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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/11
Listening

Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in June 2015. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was very similar in standard to that of June 2015. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to overwrite answers in pen but in so doing, they left first attempts at ticks or words. This was often very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Examiners again reported that poor handwriting often made scripts difficult to read.
- Many candidates now appreciate the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension. Some candidates still need to be more aware concerning ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.

General comments

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

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

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

This year, Examiners reported more cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. **Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly.** Any answer which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should also be clearly crossed out.

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

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested numbers, time, places, tourist activities, weather, food, personal items and household items. Rubrics and visuals were generally well understood by candidates.

This opening exercise caused few problems except for the final question. **Questions 1 and 2** were very well done by nearly all candidates. A few did not distinguish *cathédrale* on **Question 3** or *vent* on **Question 5**. **Question 8** was often answered incorrectly as candidates did not always hear the *eau* in *eau chaude* and took it to refer to the central heating, so **B** rather than **D** was selected.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured an advert for a holiday house. Questions tested months, domestic animals, geographical surroundings, kitchen facilities and household items. Candidates generally did well on this exercise with very good numbers being successful on **Questions 10**, **11**, **13** and **15**. **Question 9** required candidates to write the month *juillet.* Examiners frequently commented that the spellings of this month were often not correct but, they were recognisable and in an acceptable form. The weakest candidates answered *vacances.* Very occasionally, the difference between *chat* and *chien* was not known. On **Question 12**, some were unfamiliar with *four à micro-onde.* On **Question 14**, weaker candidates often confused *boulangerie* and *boucherie* and chose **B** instead of **A**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

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

Candidates heard four young people talking about clothes and fashion. The topic area was accessible to candidates and the performance of the candidature was very similar to that of June 2015 on this exercise. Some candidates chose answer **(e)** instead of **(d)** due to recognition of the word *surf,* and similarly, option **(h)** instead of option **(i)** due to the recognition of the word *blog.* Many candidates did well and scored at least 4 marks. A good number scored full marks.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard two interviews with a young French girl, Lucie, who lives in New York. In the first interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise.

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Candidates made a good attempt at this exercise. On **Question 17**, some found it difficult to spell *animé* correctly but were able to give an acceptable answer. On **Question 18**, candidates often did not recognise the word *pont* and often gave the word *pond* or *pomme.* The last three questions on this section were attempted very well with candidates making good attempts at *parcs, intéressante* and *basket.* High numbers were successful on **Question 21**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

Candidates heard another interview with Lucie and were required to give short answers in French. Here, candidates were less successful in rendering the four words required. Many scored half marks only on this exercise. On **Question 22**, many could not spell *printemps.* Correct answers needed to start with *prin, pron, pran, pren* or *prun* and finish with *temps.* The spelling *pringtemps* was not accepted. Some candidates gave a correct answer but then invalidated it by writing another season, or all four seasons. Some offered the word *hiver* as this was also heard on the recording. On **Question 23**, *trottoir* was not attempted well. Many did not know this item of Defined Content vocabulary or, quite commonly, did not gain the mark for the word *trottoir* as they split the word *trot toir* or *trop tois.* Candidates need to be reminded that words combined or split inappropriately do not gain the mark as they do not show comprehension. Candidates fared a little better on **Question 24** and were usually successful in giving an acceptable spelling of *interprète.* Some gave the correct answer but added *étudier en faculté* which invalidated their answer. Candidates should be reminded that if Examiners are presented with a choice of answers then the mark cannot be awarded. **Question 25** tested the commonly met word *bâtiments* and was not always well done. Again, answers sometimes combined two words inappropriately and answers such as *sesbâtiments* did not score the mark. Attempts to add *hauts* or *impressionnants* were not treated as invalidations as they were adjectives heard on the recording and described the buildings.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Robin who talked about his holiday cycling around Europe with a friend. The topic area was generally accessible and candidates made a good attempt at this exercise. Even the weaker candidates were usually able to score a few marks on the opening three questions of this exercise. This was a suitable demanding exercise for this stage of the examination. A full range of marks was evident with a fair number scoring 4 or more marks. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events. There was no particular discernible pattern of incorrect answers on this exercise. The first four questions were approached well but **Questions 30** and **31** proved to be the most challenging and good tests of gist understanding. Here, only the best candidates frequently chose the correct **B** options. Examiners also reported that many seemed unaware of the meaning of *égoïste.*

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

As in 2015, this was found to be an appropriately demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. A full range of performance was seen on this last exercise. Many weaker candidates made commendable efforts to answer at least some questions and were usually able to score a few marks. There was a good mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. Candidates heard an interview with Alice talking about her grandparents.

On **Question 32**, candidates were fairly successful in identifying *temps libre.* On **Question 33**, the word *journée* was sufficient to gain the mark. Answers such as *journey* or *jorné* did not score the mark. In order to be successful here a verb was not required, but, if candidates chose to include one it had to be an appropriate verb such as part of the verb *raconter.* Incorrect attempts at part of this verb such as *rencontre* often invalidated an answer that was otherwise correct as they introduced a distorting idea. **Question 34** was only done well by the very best candidates and was one of the most challenging on the paper. Only the best candidates referred to *choses sans importance/choses pas importantes.* Some understood the opposite and talked about *les choses importantes* or focused on the fact of the argument rather than its content. Many invalidated their answers by including reference to a *vision différente de la vie.* Fairly good attempts were made on **Question 35** with good numbers able to identify *santé.* **Question 36** was also answered quite well and candidates could gain the mark either by mentioning *musées* or *expositions*. Again, a few invalidated their correct answer by adding the word *expédition* which distorted the answer. Many were also successful in

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identifying *la langue française* on **Question 37** but some were unable to spell *langue* correctly. Weaker candidates said instead that the grandfather was a teacher which did not show understanding of the question. **Question 38** was also answered reasonably well but a number of candidates failed to include the verb or confused *libre* for *livre*. **Question 39** required the concept of 50 years/anniversaries of marriage to gain the mark. Some implied 50 marriages or omitted the years or included an incorrect number which invalidated the answer. On the final question, the concept of not working or working no longer was required for the mark. Just over half the candidature answered well here. Acceptable spellings of the commonly met verb *travailler* were often given. The best candidates here simply wrote the straightforward answer *ils ne travaillent plus* or *ils ne travaillent pas.* Spellings of *plus* such as *plue/plut/plu* were not accepted.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/12
Listening

Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in June 2015. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was very similar in standard to that of June 2015. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to overwrite answers in pen but in so doing, they left visible their first attempts at ticks or words. This was often very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Examiners again reported that poor handwriting often made scripts difficult to read.
- Candidates must cross out any material they do not wish the Examiner to consider. If the candidate leaves two possible answers, the Examiner cannot choose the answer for the candidate and one may invalidate the other.
- Many candidates now appreciate the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Some candidates still need to be more careful about ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.
- A few candidates used a combination of ticks and crosses in the objective exercises, making it difficult for the examiner to know which answers to mark.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

General comments

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

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

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

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This year, Examiners reported more cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. **Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly.** Any answer which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should also be clearly crossed out.

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

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

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

This initial exercise was done extremely well by the majority of the candidates with many scoring full marks. The most demanding questions in this exercise were **Question 5**, where some candidates incorrectly chose answer **B**, and **Question 8**, where some candidates confused *cirque* and *feux d'artifice* and again incorrectly chose option **B**.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard an advert about a stay in the town of Aix-en-Provence, in France. Candidates were mostly required to show their understanding by selecting one from three visual options and also to correctly identify the month of the year. As in previous years, candidates answered the vast majority of these questions correctly and many scored full marks on this exercise.

In the first part of the exercise, only an extremely small number of candidates did not correctly identify the correct answer to **Question 9**. There were many different spellings of *février* in response to **Question 10** which were covered by the instructions in the mark scheme. The remaining two questions in the first part of the exercise were answered extremely well. It was rare to see an error in the second half of the exercise with the vast majority of the candidates scoring three marks in **Questions 13–15**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Candidates heard four young people talking about what they do to help at home. The vocabulary was taken from the Defined Content and extracts included some opinions as well as occasional use of tenses other than the present. The topic area was very accessible to candidates and large numbers achieved high marks. No one particular option seemed to be more difficult than another and no pattern of incorrect answers was discernible.

This exercise was successfully attempted by the vast majority of candidates, many of them scoring 5 or 6 marks and it was rare to see a mark below 4. Mistakes usually occurred in identification of the last three correct answers: some candidates chose **(h)** rather than **(g)** or **(i)** and in the final segment, incorrectly chose **(l)** instead of **(j)**.

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Candidates now appear to be more familiar with the requirement to tick six boxes on this exercise and there were fewer incidents of candidates ticking fewer or more than the required number. Teachers should advise candidates to indicate the six true statements with either a tick or a cross as on the very odd occasion, candidates used both ticks and crosses, making it difficult for the Examiner to mark the exercise.

Some candidates answered first in pencil and then went over their answers in ink but unfortunately did not completely remove their pencil answers. Where this happened and there were more than 6 ticks visible, the candidates unfortunately lost marks as a result.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In the first part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Élodie who lived in Botswana in Africa. Candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements by supplying the correct word(s).

In **Question 17**, there were many different spellings of *Belgique*, which were covered by the mark scheme. In **Question 18**, there was some invalidation by the inclusion of *tourisme* in the answer and also candidates inappropriately split words in their answer by responding *un nagence de voyages*. The next question was answered extremely well by the majority of the candidates.

The mark scheme allowed for different acceptable spellings of *magnifique* in **Question 20** and in a similar way, allowed for different representations of *intelligents* in **Question 21**. Many candidates scored both marks on these two questions.

The second part of this exercise featured the second interview with Élodie. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French to the questions. All of the questions could be answered briefly.

Some less able candidates were confused by *souriants* and answered *sérieux* in **Question 22** and did not score the mark. In **Question 23**, many candidates correctly identified the time of arrival, but some candidates heard *6h30* and incorrectly wrote that as their answer, without listening carefully to the end of the sentence. It was rare to see an incorrect answer in **Question 24** and *moustiques*, with all the acceptable spellings, was fairly well known in **Question 25**.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

It was pleasing and extremely reassuring to see that the vast majority of candidates attempted all the questions in the most demanding section of the exam and marks ranged from three upwards. Some of the less able candidates scored all their marks on the first exercise in this section.

In the first exercise, candidates listened to an interview with Sylvie who had been on a boat journey. They were then required to select the correct answer from four possibilities offered. The first three questions were seen as more challenging with **Question 28** seen as the least accessible. Many candidates scored all three marks in **Questions 29–31** and candidates found **Questions 29** and **31** to be the most accessible.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

In the second exercise, candidates listened to an interview with Fabien who was talking about his parents. Less able candidates found this last exercise to be very challenging and often, doubtless encouraged by the teaching that they had received, made intelligent guesses at the answers.

In **Question 32**, many candidates included the ages of the parents which did not invalidate the answer, unless those ages were incorrect. The ages on their own were not sufficient for the mark and *cheveux gris* was required for the mark. Candidates did find it difficult to render both *cheveux* and *gris* correctly.

In **Question 33**, a common incorrect answer was *informaticienne* but those candidates who wrote the correct answer usually spelled *pharmacienne* correctly. The next question saw some excellent attempts at *curieux* but a significant proportion of the candidates incorrectly answered *furieux* and this was seen as a very challenging question.

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In the next question, **Question 35**, many candidates scored the mark by including the notions of *sortir* and *avec ses copains*, and *amis* was accepted as a synonym of *copains*. **Question 36** was answered correctly by the more able and included *moins* and *stressé.* Less able candidates, however, identified *stressé* but did not include *moins* in their answer and could not be awarded the mark. There were many correct answers to **Question 37** but some candidates' answers were invalidated by the inclusion of other activities such as *film* and *musique*.

In **Question 38**, only the more able scored the mark here by correctly identifying *grand-père* and a significant number of candidates just answered *père*. In the next question, candidates were required to identify *parler* and the vast majority of the candidates, across the ability range, were able to do that. The final question was seen as perhaps the most challenging in the whole exam and many candidates incorrectly answered *supermarché*.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/13
Listening

Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in June 2015. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was similar in standard to that of June 2015. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to overwrite answers in pen but in so doing, they left first attempts at ticks or words. This was often very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Poor handwriting often made scripts very difficult to read.
- Many candidates now appreciate the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension. Some candidates still need to be more aware concerning ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.

General comments

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

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

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

This year, there were even more cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. **Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly.** Any answer which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should also be clearly crossed out.

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Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested numbers, weather, food, transport, places and leisure activities. No question proved to be too demanding and there was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers. **Question 6** proved to be the most demanding question with about a third of candidates not always recognising the word *pont.* Rubrics had been well understood. This opening exercise was very comparable to the opening exercise on the paper in June 2015.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured an advert for a ski resort. Questions tested months, food, accommodation, prices, items of clothing and accommodation facilities. Candidates attempted **Question 9** well and most were well able to render *mars*. The spelling *marz* was not accepted. **Question 10** was very well done and nearly all candidates were able to identify *pharmacie* but on **Question 11**, *confiture* was not well known by about half the candidature and many opted for option **B** which showed a picture of sweets. Most were able to identify *auberge de jeunesse* on **Question 12** which presented very few problems to candidates. Good numbers of candidates were also successful on **Questions 13** and **15** but some found **Question 14**, *casque,* harder, often choosing the picture of the gloves or the anorak.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

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

Candidates heard four young people talking about money. This exercise was quite well done and the overall performance was similar to that of June 2015. Good numbers of candidates scored at least 4 marks on this exercise. The topic area was accessible to candidates. Candidates often chose **(j)** instead of **(l)** but there was otherwise no pattern of incorrect ticks which appeared on scripts scoring fewer than 4 marks on this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

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

Good numbers were successful on **Question 17** and able to give an acceptable spelling of *mercredi*. **Question 18** was found a little more difficult but a fair number went on to identify and give an acceptable rendering of *décisions*. **Question 19** required candidates to identify *passagers*. Some candidates produced

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inaccurate spellings such as *pasajes* or *passengers*. Generally, **Question 20** was approached well with many scoring the mark with an acceptable rendering of *communication.* The last question in this first part of the exercise required candidates to identify the word *météo*. Many incorrect attempts featured renderings such as *meteor.*

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

Candidates made a fair attempt at the second part of this exercise but clearly found some questions more challenging. On **Question 22**, candidates needed to refer to the fact that the flights Solange made were *longs.* Some tried to state that the trips started on a Thursday or finished on the Saturday, which was extra material heard around the required *longs,* heard in the key sentence, *maintenant, je fais de longs trajets.* **Question 23** was a little more complicated and needed the understanding that her training was the same as the training for men. Some good attempts were made but many found this challenging and often the key concepts (same and men) were incomplete or sometimes invalidated as *hommes* was spelt *hombres*. On **Question 24**, only the very best candidates were successful in identifying *nombreux*. Incorrect attempts often featured answers such as *importantes* or just pointed out that the team was well prepared which, by itself did not answer the question. On the last question in this exercise, **Question 25**, a variety of answers were accepted, such as *vedette*, *acteur, actrice, célébrité* or *star.* Many seemed unfamiliar with the word *vedette.* Some made phonetic attempts to transcribe the word and wrote answers with inappropriate word splits such as *ve det.* Centres are reminded that words combined or split inappropriately do not score the marks as comprehension is not shown.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Sandrine who talked about her work looking after children in the United States of America. The topic area was generally accessible and candidates made a good attempt at this exercise. Even the weaker candidates were usually able to score a few marks on this exercise. This was a suitably demanding exercise for this stage of the examination and candidates performed in much the same way as in the last session. A full range of marks was evident with a fair number scoring 3 or more marks. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events. Candidates generally did better on the first three questions in this exercise. There was no particular discernible pattern of incorrect answers except on **Question 27** where many chose option **B**, *ils jouaient à des jeux video*, which was the opposite of what was stated on the recording and showed that candidates had not picked out the negative. **Questions 30** and **31** proved to be challenging but good tests of gist understanding.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

As in 2015, this was found to be an appropriately challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Many weaker candidates made commendable efforts to answer at least a few questions and were usually able to score a few marks. Very weak candidates however often failed to attempt questions in this last exercise. Candidates heard an interview with Christophe who talked about recent flooding in his home town. There was a good mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise. Most candidates scored some marks with some questions only being successfully answered by the most able, as intended. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. Candidates should be reminded not to write long answers as sometimes they add extra detail which is not on the recording. This can distort and invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates made quite a good start on **Question 32** and about half the candidates were fairly successful in conveying the word *moyenne.* The next question proved more difficult but a good number were able to identify that the water had come in through the window. The word *fenêtre* was all that was needed to gain the mark. A few candidates answered *rue*, and this was also accepted. **Question 34** was well attempted by candidates and one of the easier questions. Many were able to give an acceptable spelling of *protections*. On **Question 35**, candidates needed to understand that Christophe had been washing the car. This was found to be hard although the language required (*laver la voiture)* was very straightforward. Some split words inappropriately here (*l'avait voiture*) and did not score the mark. Some mistook the *en train de laver la voiture* for him making a train trip. **Question 36** was found to be one of the most challenging with only the best candidates identifying the key concept, *chers.* Many referred to the dog or food being taken upstairs instead. Better attempts were made on **Question 37** and many acceptable attempts were seen for *vie normale.* The

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very last section was found to be the hardest part of this exercise with only the very best candidates being able to identify that the town was *sous l'eau* on **Question 38**. Some wrote that the town was *sur l'eau.* Many wrote instead that the shops were closed, which indicated that candidates needed to read the question more carefully. Some were only partially successful on **Question 39** with very few being able to identify *au moins une semaine*. Some wrote *un mois une semaine* or missed out the reference to *au moins.* The last question was also found demanding by many and answers referring to making a list of objects were frequently seen. The very best candidates correctly identified that Christophe was insured or had insurance.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/21
Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:
- read all texts, rubrics and questions very carefully,
- answer questions in French briefly and relevantly,
- ensure that when they change an answer, it is clear what is their final answer,
- check their work.

General comments

Candidates dealt confidently with the variety of reading comprehension exercise types on this paper. All candidates seemed to have ample time to complete the paper. The paper offered an appropriate challenge and a gradient of difficulty. The standard of presentation and legibility was generally good but candidates who change their mind about an answer must ensure that their final intention is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

The success rate for this opening exercise was generally good. The most common error was for **Question 5**. The dish *coq au vin* was perhaps not known to some candidates. There were errors too, but to a lesser extent, on **Question 1** and **Question 2**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Candidates fared very well generally with this exercise. Where there were errors they occurred most often on **Question 6** (*vêtements)* and **Question 10** (*trousse de secours).*

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

Here, again, candidates were confident and successful with this exercise, showing good understanding of the text and the multiple choice questions.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a short information piece about a French theme park and complete statements in French, choosing words from a given list, in order to show comprehension of the text.

Overall this exercise was completed reasonably well. Even where there were errors candidates had nevertheless often attempted to complete the sentences with a grammatically appropriate item of vocabulary from the list. The most common errors were *élèves* in **Question 16**, *appartements* in **Question 19**, and *tour* in **Question 20**. A minority of candidates entered words randomly with little success.

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Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates read an email from Simone to a friend on the topic of weekend camping trip. This was a straightforward exercise requiring candidates to understand questions in French, select the appropriate information from the text and to write down an appropriate response.

Many candidates scored full marks or close to full marks for this task. Although there was frequent grammatical inaccuracy throughout these answers, the text did seem to have been understood in most cases. Many candidates were clearly well prepared and able to find and select the correct information accurately, confident that they only had to lift the appropriate part of the text, without worrying about adding any redundant material.

In **Question 21**, misspellings of *raconter* causing confusion with *rencontrer* were sometimes a problem.

In **Question 22**, candidates very occasionally did not score, usually with answers such as *je suis partie avec deux copines* or just *Sylvie et Louise.*

For **Questions 23(i)** and **(ii)**, again, there was only an occasional mark loss here – often with mention of camping equipment.

In **Question 24**, *elle (nous) a conduites* was a common answer but did not communicate adequately. Weaker candidates often misinterpreted this question as asking what the girls took with them and talked about heavy rucksacks. The important part of this question was the understanding of the question word *comment*.

There were quite a lot of weather-related answers to **Question 25** (*parce qu'il faisait beau*). A number of candidates gave *parce que tout allait bien* as an answer.

In **Question 26**, candidates often referred to Sylvie falling or being on the ground rather than Simone hearing her call out.

Question 29 was quite frequently misunderstood and there was some inclusion of *appeler les services de secours* without mention of *portable*. In this question, again, understanding the question word *comment* was crucial.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

For this exercise, candidates had to read a longer text about a homeless man, Alex, who had the good fortune to become a computer programmer after a chance meeting. The rubric instructs candidates to read the text, tick VRAI or FAUX against five statements about the text and to write corrected version of the three statements they have picked out as false.

Many candidates correctly identified the VRAI/FAUX statements. The second stage of the exercise is to correct the false statements (**Questions 31, 33, 34**) which proved more demanding, as is appropriate at this stage in the paper. Candidates should be reminded that it is not enough to make a false statement negative to correct it. Normally candidates should select language **carefully** from the text or use their own words. For **Question 31**, *Alex vivait dans la rue* was an acceptable correction to the statement. Candidates who lifted from the text *Alex **et** vivait dans la rue* were not rewarded. For **Question 33**, a common wrong answer was *Alex était devenu excellent en informatique.* In **Question 34**, a good number of candidates failed to identify the past tense needed for their answer and instead lifted *ils allaient créer* from the text, thus failing to score. There were also answers where the ownership of the car(s) was not clear.

For this exercise, candidates need to ensure that each question has been ticked as either VRAI or FAUX. If a candidate has a change of mind it needs to be clearly indicated what the final choice is.

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Exercise 2 Questions 35–41

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

The most successful responses to this task demonstrated careful reading of the text and the questions and the presentation of brief but focused answers. Usually, answers lifted indiscriminately from the text do not demonstrate comprehension and will not score. However, **careful** lifting of the details required to answer the question does demonstrate comprehension and is rewarded. For example, in **Question 36** the answer *ses parents ont remarqué qu'il se mettait à danser chaque fois qu'une musique lui plaisait* was not acceptable.

In **Question 35**, quite a large number of candidates did not score because they misunderstood where Charles had been born and answered *Sénégal* rather than *France*.

Question 36 could be satisfactorily answered by the selected "lift" *chaque fois qu'une musique lui plaisait.* Some answers did not score since they failed to include either *Quand* or *Chaque fois,* revealing a misunderstanding of the question.

Question 37 was tricky to answer because it demanded a change from the first person in the text to the third person in the answer. There were some good attempts to handle the pronoun *lui.* Repetition of the direct speech from the text was of course not acceptable.

Question 38 was generally accessible but those answers with the unnecessarily added *sans le dire à personne* were not accepted.

Question 39 was not very successfully answered, either by inaccurate use of French to express the idea of "Charles dancing" or by the wholesale addition of information from the text about Didier and his filming on his mobile phone.

For **Question 40**, a frequent response was to say <u>who</u> phoned up, rather than <u>what</u> the director was looking for.

Question 41 proved to be challenging. The straightforward answer *de gagner sa vie en dansant* was ignored by many who, perhaps misled by *le temps passé* in the question, jumped to the conclusion that they were being asked "How long….?" and consequently referred to him training for 8 hours.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/22
Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:
- keep their answers brief and focused, particularly in **Section 3**,
- make sure that they read the questions carefully,
- check the accuracy of their spelling, especially with words used in the text/question.

General comments

The paper proved accessible to all the candidates. The vast majority attempted all sections and exercises on the paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

The vast majority of candidates scored the 5 marks available for the exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise was also very successful and most candidates scored the 5 marks available.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This multiple choice exercise based on a short text proved very successful and the vast majority of candidates scored full marks. Those who did not often chose **A** instead of **C** for **Question 11** and **C** instead of **A** for **Question 13**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates had to read a short text and then choose from a list the most appropriate word to fill in gaps.

Questions 16 and **18** were usually answered correctly. Candidates often chose *protéger* instead of *montrer* for **Question 17**, *jours* instead of *heures* for **Question 19** *and barbecue* instead of *pique-nique* for **Question 20**. This type of exercise proved accessible to the vast majority of candidates, as many scored 3 marks or more.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–30

For this exercise, candidates were asked to read a longer piece of text and answer questions in French. What was required was for the candidates to locate the correct information within the text. The responses were marked for communication only and text lifted directly from the passage was rewarded.

For **Question 21**, the expected answer was *avril.* For **Question 22**, the vast majority of candidates correctly located *un festival (traditionnel)*. **Questions 23** and **24** were very well answered. Some candidates

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misunderstood the question word *où* in **Question 25** and answered *dans des groupes bruyants* instead of the expected *(sur) la place du marché*. **Questions 26** and **27** were very successful and most candidates located the correct pieces of information – *des vêtements de toutes les couleurs* and *un défilé*. A significant number of candidates lost the mark for **Question 28** as they answered *à deux heures de l'après-midi* instead of *(il faisait) beau.*

Most candidates easily identified the answers to the last two questions and correctly answered (*elles avaient l'air un peu) bizarre* for **Question 29** and *assister encore* for **Question 30**.

Section 3

In **Section 3**, candidates need to answer questions in such a way as to demonstrate that they have understood the text/question. Candidates who "lift" indiscriminately do not demonstrate genuine comprehension and, therefore, cannot score the marks. The inclusion of unnecessary conjunctions often resulted in the invalidation of an otherwise correct answer. Candidates would do well to be guided by the length of the space allocated for an answer and should ensure that their answer fits within that space. Candidates need to be very discriminating in what they include in their answers as the inclusion of additional material copied from the text may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Exercise 1 Questions 31–35

Candidates are expected to read a longer text and then decide which of the given statements are *Vrai* and which are *Faux*. They are also told that 2 of the statements are *Vrai* and that 3 are *Faux.* Having made their choice, they must then correct the false ones in the style of the example given. No credit is given for a sentence which just adds *ne ... pas* to the original statement. It was pleasing to see that a significant number of candidates scored the 5 marks available for ticking the correct boxes. **Questions 31** and **33** were the two most often incorrectly identified as *true* or *false.*

For **Question 31**, which was a *Faux* statement, the expected answer was *Il regardait le Tour à la télévision*.

Question 32 proved to be a real challenge to many candidates as they were not discriminating enough when correcting the statement *Le «Tour pour Tous» est réservé aux cyclistes français*. A significant number of candidates gave very lengthy answers when all that was required was *il est pour des cyclistes de pays différents.* The addition of *il est réservé* was not accepted as it conveyed the wrong idea. **Questions 33** and **34** were *Vrai* and required no correction. Many candidates successfully corrected the statement for **Question 35**. The required correction was *parce qu'elle a réussi à terminer le Tour.* Some candidates found it difficult to manipulate the language required and often offered *parce que j'ai réussi à terminer le Tour*. To be acceptable the answer had to be put in the third person singular.

Exercise 2 Questions 36–42

The final exercise was, as intended, the most demanding part of the paper. Even though many candidates found this exercise rather challenging, many persevered and managed to score a few marks. Many were able to locate the correct part of the text but were not selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response to the question or they were unable to manipulate the language to give an acceptable answer. Lengthy responses did not score the marks as they did not show genuine comprehension. Candidates should be reminded that if the question contains an inversion, the necessary adjustments should be made in the answer.

Question 36 was quite successful as many candidates could clearly answer *elle devait s'occuper de ses autres enfants*. Candidates who lifted *sa mère **qui** devait s'occuper de ses autres enfants* did not score the mark as they did not show genuine comprehension. For **Question 37**, many candidates invalidated the correct answer *elle a mis des photos du Mali dans sa chambre* with the use of ***donc***. **Question 38** proved rather challenging for many candidates. The expected answer was *sa famille lui manquait* but many candidates either answered *elle manquait sa famille* or included *elle était gravement malade et très faible.* For **Question 39**, candidates had to be selective as to what they could use from the text. Those who answered *Héloïse/elle a commencé à lui raconter des histoires* scored the mark. For **Question 40** many candidates seemed to have difficulty understanding *qu'est-ce qu'elles ont appris* and concentrated on *après quatre heures d'attente à l'hôpital*. Common answers were *elles étaient très inquiètes* or *elles ont attendu le retour d'Aminata dans sa chambre (d'hôpital)* instead of the expected answer *qu'Aminata était sauvée.* As **Question 41** was ***À** qui Héloise a-t-elle présenté Aminata?* the expected answer was ***à** ses amies (dans son école).* **Question 42** was very successful and the vast majority of candidates correctly answered *elles iraient revoir Aminata au Mali.*

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/23
Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:
- read all texts, rubrics and questions very carefully,
- answer questions in French briefly and relevantly,
- ensure that when they change an answer, it is clear what is their final answer,
- check their work.

General comments

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

Success in this opening exercise was generally good. The most common error was for **Question 5**. The item *croque-monsieur* was perhaps not known to some candidates. There were errors too, but to a lesser extent, on **Question 1** (*boulangerie*).

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Candidates had little difficulty generally with this exercise.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

Here, again, candidates were confident and successful with this exercise, showing good understanding of the text and the multiple choice questions.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a short information piece about a French theme park and complete statements in French, choosing words from a given list, in order to show comprehension of the text.

Generally, this exercise was completed very well. Even where there were errors candidates had nevertheless often attempted to complete the sentences with a grammatically appropriate item of vocabulary from the list. The most common error was *curieuse* instead of *passionnante* in **Question 18**. There were errors too in **Question 20**, but to a lesser extent.

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Exercise 2 Questions 21–30

For this exercise, candidates read an email from Grégoire to a friend on the topic of time spent on a language course in England. This was a straightforward exercise requiring candidates to understand questions in French, select the appropriate information from the text and to write down an appropriate response.

Many candidates scored full marks or close to full marks for this task. Although there was frequent grammatical inaccuracy throughout these answers, the text did seem to have been understood in most cases. Many candidates were clearly well prepared and able to find and select the correct information accurately.

Questions 25 and **27** proved to be the most demanding where candidates tried sometimes to manipulate the French from the text and as a result the answer became confused or incomplete.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 31–35

For this exercise, candidates had to read a longer text about Patrick, a professional fireman. The rubric instructs candidates to read the text, tick VRAI or FAUX against five statements about the text and to write corrected version of the three statements they have picked out as false.

Many candidates correctly identified the VRAI/FAUX statements. The second stage of the exercise is to correct the false statements (**Questions 32, 33, 34**) which proved more demanding, as is appropriate at this stage in the paper. Candidates should be reminded that it is not enough to make a false statement negative to correct it. Normally candidates should select language **carefully** from the text or use their own words. For **Question 32**, it was possible to offer a valid correction to the statement by lifting *il n'a aucun problème pour s'endormir* from the text. For **Question 33**, *les accidents de la route arrivent en première position* was a perfectly acceptable answer. A common wrong answer was *ils passent la plupart de leur temps à éteindre les accidents de la route* (sic). Some responses targeted the last sentence of the paragraph, referring to *stages.* For **Question 34**, the challenge was to transpose the *ce qui me plaît* in the text to the third person. An answer such as *c'est la variété* with no reference to liking/preferring was not accepted as a complete correction to the statement.

For this exercise, candidates need to ensure that each question has been ticked as either VRAI or FAUX. A blank cannot score. If a candidate has a change of mind it needs to be clearly indicated what the final choice is.

Exercise 2 Questions 36–41

This final exercise required the reading and understanding of a longer passage about the life of Martine who, as well as being a promising swimmer, works in a nursery school. Comprehension was tested by means of questions and answers in French. Most candidates attempted answers to all the questions.

The most successful responses to this task demonstrated careful reading of the text and the questions and the presentation of brief but focused answers. Usually answers lifted indiscriminately from the text do not demonstrate comprehension and will not score. However, **careful** lifting of the details required to answer the question does demonstrate comprehension and is rewarded.

Question 36 was straightforward and was answered correctly in the majority of cases.

For **Question 37**, quite a lot of answers were invalidated by the unnecessary inclusion of the word *même* from the text.

Question 38 was usually successfully answered.

Questions 39 (i) and **(ii)** could be answered by careful lifting from the text (*beaucoup de gens la reconnaissent* and *ils veulent la photographier*). The introduction of information irrelevant to the answer was considered to be an invalidation. For example, the addition of *Martine trouve souvent bizarre que…* was not acceptable.

Question 40 required some manipulation of the language from the text to produce *les enfants (à l'école) ne savent rien de ses succès sportifs.* The unidentified *ils* instead of *les enfants* was not accepted, nor was *mes succès.*

Question 41 proved to be the most demanding of the whole exercise. The most common wrong answer was *quand l'entraînement est dur.*

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/03
Speaking

Key messages

- The format of the test was the same as in 2015 and was well understood in Centres.
- The standard of work heard was very similar to that heard in June 2015.
- Candidates had usually been well prepared for the role play tasks. Good Examiners did not deviate from the script and set tasks and prompted candidates when necessary.
- Timings in most Centres were correct but sometimes, candidates were disadvantaged due to incorrect timings in the conversation sections.
- Topic coverage was satisfactory in most Centres. A few Centres needed to cover a wider range of topics across their candidature in the Topic Conversation section. It is not appropriate for all candidates in a Centre to choose the same topic for their presentation.
- Most Examiners are well aware of the need to ensure that past and future tenses are tested in **both** conversation sections. There are still however some Centres where this is not evident. In such cases, the mark for Language was limited. All Centres need to ensure that questions to test different tenses are included in both the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation.
- The best work was heard in Centres in which spontaneous and natural conversations developed.
- In Centres in which Internal moderation had taken place, this had usually been carried out efficiently.
- Centres are thanked for their clear recordings. Please remember to label all audio files clearly with candidate names and numbers. Recordings should not be submitted on memory sticks.

General comments

As in 2015, the standard of work heard was good and a wide range of performance was heard across the candidature. Most Examiners were well aware of the format of the test and conducted the test efficiently. Candidates were generally aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well.

In the role plays, candidates had made good use of the 15-minute preparation time. Centres are reminded that Examiners may have access to the confidential test materials (Teachers' Notes Booklet and Role Play Cards) in the four working days before the first Speaking test is conducted in order to prepare the role plays. Centres are reminded that the contents of these materials are confidential and must not be shared with candidates. The confidential test materials must be returned to the secure storage facility after preparation has taken place and after each session of examining.

Once started, the speaking tests should be completed as soon as possible within the Centre. This is to ensure the security of the test materials. There should not be a long interval of time between different groups taking the test within a Centre. Once the last Speaking test has been conducted, the test booklet(s) should remain in secure storage until the end of the Speaking test period. **The sample should be checked and then sent as soon as possible after the tests have been completed. The work from some Centres arrived late this year and this can delay the moderation process**.

Centres are reminded that candidates must not be allowed to do any writing during their preparation time and must not be allowed to bring any written materials with them into the preparation area. Please also ensure that candidates do not bring mobile phones into the examination area and that Examiners' phones are switched off.

Examiners need to understand the requirements of the mark scheme in order to ask the right sort of questions which will stretch candidates and give them the opportunity to fulfil the descriptors in the higher mark bands. For example, **Examiners who included unexpected questions and went beyond the straightforward "closed" questions gave candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on Table B, Communication**. Straightforward questions which did not give candidates the

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opportunity to develop their answers did not enable candidates to score marks in the highest bands. It was also essential to include questions to elicit past and future tenses in **both** conversation sections as candidates needed to show they could use both of these tenses for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on **Table C, Language**.

- **Clerical checks**

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

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

- **Cover sheet for moderation sample**

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

- **Sample size**

  As in 2015, Centres usually understood the requirements of the sample size well and nearly all Centres submitted a correct and representative sample. Centres with permission to use more than one Examiner had clearly spent a considerable amount of time and effort in ensuring that both a good range of marks and different Examiners were represented on the sample. Many such samples were very well documented. **It was particularly helpful in such cases for the Moderators to receive a list of all the sample candidates and in which examination group they could be found.**

- **Recording quality**

  A few CDs were broken in transit this year which necessitated replacement CDs being sought from Centres. Centres were usually very prompt in responding to a request for a second sample and are thanked for this. Please check that all CDs are carefully wrapped in some form of protective packaging before they are placed in the envelope with the moderation paperwork.

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

  Please use widely recognised recording programmes. It is sometimes very difficult to open files when they are not put on CDs as .mp3 files. Please ensure that all recording equipment is tested carefully prior to the live exams. Also, please remember to avoid sticking labels on CDs and do not write on the surface of the CD without using a CD friendly pen. It is essential that each candidate's recording is labelled with the candidate name and number on the box for the CD and that the sound file is also correctly labelled. **On the CD, the recording for each candidate must be saved individually and named as follows, Centre number_candidate number_syllabus number_component number.** Most Moderators reported cases of audio files being labelled with just a track number. The recording for each candidate should be on a separate clearly labelled file.

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A list of the featured recordings must be submitted with each CD. Each CD must include a recorded introduction by the Examiner, listing the CD number, Centre number, examination number, examination name, name of Examiner and date. The Examiner (and not the candidate) must introduce the candidate by name and number and give the Role Play Card number.

- **Internal moderation in Centres**

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

It was clear that in many large Centres a very thorough approach to the Internal moderation process had taken place. In most cases, the supporting documentation made it very clear to Moderators as to what Internal moderation had taken place in the Centre.

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

- **Timings of tests / missing elements**

Most Centres adhered to the stipulated timings, but some Centres persist in going under or over the 5 minutes prescribed for the Topic Conversation and/or the General Conversation test. Each of these sections **must** last for approximately five minutes. Centres are reminded that the presentation of the topic should last no longer than 2 minutes and that the remaining time of this 5-minute section should be spent in conversation on this topic. Where conversations are short or missing, candidates can be disadvantaged as marks cannot be awarded for tasks which are not attempted. In a few Centres, marks had been awarded for missing sections which resulted in marks being reduced by Moderators.

- **Application of the mark scheme**

As in 2015, Examiners in Centres were usually successful in applying the mark scheme fairly and consistently. Many Centres had no adjustments made to their marks as they were in line with the agreed standard. A few large Centres had adjustments made just to part of the mark range in cases of lenient or harsh marking. Some Centres had larger adjustments made to their marks. This was sometimes due to short or missing sections, or the generosity of marks awarded in Centres on Table C when there was no evidence of past and future tenses.

Role plays

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

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Conversation sections

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

Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in Centres.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Centres generally encouraged candidates to attempt all parts of each task and prompted appropriately when candidates needed encouragement. 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. Examiners generally kept well to their script. Overlong answers are not to be encouraged as marks are only awarded for the set tasks. Indeed, should candidates go on and add material extra to the set task it may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates should be reminded that it is always important to listen to the Examiner as on all the Role Play A situations, there is **always** a task which requires them to **listen and choose** from the two scripted options offered by the Examiner. If one of these options is not chosen by the candidate, the appropriate mark to award is 0. Likewise, there is **always** one task which requires responding to an **unexpected question** on the B Role Plays. Examiners are reminded not to change the cues in the scripts so as to ensure that the level of difficulty in the task remains the same for all candidates

Role Plays A

All of the A role play situations featured a task which required a question to be asked and one task which required candidates to choose an option from two provided by the Examiner. Candidates generally found the three situations to be equally accessible and usually scored well on this opening exercise. Centres had trained candidates well to include a greeting and thanks where required. Centres are reminded that often a short response (perhaps one word) will be appropriate and in such cases a mark of 3 can be awarded. Examiners should introduce Role Play A and start the conversation off. English should not be used to introduce the test. It is always helpful to read out the introduction to candidates.

Phoning a riding school

This role play was attempted well by candidates. Nearly all candidates were able to state that they wanted to go on an outing and pronunciation was generally good. Some forgot to insert *à cheval.* Most listened well to the options offered and chose whether to go *seul* or *en groupe.* Task 3 posed few problems and most were able to give an appropriate time. Task 4, however, posed a problem to some and many weaker candidates gave their age using *je suis* instead of *j'ai.* The last task was well approached but again, some used a brief *Combien?* to ask the price.

Renting a bike

This was again approached well by candidates. All were able to say they wanted to rent a bike and pronunciation of *vélo* was good. Some weaker candidates did not always understand *jours* and instead stated a number of hours. The options offered were usually well understood and *ville* and *campagne* were easy to identify. The next task was well approached but again, some used a brief *Combien?* to ask the price. Most were able to communicate where they were staying but many candidates could not conjugate the verb correctly and frequently, if they chose to use a verb, the ending was incorrect. A few weaker candidates tried instead to book a hotel or ask where the hotel was which did not score marks.

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Booking a coach trip

This role play was attempted well and candidates made a good start but sometimes did not pronounce *excursion* well. Some were unable to identify a day for the outing but, usually, Task 2 was done well. The options of *montagne* and *mer* were generally well understood. On Task 4, some found it difficult to say how many people the excursion was for. Those who just stated a number did well but some who chose to use a verb experienced more difficulty. Most were well able to formulate an appropriate question on the last task.

Role Plays B

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 with some easier and more challenging tasks 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-minute preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room.

Phoning a hotel about a holiday job

This role play was again approached well by candidates. The opening task was well done but not all clearly understood the unexpected question, *Vous êtes de quel pays*? Some were unable to identify *pays* and some had to be recued with a different prompt about nationality. Candidates who gave a response identifying a country (the set task) scored 3 marks. Candidates giving a nationality (frequently after having a change of prompt) usually scored 2 marks. The next task was to state when the candidate would be free. Any logical point in the future was accepted as an appropriate time. Most were able to state for how long they could work. Task 4 required candidates to state two reasons why they wanted to work in a hotel and Moderators reported a wider range of reasons heard than in previous years, covering liking working with the public, practising languages, having done it before and wanting to earn money. Some related it to a good work experience. On the last task, many who opted to ask a question about the salary often mispronounced *le salaire*. A good variety of questions was heard on this last task.

Consulting a doctor

This role play was attempted well by many and even the weaker candidates could score marks on most of the tasks. Most candidates realised the importance here of stating that they had spent too much time in the sun on Task 1 and explained why they were ill. Candidates who merely stated they were ill did not gain full marks as the task was to explain **why** they were ill. Symptoms given were usually logical such as headaches and sickness and even *j'ai la peau très rouge.* The unexpected question required the candidates to state what they had drunk today. A verb was not required in order to answer correctly. Most opted to choose *de l'eau* but this was often poorly pronounced as *eu.* The fourth task required candidates to express their displeasure. Some missed this out and only explained why they did not want to stay in bed. In such cases this limited the mark to 1 as the second part of the task had not been fulfilled. On the last task, candidates who suggested a specific food which they could eat or asked if they could eat a specific food, or just eat, did not gain the full marks. A question such as *Qu'est-ce que je peux manger?* did gain the score of 3 marks.

Phoning the owner of a holiday house

Candidates understood the context of the situation well and were clear about the fact the brother had broken the window. Candidates usually approached the first task well but weaker candidates who stated *votre frère a cassé une fenêtre* did not score marks as the wrong message was communicated. On the unexpected question, some did not immediately recognise the key vocabulary *pièce.* Sympathetic examining did enable many to be recued on the task and enabled some marks to be scored on subsequent attempts. Most explained that the brother had been playing football but some candidates did not apologise. **It is still the case that some candidates do not recognise the cue *Faites vos excuses*.** Centres need to remind candidates about this and ensure that they do not think of it as being a list of excuses rather than conveying the notion of apology. Candidates were usually successful in formulating a suitable question to ask when the owner would be coming to the house but weaker candidates found difficulty in conjugating the verb correctly or using the correct register of language. The final task was usually done well.

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Topic Presentation and Conversation

The overall standard heard this year was very similar to that heard in 2015. There was a very wide range of performance heard and candidates had usually prepared their material well. It is important to stress to candidates that they should try to deliver their material at a suitable speed and should aim to interest and be interested in what they have chosen to talk about. Most had clearly worked hard on their presentations and communicated clearly, and often in a lively way. The best presentations showed something about the candidate in a very personal way. It was often the case that, for weaker candidates, there was a drop in the level of performance in the Topic Conversation section. The most able candidates were however usually capable of sustaining a consistent performance in which they justified and explained routinely while making use of a wide range of accurate structures. Often, candidates used a variety of tenses and structures and it is well worth impressing upon them that material heard in the opening presentation does contribute to their marks for both Communication and Language.

Timings were usually appropriate and between one and two minutes but there were instances of very long presentations of up to 8 minutes in length. This must be discouraged as candidates do not gain at all from this. Examiners should interrupt the candidates after 2 minutes and start the conversation on the topic at this point. It is also essential to keep the questions clearly focussed on the topic and not to digress onto other topics. **Questions which ask the candidate merely to repeat material from the presentation do not help the candidate to score in the higher mark bands**. It is also important to remember to ask questions to elicit past and future tenses in the conversation on the topic as this was not done in some Centres which resulted in reductions to marks for Language. While it is expected that teachers will have prepared candidates for the follow-up conversation, if candidates are to score highly, this must not consist of a series of pre-learnt questions and answers in which both Examiner and candidate know what is coming and in which order. Questions should instead arise spontaneously as the conversation develops. Some Examiners need to try to ask a few more unexpected questions on this section to enable the more able candidates to show that they are capable of “thinking on their feet” and using their prepared material in terms of vocabulary and structures appropriately.

Most candidates chose to speak on familiar topics such as their pastimes, a favourite sport, their country/town of origin, life in another country, their holidays or their school. A few, mistakenly, were allowed to present topics about themselves. Centres are reminded not to let candidates do this as it does not afford the candidate the opportunity to go into depth on one subject and can become more like the General Conversation section. Some very original topics were also heard this year spanning accounts about collecting sea shells, theatre trips, festivals, career plans, birthday celebrations, writing IT programmes, a trip to an animal reserve and playing in a band/sports team on a school trip. The environment also continues to figure as an area of interest to many candidates. A few topics were occasionally a little over ambitious in nature for the linguistic level of the candidate. Sometimes, “A” level type topics were chosen and candidates then found it hard to sustain their performance when the conversation started.

Centres are reminded to make sure that a good range of topics is covered in a Centre. Candidates in an examining group should not all cover the same topic title as the follow up questioning becomes very closed in nature and lacks spontaneity.

Most Examiners remembered to make a clear transition between this section of the test and the General Conversation section. This is very helpful for both the candidates and the Moderators.

General Conversation

Most Centres had understood the need to cover only **two or three** topics from the syllabus with each candidate in the General Conversation section but there were still some Centres in which **too many topics were covered with all candidates**. In such cases, candidates cannot see a logical order in the questioning when questions become unrelated and, at worst, it can be highly confusing for them to have to change topics so frequently. The best examining featured an announcement as to which topic was going to be discussed and then, at the end of this topic, an indication as to what was being moved onto next by the Examiner. Concentrating on two or three topics enables the Examiner to go into depth on fewer topics rather than cover more topics superficially. The topics covered in the General Conversation should be different from and not related to the topic chosen by the candidate for the presentation. Centres are reminded that candidates must not be aware of which General Conversation topics will be examined before the test.

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There was usually a good range of topics within a Centre and Examiners usually tried to vary the questions on the topics between candidates in order to keep some spontaneity in the conversation. It is important in the examination room to give the candidate the opportunity to respond to unexpected questions which arise naturally and to follow up interesting leads presented by the candidate. This enables candidates to develop points of interest and to go beyond straightforward questions which may limit them both in terms of Communication and Language.

Examiners were generally well aware in this section of the need to ask questions in a variety of tenses but it still remains the case in a few Centres that such questions are not asked. Centres are reminded that if there is only evidence of candidates working in the present tense then the Language mark will be limited to a maximum of 6.

This year, a very wide range of performance was heard by Moderators in this section of the test and the standards heard were in generally in keeping with those of 2015. Many candidates communicated well on topics such as holidays, future plans, the environment, their town/country, school, leisure activities, food and drink/healthy living, daily routine and their families. There were some excellent examples of candidates achieving at all levels of ability due to sympathetic and careful examining. As last year, good numbers showed that they could communicate well and many went beyond brief straightforward messages to longer utterances which enabled candidates to show that they could give opinions and explain and justify these in a routine fashion. The very best performances showed confident and spontaneous communication skills.

Work heard illustrating standards at the lower end of the marking bands for Language showed some manipulation of structures and awareness of verbs and a limited vocabulary. Work illustrating the performance in the middle bands showed the ability of the candidate to produce some accurate examples in past and future tenses and to be aware of key Defined Content vocabulary and certain key adverbs of time. The stronger candidates were also able to go beyond working in the first person and conjugate verbs with different subjects with greater control. Such work also showed the ability to speak accurately in a range of tenses appropriate to the questions asked and make use of a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. At the top end of the performance, candidates also made good use of adverbs, adjectives and pronouns. Utterances were longer and well connected by conjunctions. In terms of linguistic structures, there were this year more examples of structures such as *si* + imperfect plus a conditional tense, perfect infinitives, *avant de* + infinitive and, on a few occasions, compound tenses such as the pluperfect and conditional perfect tenses. This range of structures is one of the important descriptors of the very best IGCSE performances in terms of linguistic performance.

It is evident that this test is the culmination of much effort and hard work in IGCSE classrooms. The Speaking test emphasises the importance of the spoken word in terms of communicative skills in the classroom. It is also pleasing to hear from candidates that learning a foreign language is still valued by them both in terms of work and study and also for intellectual enjoyment.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/41
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should read carefully each question and should choose the option which best allows them to demonstrate the linguistic knowledge they have.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the individual tasks within each question, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must address all of the tasks.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should use a range of verb tenses, sentence structures, and more complex linguistic patterns.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation.
- The recommended word count for both **Question 2** and **Question 3** are not mandatory; candidates should not feel obliged to remove significant detail in order to meet the word count. However, answers to **Question 3** in excess of 200 words are inappropriate and in this instance candidates should be advised to be more selective.

General comments

Candidates who, for whatever reason, need to submit their work as a word processed document should choose a slightly larger font size than normal and should use at least double spacing between lines.

Candidates who require additional booklets should be given official stationery and not ordinary file paper. Centres are requested to supply single pages or 4-page booklets. 8, 12, 24-page booklets are not suitable.

The work seen suggested that the overall majority of candidates had been well prepared for this examination and that the new format is now understood. The full ability range was represented. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1

One mark is awarded for each noun which identifies an object/place represented by the illustrations. Candidates should be reminded that if they cannot recall a particular word, they are free to add different nouns which fit the context of the question. Definite/indefinite articles are not required.

Question 2

Communication

One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Up to 10 marks are awarded across the question. There is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks.

The most straightforward way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail. Provided that each new piece of information is given in a sentence or clause with an appropriate verb, marks will be awarded.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

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Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use basic sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, an article, a story line to be continued.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns.

In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: in order to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the five tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks.

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

Excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance, candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs; there were instances where candidates produced more than that. Candidates must remember that each different form of a verb earns a tick. Repeated correct forms of a verb do not qualify for a tick. By way of illustration, when expressing their opinions about situations and events, instead of using the same verb each time, many candidates used a variety of verbs which conveyed the same notion: *je pense, je trouve, je crois* and when appropriate, used them in different tenses.

Candidates should be reminded of the correct use of verbal structures such as *avant de* and *après avoir/ après être*. Many seem not to be aware that these can only be used when the action refers to the subject of the main verb.

Other Linguistic Features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The strongest candidates will be able to demonstrate among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses such as *quand, si, parce que, car, qui, que,* object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (e.g. *ne… jamais, ne... plus*), comparative/ superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions such as *depuis, pendant, pour*, and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity, common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

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Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Votre école

The vast majority of candidates were able to gain all the marks available here. The pictures clearly illustrated rooms and areas in a school: very many gained their marks by direct reference to these places. There was a little uncertainty about the spelling of *laboratoire* and *bibliothèque* but otherwise the pictures did not present any problems. Some candidates chose to include other areas in the school, e.g. *douche, dortoir* (see Mark Scheme for full list), all of which were accepted. No marks were awarded for items of school equipment as these did not fit the context of the illustrations.

Question 2: Mon meilleur ami/Ma meilleure amie

Communication

One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Up to 10 marks are awarded across the question. There is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

For the first task, candidates were required to give personal details about their friend. There were three straightforward details suggested by the examples provided: *mon ami s'appelle Marc, ma copine a 16 ans, il est espagnol*. Unfortunately, many candidates had not mastered the spelling of the verb *s'appeler.* The Mark Scheme tolerates the misuse of *être* in statements such as *il est 15 ans* but it might have been expected that almost all candidates would have mastered the correct pattern. With regard to nationality, there was evidence to suggest some confusion between the proper noun for the country and the associated adjective. The mark scheme outlines other details which were rewarded, these included: *elle habite à Lausanne, il a un frère et une sœur*. Many candidates established a good number of marks on this task.

The second task invited more specific information about the friend's physical appearance and their character. It was again possible to gain numbers of marks here for details such as *elle a les yeux verts, il est amusant*. There was some difficulty expressing the notion of 'friendly': the adjectives *amical* and *aimable* were not well known and were frequently confused with a less common, and here inappropriate, adjective *amiable*. It was pleasing to see some candidates using a range of adjectives: *compréhensif, généreux, sincère, fidèle, rigolo* and that they could use the feminine agreement where needed. Many missed out on marks as a result of poor spelling: *cheveux* remains a challenging word and, to a lesser extent, so does *yeux*. There was some evidence of the use of *haut* to describe a friend who is tall. It was encouraging however to see that *musclé* and *costaud* were part of the working vocabulary of a number of candidates.

The task did not ask about the friend's hobbies; any such information went unrewarded. However it was felt that the following remarks did reflect character and these gained marks: *elle m'aide beaucoup, il me fait rire, elle me comprend.*

Candidates had to provide details of when and where they see their friend for the third task. A simple response such as *je vois mon ami tous les jours à l'école* or *je vois ma copine chez elle pendant les vacances* was sufficient to gain marks. However, this task was problematic for various reasons. The conjugation of the verb *voir* was not known by a considerable number of candidates and this resulted in many not gaining a mark. Some candidates attempted to convey the idea in the plural but did not know that this required the reflexive use: *on se voit le week-end à la piscine, nous nous voyons chaque jour à la cantine.* Finally, a significant number of candidates wrongly understood that this task was asking them to say when and where they first met their friend.

The final task required candidates to convey some notion of future time. The task invited details of what they would like to do with their friend during the next holiday and to give reasons for their choice of activity. It should not have been difficult to gain marks here: *je voudrais aller en France avec mon amie pendant les vacances parce que je voudrais faire du ski avec elle* or *nous allons passer les prochaines vacances à la plage parce que nous aimons nager dans la mer*. Too many did not receive marks here because they mentioned only what they wished to do themselves with no reference to their friend.

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As has been mentioned above, it is important that candidates read the question carefully before beginning their answers. It is well within the capabilities of the vast majority of candidates to gain full marks for this part of the examination: by so doing, they can provide a solid basis of marks which may in turn give access to the top grades. Too many lost marks unnecessarily because they did not provide the information which the individual tasks invited.

Language

Very many gained full marks. The writing did not need to be error free for the award of 5 marks. Candidates who use simple structures, who can correctly form verbs and who check their work can readily access the top bands.

Section 2

Question 3 (a): Une lettre de remerciement à un(e) ami(e) français(e)

This was the most popular choice by far with almost 65% opting for it. A very small number misunderstood the question, some wrote of a family holiday, others of travelling to France; in such instances, marks were awarded for individual tasks if by chance the information corresponded to what was expected.

There were some excessively long answers, some candidates wrote over 100 words on each of Task 1 and Task 5. Candidates should be encouraged to be a little more selective as it is of no advantage to be writing at that length.

Communication

The first task invited candidates to give details about their return journey from France. Many provided a range of information, some of which did not quite fit the logic of a return journey but, provided that the idea of returning home was clear, marks were awarded. Many mentioned the mode of transport (e.g. *j'ai pris l'avion*), the time of travel (e.g. *je suis parti à 10 heures*), problems on the journey (e.g. *le car est tombé en panne*), details about the weather (e.g. *il faisait très chaud*) and general comments about the journey (e.g. *le voyage était fatigant*). Some gained only 1 mark because they had not successfully formed a verb in the past tense. Errors such as *je voyagé, je parti, c'été* were common.

The question provided the noun *le voyage*. It was pleasing to see that some were able to introduce the other commonly used noun *le trajet*. By contrast, the numerous references to *la journée* were disappointing, although in most instances it did not lead to the loss of marks for Communication.

A past tense was required for the award of 2 marks for Task 2, which required candidates to mention some aspect of their stay in France which appealed to them. Task 3, the reason for the choice, could be rendered in any tense which effectively conveyed the desired notion.

There was an interesting range of responses, many of which suggested genuine personal experience of places, people, activities, food, cultural experiences, weather: *j'ai adoré la vie en France, j'ai apprécié la piscine dans le jardin parce que nous avons pu nager tous les jours, ce que j'ai aimé c'était qu'il y avait plein de monuments historiques comme la Tour Eiffel*.

A significant number of candidates did not read carefully the task and did not make a clear link between what was liked and why.

Task 4 allowed candidates to state whether they were happy or not to be home. The marks were awarded for the reason, whether positive or negative. Positive reasons were very much focused on home comforts, seeing family and pets again: *je suis contente de pouvoir passer du temps avec ma famille à nouveau, mon lit est plus confortable, mes parents m'ont manqué, je n'ai pas vu mon chien depuis deux mois.* The verb *manquer* was known to a high proportion of candidates but often they did not understand how to use it in order to convey the idea of missing someone. Negative reasons tended to highlight the downside of life at home: *il n'y a rien à faire,* or perhaps the better experience of life in France: *puisqu'il ne fait jamais du soleil en Angleterre.*

In the final task, 2 marks were available for details of how the candidate spent the rest of the holidays before going back to school; candidates were free to describe further leisure activities or to make reference to preparing for the return to studying. Again, any appropriate tense was accepted. Some chose to mention

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what they had already done since returning home: *je suis partie à la plage, j'ai déjà préparé mon sac pour la rentrée*. Some chose to say what they were currently doing: *je fais de la natation, je joue au basket avec ma sœur,* whereas others explained their plans for the coming days: *je vais aller à la librairie pour acheter des livres scolaires, je voudrais aller au club pour jouer au football avec mes amis*.

There were some who introduced another holiday visit and wrote extensively about it: these were largely redundant and added little to the overall mark.

Verbs

The popularity of the question suggested that the topic was very accessible. Candidates could use very familiar verbs to complete their accounts.

It can be quite challenging to produce 18 different verb forms, however on this occasion it was relatively easy to reach the upper bands. As always, some might have improved their scores if they had checked carefully their work. The sequence of tense in clauses with *si* and *quand* were elements which sometimes broke down. Accents and agreements on past participles and the choice of auxiliary verb should always be thoroughly reviewed. Candidates should be able to use correctly and know the difference between *dormir* and *se coucher*, between *raconter* and *rencontrer* and also avoid writing the latter as *recontrer*.

Other Linguistic Features

Candidates whose rather basic language had brought them a good mark for Communication scored relatively poorly in this section if they had not been able to use some more complex sentence patterns. There were opportunities for using varied and complex sentence patterns, as the examples quoted in the section on Communication indicate.

Candidates who are not in control of gender and spelling of common nouns (*les vacances, l'aéroport, la maison, la plage, le lit, la nourriture*) are not going to achieve marks in the top most bands. There were frequent errors of spelling, which again limited marks, in common adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases (*ennuyeux, heureux, heureusement, malheureusement, beaucoup, toujours, tous les jours*). The adjective *amusant* was written as *amusement*: related to this, conveying the notion of 'enjoying oneself/having a good time' was a difficulty for many, as has been reported in the past. Loose renderings such as *j'ai eu un bon temps* were not worthy of credit.

Question 3 (b): Un spectacle musical

This question attracted about 15% of candidates. Some wrote with a passion for things musical or theatrical, conveying successfully their enjoyment of this type of occasion. There were rather too many, however, who did not have sufficient relevant vocabulary to communicate the experience effectively, often relying on show titles, artists' names and English words. There was a measure of padding, with unnecessary information about a trip to a town or city where they eventually saw a show. There were a significant number who described meals at the venue and during the show, even to the extent of this being more important than information about the musical show itself.

Communication

The first task invited candidates to state where and with whom they saw the show. Marks were awarded for indoor events, outdoor events, small scale amateur shows in village halls as well as grand theatrical experiences. Most succeeded in conveying this information: *je suis allé avec mon amie proche au théâtre qui se trouve au centre-ville, ma famille et moi sommes allés à un spectacle musical qui s'appelle Sweeney Todd à Londres*.

The second task required candidates to give some information in a past tense about what they saw. This ranged from factual detail about the venue to comments about performance: *le théâtre me semblait énorme, il y avait des affiches et des guirlandes partout, l'atmosphère était fantastique, les musiciens étaient exceptionnels*. Not everyone enjoyed themselves and negative comments were also rewarded: *la musique était trop forte, c'était ennuyeux, les chanteurs ne pouvaient guère chanter.*

It was interesting to note how many candidates wrote of a classical music experience and who, in Task 3, praised the intellectual value of this in making their recommendation. The reasons offered were sometimes simple, sometimes quite complex: *je me suis bien amusé, c'est une bonne façon de se détendre*.

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The marks for Task 4 were awarded for a clear indication of the show that they would like next to see. There was no restriction on the interpretation of *spectacle,* candidates were rewarded for sporting as well as cultural events. Candidates should remember that in such situations merely identifying a show by its title is insufficient, especially if it happens to be in English or in another language. Some qualification in French is needed: *j'aimerais voir l'opéra La Traviata de Verdi, j'aimerais voir la nouvelle pièce de Harry Potter au théâtre, je voudrais voir un spectacle de danse, je voudrais voir un spectacle d'une autre culture*.

The 2 marks for the final task were awarded for an explanation of the choice made: *il serait très drôle et je viens de lire le livre, beaucoup de gens m'ont dit que c'est génial* or *parce que je voudrais devenir actrice* represent the types of reason given.

Verbs

Marks tended to be a little lower on this question generally because candidates did not have at their disposal sufficient variety to avoid repetition. In some instances, they did not use familiar verbs accurately.

As has been mentioned, it is quite a challenge to reach the top marks for correct verb forms. It might be helpful to encourage candidates to think of what range of relevant verbs they know which they can use in their answers before they make their final choice of question.

Other Linguistic Features

As always, the correct use of basic vocabulary is critically important. Uncertainty about the gender and spelling of common nouns will always have a limiting effect on the mark which can be awarded. In this instance, it was reasonable to expect candidates to know and use accurately *la musique, le théâtre, le spectacle* (which was provided) and to know the significant vocabulary necessary to complete the tasks effectively: *le chanteur/la chanteuse, l'acteur/l'actrice, le danseur/la danseuse, le musicien/la musicienne, chanter, danser, la pièce, la scène*.

Question 3 (c): Mon job d'été

This question attracted about 20% of the entry. As is always the case with this final option, it was a little more demanding in that it placed a heavy emphasis on the consistent use of past tenses. Unfortunately, some candidates did not fully realise this or had not carefully read the rubric and wrote exclusively in the present tense, as if describing their current work, thus limiting the number of marks they could gain. However, if candidates respected the requirement to use past tenses, then it was relatively easy to gain full marks for Communication by using very straightforward vocabulary and structures.

There were some very interesting accounts which suggested that some candidates were perhaps writing from personal experience.

A very small number misunderstood this question. Maybe they did not focus sufficiently on the title and misinterpreted the leading sentence, assuming that it meant 'During the holidays, I travelled to a hotel…'. This confusion of '*travailler*' with 'to travel' is, in general terms, a very common error and efforts are always made on examination papers to ensure that there are clues which help candidates to avoid making this type of mistake.

Communication

For the first task, candidates were required to give some information about the hotel. This was a very accessible task as the response demanded a straightforward structure. Any aspect of the hotel expressed in a past tense was acceptable: size, location, facilities, quality were all rewarded: *l'hôtel était grand, il y avait plus de cent chambres, l'hôtel se trouvait à côté de la mer*.

The second task invited information about the guests who stayed at the hotel. The majority commented on the guests using a simple adjectival description: *les clients étaient gentils.* Other adjectives included *sympa, aimables, agréables, généreux, polis, riches, célèbres*, but not everyone was complimentary: *certains clients étaient méchants*. Candidates also gained marks for more detailed information: *les clients venaient des pays étrangers, les clients me donnaient des pourboires*.

Candidates needed to say what work they did at the hotel for the third task. One detail was sufficient to gain the 2 marks available. The required information was presented in different guises, all of which gained 2 marks if the verb was in an appropriate form. Simple descriptions of where they worked (e.g. *j'ai travaillé*

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dans la cuisine, j'étais à la réception), precise identifications of the job (e.g. *j'ai travaillé comme serveuse, j'étais maître-nageur à la piscine de l'hôtel*), descriptions of what work they did (e.g. *je rangeais les chambres, je répondais au téléphone*), also vaguer references to what they did (e.g. *j'ai aidé les clients, j'ai aidé le chef dans la cuisine*). Some candidates were quite expansive here, listing their different jobs and giving a breakdown of their daily duties.

As is the regular pattern for this option, the final tasks invited responses to the experience. For Task 4, 2 marks were awarded for a positive aspect. There were some simple and quite obvious comments: *c'était facile, j'ai gagné de l'argent,* but there were also some more mature ideas*: j'ai appris beaucoup au sujet du monde du travail, cela m'a appris à avoir confiance, j'ai appris quelque chose d'utile.*

For the final task, candidates were expected to make reference to a negative aspect of their work. The downsides of the job were many and varied: *j'ai détesté la routine, je détestais nettoyer les salles de bains, la patronne était méchante, les heures étaient très longues*.

Some candidates, thinking that they had perhaps not written enough, completed their accounts with some redundant detail about holiday experiences after their job had finished. There was ample opportunity within the tasks laid out to expand on relevant information without such digressions. Candidates should be advised to focus on the task as set.

Verbs

The heavy reliance on past tenses to convey the story effectively put a strain on a few of the candidates who chose this option. It was nevertheless possible to answer this question in a very simple manner, but those who did found it difficult to gain many marks for verbs as there was a lack of variety e.g. the imperfect of *être* was used very frequently in some accounts. Those who chose to be linguistically more adventurous were well able to reach the upper mark bands. It was possible to achieve a high mark by accurately using common verbs in order to do this: *travailler, faire, parler, nettoyer, ranger, porter, préparer, commencer, finir, aider*, as well as the modal verbs *devoir, pouvoir*. Candidates using *aider* should know that it is followed by *à* and an infinitive: in fact, there was evidence of a general weakness in control of verbs requiring a preposition and an infinitive.

Other Linguistic Features

The **(c)** option does provide candidates who have a good range of linguistic skill the opportunity to show fully what they know. They have the freedom to develop the story within the guidelines of the rubric and can, with careful planning, incorporate a range of familiar vocabulary and sentence structure. Basic errors of spelling and gender did have an impact on the marks awarded: *la chambre, la piscine, le jardin, la cuisine, le restaurant, la nourriture* as did the failure to make simple feminine and plural agreement of adjectives.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/42
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should read carefully each question and should choose the option which best allows them to demonstrate the linguistic knowledge they have.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the individual tasks within each question, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must address all of the tasks.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should use a range of verb tenses, sentence structures, and more complex linguistic patterns.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation.
- The vast majority of candidates kept to the recommended word count.
- Candidates are advised to highlight keywords in tasks.

General comments

Candidates who, for whatever reason, need to submit their work as a word processed document should choose a slightly larger font size than normal and should use at least double spacing between lines.

Candidates who require additional booklets should be given official stationery and not ordinary file paper. Centres are requested to supply single pages or 4-page booklets. 8, 12, 24-page booklets are not suitable.

The work seen suggested that the overall majority of candidates had been well prepared for this examination and that the new format is now understood. The full ability range was represented. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1

One mark is awarded for each noun which identifies an object/place represented by the illustrations. Candidates should be reminded that if they cannot recall a particular word, they are free to add different nouns which fit the context of the question. Definite/indefinite articles are not required.

Question 2

Communication

One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Up to 10 marks are awarded across the question. There is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks.

The most straightforward way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail. Provided that each new piece of information is given in a sentence or clause with an appropriate verb, marks will be awarded.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use basic sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

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Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, a blog, a story line to be continued.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns.

In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: in order to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the five tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks.

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

Excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance, candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs; there were instances where candidates produced more than that. Candidates must remember that each different form of a verb earns a tick. Repeated correct forms of a verb do not qualify for a tick. By way of illustration, when expressing their opinions about situations and events, instead of using the same verb each time, many candidates used a variety of verbs which conveyed the same notion: *je pense, je trouve, je crois* and when appropriate, used them in different tenses.

Candidates should be reminded of the correct use of verbal structures such as *avant de* and *après avoir/ après être*. Many seem not to be aware that these can only be used when the action refers to the subject of the main verb.

Other Linguistic Features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The strongest candidates will be able to demonstrate among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses such as *quand, si, parce que, car, qui, que,* object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (e.g. *ne… jamais, ne... plus*), comparative/ superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions such as *depuis, pendant, pour*, and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity, common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Une promenade

Candidates were asked to write a list of 8 items that they could take with them on a walk in the mountains.

To maximise their chances of scoring the 5 marks available, candidates are well advised to provide a list of eight items. The eight pictures only serve as a guide and candidates are free to use different items provided that they fit the context of the question. *Sac, portable, carte* and *lunettes (de soleil)* were well known by the vast majority. Some candidates were not so secure with the spellings of *tente (tante*) and *chapeau (chateau).*

As well as the eight items shown in the pictures, items of clothing, footwear and drinks were also credited.

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Question 2: Mon argent et moi

Candidates were expected to write about:

(a) Who gives them money and when.
(b) What they like to buy with the money and why.
(c) What activities they do with the money.
(d) What they would like to do to have more money.

Communication

Many candidates did not score the 10 marks available for Communication as they did not provide enough details for each task.

To ensure that they score the 10 marks available, candidates are advised to:

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

In task **(a)**, parents were the candidates' main source of income. Candidates often stated that they were given some money on a regular basis (at the weekend). Those who provided details about how much they were given or what they had to do to receive it, gained extra communication points. Some candidates misunderstood the task and wrote about to whom they give money (sibling/charity).

To fulfil task **(b)**, candidates were expected to use the present tense. The use of *j'aime acheter* was not essential but candidates had to show that they recognised the time frame required. Many candidates indicated that they buy sweets, clothes and CDs with their money with reasons being that they like sweet things, fashion and music.

In task **(c)**, many candidates made full use of the suggestions offered and clearly indicated that they go to the cinema/a restaurant with their friends. Some also mentioned that they like to visit museums or go to places of interest. Once again, the use of the present tense was required to fulfil the task. However, candidates who gave details of what they had done recently or planned to do were also rewarded.

As in previous sessions, the last task required candidates to use the future tense or conditional to express what they would do. Many candidates used several of the suggestions given to complete the task. Many said that they would look for a job in a restaurant or/and do more at home to increase the amount of money they get.

Language

The vast majority of candidates scored 5 or 4 for the Language mark. They produced pieces of work which were coherent and showed that they could use relevant verbs and vocabulary with a fair degree of accuracy. To maximise their chances of scoring in the top bands for Language, candidates are advised to ensure that they use the time frames used in the tasks.

Section 2

Question 3 (a): Un mariage

This option was very popular.

Candidates had to write a letter about their cousin's wedding. Candidates were expected to describe what happened during the wedding, to explain why they liked/disliked the wedding and to say whether they would like to get married and why.

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In the first task, 4 Communication marks were awarded for a description of the wedding. Many candidates scored the marks available by describing where the wedding was, what clothes were worn, the food which was served or the activities that they did. The use of the past tense was a requirement and most coped very well with *le mariage était dans un grand hôtel, la mariée portait une belle robe, il y avait beaucoup de nourriture* and *j'ai dansé*.

In the second task, 2 Communication marks were awarded for a valid reason why the candidate had/had not enjoyed the wedding. Candidates could not be rewarded for details already used to describe the wedding. Many stated that they enjoyed the wedding because they could talk to family members/friends they had not seen for a long time or because they enjoy family reunions.

To gain the 4 marks available for the last task, candidates had to answer the two questions *À l'avenir, voudriez-vous vous marier* and *Expliquez pourquoi/pourquoi pas?* Many candidates only scored one mark as they answered *je voudrais/je ne voudrais pas marier* instead of ***me** marier*. As the meaning was distorted, they could only achieve partial communication. The reasons given for their answer to the first question were very varied. The most popular choice for those who would like to get married was *je voudrais avoir des enfants* or *je ne voudrais pas être seul(e).* Those who were not in favour of getting married often stated *je veux être indépendant(e)* or *un mariage coûte trop cher.*

The vast majority of candidates who attempted this question scored very highly for Communication as their responses were detailed and clear.

Question 3 (b): Une destination touristique

Candidates had to write a blog about their family's favourite holiday destination. They needed to describe their last visit to that area, explain why their family enjoyed the visit and give the area's positive and negative aspects of tourism.

This option was also very popular with candidates who gave very interesting descriptions of their favourite holiday destinations. They showed a thorough knowledge of the country/town they had visited and could clearly explain why they loved it so much.

In the first task, many candidates provided plenty of details about their favourite destination. Apart from naming the country/town, they stated when and with whom they went and some description of what the weather was like. A past tense was required to fulfil the task and many candidates were very secure in their use of *je suis allé(e)*, *j'ai visité.* Stronger candidates were able to use *en/au* + country and *à* + town accurately. When describing the weather, there was some confusion in the use of *météo* instead of *le temps* and *c'était chaud* for *il faisait chaud.*

In the second task, 2 Communication marks were available for explaining why the family or a member of the family had enjoyed the holiday. Candidates who stated *j'ai apprécié ce séjour* could not be rewarded as it was not what the task asked. However, candidates who wrote *on a/nous avons apprécié ce* séjour could gain the marks. Reasons given were varied from *mes parents ont aimé la nourriture* to *il y avait beaucoup de choses à faire.*

For the last task, candidates had to give one positive aspect **and** one negative aspect of tourism in the area. The vast majority of candidates could provide several advantages and disadvantages. The more common ones were *les habitants sont gentils, il y a beaucoup de distractions pour les touristes, les monuments sont beaux* or *la ville est propre*. Candidates often complained *il y a trop de pollution/circulation, les restaurants sont chers, il fait trop chaud* or *les habitants ne parlent pas l'anglais.*

A further 2 marks were available for any extra detail provided for any of the three tasks.

Many candidates scored at least 8 marks for Communication as they were able to fulfil the requirements of all the tasks set.

Question 3 (c): Ma nouvelle école

This was the least popular of the three options.

Candidates were required to continue the story line: *« Je suis arrivé(e) devant l'entrée de ma nouvelle école... »*

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They were expected to give their first impression of their new school, describe what they did at school on the first day and say whether their first impression was correct and why/why not.

This option was, in many cases, not as successful as the previous two, as many candidates chose to describe a typical day at school rather than following the tasks.

In the first task, many candidates attempted to adapt the question and answered *Ma première impression de ma nouvelle école était c'était très grand*. Even though the language used was rather clumsy, the response conveyed a clear enough message to score the 2 marks available for the task.

In the second task, 4 Communication marks were allocated for a description of what the candidate did at school that day. Those who kept their language simple easily achieved the 4 marks available. Activities such as *j'ai mangé un sandwich, j'ai joué au football, je suis allé à la cantine* were all rewarded. Some candidates tried to convey ideas which were far beyond their linguistic ability resulting in a lack of communication. The emphasis was on what the candidate had done, so statements such as *les étudiants m'ont dit bonjour* or *le professeur m'a donné mon emploi du temps* could not score any communication marks. However, these statements were rewarded in the Verbs and Other Linguistic Features sections.

In the final task, the vast majority of candidates easily scored the 2 marks available by stating *Ma première impression était correcte.* Sensible justifications such as *la nourriture était excellente, les profs étaient sympa, les étudiants étaient gentils* were rewarded and did not have to refer back to what the candidate had written for the first task.

The vast majority of candidates scored very high marks for Communication as the messages conveyed were clear enough to be fully rewarded.

Questions 3 (a), (b), (c)

To enhance their overall marks for Communication and Verbs, candidates are advised to pay careful attention to the tense required by the task. Using a present tense when a past tense is required (or vice versa) incurs a double penalty as the sentence can only achieve partial communication and the verb cannot get a tick. Candidates are also advised to offer a variety of verbs throughout their essays. The repetition of *avait, était* or *étaient* should be avoided as the verbs can only be ticked the first time they are used.

To maximise their chances of achieving marks in the top three bands for Other Linguistic Features, candidates need to spend some time checking what they have written. Particular care should be taken with the agreements of adjectives and past participles and the spelling and gender of common nouns. It is also important that candidates offer a variety of complex structures and relevant vocabulary.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/43
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should read carefully each question and should choose the option which best allows them to demonstrate the linguistic knowledge they have.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the individual tasks within each question, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must address all of the tasks.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should use a range of verb tenses, sentence structures, and more complex linguistic patterns.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation.
- The recommended word count for both **Question 2** and **Question 3** are not mandatory; candidates should not feel obliged to remove significant detail in order to meet the word count. However, answers to **Question 3** in excess of 200 words are inappropriate and in this instance candidates should be advised to be more selective.

General comments

Candidates who, for whatever reason, need to submit their work as a word processed document should choose a slightly larger font size than normal and should use at least double spacing between lines.

Candidates who require additional booklets should be given official stationery and not ordinary file paper. Centres are requested to supply single pages or 4-page booklets. 8, 12, 24-page booklets are not suitable.

The work seen suggested that the overall majority of candidates had been well prepared for this examination and that the new format is now understood. The full ability range was represented. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1

One mark is awarded for each noun which identifies an object/place represented by the illustrations. Candidates should be reminded that if they cannot recall a particular word, they are free to add different nouns which fit the context of the question. Definite/indefinite articles are not required.

Question 2

Communication

One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Up to 10 marks are awarded across the question. There is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks.

The most straightforward way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail. Provided that each new piece of information is given in a sentence or clause with an appropriate verb, marks will be awarded.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

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Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use basic sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, a blog, a story line to be continued.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns.

In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: in order to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the five tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks.

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

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Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs; there were instances where candidates produced more than that. Candidates must remember that each different form of a verb earns a tick. Repeated correct forms of a verb do not qualify for a tick. By way of illustration, when expressing their opinions about situations and events, instead of using the same verb each time, many candidates used a variety of verbs which conveyed the same notion: *je pense, je trouve, je crois* and when appropriate, used them in different tenses.

Candidates should be reminded of the correct use of verbal structures such as *avant de* and *après avoir/ après être*. Many seem not to be aware that these can only be used when the action refers to the subject of the main verb.

Other Linguistic Features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The strongest candidates will be able to demonstrate among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses such as *quand, si, parce que, car, qui, que,* object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (e.g. *ne… jamais, ne... plus*), comparative/ superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions such as *depuis, pendant, pour*, and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity, common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

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Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Vous préparez le dîner

The majority of candidates were able to gain all the marks available here. The items of food illustrated were readily recognised and there were relatively few candidates who needed to think of alternative items, amongst those seen were *jambon, maïs, oeufs, pâtes, poulet, vin*. There were some common errors, especially with the word *poisson* where the mis-spelling *poison* suggested something entirely unsuitable. Candidates offering *gâteau* were not always secure in their knowledge of the spelling whereas those who identified the item as *tarte* were more successful. In a similar way, some had difficulty with the spelling of *pain*, however many succeeded in correctly writing *baguette*.

Question 2: Mon week-end

Communication

One mark is awarded for each relevant piece of information conveyed using a verb.

For the first task, candidates were required to give details of how they spend a typical weekend. Many gained at least 2 or 3 marks here for information, especially those who gave information for both Saturday and Sunday. Typical of the details given were *je sors avec mes amis, je vais à la plage, nous jouons au tennis, nous mangeons au restaurant*.

The second task invited candidates to state at what time they got up at the weekend. The knowledge of the reflexive verb pattern was not as well known as might be expected and it was common to see *je lève à* or *je se lève*. Control of reflexive verb forms is a reasonable expectation at this level. Sometimes, those who did know the correct form of the verb spoilt their answer by not giving the time in a recognisable French pattern, e.g. *à dix heures, à 10 h*. Candidates should be reminded that the use of *a.m.* and *p.m.* are not appropriate in French. There were, however, a good proportion who gained the mark here. There were a few who gained additional marks for stating that they got up at a different time on Saturday and Sunday.

Candidates were asked to say which day of the weekend they preferred and to give a reason for their choice for the third task. For the purposes of this question, the weekend was considered as Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The vast majority were successful in identifying their favourite day: *je préfère le samedi* and it was interesting to note how the more able candidates showed their knowledge by using a different pattern: *mon jour préféré est le dimanche*. Candidates were able to add to their total of marks by giving more than one reason for their preference. Among those offered were *je joue au squash tous les samedis, je regarde la télé avec ma famille, je ne dois pas aller à l'école, ce jour est plus calme.*

The final task was the most challenging as it required candidates to convey some notion of future time. They needed to identify what they would like to do during an ideal weekend and to explain why. Sometimes, candidates were not able to convey the first element of this task; it is important therefore to understand that marks could be gained for appropriate reasons if these were coherently conveyed: *je voudrais dormir toute la journée, je pourrais aller au cinéma avec mes amis, je ne ferais pas mes devoirs, j'aimerais aller à la montagne, c'est un lieu très relaxant.*

Language

Many gained full marks. However, the lack of control of verb forms did result in a lower mark for a significant proportion. The writing does not need to be error free for the award of 5 marks; candidates should aim to construct a series of simple sentences with a correct verb and they should be able to convey future time. Checking work is invaluable: it is so easy to assume that once something is written down it must be correct.

Section 2

Question 3 (a): Un nouvel ordinateur portable

This was the most popular choice with almost 50% opting for it. The new technologies are so much part of their lives that many candidates had both the ideas and the language to communicate some interesting personal ideas.

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Communication

The first task invited candidates to explain why they had bought a new computer. For some, it was a matter of need: *mon ordinateur était cassé, c'était nécessaire pour l'école,* whereas for others it allowed them to do something new: *j'ai acheté un ordinateur parce que j'adore communiquer avec ma famille et mes amis qui habitent dans d'autres pays*. Provided that there was a verb in the past tense, candidates gained the 2 marks.

A past tense was also required for the award of 2 marks for the second task. Candidates had to explain how they had got hold of the money needed to buy the computer. Candidates suggested various strategies for gaining the money: *j'ai économisé mon argent de poche, j'ai travaillé à l'épicerie du coin, j'ai aidé mon père dans son travail*. Some were a little more fortunate: *mes parents m'ont donné l'argent, j'avais de l'argent à la banque.*

For Task 3, candidates were invited to say what they would be able to do with their new computer. For some, this was a very practical matter: *je peux faire mes devoirs.* For others, it offered more leisure opportunties: *je pourrais faire des vidéos et télécharger des livres*.

Candidates had to identify an advantage of being able to use the Internet for Task 4. For young people, access to the Internet is part of everyday life and candidates were able to express a whole range of possible advantages including *c'est plus facile pour faire du shopping, Facebook est plus rapide que les autres types de communication*.

In the final task, 2 marks were available for identifying a disadvantage of the Internet. Some were very honest about their personal circumstances: *malheureusement je ne fais pas mes devoirs quand je suis sur Internet, je gaspille mon temps,* but it was also clear that many candidates were mindful of the inherent dangers: *il y a beaucoup d'information qui n'est pas appropriée pour les enfants.*

Verbs

Candidates were able to use a range of common verbs to answer this question. There were some who demonstrated control of tense and knowledge of a variety of verbs and thus gained the maximum mark. It was encouraging to see candidates introducing verbs such as *télécharger, découvrir, communiquer, tchatter, créer, économiser, gaspiller*.

Other Linguistic Features

Candidates whose rather basic language had brought them a good mark for Communication scored relatively poorly in this section if they had not been able to use some more complex sentence patterns. There were opportunities for using varied and complex sentence patterns, e.g. *je l'ai acheté parce que c'est important pour moi d'avoir un bon ordinateur, je crois que l'inconvénient de surfer l'Internet est que c'est très dangereux pour les jeunes.*

Question 3 (b): Mon voyage scolaire désastreux

This question attracted about 30% of candidates. Not all of those choosing this had recognised the word *désastreux* and wrote about a school trip in general. Such candidates did not forfeit all of the Communication marks, they gained marks for what information was relevant.

Communication

The first task invited candidates to give some information about the trip using a past tense. Most candidates earned their marks for clearly stating where they went (e.g. *nous sommes allés à Princeton*), others for identifying the type of trip (e.g. *on a fait du camping*). Sometimes candidates did not succeed in communicating effectively their main idea but were able to earn the marks for a supplementary detail (e.g. *il y avait trois professeurs*).

For the second task, a reason for not enjoying the experience was needed. The complaints ranged from issues with travel (e.g. *le vol était affreux*), problems with the accommodation (e.g. *il n'y avait pas d'eau chaude*), the weather (e.g. *il pleuvait tous les jours*), to mishaps (e.g. *je me suis blessé au genou*) and generalities (e.g. *c'était très bruyant*). The variety of problems suggested reflected the fact that each candidate had the opportunity to think of a piece of language they knew which fitted the context: the only requirement being that it was expressed using a past tense.

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In the third task, candidates had to specify what kind of a school trip they would like to go on in the future. Again, these were varied: *je voudrais faire un voyage scolaire avec ma classe d'histoire, j'aimerais visiter la France pour faire du ski*.

Candidates then had to provide a reason for their choice for the fourth task: *j'ai toujours rêvé d'aller en Europe, mon père dit toujours que la France est un pays très cool.*

The 2 marks for the final task were awarded for a reason explaining why school trips are or are not useful. The vast majority saw some benefit in these, focusing on specific advantages: *ils m'aident à apprendre des langues, ils nous donnent une perspective unique et amusante de certains endroits,* and also on more relaxed aspects: *on peut faire plein d'activités ensemble, on peut s'amuser avec ses copains.*

Verbs

It was possible to respond to this question using very familiar verbs. However, there were many frequent errors in the use of *aller* in the past tense and the misspelling of *vister* for *visiter* and *aprendre* for *apprendre*. The various forms of *pouvoir* were not as securely known as they might have been.

As has been mentioned, it is quite a challenge to reach the top marks for correct verb forms. It might be helpful to encourage candidates to think of what range of relevant verbs they know which they can use in their answers before they make their final choice of question.

Other Linguistic Features

As always, the correct use of basic vocabulary is critically important; uncertainty about the gender and spelling of common nouns will always have a limiting effect on the mark which can be awarded. The correct spelling of common words such as *beaucoup,* the appropriate preposition in constructions such as *jouer au basket*, the agreement of adjectives in phrases such as *tous les jours* should be the aim of all candidates wishing to access the middle and upper bands.

For a mark in the top bands, candidates must demonstrate not only accuracy in simple sentence structures but also range in terms of complex patterns. There were opportunities to do that here: *c'est important de faire des voyages scolaires car on peut se détendre, les voyages sont utiles parce qu'ils me permettent de découvrir une nouvelle culture*.

Question 3 (c): Une dispute

This was a less popular choice, attracting about 20% of the entry. In some respects, it was a more demanding option in that it placed a heavy emphasis on the consistent use of past tenses and it required candidates to use first person, singular and plural, and third person verbs, which can be quite challenging. In this instance, too many candidates were drawn to the subject but did not have the requisite vocabulary and structure to convey the messages which they wished to. Very few of the candidates succeeded in writing a coherent account.

Communication

Candidates had to explain the circumstances of the argument for the first task. The source of the argument varied from items of clothing, pets, shopping destinations, football teams, friends, boyfriends, but there were only a very few who could express the idea effectively in the way that this candidate did: *on s'est disputé parce qu'elle est jalouse quand je parle à une de mes amies.*

The second task required information about how the argument developed. Inevitably, there was much variety of events, among the more effectively conveyed were *j'ai pris un gâteau qui était sur la table et je l'ai lancé, mon amie a crié, j'ai pleuré.*

The third task invited candidates to explain how the argument ended. In fact, marks were awarded for this or for any further detail, as in many cases the argument remained unresolved. Marks were awarded for *je me suis excusé, elle a refusé de me parler, il est sorti de la maison, je lui ai dit qu'elle resterait ma meilleure amie jusqu'à la fin de ma vie.* This latter statement being a very rare exception.

As is the regular pattern for this option, the final tasks invited reactions to the events, firstly their own and secondly that of their friend. Candidates were more successful in managing these familiar tasks: *j'étais triste, mon amie a dit "je suis désolée", il était fâché*.

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Verbs

The heavy reliance on past tenses to convey the story effectively put a strain on almost all of the candidates who chose this option.

Other Linguistic Features

The **(c)** option does provide candidates who have a good range of linguistic skill the opportunity to show fully what they know. They have the freedom to develop the story within the guidelines of the rubric and can, with careful planning, incorporate a range of familiar vocabulary and sentence structure. There was little of merit in evidence here apart perhaps from the use of adjectives to describe the various emotions felt by the two people arguing.

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