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FRENCH

Paper 0520/11
Listening

Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in November 2017. Candidates were usually aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was similar in standard to that of November 2017. 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.
- There were a very few cases of candidates ticking an incorrect number of boxes on **Question 16**. Candidates should be reminded to tick only six boxes on this exercise.
- Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to try to erase and overwrite answers in pen but in so doing, they left first attempts at ticks or words. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- There were cases of very poor handwriting which made some scripts difficult to read.
- Many candidates appreciated 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 will invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

General comments

The paper was found to be generally in keeping with the demands made in 2017. 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** where some ticked more than six boxes. 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.

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. The 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.

There were cases of very poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. If Examiners cannot read the spellings of individual words they cannot award the mark for an answer and it is worth noting that one illegible letter can make a difference in deciphering what is an acceptable spelling.

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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.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear as answers were marked on the basis of communication. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

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 in this opening exercise which was intended to give them a confident start to the paper.

The first three questions were answered extremely well by the majority of candidates but there was some misunderstanding in **Question 4**. The correct answer was **A**, *grenier*. A significant number of candidates answered **D**.

The next three questions were answered well. In **Question 8**, there was confusion between *boucherie*, option **B** (the correct answer), and *boulangerie*, option **A**.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured tourist information about *La Vieille Auberge*. There were 7 marks available for this exercise and many candidates scored between 5 and 7 marks. In **Question 9**, the correct answer was **B**, *lac*, but less able candidates chose **C**. Many candidates recognised *quinze* as the correct answer to **Question 10** and very few candidates omitted an answer to this question.

All the remaining questions in this exercise were answered very well by the whole range of candidates, except **Question 14**, where candidates chose the incorrect option **C** instead of **B**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was extremely good across the ability range and there were only a few examples of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates seem to be very much aware of the requirements of this exercise and found it accessible. Candidates are reminded, however, not to attempt to put a tick and a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

In this exercise, the candidates heard four young people talking about their hobbies. The majority of candidates gained high marks on this exercise, with the majority scoring 6 marks. There was no discernible pattern for the incorrect answers but option **(f)** was chosen by a few.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Raisa who lives in Africa. 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 the one heard in the previous exercise.

The candidates responded extremely well to the first question with an acceptable spelling of *grand-mère*. In **Question 18**, there was some confusion among candidates between *jeune* and *gens*. In **Question 19**, both *maths* and *mathématiques* were acceptable answers but a significant number of candidates answered with either *mat* or *matte* which were not acceptable. The mark scheme allowed for several possibilities in the answer *informaticien* in **Question 20** and the majority of candidates gave a correct spelling of *nager* in the answer to **Question 21**.

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Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In the second interview, candidates had to respond in French with no more than two words to four questions. These questions proved more challenging but only a few candidates were unable to provide an answer.

The first two questions proved more difficult to answer for the candidates, requiring the answers *naissance* and *bruyant*. However, the vast majority of candidates scored 2 marks on the final two questions in this exercise with correct spellings of *humide* and *protéger* + *éléphants*. There was a complete range of marks across the whole of this exercise but it was extremely rare to see candidates who scored no marks at all.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Nicolas who had worked as a volunteer. The question type used was multiple choice. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates also 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 in the past. The topic area was generally accessible and candidates rarely omitted answers to these questions.

This was a suitably demanding exercise for this stage of the examination. Less able candidates scored a few marks on this exercise and a full range of marks was evident with a good number of candidates scoring 4 or more marks.

Candidates found **Question 28** and **Question 30** to be the most accessible and found answering **Question 27** challenging and **Question 31** the most difficult.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

This was found to be an appropriately challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Very few candidates left all the questions blank and were usually able to score some marks. Candidates heard an interview with Leila who is a Belgian pop singer. There was a good mix of challenging and more accessible questions on this last exercise. Most candidates scored marks with some questions only being successfully answered by the most able.

The questions were designed to make short responses possible and candidates generally seemed aware 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.

In **Question 32**, some candidates confused the correct answer *enfance* with *enfant* or *infant*. **Question 33** was answered correctly by a large number of candidates and in **Question 34**, the mark scheme allowed for several different renderings of the correct answer *disque*. Candidates answered this question very well.

In **Question 35**, two elements were required, *assister* + *répétitions*, but some candidates only supplied one of the elements. The next two questions were also seen as more difficult by candidates with many incorrect attempts at *voix* in **Question 36** and with many unrecognisable attempts at *reconnaissante* in **Question 37**.

In **Question 38**, candidates noted the need for two elements but often used *materne* to describe *langue*. Although many candidates used the correct adjective *douce* in **Question 39**, many opted for *dulce*, which was incorrect. There were many correct answers to **Question 40**.

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FRENCH

Paper 0520/12
Listening

Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in November 2017. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was similar in standard to that of November 2017. 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.
- There were cases of candidates ticking an incorrect number of boxes on **Question 16**. Candidates should be reminded to tick only six boxes on this exercise.
- Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to try to erase and overwrite answers in pen but in so doing, they left first attempts at ticks or words. This was often extremely difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- There were cases of poor handwriting which made some scripts difficult to read.
- Many candidates appreciated 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 will invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

General comments

The paper was found to be generally in keeping with the demands made in 2017. 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** where some candidates ticked more than 6 boxes and others only 4. 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.

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 should not try to include extra material that is not on the recording and should not try to paraphrase answers.

There were cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. If Examiners cannot read the spellings of individual words they cannot award the mark for an answer. One illegible letter can make a difference in deciphering what is an acceptable spelling or not.

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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. Answers were marked on the basis of communication. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

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 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 time, places, food, leisure activities and personal items. Rubrics and visuals were generally well understood by candidates.

Question 1 was attempted well, but incorrect answers often opted for **B**. **Questions 2** and **3** were well done by most candidates. Likewise on **Question 4**, *poulet* was very well known by candidates. **Question 5** proved harder for candidates and many were unaware of the meaning of *poivre*. Very good attempts were made at the remaining three questions on this opening exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured an advert for a holiday centre. Questions tested months, length of stay, geographical surroundings, places to visit, leisure activities and accommodation details. Candidates generally approached **Questions 9**, **12**, **13**, **14** and **15** better than **Questions 10** and **11**.

On **Question 9**, an acceptable spelling of *septembre* was usually given by a good number of candidates but quite a few candidates invalidated their answer by trying to include the numbers of the age for participants to take part (*13 à 17 ans*). Candidates need to make sure that they read the information on the question paper very carefully in the reading time before the exercise so that they only answer with detail relevant to the question. On **Question 10**, the cue on the question paper (*durée du séjour*) was also not always understood. Weaker candidates sometimes tried to use the number previously heard but a fair number were able to render *2 semaines.* Those who chose to write *deux* often made mistakes and just wrote *de.* On **Question 11**, many found it very difficult to identify *colline.* The last three questions were attempted better by candidates.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

The performance on this exercise was quite good with the majority of candidates scoring well. Candidates are, mostly, well accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were, 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 the household tasks. This topic area was accessible to all candidates with a fair number scoring 3 or 4 marks. Even weaker candidates were able to score 1 or 2 marks here. The most frequent incorrect answer here was on option **(a)** about Vanessa. Here, candidates heard *je suis l'aînée de la famille* but were not able to match this to the statement *Vanessa est plus âgée que ses sœurs* on the question paper. There was otherwise on this exercise, as a whole, no discernible pattern of incorrectly placed ticks.

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Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview in two parts in which a young French girl, Camille, talked about her life in China. 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 the one heard in the previous exercise.

Candidates made quite a good attempt at the first part of this exercise. On **Question 17**, more than half of the candidates were successful in identifying *mois.* Incorrect answers were frequently written as *moins* or *moi*. On **Question 18**, attempts to render *bois* were often written as *boire* and showed that many had clearly misunderstood the concept. Careful reading of the whole statement is vital so that the missing word offered makes sense in its context. Candidates did better on **Question 19** with the majority able to offer an acceptable spelling of *traditionnel.* The spelling of *tours* proved difficult for some on **Question 20**. Incorrect answers frequently featured the different word *tout.* On **Question 21**, quite good attempts were made at *arbres* but incorrect answers showed that candidates had concentrated more on the word that was to be replaced rather than focusing on what was identified on the recording as being in the courtyard. Consequently, there were often incorrect attempts at other animals such as *chats* and *zèbres.*

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

The second part of the exercise was found to be more difficult by candidates. On **Question 22**, many found it difficult to spell *terrain de sport* and wrote *terra de sport* or added the distorting *gymnastique* to their answers. Many had difficulty with *se lever* on **Question 23** and some invalidated their answer by including *la main.* The reflexive pronoun was not required here for the answer to score. Some also invalidated answers by incorrectly combining or distorting words such as *seurlever/souslever.* Candidates went on to make better attempts on **Question 24** and about half the candidature scored the mark here with an acceptable version of *délicieux.* The last question, **Question 25**, proved more challenging with many finding it difficult to render an acceptable version of *voisins.*

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Thomas, a champion sailor. 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 exercise. This was a suitably demanding exercise for this stage of the examination. 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.

Questions 26 and **29** were found to be the questions which posed the most problems to candidates. Good numbers were however successful on **Question 27**. The question found easiest by candidates was **Question 28** with good numbers correctly identifying that Thomas shared the same interest as his sailing club friends. **Question 29** proved to be more challenging. The key concept here which was necessary to answer correctly was *je travaille maintenant comme ingénieur et ça me permet surtout de payer mes factures.* Some did not relate paying bills to earning money. On **Question 30**, candidates needed to be able to recognise the synonym *agréable* on the question with what was heard (*mon patron est gentil*). The last question was again quite well attempted with many being able to identify that Thomas managed to concentrate during stormy weather.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

This was found to be an appropriately demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Some questions were only answered well by the very best candidates. Many weaker candidates did however make commendable efforts to answer at least some questions and were usually able to score a few marks. There was a 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 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. It is appreciated that

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candidates may try to write quickly but they do need to be aware that if writing is unclear or incorrect, and if spaces split words inappropriately, this may also invalidate their answers. Examiners need to be able to see an answer clearly as the addition (or the omission) of a letter can change the meaning of a word. Candidates need to be reminded that they should not require the Examiner to choose from two options or a list of answers in which the correct answer may feature. Such an answer counts as an invalidation and does not score the mark. Candidates also need to be reminded to make good use of the reading time and to make sure they read the questions carefully and understand exactly what is being asked rather than trying to write down too much detail from the recording.

Candidates heard an interview with Amandine, a young nursery school teacher, who talked about her work. On **Question 32**, candidates made a fairly confident start and were usually able to locate the correct person who influenced Amandine's choice of profession, her aunt. Some however wrote *tante* as *tonte or tente,* neither of which gained the mark. On **Question 33**, correct answers had to use part of the verb *lire* and also give an acceptable spelling of *histoires.* On the next question, **Question 34**, many could identify *naturels* but here the comparison *plus* was also needed. Weaker candidates often did not include this.

On **Question 35**, candidates needed to convey the concept of living with children to score the mark. Only the better candidates were able to include all the necessary elements. Similar numbers of candidates were successful on **Question 36** where they had to identify *progrès.* **Question 37** was slightly better answered with a better number able to identify *règles*.

On **Question 38**, candidates first heard references to singing and doing art before the preferred activity was mentioned. Some answered too quickly and chose one of the activities first mentioned. The key skill candidates needed here was to listen to the whole of this speech and understand that the **preferred** activity was *la peinture.* Weaker candidates often rendered *peinture* as *panture*. **Question 39** was better attempted with good numbers scoring the mark and being able to convey the concept of being organised. A fair number of candidates also made a good attempt at **Question 40** and were able to give the acceptable spellings of *sourire* although some invalidated their answers by adding distorting material such as *ville* or *vite.*

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FRENCH

Paper 0520/13
Listening

Key messages

The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in November 2017. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
The candidate performance on this paper was slightly better in standard compared to the standard observed in November 2017. 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.
There were cases of candidates ticking an incorrect number of boxes on **Question 16**. Candidates should be reminded to tick only six boxes on this exercise.
Candidates must write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to try to erase and 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.
There were cases of poor handwriting which made some scripts difficult to read.
Many candidates appreciated 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 risk that extra distorting details may be included which will invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

General comments

The paper was found to be generally in keeping with the demands made in 2017. 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. However, 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** where some ticked more than six boxes and others only four. 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.

The 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.

Many candidates 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 should not try to include material not on the recording and should not try to paraphrase answers.

There were cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. If Examiners cannot read the spellings of individual words they cannot award the mark for an answer. One illegible letter can make a difference in deciphering what is an acceptable spelling or not. Candidates must write clearly and not 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 material which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should 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 shops, weather, places, parts of the body, food items, personal items, leisure activities and time. Rubrics and visuals were generally well understood by candidates.

Questions 1 and **2** were well attempted by candidates. **Question 3** was found slightly harder and some were not familiar with *nuageux.* Similarly, on **Question 4**, some were not familiar with *dents.* **Question 5** was very well done with nearly all candidates being successful. Very good attempts were made at the remaining three questions on this opening exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured a tourist advert for a French town. Questions tested days of the week, places to visit, food, leisure and tourist activities and accommodation details. Candidates generally approached this exercise very well.

On **Question 9**, most gave an acceptable spelling of *jeudi.* On **Question 10**, *cathédrale* was well recognised, as was *tarte aux pommes* on **Question 11**. **Question 12** was also very well done but **Question 13** proved a little more difficult with not all recognising the word *chalet.* Nearly all candidates were successful on the last two questions on this exercise.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

The performance on this exercise was good with the majority of candidates scoring well. Candidates are, mostly, well accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were, 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 holidays. This topic area was accessible to all candidates with a good number scoring 4 marks or more. Even weaker candidates were able to score 1 or 2 marks here. There was on this exercise, as a whole, no discernible pattern of incorrectly placed ticks.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview in two parts in which Jeanne, a nurse in Canada, talked about her working day. 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 the one heard in the previous exercise.

Candidates made a good attempt at the first part of this exercise and performed well. On **Question 17**, *douche* was easily recognisable and very well known. Good attempts were also made on **Question 18** with well over half the candidates giving an acceptable spelling of the word *circulation.* **Question 19** was slightly less well done as some gave the word *sale* rather than *salle*. As this word sounded like the correct word but had a different meaning, the mark was not scored. The spelling of *polis* also proved difficult for some on **Question 20** and this question was the least well done in this first part of the exercise. On the last question, **Question 21**, better attempts were made to give an acceptable part of the familiar verb *manger.*

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Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

The second part of the exercise was found to be more difficult by candidates. On **Question 22**, many found it very difficult to give the answer *joie.* Better attempts were made on **Question 23**, but candidates encountered difficulty in identifying the word *confort* in **Question 24** and were often unable to spell it correctly. **Question 25** proved less challenging and the majority of candidates could give an acceptable version of the verb *travailler* together with *maison.* Both elements were needed here to score the mark.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Eric who had decided to adopt an alternative lifestyle and live in a forest. 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 exercise. This was a suitably demanding exercise for this stage of the examination. 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.

Question 26 was well done by nearly all candidates and the majority also made a good attempt at **Question 27**. Just under half of the candidature went on to score the mark on **Question 28** and were able to identify that, at the age of 18, Eric decided to live at a friend's flat. Those who did not answer correctly heard *appartement* on the recording and consequently chose option **C** in error. **Question 29** proved to be more challenging. Some confused the fact that *la terre où j'habitais était très riche* with option **D** on the question paper, *Il voulait devenir très riche.* The key information was contained in the next sentence of the recording. Candidates need to be reminded not to answer too quickly but to listen carefully to the whole of the relevant speech before making a final decision. **Question 30** was found to be the most challenging on this exercise with only the best candidates able to work out that people helped him by taking him something to drink. **Question 31** was better attempted with good numbers able to recognise the synonyms *heureux* and *content.*

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

This was found to be an appropriately demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Some questions were only answered well by the very best candidates. Many weaker candidates did however make commendable efforts to answer at least some questions and were usually able to score a few marks. There was a 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 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. It is appreciated that candidates may try to write quickly but they do need to be aware that if writing is unclear or incorrect, and if spaces appear in and split words inappropriately, this may also invalidate their answers. Examiners need to be able to see an answer clearly as the addition (or the omission) of a letter can change the meaning of a word. Candidates need to be reminded that they should not require the Examiner to choose from two options or a list of answers in which the correct answer may feature. Such an answer counts as an invalidation and does not score the mark. Candidates also need to be reminded to make good use of the reading time and to make sure they read the questions carefully and understand exactly what is being asked rather than trying to write down too much detail from the recording. The questions are phrased in such a way so as to keep their written input to a minimum.

Candidates heard an interview with Sabeen who had left her country and had come to live in France and make a new life there. On **Question 32**, candidates made a fairly confident start and were usually able to indicate that she had previously lived in the capital. Candidates did not need to add *de son pays* to score the mark but, if they went on and added *Paris* or *en France*, they invalidated their answer. Numbers scoring the mark on **Question 33** were also good with many giving an acceptable spelling of *animé.* There were fewer successful attempts on **Question 34**, with about half the candidates able to identify that Sabeen was disappointed.

Candidates were more successful on **Question 35** and were usually able to give an acceptable spelling of *langue.* Very good numbers were able to identify the comparison *plus petite* on **Question 36** but, on **Question 37**, only the very best candidates were successful. This was the hardest question on the paper

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and to gain the mark here candidates needed to be able to fully understand *je suis à l'aise en France, mon pays d'accueil.* The question asked how Sabeen felt and the answer required candidates to identify that Sabeen felt *à l'aise.* Instead, many tried to opt for *pays d'accueil* which did not answer the question.

Question 38 was much better answered by candidates and the majority went on to score the mark here for *cinéma.* About half the candidature was able to identify *bureau* on **Question 39**. Candidates needed to be careful here to avoid adding a preposition which changed the meaning of what was heard. The recording stated that Sabeen had left her photos *sur le bureau dans ma chambre.* Normally, the inclusion or omission of prepositions is tolerated by Examiners but, here, if candidates added a distorting preposition such as *dans*, the mark was not scored as it suggested that the photos were in a room other than her bedroom. Weaker candidates found it difficult to give an acceptable spelling of *bureau.* For **Question 40**, the better candidates read the question carefully. The question featured a negative and asked what in future Sabeen did **not** want to do. The required answer was part of the verb *partager* together with *chambre.* Some wrote down the first statement they heard *je voudrais avoir ma propre chambre* but this did not answer the question.

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Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:
- select carefully the information from the text that answers the question, in particular in the last two exercises
- bear in mind that the questions follow the order of the texts
- use grammatical markers to assist with **Exercise 1** in ***Section 2***.

General comments

Candidates had sufficient time to complete the paper and almost all candidates were appropriately entered for the examination. There were some instances where candidates had put two ticks for a question and it was not clear which one was their final answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

This exercise was accessible to candidates and full marks were common. **Questions 4** and **5** proved the most challenging.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Again, scores for this exercise were generally high. In **Question 9**, the word *consigne* was not always known.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

Questions 14 and **15** proved challenging in this exercise. There was no particular pattern of wrong answer with both distractors being incorrectly selected.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Some candidates did not use the grammatical markers in the sentences to assist with narrowing down their options. *Doivent* was often used for **Question 19**, instead of *sous*. *Bâtiments* was frequently chosen for **Question 16**, instead of *niveaux.*

Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text about Marc and his recent work experience. The text was mostly straightforward and the vocabulary covered familiar topics. Most candidates were able to cope with the demands of the task. Although long answers are not required, and often only a few words would answer the question, many candidates chose to copy a complete sentence from the text for each question. For this exercise, extraneous material and incorrect tenses are often ignored as long as they

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do not in some way invalidate the candidate's correct response. This sometimes happened with **Question 29** when candidates added in that there are long holidays.

Some candidates got their answers for **Question 26** and **Question 28** the wrong way round, and needed to bear in mind that the questions follow the order of the text.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

In ***Section 3***, Examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail. Candidates need 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.

Candidates cannot be credited with a justification if they have ticked *Vrai* for the statement, so there is no benefit in writing a justification for every response.

For **Question 31**, some candidates left *tout de suite* in their answer, which did not correct the false statement. For **Question 32**, many candidates did not find the right part of the text and put justifications relating to arriving in 10 days. For **Question 33**, adding an extraneous detail usually negated the otherwise correct answer, such as *il n'avait ni tente ni sac de couchage*.

Exercise 2 Questions 35–41

This final exercise was intended to be the most challenging part of the paper. Candidates often lost marks because they wrote too much and included information that did not answer the question.

Some candidates left answers blank in this segment and only a minority scored full marks. Where candidates did not score for a question, it was often because they had not been selective enough about the lift from the text, leaving in words such as *alors* in **Question 37**, *qui* in **Question 39** or *donc* in **Question 41**. Locating the answer is not enough in ***Section 3***. Candidates must give a response that properly answers the question as the ability to read and understand the question is also being tested. **Question 35** was often answered using a present tense instead of a past tense.

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Paper 0520/22
Reading

Key messages

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

- select carefully only the information from the text that answers the question, in particular in the last two exercises
- ensure that they leave no blank answers, especially in multiple-choice questions
- remember that questions follow the order of the text.

General comments

Almost all candidates completed the paper, so candidates had sufficient time. There was a full range of performance and almost all candidates were appropriately entered for the examination. Scripts were mostly legible but there were instances where candidates had partially erased answers and it was not clear what the intended response was. This particularly relates to ticks.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

The opening exercise was accessible to most candidates. **Question 3** posed the most problems with many candidates seeming unfamiliar with *virage*.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Scores for this exercise were generally high and full marks were common. There was no particular pattern of incorrect answers.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This last exercise in the first section caused some difficulties for candidates, especially **Questions 11** and **12**. A significant minority opted for **C** followed by **A**, rather than **A** then **C**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. *Table* was commonly chosen instead of *nourriture* for **Question 19**, and *jouer* was frequently selected for **Question 20**. Some candidates did not make use of the grammatical markers to help them to select a correct answer and so a distractor such as *mercredi* was used in places where it could not fit grammatically.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–30

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text about Nabila and a recent project she initiated. The text was mostly straightforward and the subject matter was familiar. Most candidates were able to cope with the demands of the task. Although long answers are not required, and often only a few words would answer the question, many candidates chose to copy a couple of sentences from the text for

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each question. For this exercise, extraneous material and incorrect tenses are usually ignored as long as they do not in some way invalidate the candidate's correct response.

The ability to locate the answer is rewarded in this exercise. This meant that writing *le parc était sale* for **Question 22** would not result in a mark being awarded even though *parc* was the only word necessary for the answer. The candidate had not located the answer correctly and had used the wrong part of the text.

In **Question 25**, some candidates misunderstood the focus of the question and gave information about the meeting. Similarly for **Question 26**, some candidates wrote that the candidates and teachers attended the meeting. For **Question 28**, some candidates were distracted by *10 heures* in the text, or thought that it was necessary to make some kind of calculation.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 31–35

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.

A significant number of candidates did not recognise **Question 31** as being false, so did not provide a justification. Candidates who provided a justification sometimes invalidated their answer by including extra material about travelling by bike.

A majority of candidates recognised **Question 32** as being false and were generally very successful in providing a correct justification. For **Question 35**, responses were very mixed with almost all candidates writing a justification selecting the correct sentence. However, some took a segment of it that did not work syntactically and could not provide a correction of the original sentence.

Exercise 2 Questions 36–41

This final exercise was intended to be the most challenging part of the paper and some of the questions required candidates to manipulate their selected information from the text. Where candidates lost marks, it was often through writing too much and including information that did not answer the question. Candidates are advised to look at the number of lines to indicate the expected length of answer.

It is not enough to locate the answer in the text and candidates must formulate a coherent answer to the question posed as reading and understanding the question is also tested.

For **Question 36**, many candidates gave an answer that used part of the text without seeming to realise that *souvent choquée par ce qu'elle voyait* did not provide a coherent answer. For **Question 38**, candidates frequently did not understand the question word *comment* and gave other information about the journey.

For **Question 40**, candidates generally gave far more of the original text than was needed and, for **Question 41**, candidates need to remember that unaltered direct speech will never be a correct answer in ***Section 3***.

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Paper 0520/23
Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:
- ensure that they have answered all questions
- read all rubrics, texts and questions carefully
- cross out answers they wish to change
- avoid including too much information in answers in French.

General comments

The majority of candidates dealt confidently with the variety of reading comprehension exercise types on this paper. The paper offered an appropriate challenge and gradient of difficulty and a range of performance was observed. Standards of legibility and presentation were generally good. All candidates appeared to have time to complete the paper in the time allowed. There were few examples of questions left unanswered.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

This exercise was handled with a high degree of success by the majority of candidates. Occasionally, in **Question 3**, *pont* was not known.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise was very well done. Errors were rare and usually concerned **Question 10** (*faire des courses*) and sometimes **Question 8** (*choisir un livre*).

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This final exercise in ***Section 1*** was generally well done. Any errors usually concerned **Question 12**, where *à bicyclette* was a distractor, and **Question 15**, where **A** was sometimes chosen.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a short information piece about a camp site and complete statements in French, choosing words from a given list, in order to show comprehension of the text. The majority of candidates handled this task with a fair degree of success, usually choosing a syntactically correct word even when it did not fit the meaning of the text. There was a high number of full scores for this task.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–30

For this exercise, candidates read a letter from Justine on the subject of her cousin's wedding. This was a straightforward exercise requiring candidates to understand questions in French, select the appropriate information from the text and write down an appropriate response. Most candidates scored very well on this

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exercise, showing good understanding of most of the question words (e.g. *où, quand, pourquoi*) and of the text. In **Question 30**, *Qu'est-ce-qui,* however, was sometimes misunderstood as *Qui*, leading to an incomplete answer.

Section 3

In this section, the texts are longer and more demanding in terms of content and language. Answers in French must show clear comprehension of the questions and the text. Questions can often be answered with language selectively 'lifted' from the text. For certain questions, some manipulation of the language may be necessary.

Exercise 1 Questions 31–35

For this exercise, candidates had to read a longer text about Christine who trained for a 21 kilometre run for charity. The rubric instructed candidates to read the text, tick *VRAI* or *FAUX* against five statements about the text and write corrected version of the statements they have picked out as false. There was a reminder that three of the five statements were false. This was helpful information for the majority of candidates. It should be remembered that only the false statements need to be corrected.

Selection of the true/false statements was generally successful. Candidates should be reminded that, if they decide to change an answer, they must clearly cross out their first attempt.

Question 31 was often correctly chosen as false. For the correction of this statement, there was more than one possibility. Candidates usually answered *elle n'était pas sûre de pouvoir faire une si grande distance.* **Question 32** was also a false statement and the answer *Ted l'a aidée* or *elle a organisé son entraînement avec Ted* was acceptable. Some candidates went for the wrong information, e.g. *elle a décidé de s'entraîner trois fois par semaine.* **Question 33** was the third false statement. The simplest valid answer would have been the selective 'lift' *elle a amélioré son régime.* The inclusion of *aussi* from the text was an invalidating addition.

Exercise 2 Questions 36–42

This final exercise required the reading and understanding of a longer passage about Alain who found a good solution to his accommodation problems as a student in Paris. Comprehension was tested by means of questions and answers in French. Most candidates attempted answers to all the questions.

Question 36 was best answered by the selective lift *parce qu'il cherchait un appartement moins cher.* **Question 37** could have been answered either by reference to the cheapness of the rent or the fact that it was a way of avoiding loneliness. The majority of candidates opted for *il ne paie que 50 € par mois.* For **Question 38**, the targeted answer was *il a trouvé une (si) bonne solution* but *les appartements (à Paris) sont chers* was also accepted. **Question 39** was best answered by the short selective lift *il sert de secrétaire.* **Question 40** did not require a long answer (*trois ans)* but some candidates introduced a lack of clarity by the use of a verb and *pour*. **Question 41** required a minimal manipulation to produce *il n'était pas indépendant*. **Question 42** demanded the understanding of the information in two separate sentences. Very few candidates gave the brief but correct answer (*être organisé)*.

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Paper 0520/03
Speaking

Key messages

- The format of the test remained as in 2017 and was usually well understood in centres.
- Candidates were usually well prepared for the role play tasks. This year, however, some Examiners deviated from the set tasks and script.
- Timings in most centres were correct but in some centres, candidates were disadvantaged as the tests were extremely short or very long in the conversation sections. In some cases, a conversation section was missed out. Marks can only be awarded for sections if they are attempted.
- Topic coverage was satisfactory in most centres. Some centres needed to cover a wider range of topics across their candidature in the Topic Conversation section.
- Most Examiners were aware of the need to ensure that past and future tenses are tested in both conversation sections. There were some centres where this was not the case. In such cases, the mark for Language was limited.
- 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 correctly.

General comments

This paper was common to all candidates. The general standard of work heard was good and covered a very wide range of performance. Most Examiners were familiar with the format of the test and conducted the examination appropriately. Candidates were generally aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well. Examiners were usually sympathetic to their candidates and helped them to work for the marks and gave them the opportunity to show what they knew and could do.

In the role plays, candidates had usually made good use of the 15 minutes preparation time. 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.

Examiners generally understood the requirements of the mark scheme and, consequently, asked the right sort of questions which stretched candidates and gave 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 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. This year, several centres omitted asking questions in past and future tenses in the Topic Conversation section.

Clerical checks

In most centres, the clerical work had been completed efficiently. Usually, the addition and transfer of marks was accurate but in a few centres, cases of clerical errors were found. It is essential that all clerical work is checked with great care to ensure that all candidates receive the correct mark. If internal moderation has taken place, please ensure that the final centre mark has been entered correctly on the MS1.

Recording quality

Centres should note that the recording must not be paused between different sections of the test nor should the recording be paused at any stage during an individual candidate’s test. The Examiner must introduce the candidate by name and candidate number and also give the Role Play card number. This announcement must not be made by the candidate.

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Centres with more than one Examiner

Most centres had understood the sample requirements and submitted the correct size of sample. In larger centres with more than one Examiner, please ensure that it is clear which Examiner examined which candidates. A separate Working Mark Sheet should be enclosed for each Examiner.

Internal moderation in centres

The standard of internal moderation in centres in which more than one Examiner had been used was usually satisfactory. 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.

If more than one Examiner is used, the marking of each Examiner should be checked and adjustments made if necessary before a final sample is chosen. If after checking the marking of a particular Examiner the decision is taken to adjust that particular Examiner's marks, that adjustment must then be applied to the marks of all the candidates who were examined by that Examiner, and not just to the work of the candidates whose work was checked in the sample.

Timings of tests / missing sections

Most centres conducted tests of an appropriate length, but some centres are going under or over the 5 minutes prescribed for the Topic presentation/conversation and/or the General conversation test. **Each** of these two sections must last for approximately 5 minutes. Centres are reminded that the Topic presentation 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. Examiners then introduce the General conversation section of the test.

Where conversations are short or missing, candidates can be greatly disadvantaged as marks cannot be awarded for tasks which are not attempted.

Application of the mark scheme

Examiners usually applied the mark scheme fairly and consistently.

Examiners should stick to the script of the role plays. If cues are missed out, candidates will be disadvantaged. Short responses in the role plays, if appropriate, can earn a mark of 3. If there are two parts to a task, Examiners are free to split the task, but if only one part of a task is 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. 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.

In the Conversation sections, the marking tended to be generous in a number of centres. In such centres, marks were often 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. In some centres, high marks had been awarded when candidates could not go beyond a series of short responses to very straightforward questions. It remains crucial that Examiners 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

Please remember to check the number of the candidate's card before starting the test and to enter the number of the card on the Working Mark Sheet.

Centres usually encouraged candidates to attempt all parts of each task and many Examiners did prompt when appropriate. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. Two part tasks were split into **(i)** and **(ii)** on the Role Play cards. Most Examiners kept well to their script and did not change the cues.

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Overlong answers should not be encouraged as marks can only be awarded for the set tasks. If 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 carefully as on all the Role Play A situations, there is always a task which requires them to listen and choose from the two 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 candidates to respond to an unexpected question on all the Role Play B situations. Cues should be read exactly as they are printed in the Teachers' Notes booklet. No extra tasks should be created.

A Role Plays

The Role Play A situations were found to be of equal difficulty and appropriate for the candidature. They posed very similar challenges to those of 2017.

The A role plays 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 Role Play A 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. It is essential that the Examiner sticks to the script as printed.

Candidates generally found these role plays to be accessible and even the weakest candidates were usually able to score at least 1 mark on each task. Centres had trained candidates well to include a greeting and thanks where required. Centres are reminded that often a short response (perhaps one word) will be appropriate and in such cases a mark of 3 can be awarded. Examiners should query pronunciation if the meaning of the utterance is unclear due to mispronunciation.

Examiners should introduce Role Play A and start off the conversation. English should not be used to introduce the test. Once started, the whole of the test should be conducted in French.

Buying ice cream in a café

This role play was well attempted by candidates. On **Task 1**, nearly all were able to greet appropriately and say what they wanted to buy. On **Task 2**, most were able to opt for one of the choices offered by the Examiner. The vast majority opted for *chocolat* on **Task 3** but poor pronunciation was sometimes an issue here. Nearly all gave a number without difficulty on **task 4** but some mispronounced *deux.* Good attempts were also made on **Task 5** but some candidates asked *Combien de prix ?* when asking the price, which could only score 2 marks.

Buying throat pastilles in a chemist's shop

Candidates generally approached this situation well. Nearly all candidates could greet and say they wanted to buy throat pastilles but the pronunciation of *pastilles* was often problematic. The next task required candidates to choose one of the options provided in the cue by the Examiner. This was usually well done. On **Task 4**, the candidates were required to ask for a tube of aspirin and this was well done. On the final task, nearly all candidates remembered to thank but some found difficulty in asking the price.

Buying a ticket at a railway station

This role play caused candidates very few problems. Nearly all greeted appropriately and were able to say that they wanted to buy a ticket to Lyon. On **Task 2**, candidates needed to specify a date. Some did not give a full date or just gave a day. This needed to be prompted so that they could give a precise day such as *mardi prochain* or *demain* or a date. On **Task 3**, candidates had to choose one of the options offered by the Examiner. This was usually well done. The next task required a number of tickets and this was again well attempted although some mispronounced the number. The last task was generally approached well and most were able to formulate an appropriate question.

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B Role Plays

The Role Play B situations were deliberately more demanding than the more straightforward A role plays in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, to apologise, to express disappointment and to justify opinions. The level of challenge was well balanced across the role plays and a similar performance across the cards could be seen. As in previous sessions, they differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score some marks on some of the tasks when prompted appropriately.

Candidates should be reminded that there is always one task in which they have to listen to the Examiner and reply to an unprepared question. Candidates should be advised to consider likely questions in the 15 minutes preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room. They should also be reminded that each card will always expect candidates to ask a question.

Reporting the theft of a bike at a police station

Candidates made a confident start to this role play and were usually able to say they wanted to declare the theft of a bike or that somebody had stolen their bike. On **Task 2**, they needed to be able to say where and when the bike had been stolen. This was usually done quite well and short but appropriate answers such as *hier, en ville* often scored the full 3 marks here. Some needed reprompting on the third task but most were eventually able to give a description of the bike in response to the unexpected question. **Task 4** was a two-part task. Some were unable to express their disappointment and chose instead to say that they were unhappy or it was bad (which was not the required concept). In the final part of the task, the candidates had to say they needed their bike for the holidays. Some found this difficult but there were some good attempts. On **Task 5**, a correctly formulated question was required for the mark of 3 to be awarded. Those who said instead *je voudrais une copie de la déclaration pour les assurances* did not score 3 marks as an interrogative was required rather than a statement.

Talking about a holiday job

Most coped well with the first task and were able to convey that they wanted to talk about their job or that they had a job. On the second task, a present or future tense was acceptable if a verb was used. Some missed out how many days they were going to work every week. **Task 3** was done quite well and many said that they did not like the colour of the uniform or that it was uncomfortable. **Task 4** was not always attempted well. The use of *où se trouve* in the cue was not always well recognised by candidates. In response to a reformulated question, some just gave a name of a well-known food chain. The best candidates gave responses such as *en ville* or *au centre commercial.* Again, the last task required a reformulation of the rubric. Many seemed well trained to reformulate the opening rubric but were not always as confident when reformulating a question. The best candidates gave a confident subject-verb inversion or used *est-ce que* appropriately. Many conveyed their message but weaker candidates gave a question form which was inappropriate or incomplete.

In a clothes shop

Candidates did not always make a confident start on this role play. In the first task, they needed to say that they wanted a refund. The pronunciation of *remboursement* proved difficult for many. Examiners need to remember to query poor pronunciation as candidates may correct themselves. Many candidates instead tried to use a phrase such as *je voudrais retourner un pull.* The second task was much better attempted and most were able to respond to the unexpected question asking when they had bought the jumper. On the third task, two details were required for a mark of 3 to be awarded. The best candidates could say that the jumper was too big or small or that there was a hole. If they did not like the colour, that was also accepted. Adjectival forms caused problems for some at this point. On **Task 4**, some did not recognise that *faites vos excuses* is not an invitation to list excuses but a cue to make an apology. As a consequence, some missed out an apology and did not complete the task. In the other part of this task, many mispronounced *caisse* as *casse.* The last task was better done. Those who just stated they wanted to choose another jumper did not complete the task fully as they did not ask an appropriate question.

Topic presentation and conversation

The general standard heard this year was very similar to that heard in 2017. There was a full range of performance and candidates had usually prepared their material well. The best presentations were presented at a reasonable speed, were clear to understand and showed something about the candidate in a very personal way. Most candidates did not go over the maximum time of 2 minutes for the presentation part of this section of the test. The remaining time of the 5 minutes total time allowed for this section of the test

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should be spent conversing on the topic. The best examining did not require candidates to repeat material already heard in the presentation.

Many candidates were able to do themselves justice on their presentation. Many had clearly taken great care to prepare a topic of personal interest but as in 2017, there was usually a marked drop in performance when they moved away from their prepared material and had to converse more freely on their chosen topic. A few candidates chose topics which were very challenging at this stage of study and which relied on statistical, over factual or background general knowledge. It is important that candidates choose a topic in which they are interested and upon which they can express and justify their opinions. Only the most able candidates were usually capable of sustaining a consistent performance in the Topic conversation part of this section of the test. Such performances were characterised by opinions, justifications and routine explanations which made use of a wide range of vocabulary, structures and accurate language.

A good range of subjects was usually chosen by candidates. This year, many talked about a particular pastime, life at school, the environment, animal protection, their family, their ambitions, life in another country or a holiday. There were very few cases of candidates preparing *Moi-même* as a topic. This topic is to be avoided as this can replicate the General conversation section. Likewise, it is very much the role of the Examiner to keep the questions clearly focused on the topic so as to avoid overlap with General conversation topics. This part of the test is intended to give candidates the opportunity to go into depth on one topic rather than cover several topic areas. The range of topics in a few centres was rather narrow. A variety of topics across a centre enables spontaneous and natural examining to take place, ensures good syllabus coverage and avoids repetition of similar questions from candidate to candidate.

Candidates usually presented their topic at a comprehensible speed and did not rush, however poor pronunciation of key words did at times make messages confusing.

Examiners are reminded not to interrupt candidates too early as this can be disconcerting for candidates. Neither should they let candidates carry on presenting material for longer than 2 minutes. In the conversation on the topic, Examiners need to avoid asking questions which ask candidates to repeat material already heard in the presentation. The best performances heard were ones in which an interesting lead was followed up by the Examiner which allowed the conversation to develop in a natural way. Some Examiners asked very few questions in this part of the test and sometimes did not ask questions to elicit past and future tenses. To score a mark of more than 6 for Language, candidates must show that they can use not just the present but also past and future tenses.

It is helpful at the end of this part of the test when Examiners make a clear transition in French to the General conversation.

General conversation

This section of the test should last for a full 5 minutes. Some General conversation sections were very long and others very short. This disadvantaged candidates who, in the case of short sections, did not have the time to develop their ideas and show what they knew and could do.

Most centres covered an appropriate range of topics. The General conversation topics must differ from the topic chosen by the candidate for the Topic presentation. 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 which topic 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. It is understood that with candidates who are less able, it may sometimes be necessary to cover more topics in less depth in order to keep the conversation going. In a few centres, the range of topics within the centre was too narrow.

Questions which are very straightforward and which require simple short responses do 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* or asked candidates to develop or explain an answer or reason for an opinion. This meant that candidates could try to develop their answers in a natural way. Candidates need to be able to develop their answers, give and explain opinions and be able to respond to unexpected questions in a spontaneous way in order to gain high marks. A few centres made use of too few questions or the same questions in the same order on each conversation topic from candidate to candidate: this approach should be avoided.

Many candidates communicated well and in an interesting way on topics such as their favourite festival, life at home, life at school, life in the town/country, daily routine, future plans and ambitions, the environment,

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leisure activities, food and drink and healthy lifestyle. A good number of candidates were able to communicate their message clearly, often thanks to sympathetic and patient examining. In so doing, they also showed that they could control a range of linguistic features. The better candidates were able to work confidently and express themselves in a good range of tenses. The more able could go beyond working in the first person and conjugate verbs with different subjects. The work of such candidates showed that they could speak accurately in tenses appropriate to the questions asked.

Many candidates were enthusiastic about learning a foreign language and were positive about their experience of learning how to communicate in French.

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FRENCH

Paper 0520/41
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should read the whole task carefully before starting to write their answers.
- Candidates are advised to highlight or underline key words in questions and sub-tasks.
- Candidates should ensure that they respond in the same time frame as used in the question.

General comments

Question 1

As most centres are now aware, marks are awarded for each recognisable word which fits the context of the rubric, whether or not the item is one of those suggested by the pictures.

Question 2

Communication

A 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. Candidates are not required 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 effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

The word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If candidates write over 90 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

The maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if the candidate omits a task.

Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use simple 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.

Candidates are advised 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.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the 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. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance. Candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

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Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs. If a candidate produces a 'correct' verb form which is in the 'wrong' tense for the task, there is no reward.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were 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 were 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 and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Vous êtes à la gare

To maximise their chances of scoring the 5 marks available, candidates are advised to provide a list of eight words. 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. Many candidates successfully provided a mixture of places and objects. *Restaurant, magasin, parking, billet / ticket* were usually well known. Some candidates had difficulty with the correct spelling of *toilettes* or *ascenseur.* The vast majority of candidates scored the 5 marks available.

Question 2: Mon emploi du temps scolaire

Communication

To ensure that they score the 10 marks available for Communication, candidates are advised to produce clear and concise answers which remain focused on the task. Candidates should avoid writing general introductions to their essays as these cannot be rewarded. Many candidates scored 7–8 for Communication.

The vast majority of candidates scored the 2 Communication marks available for **Task 1**. However, some candidates found it difficult to give meaningful times in French. Candidates should be reminded that there is no need for them to write numbers in words and that figures are perfectly acceptable. Candidates should also be reminded that a verb is necessary for a Communication mark to be awarded. Candidates who wrote *je vais à l'école de 8 heures à 16 heures* could, therefore, only score 1 mark.

Task 2 was very straightforward and enabled most candidates to score the mark available. Candidates who included extra details, such as *le matin, j'ai trois cours mais j'ai quatre cours l'après-midi* were able to score 2 Communication marks.

Many candidates gained many marks for **Task 3** as they listed in details how they spend their lunchtime. It was very obvious that many candidates made the most of their lunch break to socialise, play some sport, study or just relax.

Task 4 gave candidates another opportunity to score many marks. Candidates were rewarded for saying which subjects they like/dislike and for saying why. Candidates who used separate sentences when discussing their various subjects gained more marks than those who provided a list. For example, *j'aime l'histoire car c'est intéressant* and *j'aime aussi les maths car c'est facile* enabled candidates to score 4 Communication marks.

The spellings of some school subjects were not well known and as the words were neither phonetically correct nor looking like the actual word, marks could not be awarded. *Chimie, physique, espagnol* and *économie* were often misspelt.

Task 5 required candidates to convey some notion of future time to express what they would like to study the following year. Some misunderstood the task and described what job they would like to do in the future. Candidates must ensure that they copy key words accurately. Even though *étudier* was used in the question, many misspelt it in their answer. There was also some confusion with the correct spelling of *médecine* and *architecture*.

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Language

The vast majority of candidates scored 4 or 5 marks for Language. 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 week-end spécial

This option was the most popular. Just over 88% chose this question.

Communication

Task 1 was very well done as many candidates gave very detailed descriptions of what they did during the weekend. Some candidates got carried away and wrote the vast majority of their essay on the first task. Candidates need to plan their answers carefully to ensure that all the points of the task are delivered appropriately. As only 2 Communication marks were allocated to the first task, candidates who briefly answered the other four tasks, or omitted some of the tasks, reduced the number of marks they could achieve for Communication.

A past tense was also required to successfully complete **Task 2**. Many candidates scored the 2 marks available for explaining what they had really enjoyed during the weekend. Candidates who stated *j'aime passer du temps avec ma famille / mes amis* could only score 1 mark as they provided a general comment rather than a specific reference to their past weekend.

Candidates must read the tasks carefully and ensure that they use the correct time frames in their answers. In **Task 3**, many candidates could not score the 2 Communication marks available as they wrote about the importance of their past weekend. For this task, a present tense was required as indicated by the phrasing of the question. Candidates who explained that the weekend was an opportunity for them to relax, go out with their friends or spend time with members of their family scored the marks. A simple sentence such as *le week-end est important pour moi car je peux sortir avec mes amis* was sufficient to convey a clear message.

For **Task 4** and **Task 5**, candidates were expected to say what they would do for their ideal weekend and explain why. As this was a double task, 4 marks were available. Candidates had to use a verb in the conditional to indicate what they would like to do but any logical tense was acceptable for their reason. Candidates who could use *je voudrais* followed by a verb in the infinitive easily scored the 2 marks available. Straightforward sentences such as *je voudrais aller manger dans mon restaurant préféré parce que la nourriture est délicieuse* easily scored the 4 marks. To be rewarded, the reason had to refer back to the activity previously mentioned.

Many candidates produced very satisfactory essays and the vast majority scored 7 marks or more for Communication.

Question 3 (b): La nouvelle voiture de mes parents

Only 6% of the candidature chose this option.

Communication

In **Task 1**, a past tense was expected to explain why the parents had bought a new car. Candidates who stated *notre voiture était vieille / ne marchait plus* scored the 2 marks available.

Task 2 was usually well done as candidates gave detailed descriptions of where they went in the new car. Many stated *je suis allé(e) en ville / au collège / chez mes amis*. These fulfilled the requirements of the task and achieved full marks.

Task 3 was not as successful as candidates found it difficult to convey the idea of a future tense. Candidates need to practise the accurate use of *je voudrais* followed by an infinitive. Candidates who could write *je voudrais aller* followed by a place easily scored the 2 Communication marks.

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In **Task 4**, candidates were expected to explain the advantages and disadvantages of the car. Some candidates wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of cars in general. This was perfectly acceptable. Candidates who stated *elle est plus grande que l'autre* or *elle est rapide* scored the 2 marks available. *Elle est jolie* was an opinion rather than an advantage and could not be rewarded with 2 Communication marks. For many candidates, the main disadvantage of the new car was its cost. Candidates who chose to discuss the disadvantages of cars in general often mentioned their negative impact on the environment.

Question 3 (c): Un barbecue désastreux

Very few candidates (6%) attempted this option.

Some of the candidates who chose this option often did not fare very well as they did not have the linguistic skills to deliver the storyline. Candidates who choose this option need to have a very secure grasp of perfect and imperfect tenses as the whole story is meant to relate a past incident/event.

Communication

Task 1 was usually successful as candidates were able to communicate effectively where and when the barbecue took place. Many also mentioned what had been bought prior to the barbecue.

Some candidates were too ambitious when trying to describe what had gone wrong during the barbecue in **Task 2**. As they did not have the necessary language skills to communicate what they meant, many candidates used their mother tongue and made their message almost incomprehensible. Candidates who explained a simple problem, e.g. *il a commencé à pleuvoir* or *le chien a mangé toutes les saucisses* were much more successful.

Candidates could score an extra 2 Communication marks if they had provided extra details for either **Task 1** or **Task 2**.

For **Task 3**, candidates had to explain how they reacted to the situation. Their reaction could either be emotional (*j'étais furieuse*) or practical (*je suis allé au supermarché pour acheter de la viande*). Many candidates had been well trained to provide reactions successfully.

In **Task 4**, candidates who kept their language simple fared better. *Mes ami(e)s ont aimé/détesté le barbecue* was sufficient to score the 2 marks available.

Verbs

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, avaient, était* or *étaient* should be avoided as the verbs can only be ticked the first time they are used. Some candidates had been well trained to offer a wide variety of verbs in different forms. Candidates are also advised to pay attention to the verbs provided in the rubrics and questions to avoid unnecessary spelling errors.

Other linguistic features

To maximise their chances of achieving marks in the top three bands for Other linguistic features, candidates need to spend some time checking carefully 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. There were frequent errors of spelling in adjectives, adverbs and prepositions, such as *beaucoup, malheureusement, ennuyeux, intéressant*.

It is also important that candidates offer a variety of complex structures, relevant vocabulary and a fair degree of accuracy to achieve a mark in the top three bands. The repetition of *parce que, car, je pense que* does not demonstrate the level of control and variety expected for the top bands.

Many candidates could only score in the 3–4 mark band as the structures and vocabulary they used were rather basic and their essays contained many inaccuracies.

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FRENCH

Paper 0520/42
Writing

Key messages

In **Question 1**, candidates should avoid leaving gaps in the list. If they cannot recall a word for an item illustrated, they can give other items which fit the context of the title.
Question 2 offers open ended tasks which give candidates the chance to expand with additional details.
In **Question 2**, candidates must remember that the final task always requires a change of tense.
Candidates should respond to each task in **Question 3** in the tense indicated.
Candidates aiming for the highest grades should make sure that they use common vocabulary and structures accurately.
In **Question 3**, in order to access the top bands for Other linguistic features, candidates must demonstrate that they can use the complex structures which are detailed in the specification.
Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation. When candidates write in pen over an initial draft in pencil, their work is often difficult to read: this may have a bearing on the final mark awarded.

General comments

Question 1

As most centres are now aware, marks are awarded for each recognisable word which fits the context of the rubric, whether or not the item is one of those suggested by the pictures.

Question 2

Communication

A 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. Candidates are not required 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 effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

The word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If candidates write over 90 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

The maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if the candidate omits a task.

Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use simple 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.

Candidates are advised 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.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the 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. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that 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. If a candidate produces a 'correct' verb form which is in the 'wrong' tense for the task, there is no reward.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were 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 were 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 and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 : Vous préparez des petits gâteaux

This proved to be very accessible: many candidates gained at least 4 of the 5 marks.

The easier items were *chocolat, lait, pomme*. The items which produced the most variation in spelling were *beurre, eau* and *œufs*.

Candidates were free to add items which do not feature in the pictures, provided that the words fitted the context. Some candidates offered other fruits (e.g. *banane, citron, raisin*). Savoury ingredients as well as sweet ones were acceptable (e.g. *carotte, fromage, sel*).

Some candidates only offered two or three items and might have gained more marks if they had known that the illustrations were only suggestions.

Question 2 : Une personne célèbre que vous admirez

There were some very successful responses and many candidates gained at least 8 marks for Communication.

The vast majority of candidates chose to describe sports people or stars of pop music and film. There were also references to doctors, politicians, scientists and writers. Candidates who chose to write about a family member or a friend were also rewarded because it was considered that these people could well be 'famous' in their local communities. Some candidates did not know that *célèbre* was an adjective and that it could not be used as a noun.

Any form of a relevant verb will be rewarded for Communication, which meant that those who used infinitives or past participles were as successful as those offering the correct form of the verb. This, however, does have a limiting effect on the mark for Language.

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Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to identify this person. Marks were gained for simple sentences (e.g. *j'admire Beyoncé, la personne s'appelle Michael Jordan*). There was some uncertainty over the spelling of the verb *s'appeler* in its various forms (e.g. *elle s'apple*).

Task 2 gave candidates the opportunity to describe the person. Many candidates gained a significant number of marks here.

Candidates were not all aware of the pattern for expressing age: *elle **est** 25 ans* was a common error. Candidates often made a number of comments besides giving the person's age: physical appearance, character, family circumstances, hobbies, nationality and charitable work.

There were some frequent errors: *cheveux* and *yeux* were misspelt (e.g. *cheveaux*, *yeaux*), the wrong verb was used in simple descriptions (e.g. *il a grand*, *elle a sympa)*. Another area of difficulty for some candidates was the use of adjectives of nationality: sometimes candidates confused the adjective with the proper noun for the country.

Task 3 asked candidates to give details about this person's work. Typically, candidates mentioned: *il joue au foot, elle chante, elle est médecin*.

Task 4 required candidates to explain why they admired this person. Sometimes they referred back to a detail offered in **Task 2** (e.g. *il est généreux*). Many stressed particularly that they admired their work (e.g. *elle écrit de belles chansons, il fait des bons films*) and their charitable efforts (e.g. *elle aide les enfants malades*).

Task 5 invited candidates to say whether they would like to be famous themselves and to explain why or why not. There were some impressive responses. Those who wanted fame highlighted particularly financial advantages (e.g. *je voudrais gagner beaucoup d'argent*) but equally many wanted the fame and the money *pour aider les autres*. There were many who felt that fame was not for them (e.g. *je souhaite être médecin pour soigner les malades et aider les autres, j'aimerais mener une vie tranquille*).

This final task is always one which requires the use of a future or conditional tense: most candidates were aware of that and attempted to respond appropriately.

Language

Candidates should always remember that a correct future or conditional tense is expected for the top mark. Generally, candidates should be aiming to use correctly conjugated verbs if they wish to gain at least 4 marks. The verb *gagner* proved to be a problem with many spelling it *ganger*. Other elements of grammar also matter, e.g. the correct use of definite/indefinite articles, agreement of adjectives.

Section 2

Question 3 (a): Mon voyage en avion

Considerably more than half of the candidates chose this option. There were some very good, coherent responses at the top of the range. Most candidates were able to provide some relevant information for many of the set tasks. However, there were many instances where the wrong tense was used which resulted in the loss of many marks, e.g. **Task 1** and **Task 2** which both required a past tense were answered in the present or future tenses.

Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to give details of where and when they went on a plane journey. This was well within the grasp of all candidates but some lost marks because of the lack of control of verb forms. Typical straightforward answers included: *je suis allé à Bordeaux en mars, l'année dernière je suis allé en Afrique du Sud.* Candidates who omitted an appropriate time frame gained only 1 mark for this task (e.g. *j'ai visité le Caire*). Candidates who mistakenly thought that they were planning a future visit also gained 1 mark as long as the idea was otherwise coherent (e.g. *la semaine prochaine je vais aller en Australie*).

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Task 2 asked for any information about this flight. Details ranged from the weather (*il faisait très chaud, il y avait du vent*), to the time and duration of the flight (*l'avion est parti à six heures, le vol a duré cinq heures*), to activities on the plane (*j'ai dormi, j'ai mangé du poulet avec du riz*) and comments about the flight (*le vol était très long, c'était fatigant*).

Some thought that this task referred to what they did after they reached their destination and they provided sometimes extensive detail about their holiday in that place. There were no Communication marks for this type of information. Verbs and Other linguistic features were rewarded as it was considered logical to at least explain the purpose of the flight.

Task 3 and **Task 4** focused on the advantages and disadvantages of flying. The disadvantages were slightly better handled than the advantages in terms of the range of language used. Advantages included: *le voyage est très rapide, l'avion est un moyen de transport pratique, rapide et confortable*. Disadvantages included: *le billet coûte cher, le voyage est ennuyeux, j'ai peur dans l'avion, l'avion produit des gaz qui causent de la pollution*. Candidates should check carefully their work. The word *avantage* was given in the question, but significant numbers wrote *advantage*.

Task 5 gave candidates the opportunity to state which country they would like to visit and to explain why. Many candidates were able to convey both parts successfully using appropriate tenses: *je voudrais aller en Espagne parce que j'apprends l'espagnol à l'école, je voudrais visiter le Brésil parce que les gens aiment bien le football comme moi*.

Verbs

The control of verbs is crucial for conveying the desired messages. A significant proportion of candidates gained 7 or 8 marks. The theme allowed them to use familiar verbs (e.g. *aller, faire, manger, visiter, voyager*) to communicate the narrative details. Those who chose to introduce their opinions using *je pense que, je crois que, je trouve que* added to their score and also created more interesting, varied sentence patterns.

Not all candidates displayed this kind of control and there were some who produced past tense verbs with the wrong auxiliary or with the auxiliary missing (*j'ai allé, je suis voyagé, je fait, je mangé*). Such forms limit the Communication mark and also reduce the mark for Verbs. Candidates need to be sure of the way of expressing the idea of 'to travel', *travailler* appeared frequently.

Other linguistic features

Candidates who wish to raise their marks must demonstrate that they have secure control of basic elements: gender, appropriate articles, agreement and correct placement of adjectives, possessive forms, prepositions, elision. Evidence of more complex structures using comparative and superlative forms, object pronouns, conjunctions and subordinate clauses will enhance their marks.

Some examples of high skills include: *pendant ce vol qui a duré cinq heures, ils nous ont donné du poulet avec des légumes, personnellement je ne voyage jamais en avion car j'ai peur quand je voyage, je voudrais visiter la Chine car j'adore la cuisine chinoise et la langue m'intéresse beaucoup.*

Question 3 (b): Le nouveau centre sportif

This was a less popular choice. There were some excellent responses and the subject was sufficiently accessible for candidates over the whole range to gain some marks.

Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to give details of when and with whom they went to the sports centre. The most frequent responses followed this simple pattern: *la semaine dernière je suis allé au centre sportif avec mes amis.* If either the time frame or the person was omitted, only 1 mark was gained (e.g. *samedi je suis allé au nouveau centre sportif*).

As with **Question 3 (a)**, candidates who mistakenly thought that they were planning a future visit gained 1 mark as long as the idea was otherwise coherent (e.g. *je vais aller au centre sportif avec mon frère la semaine prochaine*).

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Task 2 asked for candidates to state what activity they did. This was a straightforward task and one within the range of most candidates. There were few variations in response apart from the choice of pronoun, both singular and plural verbs were rewarded: *j'ai nagé, on a joué au squash, nous avons joué au badminton*.

Task 3 required an explanation of the importance of this new sports facility to the local community. There were some very good ideas, with many focusing on the issue of health: *le centre sportif est nécessaire car ici les jeunes sont très paresseux, ça nous aide à rester en forme, il y a beaucoup de personnes qui souffrent de l'obésité*.

Task 4 gave candidates the opportunity to mention another improvement which could be made and **Task 5** asked candidates to explain their choice. Many candidates found this a little challenging, some could propose an improvement, which required a simple adaptation of the task (e.g. *on pourrait construire une patinoire*) but fewer were able to give a supporting reason. Among the good answers were: *on pourrait améliorer le jardin public car il est très sale, le gouvernement devrait améliorer les transports en commun, ça pourrait éviter la pollution, on pourrait construire un cinéma parce qu'il n'y a rien pour les jeunes dans mon village*.

Verbs

The same points made for **Question 3 (a)** apply here too. In some ways, candidates found it a little harder to use a range of verbs in this question. For **Task 1** and **Task 2**, candidates could use very familiar verbs in the perfect tense (e.g. *je suis allé, nous avons fait, j'ai joué, on a nagé, j'ai pratiqué*).

Other linguistic features

Candidates who wish to raise their marks must demonstrate that they have secure control of basic elements: gender, appropriate articles, agreement and correct placement of adjectives, possessive forms, prepositions, elision. Evidence of more complex structures using comparative and superlative forms, object pronouns, conjunctions and subordinate clauses will enhance their marks.

Some examples of high skills include: *parce que maintenant on a un lieu où on peut pratiquer le sport, les gens qui veulent garder leur forme trouvent le centre très utile, j'aimerais aussi que les gens nettoient mieux mon village et qu'ils ne jettent pas les déchets par terre.*

Question 3 (c): Un petit chien perdu

There were few candidates who attempted this option. Candidates gained marks for any detail which might remotely be relevant to this context. It is important to be sure that the question is fully understood before starting on what should be a coherent account of an episode.

Communication

Task 1 required candidates to give some information about their walk (e.g. *il faisait beau, on passait par la route qui menait chez ma grand-mère*).

Task 2 invited candidates to explain what the dog was doing when they found it (e.g. *elle était trempée et elle tremblait, le chien dormait, il a aboyé*). It was decided also to allow comments about the state of the dog (e.g. *le chien était sale, il avait peur*).

Task 3 gave candidates the chance to describe what happened after finding the dog. The mark scheme allowed candidates to interpret this in a variety of ways: *nous nous sommes approchés doucement, j'ai lavé le chien, je l'ai pris dans mes bras, j'ai couru chez moi avec le chien*.

Task 4 and **Task 5** asked for personal reactions to what happened, both those of the candidate and those of friends. To some extent, this was the easiest part of the question as this type of task is a regular feature of this option (e.g. *j'étais choquée, mon amie était triste*).

Verbs

The open-ended nature of this question allowed candidates to use what they knew to create a coherent account. Candidates had the freedom to use a wide range of familiar verbs in perfect and imperfect tenses (e.g. *aider, chercher, découvrir, entendre, marcher, porter, rentrer, trouver, voir*).

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Other linguistic features

Candidates who wish to raise their marks must demonstrate that they have secure control of basic elements: gender, appropriate articles, agreement and correct placement of adjectives, possessive forms, prepositions, elision. Evidence of more complex structures using comparative and superlative forms, object pronouns, conjunctions and subordinate clauses will enhance their marks.

Some examples of high skills include: *mes amies et moi étions en train de faire une longue promenade, je lui ai donné quelque chose à manger, alors nous avons décidé de l'emmener chez le vétérinaire.*

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FRENCH

Paper 0520/43
Writing

Key messages

In **Question 1**, candidates should avoid leaving gaps in the list. If they cannot recall a word for an item illustrated, they can give other items which fit the context of the title.
Question 2 offers open ended tasks which give candidates the chance to expand with additional details.
In **Question 2**, candidates must remember that the final task always requires a change of tense.
Candidates should respond to each task in **Question 3** in the tense indicated.
Candidates aiming for the highest grades should make sure that they use common vocabulary and structures accurately.
In **Question 3**, in order to access the top bands for Other linguistic features, candidates must demonstrate that they can use the complex structures which are detailed in the specification.
Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation. When candidates write in pen over an initial draft in pencil, their work is often difficult to read: this may have a bearing on the final mark awarded.

General comments

Question 1

As most centres are now aware, marks are awarded for each recognisable word which fits the context of the rubric, whether or not the item is one of those suggested by the pictures.

Question 2

Communication

A 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. Candidates are not required 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 effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

The word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If candidates write over 90 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

The maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if the candidate omits a task.

Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use simple 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.

Candidates are advised 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.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the 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. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that 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. If a candidate produces a 'correct' verb form which is in the 'wrong' tense for the task, there is no reward.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were 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 were 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 and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Des vêtements pour l'école

This proved to be very accessible: many candidates gained at least 4 of the 5 marks.

The easier items were *pull*, *short*, *t-shirt*. There were some errors with *pantalon*, spelt *pantaloon* but the items which produced the most variation in spelling were *chaussures* and *chaussettes*.

Candidates were free to add items which did not feature in the pictures, provided that the words fitted the context. Some candidates offered *chapeau, cravate, robe*, *baskets, jean, jogging, sweat, tennis*. All these items gained marks.

Question 2: La télévision

Any form of a relevant verb will be rewarded for Communication, which meant that those who used infinitives or past participles were as successful as those offering the correct form of the verb. This, however, does have a limiting effect on the mark for Language.

Communication

Task 1 invited details of general viewing habits. A large number of candidates responded using a past tense, e.g. *j'ai regardé la télévision avec mon frère dans le salon*. This was not indicated by the question which suggested regular behaviour but, by the rule mentioned above, such statements gained a mark.

There were some occasional errors with the spelling of forms of *regarder* which resulted in the loss of the mark, e.g. *je regrade, je regard*.

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Task 2 gave candidates the opportunity to talk about the kinds of programmes they like and to explain why. Many candidates took the chance to expand and gained a number of marks, e.g. *j'aime les émissions de sport parce que j'adore faire du sport, j'aime les comédies car ça me fait rire*. A mark was available for each statement and each reason. Some candidates had problems recalling the correct spelling of crucial vocabulary, e.g. *aventure*, *comédie*, *documentaire*, *policier*.

Task 3 asked candidates to state a preference for either watching television or reading a book and to explain why. Opinions were very divided. There were some very good responses, such as *je préfère regarder la télévision parce que c'est plus intéressant, je préfère lire un livre parce que c'est plus intéressant que la télévision*. A few candidates had difficulty with correct forms of the verb *lire*. There were however some very impressive comments and some candidates again gave more than one relevant reason for which they gained additional marks.

Task 4 required candidates to give details of their plans for the coming weekend. Again, there was an opportunity to gain more than 1 mark for each relevant piece of information. As the question used *expliquez*, marks were also available for any valid supporting details or reasons. Candidates variously mentioned: *je vais aller en ville pour rencontrer mes amis, je voudrais jouer au foot à la plage avec mon frère, je vais aller au restaurant avec ma famille parce que c'est l'anniversaire de ma sœur*. Some felt that they needed to link the activity to the theme of the first three tasks and perfectly offered: *je vais acheter un nouveau livre, je vais regarder le rugby à la télévision avec mon père parce que nous adorons le rugby*. This final task is always one which requires the use of a future or conditional tense. Most candidates were aware of that and attempted to respond appropriately.

Language

Candidates should remember that a correct future or conditional tense is expected for the top mark. Generally, candidates should be aiming to use correctly conjugated verbs if they wish to gain at least 4 marks. However, the correct use of definite/indefinite articles, agreement of adjectives also matters. Sometimes grammar can affect the mark. Prepositions were not always securely known, e.g. *c'est quinze heures sur le lundi*. Some candidates also wrote *jouer du sport* instead of *faire du sport* or *pratiquer un sport. Pra<u>c</u>tiquer* was a common misspelling.

Section 2

Question 3 (a): Un repas spécial

Almost half of the candidates chose this option. There were some very good responses and most candidates were able to provide relevant information for many of the set tasks.

Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to explain when and for whom they prepared a meal. Those who responded in a straightforward manner were the most successful, e.g. *j'ai préparé le dîner pour mon père samedi dernier, j'ai préparé un repas pour ma mère hier soir*. Some mentioned specific foods which was also an acceptable way to respond, e.g. *hier j'ai préparé un steak et des frites pour mon frère*. If either the time frame or the person was omitted, only 1 mark was gained.

Task 2 asked for details of the special occasion. For many, the special occasion was a birthday, e.g. *c'était l'anniversaire de ma mère, elle avait 40 ans*. There were other references but they were relatively few in number, e.g. *c'était pour le Nouvel An chinois, c'était pour ma sœur qui a fini ses examens*.

Task 3 focused on the idea of cooking, requiring a reason for enjoying or not enjoying it. The majority of candidates stated that they liked cooking. The reasons given were often interesting and sometimes impressive in the use of language, e.g. *je voudrais être cuisinier, cuisiner me donne tellement de joie*. Those who derived less pleasure suggested: *je ne suis pas forte en cuisine, ma famille n'aime pas mes repas*.

Task 4 and **Task 5** gave candidates the opportunity to identify the advantages and disadvantages of a career working in a restaurant. Among the advantages offered were the following: *on peut être créatif, chaque jour sera différent, vous pouvez apprendre à très bien cuisiner*. A wide range of points was raised about the disadvantages: *c'est fatigant/stressant, c'est très répétitif comme travail, il faut préparer tout en vitesse*.

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Verbs

The control of verbs is crucial for conveying the desired messages. A significant proportion of candidates gained 7 or 8 marks. The theme allowed them to use familiar verbs (e.g. *préparer*, *faire*, *manger*, *travailler*, *gagner*) to communicate the narrative details. Those who chose to introduce their opinions using *je pense que, je crois que, je trouve que* added to their score and also created more interesting, varied sentence patterns. Some candidates produced past tense verbs with the auxiliary missing: *je préparé, je fait, je travaillé*. Such forms limit the Communication mark and also reduce the mark for Verbs.

Other linguistic features

Candidates who wish to raise their marks must demonstrate that they have secure control of basic elements: gender, appropriate articles, agreement and correct placement of adjectives, possessive forms, prepositions, elision. Evidence of more complex structures using comparative and superlative forms, object pronouns, conjunctions and subordinate clauses will enhance their marks.

Some examples of high skills include: *je lui ai préparé des lasagnes au fromage bleu car elle adore les lasagnes et ceci me semblait parfait pour son anniversaire, je voulais lui faire une surprise car c'était son anniversaire et quand elle a vu ce que j'avais préparé elle était très contente, j'adore faire la cuisine parce que quand j'étais petite ma mère et moi faisions la cuisine tous les jours.*

Question 3 (b): Mon nouveau passe-temps

This question was almost as popular as **Question 3 (a)**. There were some excellent responses and the subject was sufficiently accessible for candidates over the whole range to gain some marks.

Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to give some information about their new hobby. The most frequent responses included: *je vais au stade cinq fois par semaine avec ma sœur pour faire du sport, je vais au parc qui se trouve devant mon appartement, je joue tous les soirs avec mes amis*. Information expressed in the past tense was also rewarded, e.g. *j'ai nagé dans la piscine samedi*.

Task 2 asked for candidates to state when they started. Simple manipulation of the verb in the question was the key to success: *j'ai commencé la semaine dernière, j'ai commencé il y a deux mois*. A small number of candidates gained the marks in another way: *je joue au foot depuis septembre*, *je viens de commencer la boxe thaïlandaise*.

Task 3 required a reason for having chosen this new hobby. Once again, the easiest way of responding was to use the verb in the question: *j'ai choisi ce sport parce qu'il m'aide à rester en forme, j'adore l'exercice et c'est pourquoi j'ai choisi ce passe-temps*.

Task 4 gave candidates the opportunity to identify either an advantage or a disadvantage of doing this activity. Among the disadvantages, candidates who chose a sport mentioned: *je dois faire de l'entraînement tous les jours, j'ai souvent mal aux jambes*. Candidates who enjoyed another activity such as photography stated: *l'appareil coûte cher*.

There were many more positive comments, e.g. *c'est facile à apprendre, ça fait perdre beaucoup de calories*, *on peut se faire de nouveaux amis*. Some verbs were often incorrect, e.g. *rencontrer* was misspelt and confused with *raconter*. *Faire des amis* was used rather than *se faire des amis*.

Task 5 asked for suggestions of another activity they would like to do and a reason for the choice. For this task, 1 mark was allocated for identifying the activity and 1 mark for an appropriate reason. There were many different ideas: *je voudrais faire du jardinage, monter à cheval, jouer du violon, écrire des livres* and many more sports. The reasons offered were straightforward in the pattern of *c'est intéressant, ça m'intéresse.*

Verbs

The points made for **Question 3 (a)** apply here too. In some ways, candidates found it easier to use a greater range of verbs in this question, e.g. *aller*, *faire*, *jouer*, *pratiquer*, *commencer*, *décider*.

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Other linguistic features

Candidates who wish to raise their marks must demonstrate that they have secure control of basic elements: gender, appropriate articles, agreement and correct placement of adjectives, possessive forms, prepositions, elision. Evidence of more complex structures using comparative and superlative forms, object pronouns, conjunctions and subordinate clauses will enhance their marks

Some examples of high skills include: *mon ami m'a dit que les premières semaines sont les plus difficiles, ce club est super car j'ai rencontré de nouvelles amies avec qui je peux partager cette passion, je voudrais faire du jardinage car je le trouve intéressant, dans l'avenir je voudrais faire du ski parce que mon ami m'a dit que c'est très amusant.*

Question 3 (c): Un festival de musique

Only about 4% of candidates attempted this question. Candidates who chose it did not really understand the idea given in the introduction, namely that the change in weather disrupted their visit to the music festival. Candidates gained marks for any detail which might remotely be relevant to this context. It is important to be sure that the question is fully understood before starting on what should be a coherent account of an episode.

Communication

Task 1 required some mention of the change in the weather. Few candidates were able to express this detail clearly. Simple statements were sufficient to gain the marks: *il y avait du vent, il a commencé à pleuvoir*.

Task 2 invited candidates to explain what they did after the weather changed. Candidates gained marks even if, sometimes, it was not obvious that the activity was linked to the change in the weather, e.g. *nous sommes allés au café, nous avons mangé un sandwich en ville, nous avons fait du shopping*.

Task 3 gave candidates the chance to describe how they spent the evening. Information such *nous avons écouté de la musique, nous avons mangé au restaurant* or *nous avons parlé avec des amis* gained the marks.

Task 4 and **Task 5** asked for the candidate's reaction and the friends' reaction to the day's events. To some extent, this was the easiest part of the question as this type of task is a regular feature of this option. Marks were gained for straightforward responses: *j'ai été très content, mon amie a aimé la musique.*

Verbs

The open-ended nature of this question allowed candidates to use what they knew to create a coherent account. Candidates had the freedom to use a wide range of familiar verbs in perfect and imperfect tenses.

Other linguistic features

Candidates did not show the kind of control and variety expected. Candidates could have added clarity and interest to their accounts by using time phrases to establish the sequence of events and could have linked individual events by using subordinate clauses and conjunctions.

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