

FRENCH

Paper 9779/01
Speaking

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reaction(s) to it
- in Part II, choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where the target language is spoken
- in Parts I and II, be prepared to take the lead in the conversation
- in Parts I and II, be ready to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion.

General comments

Many candidates performed well in this year's examination. In general, candidates made effective use of the preparation time and gave thought to issues raised by their chosen article.

There were some instances of candidates attempting to read out written mini-essays by way of the summary: candidates should be reminded that this is not permitted.

It is advisable for candidates to keep to the specified duration of 1 minute for the summary; where candidates give an over-long summary, examiners will interrupt them so that full time is available for the discussion.

In the majority of cases, all administrative matters were dealt with in a meticulous way. There were just a few administrative issues to note:

- Where Centres are unable to manage certain dates, it is important to specify this in advance, in the visit arrangement form, with full details of any dates to be avoided. It is not possible to accommodate late requests for changes to the date of the visit.
- Complete batches of topic forms in hard copy should be received by Examiners via first class post at least two weeks before the examination date. In the case of large Centres it is helpful if the topic forms are received as early as possible.
- Centres are requested to provide the Examiner on his/her arrival with a working mark sheet which has been completed with name, candidate number etc. It is helpful if the sheet can be completed in the order of examining rather than in candidate number order.

Discussion of Article

The two most popular articles proved to be those on electronic cigarettes and on the values of young people. The article that was chosen least frequently was the one on school uniform.

Card 1: Education

Of the relatively small proportion of candidates who chose this card, the strongest among them showed themselves able to formulate with commendable confidence ideas about such matters as the following: the advantages and disadvantages of school uniform; the negative attitudes nurtured by many pupils towards their uniform; how pupils who fail to conform with the regulations might be punished; whether, in schools where pupils have to wear a uniform, teachers should also be required to wear standardised dress; and various other aspects of school life and school rules. In the more general discussion of the wider heading *Education*, topics covered included, for example, the following: what constitutes a good education; specialization; religious education; extra-curricular activities; university tuition fees; the role of parents in the

education of their children; whether children learn more outside the classroom than in it; the comparative virtues of mixed and single-sex education and the problem of equality of opportunity in the educational world.

Card 2: Health and fitness

Many candidates showed themselves to be both well informed and well able to express their views on such matters as the reasons for the growing popularity of electronic cigarettes, the effectiveness of anti-smoking legislation and publicity, the controversy surrounding the packaging of cigarettes, the sale of tobacco online and the health risks presented by smoking. Topics covered when the discussion was broadened included, for example, the following: obesity, eating disorders and food-related illnesses; alcohol abuse; the merits and demerits of the NHS; psychiatric illnesses; the dangers posed to health by the use of electronic gadgets; euthanasia and the use of animals in medical research.

Card 3: Work and leisure

In the first part of the discussion, candidates who opted for this card were generally quite forthcoming about such issues as the reasons why stress is becoming an increasingly serious problem, the factors that result in heightened levels of stress, strategies calculated to combat the problem and the action that firms need to take in an endeavour to promote a healthy working environment. The more general discussion that followed ranged over such areas as the following: reasons for the high level of unemployment in many countries and its consequences for society; the role of schools in preparing pupils for the world of work; the retirement age; discrimination in the workplace; the abuse of the benefit system and the role of trade unions.

Card 4: Young people

This card generated some particularly lively discussions. Candidates were not afraid to disagree with the results of the poll described and many talked about values not mentioned on the card that were dear to them, not least among which were social networking and cultural values. Many expressed an interest in politics and gave voice to a wide variety of views on the issues and personalities given prominence during the 2015 election campaign. Topics covered in the second part of the discussion included, for example, the following: juvenile delinquency and how best to punish juvenile offenders; young people's attitude towards health, towards the institution of marriage and towards the environment; influences on the behaviour of young people and the generation gap.

Topics

A smiling confidence and stamina marked the approach of the great majority of the candidates, suggesting that preparation for this component had generally been sustained and robust. The majority of topics chosen made for interesting, wide-ranging discussions in which candidates demonstrated both excellent factual knowledge and clear evidence that they had thought about the material they had researched and arrived at balanced opinions and conclusions. Just a few chose topics that were simply too factual in nature and/or too narrow in their focus with the result that, despite the examiner's best efforts, the discussion lacked depth and analysis. In a fair number of cases, the introduction proved to be the weakest part of the performance. Intonation was often relatively weak in this part of the examination. It should be noted that the introduction should not exceed 1 minute and that if it does, candidates should expect to be interrupted.

Examples of the wide range of topics chosen in this series are given below.

Socio-economic issues: La laïcité; Le voile islamique en France; Les bidonvilles; Le dopage dans le sport en France; L'énergie nucléaire; Le mariage homosexuel en France; Le droit du travail en France; L'Immigration.

Literature: Britannicus; Le Malade Imaginaire; Le Misanthrope; Les Mains sales; Le Silence de la Mer; Moderato Cantabile; Le gone du Chaâba; Boule de Suif; Candide; Germinal; Poèmes saturniens; Rimbaud; Gide; Thérèse Desqueyroux; La Princesse de Clèves; La Peste; Léopold Senghor – poète et Président; Balzac.

Film: Intouchables; A bout de soufflé; La Haine; Le cinéma comique français des années 1960 et 1970; Les films de Louis Malle; Xavier Dolan; La Bataille d'Alger; L'homosexualité dans le cinéma français de 1950 à aujourd'hui.

Music: Messiaen; Debussy; Ravel; Berlioz; Bizet; La Querelle des Bouffons; Serge Gainsbourg; Edith Piaf.

Art and Architecture: 'L'haussmannisation' de Paris; Magritte; Le Corbusier; L'Impressionnisme; Matisse; Manet.

History: L'affaire Dreyfus; Louis XI; La Déclaration des Droits de 'Homme et du Citoyen; Robespierre; Charles de Gaulle; Le régime de Vichy; Napoléon Bonaparte; La Guerre d'Algérie; François Mitterand; La colonisation française du Maroc; L'Indochine; L'Algérie française 1848-1914.

Political: Le conflit en République Centrafricaine; le Front National; François Hollande; Dominique Strauss-Kahn; Les manifestations de mai '68.

Miscellaneous: L'abbé Pierre; Claude Lévi-Strauss; L'attentat contre Charlie Hebdo; L'Académie Française; Le nationalisme en Corse; Le nationalisme au Québec; Les langues régionales.

Language

The strongest candidates demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary and syntax and a commendable level of accuracy. However, in general, accuracy was an area for improvement. Particular areas of weakness included: subject-verb agreement, preposition and article combinations (*de les* and *à les* plus noun were frequently given), and adjectival concordances. At the lowest end of the range, candidates quite frequently used the infinitive where a finite verb was required. By and large, pronunciation was good, as was intonation. However, there persisted a certain tendency on the part of a relatively small number of candidates to sound the final syllable of such words as *les*, *nous*, *sans*, *port*, *tabac* and *climat*. As in previous series, a large number of candidates did not pronounce *alcool* and *pays* correctly.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/02

Reading and Listening

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
- pay particular attention to conveying the required information to the examiner in unambiguous language.

General comments

Performances spanned the whole of the ability range. In the strongest scripts, candidates made a good attempt to express themselves in their own words, and their answers were concise and to the point. In weaker scripts there was sometimes a tendency to write over-long responses, copying substantial chunks of text from the question paper. In some cases, candidates provided various alternative answers or they incorporated surplus, contradictory information that invalidated correct information given elsewhere.

Part 1: Reading

Texte à lire 1

This exercise was often done well. However, at the lowest end of the range, there were a few candidates who struggled with most or all of the questions.

Question 1

This question was generally well done and the essential information – *ils ont l'esprit plus ouvert* and *ils sont plus autonomes/indépendants* – was concisely given. There were, however, a few instances of candidates providing very lengthy, entirely incorrect responses.

Question 2

All that was required here was a noun. *La peine, la douleur, la confusion, le dépaysement, le malaise* were all appropriate. Again, there were a few extremely long answers that were usually wide of the mark.

Question 3

A number of candidates copied out text word-for-word from the passage and did not therefore target the specific question asked. To score the mark, candidates needed to deduce from Pierre's statement "*J'ai constaté l'étroitesse de la pensée des Français*" that "*il pense qu'ils ont des idées limitées/des horizons bornés/l'esprit étroit*". The second part of the question proved to be quite straightforward for most, the explanation being that they had never had the experience of working abroad.

Question 4

A substantial proportion of the candidature had understood that his standard of living while he was working abroad was higher than his standard of living in France. A number of answers did not respond to *Comment son niveau de vie à l'étranger était-il différent ?* as they simply stated *Il avait une vie de luxe*, without making it clear whether they were referring to his life in France or his life abroad.

Question 5

This was the least well done question. The two pertinent points were the length of time that he had been absent and the fact that, as a result, his colleagues viewed him as bizarre. Many candidates simply repeated more or less verbatim the last two sentences of the fourth paragraph, notably that *On ne savait pas où le mettre* and that he was treated as someone *qui revenait de sept années de vacances*.

Question 6

Here again, many candidates gave very lengthy answers spanning several lines, mostly comprising direct lifts from the text. For a successful answer to this question, the pertinent points were that the new strategy enables the employees to remain in contact with their former boss and that it will make their return to the fold a lot easier.

Texte à lire 2

Most candidates scored highly in this exercise. Apart from the very weakest candidates, most gained at least half of the marks available. There was one instance of a candidate answering in the wrong language.

Question 7

The key word here was *manifeste*. Quite a lot of candidates confused it with *manifestation*.

Question 8

This question was well done. The vast majority of candidates understood that Ophélie was confused because her parents had brought her up as a vegetarian but had started eating meat again.

Question 9

Most candidates understood that Ophélie was mocked/teased. However, a fair number interpreted *la remise en question* to mean that they asked her questions about her vegetarianism rather than that they questioned (in the sense of challenged) it.

Question 10

Pesante was generally well understood, though there was a certain incidence of answers of the sort *petty, upsetting, depressing* and *heavy*.

Question 11

The vast majority of candidates demonstrated clear understanding of the fact that her ex-husband claimed that vegetarianism would harm the children's health. A few candidates omitted *health* and did not score.

Question 12

Most candidates had understood that the Breton businessman puts aside his vegetarianism at business dinners. Just a few transliterated the key phrase (*il*) *n'assume pas son végétarisme* – “*he does not assume his vegetarianism*”. In the second part of the question the phrase *par peur d'être vu comme un marginal* was also sometimes transliterated as *he fears being seen as a marginal*.

Question 13

Harcèlement moral was recognised by the majority of candidates as being *moral harassment/bullying*. The second point, however, proved more problematic mainly because of confusion between *végétalien* and *végétarien*.

Texte à lire 3

Question 14

Most candidates fared well and sometimes very well on this exercise, scores of 8 and above being seen quite frequently. In just a relatively small proportion of scripts, candidates' limited linguistic knowledge meant that they struggled to access the task.

Examples of errors frequently seen included the following: repeated use of *que* rather than *qui* ; renderings of the sort *a finit, a justement fini, a vient de, elle première année, a dis a moi, dit elle a devenu, elle a deviant, je pense ce surligne, ce refleche son situation, plus quelqu'une opposition, malgré que une opposés à, ses amies Russe devrait question le principe, le principaux qu'un repas serait servi, un plat pourrait servi, nous voirons, on voissait, si elle decide changer and on voit si elle decidait.*

The following lexical items caused difficulty to a significant number of candidates: *financial, animal cruelty, challenge* and *principle* even though *la souffrance animale* and *remise en question* figured in the previous passage. Some candidates did not know *fish* which they gave as *pêche*. *Job* was given variously as *un/une métier* and *un/une travaille*.

Texte à écouter 1

In the main, this exercise was done well or very well, with a significant number of candidates emerging with scores of 9 or 10 out of 10. However, at the other end of the range, there were a small number of candidates who scored 1 or 2 marks.

Question 15

Many candidates did not give a targeted response to the question (*Qu'est-ce qu'on faisait.....?*) and simply transcribed the phrase *Il sert le plus souvent de lit*. Other recurrent incorrect answers included *on lit* and *on boit*.

Question 16

Most candidates had understood that a *dossier* was introduced to support the back. Minor spelling errors of both *soutient* and *dossier* were tolerated where the meaning was clear, but in many cases candidates' attempts to spell *dos* did not communicate the meaning. For example: *qui soutient le d'eau* or *le doux* could not be credited.

Question 17

This was the least well done question in this exercise. One mark was available for *pour être élégant* and one for *pour boire du thé/du café*. A significant number of candidates simply transcribed what they had heard and did not address the specific question asked. Correct transcriptions of *C'est un meuble pour la conversation élégante entre gens élégants* were accepted for the first point, but for the second, it was not sufficient simply to transcribe *Cela correspond à l'arrivée du thé et du café sur les tables françaises* which does not target the question.

Question 18

This proved straightforward for the majority of candidates, though weaker candidates sometimes struggled. Incorrect answers seen included *La table était l'immeuble le clé pour les médecins et les amis, Avec certains plus normales. Les gens français(sic) and Ils deviennent quelque chose de profond ou savaché.*

Question 19

Many candidates scored the first mark for providing the information that the settee was at the centre of the room. A good number also gained the second, for the information that everything was organised around the settee. The most frequent error was to mis-transcribe the phrase *tout s'organise* as *tous organise(nt)*,

Question 20

Most candidates gained the mark attached to *c'était un lieu de discussion* or *à parler/à discuter*. Some candidates attempted to provide a lengthy transcription and this sometimes led to problems such as *un nouveau lieu de discussion* and *un nouveau de la lieu discussion*.

Question 21

The information that the size of living rooms became twice that of kitchens was correctly given in the majority of scripts. Where the mark was not scored, it was either because of a mistake in the transcription of *séjours* or because it was suggested that it was settees that became twice the size of kitchens.

Question 22

Most candidates correctly provided the information that the settee became a bed.

Texte à écouter 2

Relatively few candidates scored full or very high marks in this exercise, but there were many satisfactory performances.

Question 23

The vast majority of answers given here were correct: Rachida had been fighting for women's rights. Just a few suggested that she had been advising Sarkozy throughout the period in question.

Question 24

This proved to be the least well done of the nine questions: the main stumbling block was *zones sensibles* but *doués* also caused problems, e.g. *hard done by, driven, troubled*.

Question 25

Most candidates scored at least one of the two points available for this question.

Question 26

A good number of scripts gave the correct information, notably that Rachida's organisation helps young girls with promotion and social advancement. A flawed answer that recurred was *her association helped them to promote themselves*.

Question 27

About half the candidates demonstrated comprehension of the idea expressed in the utterance *cumuler des cours à l'université et un emploi à plein temps*, notably that she attended university and held down a job at the same time. A certain number interpreted *cumuler* to mean that she did lots of courses at university and quite often went on to add that she then got a job or that she had a part-time job.

Question 28

The statement that working at the weekends does not generate enough money to pay for the rent or for books was well understood by most candidates. The answers of some less strong candidates were either too vague and/or were clearly guesses, e.g. *She didn't earn enough money, It didn't pay enough for her work, Impacts social life, Doesn't help your train of life ("train de vie")*.

Question 29

The vast majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 30

Again, the vast majority of candidates scored the mark. Just a few understood *se faire caricaturer* to mean *stereotyped* or *characterised*.

Question 31

Most candidates scored the mark. Where incorrect answers were given, it was usually because candidates misunderstood the phrase *il ne faut pas se priver d'agir*, e.g. *she has privacy and rather than pretending to do it*. Just a few had recourse to guesswork of the sort *Get her message across and she can help people* and *She can put pressure on politicians*.

Texte à écouter 3

This year the summary exercise tended to be the least well done of the three listening exercises. Quite a lot of candidates considerably exceeded the permitted 100 words: a few wrote over 200. In the interests of fairness, credit could not be given for points made after the word limit had been reached. Also significant was the omission or distortion of key points: examples included *Ils sont déjà au moins 170 à brouter les pelouses des entreprises parisiennes* – “there are at least 170 sheep cutting the grass in Paris”, *La Mairie de Paris compte désormais les utiliser* – “He uses them”, *Ces moutons seront expérimentés* – “they were trialled”, *j'avais des moutons tout autour de mon usine* – “he saw sheep around his office” and *font en continu le labeur d'un jardinier pour 25% moins cher* – “they are 25% cheaper”. Items that were quite commonly misunderstood were *la livraison* – accommodation, provision, a place for exercise; *un berger* – a hairdresser, a manicurist, a vet and *entretien* – interview. A number of candidates misunderstood one or more of the numbers given in the recording: 170 was given variously as 160, 162, 171 and 180; 2 as 12; 3000 as 2000 and 3,000,000; 240 as 200, 250 and 400; and 25% as 20%, 26%, 27% and 55%.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/03
Writing and Usage

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, choose a title on which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and lexis
- in Part I, plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments
- in Part I, write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- in Part II, read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence(s)
- in Parts I and II, carefully proofread their responses.

General comments

The selection of essay topics in this summer's paper covered School life, corruption in politics, the importance of the Internet in the modern era, the health of the planet and its inhabitants and the joys associated with sport. The usage section of the paper tested knowledge of verb forms in **Exercise 1** including sequence of tenses with *si*, the imperative, preceding direct object, use of reflexive verbs and subjunctive usage. **Exercise 2** tested candidates' ability to manipulate language and included structures used after *avant* and *à cause*, use of passive voice, use of relative adjective and replacement of direct by indirect speech. **Exercise 3** provided candidates with a newspaper article about priests combining a holiday by the sea with duties in a local parish.

Overall, candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of the paper and most adhered closely to the rubric. There were, however, some very long essays in excess of 750 words. In many cases this proved counterproductive for candidates since they tend to self-penalise when they are not concise. Often these candidates do not use paragraphing appropriately or appear to have worked out an overall structure to their essays. Language errors accumulate and arguments can become repetitive and rambling. There were some very good essays at the upper end which showed maturity of thought as well as idiomatic and accurate language usage. The candidates concerned revealed a strong engagement with the topics and were able to deploy a large range of structures and vocabulary in support of their arguments.

Most candidates were able to write relevant, if at times superficial, answers to the essay questions set and it was clear that topic areas had been studied, appropriate vocabulary learned and opinions formed. There were, however, a number of candidates who struggled to convey their meaning as they did not have the knowledge and control of grammatical structures and idiom in order to express themselves. In these cases, arguments were often unclear and long explanations in poor French were given to describe situations or to make very minor points. In essays of this type, candidates displayed poor linguistic awareness, clumsy expression and even a tendency to use English or Spanish words when the French word was not known.

It must be said, however, that in the large majority of cases, candidates appeared well prepared for the challenges of the paper and were able to offer some interesting ideas on a range of contemporary issues.

Common errors in the essay section involved:

- incorrect genders of common words such as *âge*, *outil*, *monde*, *avantage*, *public*, *crime*, *manque*, *problème*, *service*, *effet*, *thème*, *rôle*, *type*, *programme*, *aspect*
- overuse of *le taux*, often incorrectly used for *le nombre*
- misspellings such as *exemple*, *personnellement*, *traditionel*, *gouvernement*, *significant*, *cases* (for *cas*)

- numerous accent errors such as *idèntite, societé, admèttre, existé, créés* (past participle), *façile*
- anglicisms such as *actuellement (en fait), espace (place), change (changement), stage (étape), définitivement, l'internet et dangerous*
- incorrect use of a past participle agreement such as *ils ont menés*
- use of *mieux* for *meilleur*, *mal* for *mauvais*, *bien* for *bon*
- failure to discriminate between the forms of *leur* and *leurs* such as *leur enfants, leurs donner* and use of *leur* for *eux*
- phonetic spellings such as *ce* for *c'est* or *ceux*, *ses* for *ces* and vice versa
- incorrect formation of reflexive verbs, particularly in *nous* form, such as *nous devons s'occuper de la planète*
- paragraphs starting with inappropriate link words such as *aussi, ensuite, alors*
- problems with formation of *corrompre*, use of *convénient* for *convenable* and *isolation* for *isolement*.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Discursive Essay

The essay question gives candidates the opportunity to discuss their chosen title in any way that they wish. There is no single correct answer or viewpoint. Candidates' arguments should be convincing and have a degree of balance.

Most candidates adhered to the instructions in the rubric about the suggested number of words but a significant number did not. Many wrote in excess of 750 words.

Candidates appeared to have understood the major implications of the questions set and to have acquired a good knowledge from their reading of French texts and articles. In general, candidates were able to offer some genuine personal insights into the topics.

In some cases, the opening paragraph was an area of weakness. A carefully considered opening paragraph helps to set the tone and parameters of the argument. A definition of the terms involved in the question also helps to set the essay off in the right direction. It is, however, important that candidates do not make extravagant claims in their introduction which they cannot then fulfil.

1(a) « À l'école aujourd'hui, on n'apprend rien sans souffrir. » Êtes-vous d'accord ?

This question was only attempted by a small number of candidates. It was, on the whole, well answered with candidates having many differing views of the role of school in the modern world. It was clear that candidates had strong feelings about the importance of study within the school system. They recognised that to succeed it is necessary to work hard and take advantage of all that is on offer in school. They did, however, point out that there can be too much pressure caused by a constant stream of tests and examinations as well as large amounts of homework. Some candidates raised the issue of the link between homework and depression and referred to recent coverage of the topic by the UK media. Others mentioned the requirement to learn by rote as being common in France and a form of torture for some candidates. It was generally felt that school should be a place where candidates enjoy learning according to their interests and where they can become rounded individuals by taking part in activities such as music, drama and sport. Candidates made clear that too much systemisation in education can be oppressive and lead to a lack of motivation and, in the most extreme cases, mental breakdown. They referred to schools in China and Japan and expressed the view that a rigidly controlled curriculum and strict discipline lead to a lack of individuality and, in some cases, to suicide. Some candidates were keen to point out that our notion of suffering in the developed world is nothing compared to that in certain developing countries where candidates often have to walk miles to school, share one or two books among a class, and work in the open air or in classrooms that resemble shacks. It was pointed out that their desire to succeed and their work ethic put to shame many candidates in the West who are lazy and complain about everything.

1(b) « La politique est étroitement liée à la corruption. » Discutez de cette affirmation.

Relatively few candidates answered this question. The title elicited strong feelings among candidates, who did their best to describe cases where politics were clearly linked to corruption and then balancing this with examples of countries where corruption seemed to have less of a hold. They talked about the corrupting influence of power generally and referred to specific examples where leaders bought votes in elections or diverted aid funding into personal bank accounts. It was clear that candidates were deeply suspicious of all politicians and indeed anyone in power. The FIFA President Sepp Blatter came in for heavy criticism as did Dominique Strauss-Kahn. While stressing that democracies such as those in the UK and USA seemed less corrupt overall, they were not without blame since there were examples of cash for questions, MPs fiddling expenses and senators being indicted for accepting gifts and cash donations for personal use. Candidates tried hard to believe that politics could be divorced from corruption but there was a certain inevitability about the link in their minds. Overall, the question was well answered with some mature and telling insights into modern politics.

1(c) On dit que le plus grand accomplissement de notre ère est l'invention d'Internet. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

This was by far the most popular question. There was, therefore, a wide range of ability demonstrated across the essays from the very superficial to the very sophisticated. The title gave candidates of all levels of ability the chance to express their feelings about the rise of the Internet and its role in contemporary society. Most candidates attempted to provide some balance within their answers, describing the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet in our lives. Some candidates went further and talked of other accomplishments of the modern era and tried to create some kind of hierarchy of importance. Comments on the Internet ranged from the simple *Internet est une bonne chose* to the more sophisticated *Internet, c'est un outil et un privilège*. Candidates described the benefits of the Internet as the facility of communication between family, friends and business colleagues, the sharing of knowledge, the creation of communities to fight for causes such as equality, civil rights and saving the environment. In contrast to these advantages, candidates could see that the disadvantages were manifold. These included cyberbullying, loss of social skills, obesity, lack of privacy, Internet porn and other ramifications such as the death of record shops, bookshops and small shops as more and more people shop online. For many *le cauchemar orwellien* that is the Internet is a necessary evil that we must learn to use carefully and in moderation. Other accomplishments mentioned with which the Internet was compared were peace in Europe, the development of the UN, EU and NATO and advances in medicine. There were many different ways to approach this question and most candidates were able to express a view and provide some relevant illustration.

1(d) « Pour que nous soyons en bonne santé, il faut que notre planète le soit aussi. » Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

This was the second most popular question but was often not particularly well answered. Many essays lacked relevance to the title. These types of essays, on the whole, listed features of either public health or environmental issues without relating them one to the other. Candidates who scored more highly for the development and organisation of ideas referred to the overlap between the health of the world's population and the environment in which we live. They pointed to physical health issues such as respiratory diseases and cancers caused by pollution and they explained that these problems were of our own making since we are destroying our planet by the emission of greenhouse gases. They also made reference to climate change which was leading to devastating natural disasters such as floods and famine leaving people either maimed physically and mentally or dead. It was clear to many candidates that we are subject to influences from our environment and these can determine the state of our health. Some referred to the heat waves in France which are the result of global warming and lead to serious repercussions for the health of the very young and the very old. Overall, though, there were many essays which talked about obesity, heart disease and cancer caused by diet and inactivity. A discussion of ways in which we compromise our own health by our own lack of self-control and our modern sedentary lifestyle was appropriate but many candidates tended to go no further, making little reference to how the state of our health may also be linked to that of the planet. Other candidates described the current state of the environment in detail giving many (often incorrect) statistics, with little reference to its effects on human health.

1(e) « Un monde sans sport, c'est un monde sans joie. » Dans quelle mesure est-ce que vous partagez ce jugement ?

Relatively few candidates attempted this question. The title gave them a chance to consider what it is about sport that makes it so popular throughout the world. The question was clearly understood. Responses varied widely in terms of the sophistication of candidates' approach. Most candidates were well able to describe the enjoyment and excitement engendered by sport whether it be as a player or a spectator. They mentioned the physical and psychological benefits of taking part in sport, the release of endorphins bringing about a sense of pleasure and happiness. They also referred to the benefits of playing in a team, learning personal responsibility, working alongside others, and experiencing ups and downs. Many mentioned events such as the World Cup or the Olympic Games which bring the world together in a shared experience that creates a sense of wellbeing, co-operation and unity. Those who were less in favour of sport were keen to point out that it can also bring about discord, bitter rivalry, greed and corruption. They referred to the recent FIFA scandals and the scourge of drugs within sport. Overall, though, most candidates felt that sport had a very long history and that it brought life and light to existence in all countries whether they be the rich developed countries or those that are very poor and where sport is often seen as a means of escaping from reality. All candidates were able to understand the parameters of the question and show some personal response at their particular level.

Part II: Usage

Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well understood by candidates with most achieving 3 or 4 out of 5 marks. Incorrect answers were distributed across all questions. Examples of incorrect answers given included:

Question 2 – *pouverrions, pourrait, aurions pu, pouviourons*

Question 3 – *Réfléchise, Réflèche, Réflechies*

Question 4 – *a prites*

Question 5 – *nous être maquillant, nous se maquillés, être se maquillés, avoir se maquiller*

Question 6 – *furent*

Exercise 2

This exercise tested a range of grammatical points. Few candidates achieved full marks but many achieved 3 or 4 out of 5. Incorrect answers seen included the following:

Question 7 – *être partis, de partent pour*

Question 8 – *de son départure, de son partir, de qu'il soit parti*

Question 9 – *ont été misées,*

Question 10 – *ce qu'en, ce qui, ce que*

Question 11 – *s'abandonnaient, ont étaient abandonnées*

Exercise 3

Candidates of all abilities achieved good marks in this exercise, showing that they had understood both the content and grammatical structure of the passage. **Questions 16, 22, 28** and **31** were some of the clearer discriminators although incorrect answers were distributed across the whole exercise.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/04
Topics and Texts

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- read the question with care and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close attention to the question
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid simply retelling the story.

General comments

Many candidates gave a strong performance in this examination. Answers were often well planned. At the highest end of the range, there were some exceptional responses which demonstrated an impressive acuity of insight.

The effectiveness of essays varied according to the quality of discussion and development of argument. Candidates often wrote at great length, in many cases including a variety of good ideas and anchoring their assertions with close reference to the texts or films. By contrast, there were also some very concise essays which evidenced closely argued and thoughtful evidence and also scored highly. It should be noted that, whatever the length of the answer, candidates are not required to write down a word count.

Answers on cultural topics generally indicated a good knowledge of the source material. There were relatively few instances of candidates taking a narrative approach. The quality of language was at least satisfactory, and often very good, indicating that candidates had built up the requisite vocabulary and were comfortable in writing extensively in the target language. All candidates answered the questions in the correct language.

The best answers to the second part of the paper, Texts, showed an excellent ability to organise material in direct reference to the terms of the question and also showed command of detail of the text studied; they proved to be cogent and considered arguments. Most candidates were well practised in structuring their answers, notably in defining the terms of the question with a clear introduction and conclusion. In the vast majority of scripts, candidates used appropriate register. However, there were a few instances of candidates referring to characters in abbreviated form, for example by using the initial letter of the characters' name throughout the essay; this is not to be recommended.

There was an increase in the number of candidates attempting the commentary question this year. Many, though not all, were aware of the methodology and technique of the exercise. The better answers were able to make convincing cases by close analysis of the text before widening the perspective to show how such elements were evident elsewhere in the work, or to show how specific themes or characters developed. Some candidates who attempted this type of question used the passage as a springboard for a wider, more general essay which therefore did not seek to analyse the passage set, while others, rather than providing an analysis of the passage, tended towards a more basic narrative approach to the passage before them. A few candidates engaged fully with the passage, considering the use of language and style in their commentary, and their enterprise made for very effective responses.

The remaining questions were of a conventional discursive nature, and candidates responded rather more evenly to these, some showing excellent analytical ability. There was a general improvement in the usage of close reference to the text to further analysis.

Part I: Cultural Topics

Question 1A

Answers drew exclusively on the film and the Némirovsky novel. There were some well-informed discussions of the elements of fear, which are more prominent in the novel, and it was the novel which tended to generate the material in considering that side of the question. Discussion of the film varied from thoughtful and even-handed analysis to a more sketchy approach which considered just a few points of Lucie's actions and motivation to evidence her courage. As last year, the novel was referenced far more extensively than the film. Good answers were able to integrate evidence from the sources to substantiate the argument; less persuasive answers gave little evaluation of what was clearly good knowledge of the material. Some pertinent observations contrasted the different intentions of the sources, noting that the novel dealt with the general reaction of individuals and families to war and chaos, whereas the film sought to present the Aubrac couple as heroes keeping alive the flames of patriotism.

Question 1B

Here, too, answers considered the film and the Némirovsky novel exclusively. There was good coverage, and sometimes extensive detail, of the lack of solidarity amongst the cast of characters in the novel. Discussion touched on the war's chaos unleashing personal contempt, selfishness, greed, as well as widespread fear and understandable desire for self-protection. The obvious exceptions to this canvas of human frailty were Hubert Péricand and the Michaud couple, and these served as a counterbalance in many essays. Analysis of the film varied in depth and detail. Some restricted themselves to the Aubrac couple, arguing that solidarity and patriotism were shown in their various dealings with the Nazis. Others, offering more complex answers, examined the range of Resistance activities and black marketeering shown in the film. A few made some useful remarks on the role of Raymond's parents. The best essays gave an evaluation of the 'jusqu'à quel point' element of the question; in some cases, though, this was overlooked.

Question 2A

The quality of responses ranged from satisfactory to very good. The best scripts showed a balance of discussion and wide-ranging detail to corroborate argument. There was thoughtful discussion of, and perceptive points made about, *Les 400 coups* and the novel. The film provoked comments about the repressive environment of school, the expectation of conformity and discipline. Answers which analysed Pennac's book included consideration of the author's own experience as a learner to those which thoughtfully evaluated the range of situations which are discussed from his teacher's perspective. Better answers made mention of the influence of home background, the readiness – or otherwise – to learn, and the learner as an unreflective consumer. Answers on *Entre les murs* were often less detailed and convincing, some just mentioning Souleymane and Morin, for example. The best answers considered not just a wider range of individual pupils, but also how the school authorities and teachers responded to or categorised the pupils, and how these elements colour the viewer's judgement.

Question 2B

Candidates mentioned a range of different concerns facing school and the education system generally. Many answers engaged thoughtfully with the question and framed discussion either thematically or by each work in turn. Here, too, generally good knowledge of the primary sources was in evidence. Whilst some answers concentrated on the two films and focused on the broadly negative experience of pupils at school, more discerning ones counterbalanced this with consideration of the school's interaction with the family context, attitudes towards authority and examples of ambition and positivity. Quite a few discussed the differences between the two film settings, contrasting the authoritarian but ethnically homogeneous Paris classroom of 1959 with the 'modern' approach of an ethnically diverse school in the 20th arrondissement of fifty years later, and drew useful conclusions. Those who had studied Pennac's book were able to draw both on the author's experience as a learner and his thoughts and experience as a teacher. There was some excellent analysis of how pupils were affected by teaching methods, family background and their manipulation at the hands of commercial firms. Less commonly mentioned elements which could have coloured opinions included the school at Blanc Mesnil and the role of the media in (mis-)representing schools. A few examined Pennac's conversations with former pupils which gave an insight into how school had helped them and what value they placed on their experience.

Question 3A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 3B

There was some lively discussion of the different facets of parent-child relations drawn from the sources. Different combinations of the film and texts were pressed into service to present evidence for well-informed argument. There was a wide variety of personal responses, many of which worked well.

Question 4A

This was a popular choice, and usually satisfactorily answered. All candidates chose to contrast *Un aller simple* with the film. It was encouraging that a weakness highlighted in last year's approach had been corrected, and that answers generally gave equal consideration to both sources. There was lively discussion of the theme and a number of equally valid approaches were taken. Candidates drew on a variety of material, giving rise to very original answers as they carried the discussion into different areas of the film and novel. Most answers examined the way in which men and women were portrayed in the film. A small number of scripts argued that, as Albin was Laurent's second 'mother', he could be considered a woman. However, those who pursued this tack did not develop the importance of the male-male relationship with regard to the other male-female pairings and instead tended to look at specific plot details. Many answers were convincing in the range of material which was put in the service of argument, indicating that candidates had an excellent knowledge of the film. Discussion of the novel varied in breadth of reference. As a minimum, answers discussed the Aziz-Lila and Jean-Pierre-Clémentine parallels. Not all candidates discussed the role of Valérie, who could offer a useful fulcrum for the two men's development; some very good answers discussed the relevance of Agnès, though she was omitted by many. There was good analysis of Jean-Pierre's development and role; discussion of Aziz tended to focus on the first half of the novel, though there were some excellent answers which examined the novel in the round. Nevertheless, the overall impression was one of confident knowledge being deployed to good effect, and many answers were persuasive and thoughtful.

Question 4B

This question attracted a good number of answers and generated interesting discussions and a range of approaches. All candidates who answered this question chose *Un aller simple* and the film as a basis of comparison. The interplay of real and pretend provoked engaged arguments from all candidates. In the film, the contrast between the lifestyle, habits and happiness of Albin and Renato and the stifled, social climbing, hypocritical, political couple of M and Mme Charrier was discussed with relish. Further, many candidates contrasted the role of Laurent's mother with that of Albin, bringing out both comic and serious elements with a degree of success. Many answers engaged with much of the plot detail, though not all were adept at drawing broader-based conclusions which showed the lampooning of social hypocrisy and double standards. The novel provided plenty of ammunition to explore the interweaving of mistaken or unclear identity (Aziz) with Jean-Pierre's desire to deny his roots, embrace writing and adopt a new life. Answers examined the first half of the novel in particular; more astute candidates mentioned the significance of Valérie and Irghiz, and traced Aziz's trip to Uckange with appropriate commentary. Answers often showed considerable engagement with the material. Many answers were written in high quality French.

Question 5A

There were some excellent, well-written and sophisticated answers which showed a detailed knowledge of the texts and a thorough understanding of the moral dilemmas and political aspects of both plays. All of the candidates had plenty of ideas about how the characters in both plays experienced a feeling of 'gratification happiness' despite their sacrifices, and of how the plays were similar and could be said to contain 'parallels'. They were differentiated by the ease and sophistication with which they were able to express this. Some answers dealt with each play in turn, while others were able to discuss both texts in the light of points being made.

Question 5B

All responses to this question were based on the two plays. Candidates showed a good knowledge of the texts and also showed some knowledge of the intellectual background which informed the action. Essays were generally well balanced, indicating ways in which characters were purely interested in revolutionary principles and to what extent they showed a concern for people. Candidates discussed and compared the actions and motivation of Hoederer, Hugo and Kaliayev with encouraging insight and analysis. Some felt that Stépan's position was justifiable in view of the treatment he had received in prison, but sometimes omitted to suggest that his inflexibility is not necessarily to be perceived as a strength. Answers which contrasted Stépan and Kaliayev were able to bring out the implications of the central debate between the two characters. Further shades of opinion were discussed with reference to the role and function of additional characters in the plays, though many answers confined themselves to the revolutionaries already mentioned by name. There were some answers of great insight and maturity, combining excellent understanding of the political background, the actions of the plays and bringing out the tension between Sartre and Camus.

Question 6A

All candidates could place the passage in its context in Act 1, scene 5, which was said to give the dramatic energy of the play a boost, and most wrote a line-by-line commentary on the passage, occasionally combining lines 1 and 16, 10 and 12, and 9 and 14. Sometimes other scenes were also referred to specifically, such as Act 1, scene 3, Act 3, scene 4 and Act 4, scene 6. Candidates were able to introduce the 'situation', 'implications of Cœnone's advice' and 'Phèdre's response', requested by the question. Although all responses broadly covered everything, some essays emphasised Cœnone ('Phèdre's own role in this plan is minimal') or Phèdre. Most at least gave more space to Cœnone, which reflected the shape of the passage. Cœnone was sometimes portrayed negatively, but was at other times said to provide 'well-meaning advice based on incomplete information', resulting in a sense of tragedy. Aside from an excellent knowledge of rhetorical effects identified in the passage, candidates often made note of Phèdre's 'gloire' ('a conflation of reputation and duty central to the concerns of noble characters') and the duties inherent in her nobility and royal position. They also established that Cœnone's advice is clearly well-intentioned, and gives the tragedy that will unfold a powerful sense of pathos. It can be seen as the catalyst for the events which will culminate in the deaths of Phèdre, Cœnone and Hippolyte. Overall, answers showed a sensitivity and good understanding in their analysis.

Question 6B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 6C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 7A

The commentary exercise was a popular choice, generally well handled by candidates. Answers showed a very good grasp of the context of the extract, and, in the best answers, analysis was thoughtfully developed with appropriate reference to the passage. There was a good understanding of the characters of the play, and candidates had much of relevance to say about Orgon's role as head of the family and Dorine as a mouthpiece of common sense. Only some candidates discussed Mariane and the significance of her silence throughout. Good answers analysed the language of the extract and commented on, for example, elements which reflect Orgon's obsessions. Few, though, brought out the comic value of the drama, particularly of Orgon's fantasy and its laughable lack of contact with reality. In some answers, there was a tendency to adopt a more narrative approach, including much detail which was not anchored in the extract. At the lowest end of the range, there were a few responses that confined themselves to a few tangential remarks about Orgon and Tartuffe, barely addressing the question.

Question 7B

Answers to this question were generally well-informed. Much attention was paid to Cléante's role as Molière's mouthpiece and, to a lesser extent, to his function as a purveyor of boring advice which Orgon systematically ignores. More astute answers brought out the fact that Molière uses Cléante as a vehicle to address specific issues which had to be addressed to defend himself against accusations of anti-clericalism. Some candidates highlighted Cléante's key lines of promoting the idea of 'une religion humaine et traitable'. Nevertheless, answers were generally successful in bringing out the role of the character as a means of satirising false pretence and Orgon's gullibility.

Question 7C

This was a popular choice of question, and one which was generally competently answered. Candidates showed a detailed knowledge of the play and also of comic techniques used by Molière. Thus, there was much discussion of Tartuffe's hypocrisy, his lecherous behaviour, Orgon's blindness to an obvious imposter and turns of plot. There was analysis, too, of how unappealing Tartuffe is, and some answers suggested that it is his very unattractiveness as a character which is a source of humour, but these generally chose to ignore the 'threatening' aspect in the question. Good answers went on to show that the threat is finally defused because Tartuffe is isolated and incompetent. They were able to develop an argument to show that the comedy relies on the discrepancy between the two perceptions of Tartuffe, reflecting Tartuffe's true character and the persona he adopted, as well as the contrast discrepancy between Orgon's reverential attitude towards Tartuffe and the latter's inappropriate behaviour. In general, candidates seemed to be aware of Tartuffe as a faux dévot, and that the play was not satirising religiosity in general, but pillorying religious hypocrisy. Many candidates had a good understanding of the historical context of the play, and were able to deploy this knowledge to good effect.

Question 8A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 8B

A number of candidates attempted this question. Answers showed engagement with, and enjoyment of, the novel. Character studies of Vautrin were balanced, including such elements as his magnetic personality, his relationship with the other characters in the Maison Vauquer, his criminal activities and his ruthlessness. There was some useful discussion, too, of his credibility as a character, and answers demonstrated a contextual understanding of French Realism.

Question 8C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9B

The candidates who engaged with Baudelaire's poetry did so with sensitivity and enjoyment, as was clear from their essays. The theme of 'idéal' attracted a good number of answers which commented with insight on Baudelaire's philosophical and aesthetic goal, described as a magical place which is variously unattainable, complex, sublime, rare, mysterious, intangible and perplexing. The poet sees himself as empowered to reach an elevated state, using his energy and inspiration to create and understand; answers gave supporting evidence from the lexical field of ascent, height, with the poet soaring above common mortals. The poet, it was noted, is not limited to traditional perceptions of beauty, he rejects conventional interpretations and sees his creativity as a means of escape from reality. Some answers conceded that 'idéal' is difficult to define, but that it was close to the opposite of spleen or, more discerningly, not completely the antithesis of spleen.

Question 9C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 10A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 10B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 10C

Answers examined in some detail those episodes which linked Seurel and Yvonne. They showed good understanding of the significance of Yvonne for the friendship with Meaulnes and her contribution to Seurel's powerful emotions together with his failure to perpetuate the idyllic moments of childhood. Some brought in an autobiographical element, positing that the relationship symbolises an ideal for the author. Candidates chose to look closely at the nature of the love between Seurel and Yvonne (variously pure, platonic, idyllic), and analyse how this shapes the reader's view of the novel: Seurel's qualities of loyalty and friendship were brought out through his contact with Yvonne. Answers also commented thoughtfully on the significance of Yvonne's death scene and Meaulnes's subsequent departure with his daughter; the best pointed out how this informs themes of nostalgia and Seurel's naiveté; good answers also showed an awareness of its significance for colouring Seurel as a melancholic or sad figure. Overall, answers were well-informed and targeted the question satisfactorily.

Question 11A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 11B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 11C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 12A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 12B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 12C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 13A

This was a popular option. Good answers worked their way through the extract systematically, and anchored their points with pertinent illustrations from the passage. Some answers were less disciplined in their analysis of detail, but rather tended to use the extract as a springboard for more general comments on Raymond or the trial in general. In some scripts, different characters were given unexpected prominence in different answers, sometimes Perez, on other occasions Raymond. Thoughtful answers seized on the Prosecutor's three remarks in the passage and explained the implications of them. Quite a few answers saw the twisted logic of the prosecutor's remark at the end of the first paragraph, though fewer understood this as a way for the author to point to the lack of understanding between the court (or society in general) and Meursault, and indeed, as a precursor to the court's condemnation of Meursault. There was some comment on the role of the defence counsel, and his success on provoking laughter in an attempt to show the absurdity of the prosecutor's remark, but there was little analysis of the emotive crescendo in the case for the prosecution or the understated failure of the defence lawyer. Many answers, though, understood implications of the narrative perspective.

Question 13B

This question attracted a fair number of answers. Many of these expounded at length the examples of Meursault's undemonstrative behaviour towards his mother, Marie, and Raymond. There was no difficulty in identifying, in general terms, what was 'odd' and unacceptable about Meursault's behaviour, but there was less analysis of the terms of reference used by those who condemned this behaviour. Love and friendship for Meursault may not have had the same resonance as for most people, but candidates who shared the view that he was some kind of 'monstre moral' rather missed the point. More astute candidates observed that there was no evidence that Meursault never loved his mother, nor that he was entirely devoid of feelings. Good answers argued that Meursault's inability to relate to the representatives of society in Part two, and his refusal to discuss his actions and relationships on their terms, mark him out for condemnation and execution.

Question 13C

Most answers took issue with the quotation and wrote persuasively about those aspects of the book which pointed to a more subtle interpretation of Meursault's life. Many pointed out that Meursault's assertions of his personal values can be seen in a positive light. Some reference was made to Camus' thoughts on 'the Absurd', though, happily, these did not usually obscure consideration of the text itself. Candidates did acknowledge the negativity that Meursault's passive performance is apt to evoke, and some more astute answers pointed to the negative feelings Camus wished to evoke about the conventions of this society and those who regard their contravention as immoral or criminal. Good answers went on to analyse the hypocrisy and arbitrary judgements of those who concluded that Meursault was a threat. A distinction was not always drawn between Meursault as a character who came to an unfortunate end, and Meursault as a cipher for Camus to challenge *idées reçues* in society and to champion honesty. The most nuanced responses drew a distinction between 'Camus ... a prophet of despair' (with which most disagreed) and 'Camus ... a prophet of nihilism', which many answers were able to qualify and discuss.