

FRENCH

Paper 9716/01

Speaking

General comments

The majority of recordings were clearly audible, though a few were marred by interference, and some suffered from the fact that the microphone appeared to favour the Examiner rather than the candidates. Centres should be aware that Examiners often speak more loudly than candidates and should accordingly position microphones carefully, probably closer to candidates, so that both candidates and Examiner are audible.

Examiners should remember that, in order to avoid disruption to candidates and loss of parts of the examination, they should record a maximum of **two** candidates per side of a 90 minute cassette and only **one** per side of a 60 minute cassette. When recording onto a CD, please ensure that this can be played on a normal audio CD player, rather than only as computer files. Candidates, Centre and syllabus should all be clearly identified, both visibly, on the cassette/CD and its box, and audibly, at the beginning of the recording of the examination. It is very helpful to Moderators to be able to identify the order in which candidates have been recorded, and on which cassettes or CDs they appear. Recordings should be spot-checked before despatch, and should be accompanied by both the Moderator's copy of the MS1, and a copy of the Working Mark Sheet, completed with a mark in every column, according to the mark scheme supplied in the syllabus booklet.

Conduct of the examination

Timing for the various elements of the examination is still an issue: candidates should be allowed to speak on their chosen topic for between 3 and 3½ minutes **without interruption from the Examiner**. Obviously, if candidates are at a loss, Examiners may try to help/prompt them in an appropriate way to enable them to continue. The Presentation should be followed by 7 to 8 minutes of Topic Conversation - Examiners who introduce each section should try to do so in French, so that the candidate is not required to keep switching languages. Examiners should avoid merely asking for repetition of material from the presentation, but should rather ask questions which will explore the material of the presentation in greater depth, asking the candidate to explain, or develop various points of interest they have noted. They should ensure that their questions ask not only for factual information, but also for ideas and opinions.

The start of the General Conversation should be signalled by the Examiner and should last approximately 8 to 9 minutes. This section should deal with different topic areas from that chosen by the candidate for the presentation, and here, Examiners need to be prepared to engage the candidate in discussion, rather than merely asking a series of unrelated questions. It is better to cover 3 or 4 different areas in depth than to try to deal in a superficial way with all the topics touched on during the course.

Candidates will always want to do their best, practising their presentation and gaining experience to deal with the sort of questions asked during the examination, but it was very apparent this year that a number of Centres had over-rehearsed. Topic Conversations lacked spontaneity, and General Conversation sections were sometimes merely a parade of pre-learnt material. Candidates who rehearse to this degree will not achieve marks in the highest band for comprehension and responsiveness: though the responses may be immediate, where there are no unexpected questions, there is no real test of comprehension, and marks are likely to be limited to 5/6 (see mark scheme – "relies heavily on prepared material").

When Examiners start questioning candidates, they may need to begin a topic with a "closed" question, expecting a "yes" or "no" answer, in order to determine a candidate's level of interest, but they should remember to try to keep to "open" questions thereafter, in order to offer candidates scope to develop and expand on their ideas and opinions. It is noticeable that, when an Examiner asks a long and complex question, the candidate's response is frequently short, whereas conversely, a short question often gives a candidate opportunities to provide a longer and more developed answer.

Candidates are expected to ask questions in **both** conversation sections, and where they do not, in the course of conversation, Examiners must prompt them to do so, in order to give them the chance to do so for the 10 marks (5 in each conversation section) available for this element of the examination. For a mark of 5, candidates need to be able to show that they can ask more than 1 question, and the questions they ask should be relevant to the matter under discussion, should be accurate, and should show a range of question forms. When completing the Working Mark Sheet, care must be taken to award and record marks **only** in the sections where they have been asked. There are no marks available for asking questions during the presentation, and candidates should be discouraged from this, since it limits the time available to them for the presentation itself. However, marks are frequently awarded in both conversation sections when candidates have only asked questions in one of them, and often a “nominal” mark of 1 or 2 seems to be awarded where candidates have asked no questions at all! – if this is the case, a zero must be recorded on the working mark sheet in the final column for that conversation section.

When candidates ask questions of the Examiner, Examiners must remember to keep their answers to a minimum, in order to allow candidates the maximum possible time for the expression of their ideas and opinions.

Presentation

Once again, candidates chose a wide variety of topics for their presentation, ranging from *tourisme* in various aspects, (regions of France, Paris, *Palais de Versailles*, *la Tour Eiffel*), education, food and health, the family in modern society, *les jeunes*, sport (*la Coupe du Monde*, *le Tour de France*) entertainment (*le cinéma française*), *les médias* with the usual sprinkling of ‘pollution’, ‘energy’, ‘drugs and poverty’, and a few biographical choices.

There were, as always, a number of cases where candidates were not aware of, or had simply disregarded the information that “Candidates who make no specific reference to the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the language is spoken will have their mark for Content and Presentation halved.” This is one of the two most common reasons for the recommendation of mark adjustment, the other being marks awarded for unasked questions. Candidates should therefore be warned of this when they choose their topics – it is not enough merely to say... *et en France, c'est la même chose...*, there should be some genuine connection with francophone culture or society.

The choice of a topic does present some pitfalls: if it is something very general (*la pollution*, *la drogue*), the whole topic is so vast that it is impossible to cover it meaningfully in 3 minutes - better to choose a particular aspect to research, keeping in mind the francophone connection, thus making it far more personal. Candidates often find it easier to talk about something in which they have a personal interest, and about which they may already be knowledgeable – it may not necessarily be an area in which the Examiner feels equally at home, but it is an opportunity for Examiners to learn something from candidates, and often leads to interesting discussion. More factual topics (biographical, for instance) often present problems for the Topic Conversation section. The life of a famous person may seem an inviting and clear-cut topic, but to score well for Content and Presentation, ideas and opinions need to be included as well as factual information, and once the details of the person's life have been given, it is difficult to discuss this further in any meaningful way. When choosing a topic, a candidate should try to think of about 10 questions which could be asked about it, and if questions such as *comment? pourquoi?...* could be asked, then it is likely to be a topic which would be possible to develop in other than factual directions.

Overall, the vast majority of Centres worked hard to do their best for their candidates and to award marks appropriately.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

The topic of the paper (tourism) was one with which candidates generally seemed familiar and comfortable. The most able scored very well, and there were relatively few examples of candidates who appeared totally defeated by the tasks.

Nearly all candidates completed all sections of the paper (apart from the occasional comprehension question omitted through inadvertence) and there were few signs of candidates having been under undue pressure of time.

Stronger candidates tended to make the necessary point(s) succinctly and proceed to the next question promptly. The weaker ones indulged in a good deal of unnecessary repetition and copying verbatim from the texts, wandering from the point and often ended up writing considerably more than was needed.

The practice of copying out the questions or of reworking them as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker and this time would be much better spent in checking the accuracy of the answer.

An increasing number of candidates understand how to set about the various exercises, but there are important points of exam technique which still need to be made in respect of all questions:

In Question 1, candidates need to understand that the word or words which they give as their answer need(s) to be interchangeable in all respects with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing. Many marks were lost by the addition of unnecessary words. Equally, there were some examples of not enough words being included. See **Comments on specific questions** below for examples.

In Question 2, the re-working of the sentence must begin with the words specified in the brackets. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary. Candidates should not change the vocabulary in the sentence for its own sake, but merely re-arrange the words and make any changes to the grammar required by the new start to the sentence given. In other words, answers in this question should use the vocabulary of the original wherever possible.

In Questions 3 and 4, the rubric clearly states that candidates should answer *sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte*. **Copying sentences or whole phrases verbatim from the text (or indeed the question) in the hope that they contain the answer does not demonstrate understanding and is therefore not rewarded.** Candidates should try to express relevant ideas using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes or manipulations of the text can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language. Candidates are also advised to look at the number of points awarded for each question (indicated in brackets) as a clue to what may be required in terms of answers. It was encouraging to see some candidates setting out their answers with this clearly in mind.

It was not uncommon for candidates to focus on what they thought the text ought to say rather than on what it actually said, or to introduce ‘facts’ for which there was no evidence in the text. With the exception of the Personal Response (Item 5b), it is important that candidates confine themselves throughout to the evidence of the texts, unless specifically invited to do otherwise, and avoid the temptation to base their responses on their own background knowledge of the topic rather than on the text.

In Question 5, it was pleasing to note that there were fewer candidates again this session who exceeded the word limits set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections (90-100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40-50 words for the response). Those who are tempted to write beyond these word limits ought to remember that **material beyond 150 words overall for Questions 5a**

and 5a combined is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who used the entire allocation of words on **5a** automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for the Response (**5b**).

These limits are such that **candidates simply cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble** such as: « *Le tourisme est un phénomène global. Ce sujet est débattu par tout le monde parce qu'il propose les bienfaits et les dangers pour les pays en voie de développement. Cette rédaction discutera ces points et aussi discutera le pays étranger que j'aimerais visiter et pourquoi.* » Worthy though it may be, this has wasted almost a third of the maximum number of words for **Parts (a)** and **(b)** combined without scoring any marks. It is an efficient summary/*résumé* of specific points drawn from the texts that is required in **Question 5a**, not a general essay, and candidates need to set about making their points (and thereby scoring marks) from the very outset.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est*. It is also helpful if candidates make a clear distinction between **Parts (a)** and **(b)** in setting out their answers.

A number of candidates used bullet points to illustrate the points that they were making for content. Though content marks may be awarded for this, the language mark may be reduced if no verbs are used to express the ideas and the answer consequently lacks fluency.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Many candidates correctly identified *l'étranger*, but it was quite frequently offered without the necessary *à* to make it make sense when inserted into the text. More commonly, marks were lost by the inclusion of words which would not fit into the footprint left: *transports aériens; nouvelles perspectives; lutte contre; la réduction*. See **General Comments** above. Many candidates who observed the rules in this respect scored highly on this exercise.

Question 2

There were quite a number of high scores on this exercise from candidates who were able to manipulate the structures accurately, but as usual the task proved very demanding for candidates whose command of grammatical structures was shaky.

- Item 2(a)** This was handled successfully by many, but very often the omission of *ne* (or indeed the insertion of a superfluous *pas*) cost marks.
- Item 2(b)** The conversion of reported into direct speech was negotiated successfully by those candidates who could handle the *nous* form of the present tense of *prévoir*, but some were then unable to make the consequential change from *ses* to *nous*.
- Item 2(c)** The transfer to the passive was achieved successfully by a good number, but in many cases the mark was then lost by a failure to provide the necessary agreement on *accélérée*.
- Item 2(d)** There was some confusion in some scripts as to what had encouraged what here and, in contrast with 2(c), some candidates insisted on retaining an incorrect agreement on *encouragé*.
- Item 2(e)** This was the most successful of the five 'manipulations' and a large number of candidates scored the mark here. Those who were unsure of the present tense of *pouvoir* would have done better to have avoided it with *ont la possibilité* or similar.

Question 3

- Item 3(a)** The question specifically directed candidates to the first paragraph, but there was a significant amount of unrewardable material from other paragraphs included in some candidates' answers. Many answers were too vague, stating simply that tourism was a large industry and employed a lot of people, rather than the fact that it is the number one industry and employer in the world. Most (but not all) of those who made the points also managed to avoid the straight 'lift' by using *du monde/de la terre* instead of *de la planète*, thereby scoring the marks. The third mark required the idea of future (rather than past) increase in the number of tourists, and the fourth mark was generally achieved by candidates who avoided the straight lift (*dont la moitié devrait se concentrer* etc.).
- Item 3(b)** This was well handled, even though there were some pretty far-fetched reasons offered which did not appear in the text.
- Item 3(c)** This item was successfully handled by candidates who found ways of avoiding copying straight from the text. Sometimes this was simply achieved by finding a reasonable synonym (*hausse* or *amélioration* for *élévation*; *baisse* for *réduction*), elsewhere by replacing a noun with a construction using a verb (*les voyages en avion coûtent moins cher* for *la réduction des prix des transports aériens*; *elles ont un niveau de vie supérieur/élevé* for *l'élévation du niveau de vie*).
- In Item 3(d)** Weaker candidates resorted to copying out the text, but the better ones saw the very straightforward way around the problem by converting verbs into nouns (*la création des emplois* for *créer des emplois*) or by turning an infinitive into a finite verb (*Il améliore les services publics* for *d'améliorer les services publics*). A pleasing number of candidates scored the maximum three marks on this question.
- In Item 3(e)** Many candidates focused irrelevantly on the first part of the paragraph and produced a general defence of tourism rather than the ways of ensuring that the host country actually benefits from it (respecting traditions and environment and making sure that the revenue generated remains within the host country).

Question 4

- Item 4(a)** Some candidates confused the percentages of who kept what, or wrote vaguely about *ces pays* without specifying which ones were meant, but many expressed the facts successfully without resorting to copying *les autres 80 euros revenant*. Some suggested that the average tourist spends only 100 euros. Few managed to express the third point (widening the gap between rich and poor [countries]) clearly.
- Item 4(b)** This was quite well handled by those who realised that the easiest way to avoid 'lifting' was to convert nouns to verbs: *les prix augmentent* for *la hausse des prix*; *On/il consomme des ressources* for *la consommation des ressources*
- Item 4(c)** A surprising number failed to understand that the first part of the question simply required the paraphrasing of '*pieds dans l'eau*' as *au bord de la mer* or similar, but most were successful in expressing the tourists' desire for the same comforts which they enjoy at home.
- Item 4(d)** This item proved quite difficult. Many seemed to think that it was pollution of the sea or drinking water which was the problem. Few mentioned *l'urbanisation de la côte* as an alternative way of scoring one of the marks.
- Item 4(e)** This was very well done by a large number who saw the obvious way of avoid 'lifting' by the simple mechanism of expressing the relevant nouns as constructions involving infinitives or finite verbs, and did so successfully (*découverte* to *découvrir*; *préservation* to *préserver*; *amélioration* to *améliorer*. *Répartition* to *répartir* proved more taxing).

Question 5

The summary was better handled than sometimes in the past, with a pleasing proportion scoring 8. This question asks the candidates to summarise the main issues of the two texts in **Part (a)**. Being clear is part of the task – see **General Comments** above for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving mark-scoring information without a general introduction.

Candidates were required to summarise *'les bienfaits et dangers du tourisme de masse pour les pays en voie de développement'* as presented in the two texts. There were sixteen points for which marks were available, and it was by no means uncommon for candidates to score all ten available marks. Highest marks were scored by those who dealt simply and systematically with making the points without further elaboration and moving on. Others made one or two points several times over or got bogged down in unnecessary technicalities and scored poorly.

Part (b) gave candidates free rein to express their own preferences and desires unrelated to the text, an opportunity which was accepted by many who gave a variety of reasons to support their choices, often having interesting things to say about the geography, history, culture, gastronomy, tourist sites etc. of the countries involved. There were some rather bland responses along the lines of *"mes amis m'ont dit que c'est un beau pays et qu'il y a beaucoup de monuments intéressants à voir"* but these were counterbalanced by some original and genuinely personal responses.

The quality of language over the paper as a whole varied considerably. Verb tenses and forms were the most common sources of error, in particular the confusion of infinitives with past participles. Another common source of error was the indiscriminate use of pronouns of all sorts. In many cases, agreements of adjectives with nouns and of verbs with their subjects appeared largely random. The distinction between *qui* and *ce qui* (or indeed *ceux qui*) was widely ignored, and *ses*, *leur* and *leurs* appeared interchangeable. There was the usual tendency to confuse homophones: *ces/c'est/ses*; *et/es*; *ce/se/ceux*; *on/ont*; *sa/ça*; *son/sont*; and to adopt a purely phonetic approach to spelling. There were also a fair number of 'anglicisms' behind some of the vocabulary offered: *expecter*, *affordables*, *la monnaie* (money).

Although a small number of candidates found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, many candidates wrote with impressive fluency and accuracy, making their points in correct, idiomatic French which was a pleasure to read.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/03

Essay

General comments

Candidates were given a choice of 5 questions, one on each of the following topics; *Les Jeunes, Le Tourisme et les voyages, La Pollution, Les Progrès scientifiques et médicaux* and *L'Alimentation et les boissons*. The essays were marked out of 40, comprising of a maximum of 24 marks for Language and a maximum of 16 for Content. The overall level of performance on this paper was felt to be similar to that of previous years from the point of view of Language, and slightly lower from that of Content. Most candidates observed the rubric on the number of words to be used, some exceeded the recommended number, but not excessively so, and only a small minority wrote excessively long essays.

Whilst a small number of candidates produced essays that fell into the very good category for quality of language, overall, marks tended to fall in the adequate to good categories. However, towards the bottom of the range candidates showed only a tenuous grasp of the grammatical structures required at this level, writing essays that were riddled with serious errors. It should be noted that across the ability range there was a tendency for candidates to lose language marks because of mistakes that appeared to be due to carelessness rather than to a lack of linguistic ability. It is felt that if more time was spent on a thorough and systematic revision of candidates' work, such avoidable errors might be reduced in number.

Marks for content were mostly in the adequate category, candidates tending to display some knowledge of the topic but which was not always relevant, and a more limited capacity to develop an argument leading to a conclusion. More able candidates wrote essays that showed sound knowledge, that were generally relevant and that displayed more ability to develop an argument. Weaker candidates displayed poor reasoning skills allied to a tendency to write unfocused essays on the overall topic rather than on the specific question set.

Examples of common language problems follow:

- Misspellings of common words such as : *problème, société, environnement, ressources, exemple, chacun, tout le monde, graisse, atmosphère, déchets*.
- Gender of important and commonplace nouns such as : *problème, boisson, santé, manque, chose, relation, personne*.
- Confusion/misuse of : *a/à, ou/où, c'est/ces, ses/ces, leur/leurs, ce qui/ceux qui, tandis que/pendant que, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, parce que/à cause de, essence/pétrole*.
- Constructions : *les jeunes sont donnés la permission, les dangers que les jeunes sont menacés par, les conseils que les jeunes ont besoin de*.
- Omission of *ne* as in *il y a que deux problèmes principaux*.
- Past participles used as infinitives and vice-versa : *ceci peut pollué, les mers sont polluer par l'industrie*.
- Failure to link a verb to its subject : *des machines qui nous aidons, ce qui les poussent*.
- Adjectival agreements in general.
- Agreement of past participle with *avoir* : *Ils ont essayés...*
- Inaccurate use of accents even when using words featuring in the question such as *écologie, éduquer*.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

This was a popular question and it attracted candidates across the ability range. Many candidates appeared to have prepared an essay on young people's problems which was often over-generalised and not focused on the question, writing rather descriptive answers about general difficulties within the family, and tending to concentrate on some of the causes of the generation gap such as parental disapproval of young people's tastes in dress and music and of their choice of friends. References to authority were generally restricted to parental authority. However, stronger candidates also considered attitudes towards authority in the shape of teachers and the police, for instance.

Question 2

This was quite a popular question. Many candidates did not seem to have a clear grasp of what was meant by *patrimoine*, and repeated the word throughout their essay to avoid defining it, which led to insufficient exemplification. Some, however, argued the case for protecting local tradition and culture. Those who realised the importance of '*Le principal bienfait*' generally disagreed with the statement and showed a good understanding of the economic benefits of tourism in terms of the employment and income it brings, enabling less- developed countries to improve their infrastructure.

Question 3

This attracted the greatest number of candidates, but overall was not particularly well answered. Many weaker candidates succumbed to the temptation to write a general, rather descriptive essay on various forms of pollution with the result that there was little or no argument leading to a conclusion. This meant that marks for content were inevitably low. However, quite a high proportion of this type of essay contained impressive subject-specific vocabulary. Stronger candidates examined ways in which present-day and future technology can work for the protection of the environment and towards a reduction of climate change and global warming, referring, for example, to alternative sources of energy, the development of electric and hybrid cars and bio fuels.

The need for international cooperation and more education on environmental issues were recognised. The overall outlook of candidates who focused on the question was one of optimism.

Question 4

This question attracted the smallest number of candidates. However, interesting views on the scientific, moral and religious aspects of human cloning were expressed, quite often with passion and fervour. Some candidates were firmly against cloning because in their opinion it amounts to nothing more than man trying to act as God, whilst other focused more on the practical, medical advantages that could result, such as replacement organs.

Stronger candidates looked at both sides of the argument, evaluated, and came to a reasoned conclusion, and tended to score well for content. Weaker candidates tended to over-exaggerate either the positive or the negative aspects of cloning – or both – without producing a convincing argument.

Question 5

This was a popular question and on the whole was well answered. Many who opted for it were well informed on the topic and produced sound subject-specific vocabulary within their argument. The general view was that whilst many people know what constitutes a healthy diet, there are nevertheless too many aspects of modern life that work against its implementation. Established eating habits, convenience foods, fast-food outlets, working mothers and the wrong sort of role models were given as examples of obstructions to healthy eating. It was clear from essays written by candidates from Centres in many different countries world-wide that it is the proliferation of the Western diet with its attendant health problems that is largely responsible for the need to educate people on the subject of healthy eating.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/04

Texts

General comments

The spread of marks on this paper was reasonably wide, with a fair number of candidates towards the top end, and a few consistently good performances. There were also a number of candidates who scored no points as their scripts were either blank, or consisted of material copied from the examination paper, or paraphrases of the passages set for commentary, with no reference to the question or evidence of textual knowledge.

All questions were attempted, the most popular texts being the Maupassant stories, *Candide*, *Les Mains sales*, *Vipère au poing* and *L'Étranger*. Few candidates answered on Giono, the essay question on Maupassant or the first essay question on *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Only a handful of candidates penalised themselves by writing at excessive length, but this infringement of the rubric continues to cause concern, in that it can lower a candidate's grade unnecessarily.

A problem that continually surfaces is that some candidates do not state, in **Section B**, which essay they are attempting, and unfortunately it is not always easy to tell. There is no need for candidates to waste time copying out the title, but they should be told to write clearly the number and letter of the question they have chosen.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Maupassant: *Boule de Suif et autres contes de la guerre*

- (a) Almost all candidates successfully identified the context of the extract set for commentary. They showed a good understanding of the character's pain and indignation caused by the change in attitude of the other characters once their requirement had been satisfied. Many alluded to the irony of their failure to share their food, given Boule de Suif's generosity towards them earlier in the journey. Better answers also drew attention to her desperate attempt to maintain her composure, and the fact that she did not indulge in recriminations. The second part of the question was less well handled, in that most answers failed to focus on Madame Loiseau, preferring to comment in general terms on the hypocrisy of the travellers. There was a tendency to describe her, inaccurately, as part of the 'upper class' brigade in the coach. What was needed here was reference to her attitudes towards Boule de Suif earlier in the story, to underline the sheer nastiness of her inconsistency. Thirdly, comments on the role of the nuns mostly included justifiable accusations of hypocrisy and lack of Christian charity. The best answers gave an account of the role of the older nun in persuading Boule de Suif to satisfy the Prussian officer's demands with spurious biblical references in support of what was self-evidently an example of preposterous casuistry.

- (b) There were few attempts to answer this question. Those who chose it tended to rely on general knowledge and showed little or no understanding of Maupassant's use of satire, irony or caricature. As a consequence of this limitation, essays generally lacked appropriate examples, and those that appeared to be chosen because the candidate knew them, rather than because they offered suitable material in relation to the question.

Question 2

Voltaire: *Candide*

- (a) By no means did all answers correctly and clearly identify the two men killed by Candide. There was even some confusion about which one was Jewish. The most significant (and surprising) omission here was detail about the role of the Grand Inquisitor. Candidates could infer from the text that he was important, and that his death would bring recriminations, but very few could say why. There was very little commentary on the bizarre domestic arrangements in which Cunégonde had been living up to the moment of Candide's arrival, and unnecessary paraphrase and reiteration of her surprise at Candide's ability to show such aggression. Some of the best answers perceived Cunégonde's consistent preoccupation with her own comfort and welfare in contrast to Candide's overriding concern for her rather than for himself. Commentary on the life story of the old woman was generally sound, varying somewhat in accuracy but considerably in the amount of relevant detail provided. The third question generated many answers which went no further than a general comment on discrimination. Surprisingly few candidates were able to refer to the ambiguous status of Don Issachar in society. Given the vagueness of many answers in the first section concerning the Grand Inquisitor, it was inevitable that little was offered here by way of relevant comment on the regime of the Roman Catholic Church at the time.
- (b) The quality of answers on the subject of Candide's name was very variable. There was a high level of awareness of the notion that he is, at the outset, innocent and pure. That said, many answers dwelt at unnecessary length on material drawn from the opening chapter. Most made appropriate reference to Candide's belief in Pangloss's philosophy, and went on to say, correctly, that this belief was put to the test after Candide left the château. What was then required was an analysis of the way Candide's belief is gradually but systematically eroded by experience, as Voltaire exposes the inability of the Optimists to explain the real world. Surprisingly few answers gave a convincing account of this process.

Question 3

Sartre: *Les Mains sales*

- (a) Most who tackled the commentary had no difficulty in explaining what Louis was talking about at the beginning of the extract: the disposal of Hoederer. The variable quality of answers lay in the level of detail provided about the significance of this plan and the contrasting attitudes to power-sharing which lay behind it. In the second section, many weaker answers were able only to refer to Hugo's desire to be involved in direct action, whereas the better ones provided some insight as to the psychological explanation for this need. Overall, however, it seemed that few had a clear perception of these issues, which were set out by Sartre in his own commentaries on the play. The third section produced a wide variety of responses. As usual, candidates tended to dwell on the idea that Hugo killed Hoederer out of jealousy. Those who examined Hugo's bibulous soul-searching and exposed his fundamental unsuitability for the task were duly rewarded.
- (b) Answers to the essay question were generally fairly disappointing. Many candidates seemed uncertain as to what the answer was. They conveyed little or no understanding of Sartre's perspective on the matter, again clearly stated in his commentaries, which give all the credit to Hoederer for dismissing the idea that political virginity can be retained in the real world. Candidates seemed to fight shy of the important notion that it might have been more constructive, on balance, for Hugo to move on and make a positive contribution to the Party rather than to cling to an idea which, for all its idealism, smacks of an Anouilh heroine rather than of an existentialist. Bizarrely, there were few references to Existentialism in these answers, whereas they were legion (but often unhelpful), in essays on the Camus text.

Question 4Giono: *Regain*

- (a) There were few attempts at the commentary, and little success in answering the questions with precision and relevance. The first section produced a good deal of paraphrase, often not enough to display an awareness of Arsule's concerns about the derelict state of the farm. Candidates did show some understanding of Arsule's influence on Panturle's way of life, but weaker answers even failed to appreciate the significance of her recommendation that he change his shirt before going out. Not all answers explained the significance of the box of matches, with the result that credit could only be given in some cases.
- (b) Those who chose the essay question tended to fare rather better on this occasion. Most could appreciate the significance of the seasons, the harshness of the elements, the battle for survival in which nature might seem either hostile or benevolent, and the productive power of nature when effectively harnessed by the characters.

Section 2**Question 5**Rostand: *Cyrano de Bergerac*

- (a) Only very few candidates attempted this question, and their answers were so insubstantial that it is not possible to draw any useful conclusions.
- (b) This question was attempted by almost all candidates who had studied this text. They generally displayed a good knowledge of the plot, and a clear perception of Cyrano's sacrifice in the interest of Roxane's love for Christian. There were many competent accounts of the aspects of the story which attract sympathy for Cyrano. Some pointed out, correctly, that certain elements of Cyrano's life generate our admiration as well as our sympathy. On the other hand, much uncertainty surrounded the issue as to what constitutes tragedy, and high marks were difficult to achieve because of this lack of understanding of the terms of reference. For example, candidates did not point out that a sense of wasted potential, or an acutely painful awareness of the cruelty of fate can elevate sad events to the level of universal tragedy. Such issues were not evoked in answers which, nevertheless, showed sensitivity to the character's predicament.

Question 6Bazin: *Vipère au poing*

- (a) Many who attempted this question gave elaborate explanations of the symbolism, dwelling at length on the opening scene and giving appropriate examples of the image of the viper applied to Mme Rezeau throughout the novel. There was a tendency to provide narrative accounts of her 'poisonous' behaviour and its effect on the lives of Brasse-Bouillon and his siblings. A good answer, offered by a number of candidates, needed to examine the ending of the story, rather than merely quoting it as a final reference to the image of the snake. To score well here, it was essential to appreciate the long-term damage to Jean's personality by referring to the fact that he becomes suspicious, cynical and aggressive. The negative implications of the title were not always understood, as many candidates took the view that his victory over his mother simply echoed the strangling of the snake at the outset, and that the hero bowed out to loud applause. A more balanced view, taking into account the damaging effect of the battle on his personality, was suitably rewarded.
- (b) Candidates were mostly more adept at asserting their solidarity with Brasse-Bouillon against his mother than justifying their answers as the question required. Many essays did little more than list Mme Rezeau's atrocities against her children. What was wanted for a good score on this topic was not merely an account of her regime and a statement that Brasse-Bouillon was right to object to it. The psychological development of the narrator should be seen as a systematic process of disfigurement. Many candidates seemed unaware that the question invited them to show that they were sympathetic to the narrator's violent and even shocking feelings and actions generated by his mother, because of the lasting damage these did to him as a human being.

Question 7Camus: *L'Étranger*

- (a) The mark scheme for this component has, for many years, included the idea that a 'black and white' perception of characters by the candidate is not worthy of high marks. Thus, those who saw this essay title as an opportunity to echo many of society's objections to Meursault's behaviour were consigned to the appropriate mark band. Whilst examiners would not, of course, penalise candidates for expressing disapproval of Meursault's indifference and lethargy, they expect to find some account of the negative feelings Camus wished to evoke about the conventions of this society and those who regard their contravention as immoral or criminal. Thorough answers also pointed out that Meursault's assertions of his personal values, as compared with the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of those who condemn him, can be seen in a positive light.
- (b) Many answers to this question were thorough, and showed a good knowledge of the text. The most common shortcoming was a tendency to spend too long expounding the examples of Meursault's undemonstrative behaviour towards those closest to him, at the expense of an analysis of his dealings with the representatives of the legal system. It is, after all, his inability to relate to these people, and his refusal to discuss his actions and relationships in the terms which they would dictate, which mark him out for eradication.

Question 8Radiguet: *Le Diable au corps*

- (a) Candidates were broadly aware that the statement contained in the question was true. However, most answers were superficial and inadequately structured. The narrator's dictatorial attitude was properly cited as a main cause of the problem, as were the war and the attitude of the adult world. Little was written about the artificial nature of the relationship in terms of the narrator's erroneous perception of his ability to play the Romantic hero. Many answers also lacked the required analysis of the part played by the telling of lies in undermining the relationship.
- (b) Only very few candidates attempted this question, and no useful conclusions can be drawn from their answers. The issue of role-playing is perhaps a subtle one, but is central to the idea of the flawed hero, and no answer on this topic conveyed its significance.