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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/03
Speaking

Key messages

The standard of performance in the Speaking test was similar to the standard heard in March 2016.
Many Examiners did not observe the correct timings for the exam. Many of the tests in this session were **much too short** in the conversation sections and, in particular, in the topic/conversation section. In some cases, the topic conversation section was missed out.
Centres usually remembered to include questions in the general conversation section which would elicit past and future tenses from candidates. This was, however, often not the case in the topic/conversation. This resulted in downwards adjusting to marks. Such tense usage is essential if candidates are to score more than 6 marks for Language.
The role play sections were usually attempted well. Good Examiners did not create or change cues and tasks. Candidates needed to be concise and stick closely to the tasks to score well.
The best performances at all levels of ability were in Centres where there had **not** been over preparation of work and in which spontaneous and natural conversations could develop.
Centres should aim to cover only two or three topics in the general conversation section with each candidate. In many Centres **too many topics were covered too briefly.**
The quality of recordings was usually good and samples arrived promptly.

General comments

The format of the test was as last year.

Centres were usually well aware that there were three sections to the test. The role play section was usually conducted well in Centres. Examiners usually followed the cues correctly, prompting where necessary and encouraging candidates to work for the marks. Examiners who did veer away from the script and changed the tasks or who did not prepare fully sometimes made this section of the test harder for the candidates. There were, in this session, many cases of very short tests in the conversation sections. New Centres should **understand that if conversation sections are short that this will adversely affect candidates' marks**. In such cases, candidates are not given the opportunity to develop their ideas and use a range of structures and tenses. It cannot be over-emphasised that it is in the interests of fairness to all candidates to make sure that each candidate is given the full examination time of 5 minutes for each of their two conversation sections.

Candidates had usually made good use of the 15 minutes preparation time. Centres are reminded that Examiners may have access to the confidential test materials (Teachers' Notes Booklet and Role Play Cards) in the four working days before the first Speaking test is conducted in order for the Examiner to prepare for his/her role. **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 the last Speaking test has been conducted, the materials must remain in secure storage until the end of the Speaking test period. 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.

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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. **It is also essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in both conversation sections as candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on Table C, Language. In many Centres where reductions were made to the marks it was frequently the case that candidates had not been asked questions in past and future tenses in the topic conversation and/or general conversation.**

Centres are reminded to make a clear transition between the topic conversation and the general conversation. This transition should be in French. **The links between the different parts of the test should not be in English.**

The full requirements of the test are clearly laid out in the Teachers' Notes booklet and all Centres are strongly advised to read through these in advance of the test so that they have plenty of time to clarify any uncertainties.

Clerical checks and sample size

In the vast majority of Centres, the clerical work had usually been completed efficiently and Centres are thanked for this. It is essential that all clerical work is checked very carefully so as to ensure that candidates receive the correct mark in Centres. 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.

Centres generally understood the requirements of the sample size well and samples were nearly always correct. New Centres are reminded to check the instructions on sample size carefully and to ask for advice from Cambridge if they are unsure how to proceed.

Recording quality

Moderators commented that a high proportion of the recordings received were of a very good quality. Centres are thanked for this. Most Centres submitted digital recordings which were very clear and this eased access to the sample. Please check all recording equipment 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.

Please ensure that each candidate's recording is labelled with the candidate name and number on the box for the CD and that **the sound file is correctly labelled.** On the CD, the recording for each candidate must be saved individually and named as follows, Centre number_candidate number_syllabus number_component number. **The recording for each candidate must be on a separate file.**

A list of the featured recordings should also 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. This introduction needs to be made only once, and should be saved as a separate file (named recording introduction). The Examiner and **not the candidate** must introduce the candidate by name and number and the role play card number.

CDs must be carefully wrapped in some form of protective packaging before they are placed in the envelope with the moderation paperwork. The appropriate label (which includes the Centre name and a bar-code) should then be placed on the envelope. The envelope containing the recordings and paperwork should then be packaged in another parcel/envelope and one of the return labels with the Cambridge address should be attached before it is returned to Cambridge. In the very few cases of extra or replacement recordings being required, Centres were quick to respond and provide new copies of recordings.

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Application of the mark scheme

Some Centres required no or only small adjustments to their marks to bring them in line with the agreed standard. There were, however, some large adjustments to marks in Centres. This was often a result of lenient marking in the conversation sections. **This, in turn, could often be attributed to short sections and few opportunities for candidate to answer unexpected questions or answer questions in a variety of tenses.** Some Centres had adjustments made just to part of the mark range in cases of lenient or harsh marking over part of the mark range in the Centre.

In the role plays, some Examiners did not realise that a short response, 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 should be queried especially if it prevents clear communication of a task. If pronunciation of a key element is not clear, a mark of 3 is not appropriate.

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

Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in Centres but were a little generous in some Centres when pronunciation was not good and impeded successful communication.

Comments on specific questions

Role Plays

Examiners in Centres generally prompted candidates when necessary but there are still cases of a need to prompt when candidates miss tasks. **Examiners should keep to the script provided**. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. Centres are reminded that two part tasks are split into **(i)** and **(ii)** on the Candidate Role Play cards. This helps candidates to remember to attempt both parts of the tasks where necessary.

Candidates are also reminded that it is always important to listen to the Examiner as on all the Role Play A situations, there is a task which requires them to listen and choose from the two options offered by the Examiner. Likewise, there is always one task which requires responding to an unexpected question on the Role Play B. **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. Extra tasks should not be added by the Examiner.**

Role Plays A

The A role plays were found to be of equal difficulty, accessible to candidates and very similar in difficulty to the March 2016 role plays. They were a very fair test at this level of the test and many candidates performed very well on them and made a confident start to the test. They are designed to be easier than the B role plays and are set using vocabulary from Topic Areas A, B and C of the Defined Content. All of the A role play situations featured a task which required a question to be asked and one task which required candidates to choose an option from two provided by the Examiner. (These options should not be changed by the Examiner and should be read as on the script). Candidates generally found the tasks to be accessible and even the weakest candidates were able to score at least one mark on each task. Centres had usually 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 in many tasks and, in such cases, a mark of 3 can be awarded. **Examiners should query pronunciation if the meaning is not clear due to mispronunciation.** Examiners should introduce the role play and start the conversation off. English should not be used to introduce the role plays. Generally, candidates had been well prepared for the A role plays.

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Reserving at a campsite

Candidates approached this role play well. **Task 1** was usually well done although pronunciation of *tente* was frequently not good. On **Task 2** most were well able to give an appropriate date. **Task 3** was also well done with nearly all candidates able to convey the number of weeks they required to stay. On **Task 4**, nearly all candidates listened well to the two options and chose appropriately. Candidates were generally well prepared as to how to phrase an appropriate question and were generally successful on the last task.

Buying groceries

This was found to be straightforward by candidates but, again, some found the pronunciation of *pêches* challenging and were not always prompted by Examiners. Most listened well to the choice of options and did well. Nearly all were successful in saying how many peaches were required. **Task 4** proved a little more difficult. It is wise to encourage candidates to avoid giving specific brand names wherever possible and instead, when asking for a drink to give a generic such as *une limonade* as particular brand names in some countries would not be recognised in some French speaking countries. Candidates using the word *boisson* frequently mispronounced the word. On the last task, some candidates continue to use *C'est combien de prix ?* instead of *C'est combien ?* This is again a thing worth stressing to candidates as it is a fairly common task and one worth learning thoroughly prior to the test.

At the bus station

This role play was also approached well by candidates. Some candidates were clearly not familiar with the French for a return ticket, even though the correct French was offered as one of the two options from which to choose. Most candidates however conveyed their message without too much difficulty. On the third task many were very successful in giving an appropriate date and on **Task 4** nearly all could give an accurate time of departure. Again, as with the other cards, candidates showed that they had been well prepared to ask 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, express pleasure and give and justify opinions. As last year, the level of challenge was balanced across the role plays. They differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score a mark on most tasks. It is important that Examiners know their own role and stick to the set tasks and most Examiners did this well. 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 fifteen minutes preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room. It must be noted also that there is always one task which will require candidates to react in some way. They should also be able to cope with giving a positive or negative opinion about something. It is also well worth remembering that one task on B role plays requires the candidate to ask one appropriate question and candidates also need to be aware of this in their preparation time. Practice in using a variety of interrogative forms is excellent examination preparation. **Centres are reminded that if a verb is used by a candidate it should be correctly conjugated for a mark of 3 to be appropriate.**

Phoning a French friend after a stay at their house

In the opening task, some candidates found it difficult to transpose the *le/la* used in the rubric (*pour le/la remercier*) to the *tu* form (*pour te remercier).* Some also confused *vous* and *tu* throughout the role play. It is essential to aim for a consistent and appropriate use of subject pronouns. On **Task 2**, some candidates confused the return trip home with the notion of their whole stay in France and did not realise that their comments were supposed to refer to their return journey. This was tolerated by Moderators who instead looked for an opinion and an expression of what had been liked (or not) either during the return journey or during the stay in France. It is well worth checking that candidates are aware of the difference between *séjour* and *voyage* during their course of study. Many were able to give an appropriate opinion and back this opinion up and a variety of reasons were given. The unexpected question in this role play related to how long the journey had taken. Again, if candidates referred to the notion of the whole stay rather than the return this was treated as being an appropriate answer. **Task 4** was well done and nearly all were successful in managing to convey their message. Answers relating what they had done, were doing or would be doing were all appropriate in the context. The last task required candidates to phrase an appropriate question and to ask Adrien(ne) to stay with them next year. Most attempted this quite well but weaker candidates clearly found it difficult to conjugate the verb correctly.

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Phoning a language school

Most candidates were able to say why they were phoning but some had difficulty in pronouncing *renseignements*. On **Task 2** some missed out the first part of the task which required them to express their pleasure that there were lessons available. Most however made good attempts at saying they would be free in April. **Task 3** proved to be hard for some. Weaker candidates did not understand the word *niveau* but with sympathetic second cues and prompts, most were able to get the possibility to work for a mark on this part of the two-part task. The second part of the task was found to be easier than the first. The best candidates were able to say that they had been studying for a certain number of years or were good/bad at French or they could speak some French. **Task 4** was in response to the unexpected question and was done well by candidates with nearly all recognising clearly what the question meant and being able to offer some clear and appropriate answers. The last task required candidates to phrase an appropriate question about accommodation and was usually well done. It had been thought about well in the 15 minutes preparation time.

At a theme park

On this role play, the opening task was generally well understood and candidates made a good start. On **Task 2**, some however missed out the information as to when the teacher had been seen for the last time. Examiners should note that in such a case they are free to go back and ask the relevant question again. Some Examiners chose to split the task and ask each question separately. This was entirely acceptable and good examining practice. The unexpected question, as on the other cards, was done well by candidates with many candidates making a satisfactory attempt and conveying their message. On **Task 4**, the task required the candidate to ask the employee if s/he could make contact with the teacher. This proved hard for some and they got confused with the register, often choosing to use the inappropriate familiar form *tu* instead of *vous* in their question. The final task required a positive opinion to be made and this was usually fairly well done although weaker candidates found it harder to say the employee was *gentil(le).*

Topic presentation & conversation

The standard of work heard in this section covered a wide range of performance and standards heard across the mark range were very much in line with those heard in the last session. **The whole section (Topic presentation and Topic conversation) should last for a full five minutes.** Moderators reported that this was frequently **not** the case and that after the presentation part of this section, some Examiners passed straight on to the General conversation section. **This therefore denied candidates the opportunity to converse on their chosen topic which is a required part of the test and this often disadvantaged them.** Presentation times (maximum two minutes) were usually well adhered to by candidates and many candidates had clearly prepared their topic thoroughly. **The presentation should be followed up by a conversation on this same topic for the remainder of this five minute section**.

Examiners were generally aware of the need to seek out different information from what had already been presented but Moderators reported that in some Centres, questions were asked which did not elicit new information and led candidates merely to repeat material already heard. Examiners are reminded not to ask questions too early during the presentation time but to feel free to interrupt the candidate at the two minute point. While it is expected that teachers will have prepared candidates for the follow-up conversation, if candidates are to score highly, **this must not consist of a series of pre-learnt questions and answers** in which both Examiner and candidate know what is coming and in which order. Questions should instead arise **spontaneously** as the conversation develops and in a natural way. Good examining of this section was clearly focused on the candidate's topic and featured a variety of questions to test both past and future tenses. Centres should note that Table C of the mark scheme makes clear reference to the need for candidates to use past and future tenses accurately in order for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded for Language**. Centres should also note that marks were often adjusted downwards by Moderators in this section as this section was very brief and did not feature the use of past and future tenses**.

Centres generally understood the need to avoid 'Myself' as a suitable topic in this section of the test. New Centres should note that this is not a suitable topic for this section of the exam as it can become too much like the General conversation and leave little material to explore in the final section of the test.

Candidates had usually prepared themselves for the presentation part of the test well and were enthusiastic about their chosen topic. Many introduced what they were going to talk about and then made good use of this time to communicate their message. Some however rushed their presentation and, consequently the message was sometimes lost due to poor intonation and pronunciation. The better candidates conveyed a clear message in a range of tenses and made good use of a variety of structures and relevant vocabulary. In

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this examination session, a wide range of topics was heard by Moderators. Many candidates chose this year to talk about the environment and technology. Many spoke about mobile phones and their own use of technology. Other popular presentations were on the following themes: *mes vacances, mes ambitions, mon pays, mes loisirs, ma famille* and *mon école.* 'Festivals' also remains a popular choice of topic with many giving very interesting accounts of Diwali and other important religious festivals. Presentations on India were often very interesting and the topic was appropriate, but, Examiners are reminded of the need to avoid too many questions which require precise geographical or statistical knowledge. It is better instead to ask candidates to say what they find most interesting/like/dislike etc. about their country/another country and why. As ever, the best performances in this section were those which developed into a natural conversation and in which candidates could express not just factual information in response to straightforward questions but also give their opinions and feelings about the topic. Good examining practice was heard when Examiners clearly indicated the end of this section of the test to candidates with a phrase such as *'Maintenant on passe à la conversation générale'.*

General conversation

This final section of the test was, on the whole, dealt with more consistently than the topic conversation section by Examiners. Consequently, opportunities for candidates to use a variety of tenses were usually greater in this section. Centres covered an appropriate range of topics within the Centre but often they tried to cover too many topics too superficially and did not give candidates the chance to go into depth on a topic. **Two or three topics only should be covered in this section.** It is helpful on each of the two or three topics examined to include questions in different tenses rather than leave such questions until the final topic and, indeed, there were some good examples of this approach. **Centres are reminded that if there is only evidence of candidates working in the present tense then the Language mark will be limited to a maximum of 6.**

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

It is common practice in classrooms to make use of banks of questions but over reliance on such banks in the live Speaking test can produce stilted conversations which do not flow naturally and are a test of memory rather than conversational ability. Such questioning can also prove to be very confusing for the candidate. Once in the examination room, it is far better if the Examiner listens to what the candidate is saying and responds as spontaneously as possible. The best examining heard this session featured such an approach.

A wide range of candidate performance was heard by Moderators. A good number of candidates showed that they could communicate across a range of topics in Centres. Many spoke on holidays, healthy lifestyle, future plans, the environment, their town/country, school, leisure activities, future plans, daily routine and their families. Some candidates not only communicated their message clearly but, as last year, were also well able to do so in consistently accurate language which showed a good control of a range of linguistic structures and lexis. The best work in terms of language featured an accurate range of verbs in a variety of tenses and a range of appropriate vocabulary. Such work also featured a good range of longer, more complex utterances which made use of structures such as *si* + imperfect plus a conditional tense, *avant de* + infinitive, perfect infinitives, *depuis* and, occasionally, compound tenses. This remains even more impressive when such structures are heard in response to unexpected questions which arise naturally in the course of a conversation.

It was clear from the work heard in many Centres that oral work had been an essential activity in many IGCSE classrooms. As last year, many candidates heard by Moderators were enthusiastic about their chance to have learned French and were fully aware of how important a skill it could be to them in the future when entering the world of further studies and work. Many had clearly relished the opportunity to learn French.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/12
Listening

Key messages

The performance of candidates on this paper was similar to that seen in the last examination session. Candidates scored well on the first two sections of the paper. As intended, the last section was found to be more challenging but a good number of candidates managed to score quite good marks on this section. The examination was accessible to candidates.
Candidates should be reminded to write clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates still write answers first in pencil and then overwrite answers in pen, often leaving first attempts visible. This can be very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
Poor handwriting was again apparent this March, making some scripts hard to read.
Many candidates now clearly 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.
It is important that candidates are made aware of the need to indicate the correct number of ticks in multiple choice and box ticking exercises. In a few cases, candidates ticked an incorrect number of boxes on **Question 16**.
Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

General comments

This session's paper was found to be very similar to the demands made in previous sessions with the candidature performing 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 last exercises. The candidature was usually familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were usually well understood. As last year, there were incidents of some candidates ticking more than six boxes on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper and a wide range of marks was apparent. 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.

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

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

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

Nearly all candidates answered **Question 1** and **Question 2** correctly. **Questions 3**, **4** and **5** were done well. The most difficult item of vocabulary tested on the exercise proved to be on **Question 6** with a fair proportion of candidates showing that they were not familiar with the words *ski nautique*. **Questions 7** and **8** were attempted more successfully and were usually well done.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured information about a music festival. Questions tested months, places, shops and accommodation details. Candidates generally performed well on this exercise with good numbers performing well on **Questions 9**, **11**, **13**, **14** and **15**. On **Question 9**, most candidates gave an acceptable spelling of *juin*. On **Question 10**, incorrect answers often featured a ticket rather than an ID card. Most candidates did very well on the last two questions on this exercise. On **Question 12**, some confused *auberge de jeunesse* with *appartement*.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was quite good and continues to improve as many candidates become accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still, however, cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks **or** crosses are both acceptable, but are likely to cause confusion when used together. Candidates 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 a stay in the United States of America. Candidates again found this topic area and associated vocabulary to be familiar and made good attempts at the exercise with even the weakest candidates often being able to score at least 2 marks. The most common incorrect answer seen was on the extract from Mireille. Candidates often did not choose option **(h)** indicating that they could not identify *une ville au bord de la mer* and relate it to *une station balnéaire*. Other than this, Examiners were unable to discern a particular pattern of incorrectly ticked boxes. As last year, a good number of candidates scored at least 4 marks on this exercise which was, overall, quite well done.

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Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard two interviews with Christine, an author, who talked about her work and her lifestyle. In the first part of the interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise. **Question 17**, which required candidates to identify the word *chambre*, was well attempted by most candidates. **Question 18** was also well done with many able to identify the frequently met word *danse*. **Question 19** proved more difficult with candidates often not recognising the word *élégant*. On **Question 20**, candidates needed to identify the word *documentaire* to score the mark. **Question 21** was quite well done but weaker candidates did not recognise the commonly met word *matin*.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

The second part of this exercise featured a continuation of the interview with Christine. Questions required short answers in French. Candidates usually did less well on this second part of the exercise and showed that on some words they had misheard the key items for comprehension. On **Question 22**, the key concept to convey was that of finishing writing or finishing a book. Answers sometimes distorted the message if the word *lire* was added. On **Question 23**, candidates heard the commonly met word *peinture* but were often unable to offer a correct or acceptable rendering of the word. The next question, **Question 24**, focused on the word *traduction* and was sometimes answered with attempts at the word *tradition* instead of *traduction* showing a need for careful listening when encountering the different vowel sounds of *i* and *u*. The last question also showed a similar confusion of certain nasal / vowel sounds as the desired answer *pour inviter des amis* was often rendered as *éviter des amis*.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Serge who talked about a trip he had made to New Zealand. 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. The exercise discriminated well across the candidature and a full range of performance was seen with many candidates scoring 3 or 4 marks. Candidates generally made quite a good attempt at this exercise and even weaker candidates were usually able to score 1 or 2 marks on the exercise. Candidates did well on **Questions 26**, **29** and **31**. The question which proved to be the most challenging was **Question 30** which required candidates to understand how Serge had travelled round. The answer relied on them understanding the word *camionnette* and relating this to the fact that he had worked as a mechanic and could make repairs himself. This required not just the identification of one item of vocabulary but careful listening to the material around it which emphasised that he used his own vehicle, as in option **A**, *il a utilisé son propre véhicule*. There was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers for this question. On other questions, candidates were able to identify key words in the extract and were able to follow the narrative. Options in the answers were deliberately expressed in accessible language with fairly short options so as to lessen the need for excessive reading whilst listening. Candidates need to be reminded to make careful use of the reading time before the extract is heard. **If candidates wish to choose a different option from the one first chosen they should remember to cross out the option first chosen**. If two ticks are visible, a mark will not be awarded, even if one of those answers is correct.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

As last year, this was found to be a suitably demanding and appropriately challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Very few candidates did not attempt this exercise. Even the weaker candidates made commendable efforts to follow the extract and answer at least some questions and consequently were able to score some marks. Candidates heard an interview with a young German student, Maryse, who had studied in France. 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.

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On **Question 32**, most had heard *trimestre* but often wrote *semester*. **Question 33** also required careful listening to identify *la plupart.* Incorrect splits such as *plus part* did not score the mark. Answers such as *beaucoup* were not precise enough and also did not gain the mark. **Question 34** needed a response which indicated that Maryse did not speak Spanish well. Here, the vital thing to include was some notion of negativity. Weaker candidates often attempted to write the opposite and said she was good at French. Examiners accepted confusion between *Espagne* and *espagnol* but did look for an idea of negativity and the concept of *bien*. **Question 35** was attempted well and about half the candidates scored the mark for *triste*. On **Question 36**, candidates needed to identify the verb *s'amuser*. Weaker candidates found this quite difficult and many added extra distorting details or guesses such as *musée* which did not convey the correct message. On **Question 37**, to score the mark, some part of the verb *encourager* was required, together with an acceptable spelling of (*les*) *autres*. Candidates usually did better on **Question 38** and were able to identify *club de sports*. Incorrect answers from weaker listeners frequently saw attempts to render *club de spa*. Some also chose to add in the extra detail *à l'université*. In such cases, the mark was not scored as it showed the candidate had not understood the key concept that the sporting activities were done outside university time as heard in *J'ai rencontré des gens intéressants en dehors de l'université, surtout au club de sports*. The addition of such incorrect material distorted the message conveyed and meant the mark could not be awarded. It is well worth reminding candidates to keep answers brief and to be concise as lots of extra material may run the risk of invalidating an otherwise correct answer. **Question 39** was quite well attempted but, again, weaker candidates made guesses such as *contente* or gave unacceptable spellings of the word *ravie* such as *rave*. The final question proved to be a suitably discriminating last question with the most able candidates answering this well and showing that they were able to give an acceptable spelling of part of the verb *communiquer* together with a comparative *plus facilement*. It is well worth spending some time with candidates when preparing them for this last section upon work featuring comparisons of adjectives and adverbs.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/22
Reading

Key messages

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

ensure that their written responses grammatically answer the question in ***Section 3***,
ensure that they are familiar with question words such as *pourquoi* and *quand*,
answer all questions, especially the non-verbal questions.

General comments

Almost all candidates managed to finish the paper, indicating that candidates had sufficient time. There was a very wide range of performance, with a small number of candidates who had not yet reached the level of the examination. Handwriting was generally very legible, which is much appreciated by examiners. When a candidate changes his or her mind, especially in the non-verbal answers, it is important that a clear indication is given which answer is intended to be assessed.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

Full marks were common for the opening exercise. **Questions 1**, **2**, **3** and **5** gave few problems, although **C** was a commonly chosen distractor for **Question 4**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Again scores for this exercise were generally high and full marks were common. Some candidates had difficulty with **Question 7** (**C** being a common distractor) and **Question 10**.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

Questions 12, **13** and **14** caused candidates few problems. **C** was a favoured distractor for **Question 11**, and **Question 15** caused a minority of candidates to select an incorrect answer.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. **Question 17** and especially **Question 20** caused difficulties, with some candidates failing to recognise the part of speech needed to fill the gap. *Excursion*s and *repasser* were frequently chosen. There are many grammatical markers to aid candidates in selecting an appropriate word, but many candidates seem only to take note of the individual words.

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Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of an email from Valérie to her friend Nathalie on the subject of her recent work experience placement in her aunt's clothes shop. The text contained familiar vocabulary and the subject matter was familiar. Most candidates understood the text sufficiently to be able to locate the answers, which is all that is required in ***Section 2***. Many candidates chose to copy a couple of sentences from the text for each question, which is more than is needed to answer the questions, but extraneous material and wrong genders/subjects are usually ignored as long as they do not in some way invalidate the candidate's correct response.

Question words were not always known, leading to candidates selecting incorrect material. Candidates should also be aware that the questions, and therefore answers, follow the order of the text. Some candidates mixed up the order of their answers. **Question 26** gave particular difficulties, with many candidates trying to perform a calculation of the number of hours per day, rather than giving the start and finishing times. **Question 27** proved the most difficult.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

In ***Section 3***, examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail, and for candidates to be more selective of the information they take from the reading texts when correcting the false statements. Candidates are reminded that they should not merely write the opposite of the statement and need to look for the alternative information.

Most candidates correctly identified **Questions 30** and **33** as being false, but **Question 34** was sometimes ticked as false in preference to **Question 32**. A minority of candidates chose to write a justification for every statement. Centres are reminded that a sentence ticked as being true cannot be awarded a mark for a justification, even if it is correct.

In terms of the justifications, for **Question 30** an otherwise correct answer was sometimes invalidated by the inclusion of *alors*. Where candidates missed the mark for **Question 32** it was usually the selection of a completely irrelevant piece of information that cost the mark. The justification for **Question 33** proved the easiest for candidates.

Exercise 2 Questions 35–41

This final exercise was intended to be challenging, and at least some of the questions required candidates to manipulate their selected information from the text. Unlike ***Section 2***, extraneous information is not ignored, and what is more, candidates need to ensure that their response answers the question from a grammatical point of view. This may mean that it is not necessary to use a verb for example, but if the candidate does use one, it is expected to be correct and in an appropriate tense.

Some candidates left answers blank in this segment, and only a minority scored full marks. There was again some evidence of question words such as *qu'est-ce que* not being known.

Apart from responses that did not provide a grammatical answer, other reasons for losing marks were the inclusion of extra material, especially in **Question 40**, or not reading the question closely enough, such as **Question 37**. Many replied that Marc found himself in the water because he was repairing the sail, whereas it was the act of losing his balance that made him fall in. Similarly, many replied to **Question 38** with *il ne la voyait pas*, without it being clear what the pronoun *la* was referring to.

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FRENCH (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0520/42
Writing

Key messages

It is vital that candidates be familiar with all the common interrogative adverbs.
In **Question 2**, candidates must address all the tasks.
The recommended word count for both **Question 2** and **Question 3** is not mandatory; candidates should not feel obliged to remove significant detail in order to meet the word count.
Candidates should read carefully each of the options in **Question 3** and should choose the one which best allows them to demonstrate the linguistic knowledge they have.
Candidates aiming for the highest grades should use a range of verb tenses, sentence structures and more complex linguistic patterns.

General comments

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

In each question, there are key words which inform the candidates of what is required; candidates must be aware of these otherwise they risk producing work which may be linguistically accurate but which is, in some measure, irrelevant. It is particularly important that candidates are aware of the full range of interrogative adverbs, e.g. *Combien?* which can be used in a number of ways and does not only refer to the cost of things. It is worth noting that *Comment? D'ou'?* and *Depuis quand?* are forms of the interrogative which occasionally cause problems for some candidates.

Question 1

One mark was awarded for each noun which identified a 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 was 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: 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.

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 correct 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 just 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 ablest candidates will be able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses (e.g. *quand*, *si*, *parce que*, *car*, *qui*), object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc*, *cependant*), strong negatives (*ne…jamais*, *ne…plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions (e.g. *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: À l'auberge de jeunesse

A very high proportion of candidates scored full marks for this question. There were at least five common nouns which candidates could identify: *chambre*, *cuisine*, *parking*, *restaurant*, *salon*. There were three which were less well known: *ascenseur*, *dortoir*, *salle de jeux*. Candidates also offered places not illustrated but which were rewarded: *bibliothèque*, *court de tennis*, *gymnase*, *infirmerie*, *toilettes*, amongst others which are listed in the published mark scheme.

The key word in the rubric was *endroits*: items of equipment and furniture were not rewarded.

Question 2: Les vêtements

Communication

The vast majority of candidates scored some marks for this question. Some might have gained more marks had they been a little more careful with spellings and verb forms, e.g. *je port* for *je porte*. Some misspellings did not result in the loss of marks but it was a little disappointing to see that words given in the question were not correctly copied, particularly *uniforme*, *vêtements*.

For the first task, candidates were required to mention what clothes they wear at home. Many gained a mark here for simple statements such as *je porte un jean et un t shirt*. There were opportunities here for candidates to describe what they wear at different times of the day. Knowledge of some common nouns was a little insecure: *chemise* (*chimie*), *pantalon* (*pantaloon*), *pyjama* (*pajama*).

The second task invited candidates to give their opinion of branded clothes. Many claimed: *j'aime les vêtements de marque* and went on to gain further marks for comments such as *les vêtements de marque sont confortables, ils sont élégants.* There were others who expressed a contrary view: *je n'aime pas les vêtements de marque parce qu'ils sont trop chers*.

Candidates had to state whether or not they approve of school uniform for the third task. There appeared to be more who favoured school uniform: *je suis pour l'uniforme scolaire parce que c'est pratique*. Some for a very simple reason: *parce que l'uniforme est bleu et c'est ma couleur préférée*, whereas others were able to give more sophisticated reasons including: *le matin je ne dois pas penser à ce que je vais mettre ; parce que l'uniforme représente l'école*. Those who wanted to emphasise the fact that school uniform established a measure of equality often struggled to convey this notion but some did succeed: *il n'y a pas de différences entre les riches et les pauvres*. Those who disapproved of school uniform variously objected: *je n'aime pas la couleur ; je n'aime pas porter la même chose tous les jours.* Some tried to suggest that it deprived them of their individuality.

It should be noted that not all candidates fully understood the third task: the difficulty lay in ***pour ou contre***. As a result, the information given was compromised: *je suis pour ou contre l'uniforme parce que*…. In such instances, candidates could still gain a mark if the reason was coherent. Another issue for candidates was the lack of security in the spelling of *couleur*.

The fourth task provided candidates with the opportunity to gain a number of marks for explaining what they would like to wear at school and why. Not unexpectedly, many commented in this vein: *je voudrais porter un jean et un pull parce que c'est plus confortable*. For those who gave multiple reasons, there was a mark for each one: *parce que c'est plus pratique*, *c'est plus facile*… Some preferred to maintain the uniform but in a different colour: *parce que j'aime le bleu*, or echoing the previous point: *parce que tout le monde est égal*.

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

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Language

A high proportion of candidate 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. However, some did not gain 5 marks because they did not use a future/conditional verb in the final task. Candidates must always remember to use the tense appropriate to the task.

There were some issues regarding the various verbs associated with this topic. Whereas most candidates were able to use correctly *porter*, not all candidates were confident over the use of *mettre* and *s'habiller*. This was a pity in some respects because it was possible to respond to the question by using exclusively the more familiar verb.

Section 2

Question 3(a): Le cinéma et moi

This was the most popular choice by far with a little more than 72% of candidates opting for it.

Communication

The first task invited candidates to give details of when they last went to the cinema. Candidates responded in various ways using correct past tense verbs: *je suis allé au cinéma samedi dernier* ; *j'ai regardé un film au cinéma le 12 février pour mon anniversaire*. However, the important detail of when was often compromised by an error in the placing of the adjective *la dernière semaine* as opposed to *la semaine dernière*.

A past tense was also required for the award of 2 marks for Task 2. Candidates had to give an opinion of the film that they saw. There was a range of responses from the simple *le film était intéressant* to the more sophisticated *je n'ai pas aimé le film parce qu'il y avait beaucoup de violence*. As with the first task, lack of control of the past tense resulted in some gaining only 1 mark; as did those who referred to the film in the present tense: *le film est amusant*.

Candidates needed to identify the type of film which they do not like. This was a straightforward task: *je n'aime pas les films policiers* ; *je déteste les films violents* are representative of the type of answers given, although there were again some difficulties with the spelling of appropriate nouns and adjectives: *horreur*, *romantique*, *aventure*.

Task 4 invited candidates to state their reasons for disliking the kind of film mentioned. Candidates offered some interesting reasons: *parce que j'ai peur* ; *car je ne peux pas dormir après* ; *ils ne me font pas rire*. The spelling of *ennuyeux* is not well known.

For the final task, 2 marks were available for either an advantage or a disadvantage of watching films at a cinema. Many candidates were quite expansive here, offering both advantages and disadvantages, which meant that most succeeded in providing at least one clear statement worthy of 2 marks. Advantages ranged from *c'est confortable* ; *on peut réserver des places* and disadvantages from *c'est cher* ; *c'est bruyant ; les gens parlent pendant le film*. Many wanted to comment on the screen: unfortunately, they did not know the word *l'écran* and references to *la télé* were inappropriate.

Verbs

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

It can be quite challenging to produce 18 different verb forms, unfortunately some candidates made it difficult for themselves by not spelling correctly, e.g. *regarder* was written as *regader*, *regarger*, the kinds of errors which could have been corrected with careful checking. There were mistakes in conjugating quite common verbs, e.g. perfect tense verbs formed with the wrong auxiliary and accents omitted from past participles.

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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 evidenced by the following examples drawn from candidates' work: *je l'ai aussi aimé car il y avait beaucoup d'action ; je déteste les films romantiques car c'est très facile de deviner ce qui va se passer ; je n'aime pas les films d'horreur car j'ai peur ; si je les regarde je ne peux pas dormir la nuit ; à mon avis le film que nous avons vu n'était pas bien car l'histoire n'était pas intéressante ; je pense que c'est mieux de regarder les films dans une salle de cinéma, l'écran est plus grand que la télévision ; je pense que la maison est plus confortable que le cinéma, là il y a trop de gens.*

Question 3(b): Mes ambitions

This question attracted just over 20% of candidates.

Communication

Marks were awarded in the first task for information in the past tense of where the candidate was born. This appeared to be relatively easy for the majority: *je suis né à Chennai*.

Candidates were required to say in which country they had completed their studies. Suitable responses were readily given: *j'ai fait mes études à Mumbai en Inde ; j'ai étudié en Angleterre.* Candidates who used a present tense gained 1 mark. Some were uncertain about the verb *étudier* and consequently did not gain any reward; this is an important verb and candidates should be able to use it with confidence. There was evidence of confusion between the noun *étude* and the verb *étudier*.

The third task required candidates to give their opinion on the importance of foreign languages. It was pleasing to see that so many could see their value: *on peut communiquer avec des gens dans d'autres pays ; je pourrais trouver du travail à l'étranger.*

The marks for Task 4 were awarded for information of candidates' future plans. The simplest response and the most commonly seen followed this model: *je voudrais être pilote*. For the purpose of an exam, it is always important to show what you know rather than the reality: some lost marks because they could not spell the words they needed, e.g. *ingénieur*. Candidates would be well advised to adjust what they wish to say about themselves if they cannot recall the specific noun or adjective they require.

The 2 marks for the final task were awarded for a reason for choosing/not choosing to live and work abroad. There were again some pleasingly complex ideas: *je voudrais aider les pauvres dans mon pays* ; *je pourrais découvrir d'autres cultures*. Some liked the idea of making new friends but did not know that this involves a reflexive verb: *je pourrais me faire de nouveaux amis*.

Verb

It was encouraging to see that many candidates had a range of appropriate verbs at their disposal, although sometimes control of spelling let them down, e.g. *travailler*. Among the many verbs used were *améliorer, découvrir, rencontrer, apprendre, comprendre, déménager.*

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 and prepositions will always have a limiting effect on the mark which can be awarded. Although there were fewer candidates who attempted this question, it appeared that those who did had some good control of sentence structure as can be seen in these examples: *depuis mon enfance je veux être comme mon père, il est pilote ; j'ai l'intention de devenir médecin car c'est mon rêve depuis toujours ; j'aime découvrir les cultures différentes, je crois que c'est très important de les respecter ; j'aimerais mieux rester près de ma famille qui me soutient beaucoup.*

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Question 3(c): Une soirée inoubliable !

This question attracted just over 7% of the entry. As is always the case with this final option, it was a little more demanding as it required the consistent use of past tenses. Unfortunately, among the small number of candidates who chose this, there was a significant proportion who lacked control of verb tenses. There were very few interesting accounts which suggests that candidates did not make a wise choice.

Communication

For the first task, candidates were required to mention something which the brother and his friends did during the evening. This was relatively straightforward and there was a range of responses: *mon frère et ses amis ont joué au foot ; ils ont chanté ; ils ont mangé.* It was expected that both the brother and the friends be mentioned; 2 marks were awarded for information presented thus: *mon frère a joué de la guitare et ses amis ont dansé*, however only 1 mark was awarded if the detail related only to either the brother or the friends.

The second task invited candidates to say what they personally did. Marks were awarded for various types of information: *je suis allée dans ma chambre ; je suis sortie* or details of what the candidate did in response to the actions of the others: *j'ai appelé ma mère ; j'ai téléphoné à mon voisin* or something which happened as a consequence of the actions of the brother and his friends: *je suis tombée*.

Candidates needed to give details of the state of the house by the end of the evening for the third task. This was quite a simple task but many struggled to convey appropriate details. Some relevant information was given: *la télé était cassée ; il y avait de la nourriture sur le tapis ; le salon était sale ; il y avait des bouteilles cassées*.

As is the regular pattern for this option, the final tasks invited responses to the experience. Marks were awarded for reactions wherever they occurred in the account. Some candidates mentioned the noise: *c'était très bruyant,* others more directly their annoyance: *j'étais fâchée.* With regard to the reaction of the parents, some were able to convey more complex ideas: *mes parents ont puni mon frère*.

Verbs

The heavy reliance on past tenses to convey the story effectively was a challenge for the very small number of candidates who chose this option. It was possible to respond to this question using very familiar verbs: *manger, boire, jouer, regarder, chanter, danser, écouter*.

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. The use of adverbs and adverbial time phrases to establish the sequence of events is a very useful method of structuring such a narrative response: *d'abord, premièrement, ensuite, plus tard, tout de suite.* The few really successful accounts used structures such as these: *je leur ai expliqué mais ils n'ont rien compris ; mon frère qui s'appelle Ranvir est tombé en descendant les escaliers, j'ai dû appeler mes voisins qui étaient en train de dormir ; j'ai été tellement contente quand mes parents sont rentrés.*

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