

FRENCH

Paper 8682/01

Speaking

General comments

The majority of recordings this year were audible, but there were a few problems. Before beginning examinations, examiners need to ensure that conditions are suitable – that they are conducting and recording examinations in as quiet a room as possible and the Centre is organised to prevent accidental disruption. There were a number of recordings badly affected by school bells and noise nearby, and one or two which were interrupted by someone coming into the room during the recording.

Examiners should satisfy themselves that the recording system is adequate: remembering that an examiner's voice tends to be more dominant, they should make sure that the tape recorder or microphone is positioned to favour the candidate rather than the examiner – it is vital to be able to hear the candidates clearly, but it is also important to be able to hear the questions an examiner asks. Examiners both external and internal should be provided with correct candidate names and numbers and should use these to introduce each candidate at the beginning of his/her examination. Cassettes need to be labelled to show the Centre and syllabus details and the order in which candidates appear on each side (that is, recording order, rather than numerical order) – this makes the task of moderation much simpler, as particular candidates from the sample can then be located more easily.

Examiners should make sure they are familiar with the timings of the examination: 3 to 3½ minutes for the candidate's Presentation (uninterrupted by the examiner, unless the candidate is clearly unable to continue without assistance), followed by 7 to 8 minutes of Topic Conversation and 8 to 9 minutes of General Conversation, giving a total time of approximately 18 to 20 minutes. In order to avoid disruption to candidates and the loss of parts of an oral, the examination of a candidate should **not** be split between two sides of a cassette, so a maximum of **two** examinations should be recorded per side of a 90-minute cassette, and only **one** per side of a 60-minute cassette. Before despatching the examination material, examiners should check that all candidates forming the sample have actually been recorded and are audible.

For each candidate, a mark should be entered in each column of the Working Mark Sheet. Each mark corresponds to one of the elements of the mark scheme, so there are 3 columns relating to the Presentation and 5 columns for each conversation section. The last column for each conversation section should record the marks awarded for asking questions: where candidates do not ask any questions, even when prompted to do so, a zero (0) must be recorded in that column. Additions should be checked and marks transferred to the MS1.

Topic and Topic Conversation

Most Centres are accustomed to the need to relate topic presentations to France or francophone culture in some way. A few candidates still give only a brief nod to the requirement (*Ici, comme en France...*) but only a small minority seem entirely unaware of the requirement – teachers should make sure that all candidates know about this, and realise that a lack of appropriate reference may cause their marks for content/presentation to be halved.

There was a wide range of interesting topics chosen, from the factual, (*Le fast food en France, Le Scoutisme, Victor Hugo*), the social and general, (*Les familles monoparentales, L'immigration illégale en France, Les jeunes, Le sport, La mode, Les médias*), the more philosophical (*Discrimination contre les femmes*) and the personal, (*Les parfums, la langue française au Canada*), with several this year dealing with various aspects of the Internet, and references were made to France, the Ivory Coast, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Senegal.

The general social topics (*La famille* for example) are often the ones least related to France, while those which clearly define the scope of interest (*Le racisme en France* for example) make the point from the start. The very factual, mundane topics (*Mes vacances au/en...* for example) are often limited in ideas and opinions, so score less well for the content/presentation mark, and in addition do not lend themselves to development in sufficient depth. If topics cannot be developed beyond the basic levels which would be appropriate to an IGCSE examination, however good the candidates might be, their marks in the topic conversation section are not going to reflect their true abilities. Examiners need to be aware that they should not be merely asking for a reiteration of the topic material in the Topic Conversation section: questions should require candidates to develop and extend their original material. Candidates who have prepared thoroughly for the examination will have considered what questions might be asked of them, but even with a topic which has already been tested in a mock examination, examiners should be able to vary questions so that there is no lack of spontaneity or feeling of over-rehearsed questions and answers.

The topic presentation itself is not the place for questions. This may over-extend the time allocated for this exercise and may create consequent pressure of time on other elements of the test. The end of the presentation is often an appropriate place for a candidate to ask a question and this will lead naturally into the topic conversation section. Candidates are expected to ask questions of the examiner in the topic conversation section and if they do not, the examiner should prompt them to do so.

General Conversation

This is often a difficult area for both candidate and examiner. The examiner needs to find a topic of interest for discussion and is likely to begin with something straightforward, everyday and well within the candidate's capabilities. At A/AS level, however, it is inappropriate to continue asking questions about school routine, the weekend, holidays, all of which would be very suitable for a conversation at IGCSE level. However well candidates respond to this kind of question, it is unlikely that they will score marks in the top bands of the mark schemes, since this type of question is simply not appropriate at this level. Conversation should move on rapidly from this kind of question, so that the candidate is challenged to express ideas and opinions, and develop them as far as possible. The examiner needs to be prepared to engage with the candidate in this, otherwise this is not a conversation, but merely a formulaic series of questions and rote answers.

It is not expected that examiners will try to cover every area studied during the course, but two or three topic areas, discussed in depth, will give candidates opportunities to show what they are capable of. In a Centre with several candidates, candidates should not all be asked the same questions: they will all have different areas of interest, and the examiner needs vary the topic areas accordingly. Examiners should not necessarily view responses given by candidates as "right" or "wrong" – candidates are entitled to express their own opinions and should be given the opportunity to do so and defend their points of view. The aim on the examiner's part should be to establish a natural conversation, and as for the candidate, he or she should not restrict him/herself to simple sentence answers, but should be prepared to develop those answers. The candidate who restricts him/herself to short, accurate responses, relying on good comprehension and accuracy, is also restricting the marks available for responsiveness, and providing information and opinions, since there is a limited amount of language which can be assessed.

In this section too, candidates are required to ask questions, and though many did so, quite a number did not, and some who were prompted to do so said they had no questions to ask. Candidates should be reminded that there is a total of 10 marks allocated to asking questions, 5 in each conversation section, and if they do not ask questions when prompted, they are throwing away a possible additional 10 marks. Where candidates do not ask questions in one or other conversation sections a **zero** should be recorded in the final column of the Working Mark Sheet for that section – marks cannot be awarded where no questions are asked.

Overall, the vast majority of Centres tried hard to conduct the examination as the syllabus requires and worked on giving their candidates every possible opportunity and eliciting the best responses from them. Candidates had usually researched their topics well and were able to give a good account of themselves. Centres and candidates alike should be congratulated on their commitment and performance.

FRENCH

Paper 8682/02

Paper 2

General comments

The performance of the candidates on this paper was overall satisfactory. The paper proved to be as demanding as the previous year. Candidates found the texts accessible but in many cases difficult to rephrase or manipulate. A number of candidates produced excellent performances, giving the main points in clear, succinct and idiomatic French, whilst the weakest gave vague or no answers and used less than accurate and grammatical French.

Copying wholesale from the text was again a common feature this year. This does not, show comprehension and therefore can gain no marks.

In **Questions 3 and 4** where candidates are required to answer in French, the rubric quite clearly states that candidates should answer “sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte.” They may use material from the passage but they must answer in such a way as to demonstrate understanding of the text. Candidates should try to express relevant ideas using different vocabulary or structures. Even small changes to the original show that the candidates can handle the ideas and the language. Examples of manipulation of the language and content are given under the comments on specific questions.

It was encouraging to note that fewer candidates copied out the question as part of their answer thereby saving a great deal of time.

Some candidates failed to complete all of the questions on the paper. It is extremely important that candidates learn to manage their time well. **Question 5** is worth 20 marks and failure to start and or to complete this can affect the overall mark on the paper quite dramatically.

In **Question 5** the rubric states that both parts of the question should be answered in 140 words in total. Candidates should observe the word limit because only limited latitude is allowed beyond this figure. Candidates will not be awarded content marks after the 140 words. No introductory remarks about the subject are needed. They will gain no marks and only use up valuable words out of the 140 maximum.

In general candidates should aim to use 90 to 100 words for the resume and 40 to 50 words for the personal response. This relates closely to the content marks available for each part.

Some candidates wrote a general essay in answer to **Question 5**. In this case the candidate will score 0 for content because information which must be drawn from the two texts. The essay will be treated as a personal response and therefore can score up to 5 marks.

The same 5 point language grid is used for assessing quality of language in each of **Questions 3, 4 and 5**. This means that candidates must maintain a good level of accuracy throughout the paper if they are to score high marks overall.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was not answered as well as in the previous year. Candidates had difficulty finding correct alternatives for all the definitions. Minor copying errors were tolerated. Most candidates grasped the idea that only one word was required and not a phrase.

- 1 (a) was generally well done.
- (b) proved to be extremely difficult. "Inculcte" was little known. Some candidates thought it was a verb and offered "provoque" instead of the adjective "vierge".
- (c) was well done.
- (d) was quite well done. Both "nuire" and "abîmer" were accepted.
- (e) was generally well answered.

Question 2

This task proved to be extremely difficult and required the candidates to manipulate the grammar of the sentence. Minor spelling mistakes were not penalised but grammatical mistakes were. Candidates do not need to change the vocabulary in the sentence but merely to re-arrange the words and make any necessary changes to the grammar.

- 2 (a) This question was quite well done. Many different formulations were accepted including "On a construit des bâtiments en bord de la mer ce qui a eu/et cela a eu/action qui a eu....."
- (b) This question was generally well answered.
- (c) This question proved to be very difficult. Most candidates failed to include any form of "on dit" and merely re-wrote the sentence omitting the first three words. The use of "à ce qu'on dit/selon certains/sont censés" would have obtained the mark.
- (d) This question was quite difficult though a greater number of candidates this year managed a correct form of the subjunctive. The use of "ne" before the subjunctive was rarely seen.
- (e) This was quite well answered though the passive and an agreement proved to be too much for many candidates. The past participle of "envahir" was surprisingly badly done.

Question 3

Candidates who copy whole sentences and even paragraphs from the text are not demonstrating comprehension of the text even if they include the correct information within the answer. The candidate must show some ability to alter the text: without doing so they will score no marks. A lot of copying from the text was observed.

- 3 (a) Most candidates managed to score 2 of the 3 marks for this question. They realised that tourists wanted to live as they did in their own country and did not adapt to the local culture. Further marks could have been obtained by referring to their excessive demands for energy, water and food.
- (b) This question was quite well answered. Clearly the candidates were able to define "infrastructures" as "installations (aéroports), services (magasins)" but did not relate them to economic activity.
- (c) was well answered though it caused considerable misunderstanding for some candidates. Most gave swimming and golf as the two sporting activities that use a lot of energy mentioned in the text and that the energy is used to fill the pools and maintain the golf courses. Some candidates thought that the energy used was physical energy and wrote about how tiring swimming is. Some did not refer to the text and included wrongly the use of motor boats for water skiing.

Where candidates did mention the correct sporting activities there was a great deal of copying. Many copied the text instead of making changes thereby failing to score marks." Le remplissage

des piscines” would have been rewarded if it had been re-phrased as “pour remplir”. Similarly” l'entretien des parcours de golf would have been given a mark for “parcours de golf”.

- (d) was generally well answered. Nearly all the candidates managed to say that tourists pollute the environment but some failed to add that the environment is particularly sensitive.
- (e) was quite well done. Most candidates stated that tourists damaged the environment. Many managed to link the damage to a reduction in the number of tourists in the future. Only the best candidates were able to see the full meaning of “l'effet boomerang” in that it was the environment that attracted the tourists in the first place.

Question 4

- 4 (a) This question was well answered by most candidates. They made the points that tourists brought new ways of behaving, that local inhabitants were greatly influenced by them and so changed their habits and culture. Many candidates failed to establish that the local inhabitants had had little contact with other cultures before the arrival of the tourists and were therefore vulnerable.
- (b) This question was well done. Nearly all the candidates referred successfully to profits as one of the common elements but the second, the distribution of the profits, was often confused with incorrect notion of the generation of profits. The remaining two points were well answered as a range of answers were accepted for each; the first was positive or fair or the locals did not benefit, the other was negative or unfair or the organisation sought a more just system.
- (c) Most candidates scored at least one of the two points available. Questions that begin “d'après vous” look for the candidate to give a personal opinion based on the text. The most common answers given were “ils sont riches”, “ils travaillent dur/ils ont besoin de repos/ils sont stressés”. A significant minority took “droit” too literally and said that it was a legal right to go on holiday.
- (d) This was well done. Both points were clearly made, firstly that tourism will last or bring long term benefits and secondly that the environment and the local inhabitants would be protected,
- (e) This question was well answered but some candidates merely copied sections of the text instead of re-using words. Some manipulation must take place such as “les grands développements restent propriété étrangère or les étrangers financent les grands développements” and “ beaucoup de produits sont importés de l'extérieur”

Question 5

It is essential that candidates manage their time correctly so that they answer all the questions on the paper.

Candidates should stick to the word limit. It would be unfair to candidates who do find ways of summarising succinctly if lengthy essays in excess of 200 words were given full marks. Similarly, if candidates write significantly less than 140 words, they cannot be expected to be awarded the full language mark.

It is vital to recognise the importance of the rubric defining the task. There are two clear questions to answer :-

- 1: a summary of the texts
- 2: a personal response to the subject

140 words is the aim for the two sections and only a limited number of words beyond that figure is allowed - usually the completion of the sentence. Clearly candidates should consider writing a summary consisting of 90 to 100 words which can gain 10 content marks and a personal response of 40 to 50 words which can gain 5 marks.

There were two clear areas indicated for the summary: résumez les conséquences du tourisme sur l'environnement et sur le mode de vie des gens. The mark scheme is constructed to take account of this dual task. The question also states “telles qu'elles sont présentées dans ces deux textes” so candidates can only gain marks by making reference to specific details in the texts. This part of the exercise is to get the candidates to focus on the main issues of the two texts. No introduction to the answer is necessary and, given the amount of information to be summarised, they should not waste words on general reflections.

FRENCH

Paper 8682/03

Essay

General comments

Candidates were given a choice of six questions, one on each of the following topics: *Aspects contemporains de la francophonie, Les jeunes, L'ordre public, La vie urbaine et rurale, Les sports, L'innovation technologique*. The essays were marked out of 40, with 24 marks for Language and 16 for Content.

Overall the candidates performed less well this year than last year. At the top end of the range, essays showed evidence of a sound grammatical awareness, confident use of idiom, a praiseworthy level of fluency and a suitable range of vocabulary. Essays had a relevant introduction and a well-linked and coherent argument leading to a conclusion.

At the lower end of the range, candidates displayed little or barely adequate grammatical accuracy and an inadequate range of vocabulary. The essays were characterised by considerable irrelevancy and generalisation, with little focus on the issues involved.

Common linguistic difficulties included:

- Common misspellings: *resource, existence, aggression, problem, honour, gas, traffic, tranquillité, damage, autorité*.
- Confusion of homonyms such as *ces/ses, on/ont, sa/ca, s'est/c'est, cela/ceux-là*.
- Confusion/misuse of: *qui/que, ce qui/ce que, entre/parmi/chez, chaque/chacun, faire/rendre, pendant que/tandis que, opportunité/chance, depuis/puisque* (to express 'since'), *bon/bien, mauvais/mal, meilleur/mieux*.
- Omission of *ne*, particularly when followed by *que*.
- Gender of very commonplace nouns: *problème, manque, valeur, crime, pollution*.
- The use of *tu* or *vous* instead of *on* when making general statements and the ability to use the correct related pronoun and possessive adjective.
- Wrong agreement of the verb form after pronoun objects: *le manque d'éducation les empêchent...*
- Confusion of *leur* (indirect pronoun) and *leurs* (adjective): *Ils n'aiment pas que leur parents leurs donnent des ordres*.

Most candidates, across the ability range, would doubtless benefit from leaving sufficient time to make a systematic check through their completed essay in order to eliminate some of the above linguistic mistakes that could have been made through carelessness under the pressure of the examination.

Comments on specific questions.

Question 1

This was by far the least popular question, attracting only three candidates. Hence, constructive comments that would be helpful to future candidates cannot be made.

Question 2

This was a very popular question, appealing to candidates across the ability range. Quite a large number had, however, some difficulty in understanding *les valeurs*. Here, there was a tendency to write about various aspects of young people's behaviour which their parents disapprove of, such as skimpy clothing, staying out late, piercing, tattoos, smoking and drinking. Analyses of the extent to which this is a problem more often than not were limited to simply stating that disagreement on such matters leads to arguments between parents and their children. Some candidates, however, focused more closely on the question and explained why, in their opinion, young people have different values. Amongst others these included the view that in their parents' day there were many fewer outside influences such as the media, and that values were handed on by the church and the family; that in modern society working parents are able to spend less time with their children; that increasing divorce and separation rates make it inevitable that young people see the world from a disillusioned angle. It was generally felt that even if the younger generation of today do have somewhat different values, they will nevertheless behave as responsible parents when the time comes.

Question 3

This was also a popular question and was generally well answered, with well-structured answers leading to a variety of conclusions. However, a relatively small minority of candidates wrote about various forms of violence rather than about the rising crime rate and possible ways of reducing it. A common approach was to list different types of crimes, to analyse various factors responsible for them, such as poverty, unemployment, a penal system that is too lenient, prison overcrowding, lack of discipline in schools, and then to suggest ways in which the crime rate might be reduced. These included much more severe sentencing as a deterrent, and more efficient attempts to rehabilitate prisoners.

Question 4

This question was also very popular, but generally the standard of answers was not particularly high. Many candidates were content to write everything they knew about the topic without taking the time to plan, select and organise a relevant answer. Two common approaches were to examine the advantages and disadvantages of living in a large town, or to compare urban life with life in the country. Those candidates who focused on the question set gave various examples of aspects of town life that contribute to make life there increasingly unbearable, considering for example, overcrowding, a rising crime rate, the ever-increasing cost of housing and pollution. *Qu'en pensez-vous?* generally received the response that the drawbacks of urban life were counterbalanced by the advantages of living there, although quite a number of candidates pointed out the potential benefits of making the quality of life in rural areas more attractive, so as to reduce the number of people migrating to the towns.

Question 5

This was a much less popular question, and not particularly well done, as quite a large number of candidates treated it as *la valeur du sport*, discussing such ideas as sport as a way to a healthy life, the social doors it opens, entertainment, a job, an escape for some from poverty. Candidates who focused on *les valeurs* mostly agreed with the opening statement of the question, using trends in professional sport as a background against which to set their answers, and illustrating their argument with well-chosen examples. They tended to argue that whilst to some extent such values as fair-play, good sportsmanship, accepting defeat gracefully and respecting officials' decisions still exist, particularly in amateur sport, they are increasingly under attack. The use of performance-enhancing drugs, corruption, bribery, greed, cynicism, the need to win at all costs and arrogance were deemed by many to be the characteristics of modern professional sport, and deeply deplored.

Question 6

Again, this question was not a very popular choice. Most answers were unfortunately quite weak. Too many essays were restricted to a survey of the negative aspects of owning a computer, such as eye-strain, lack of exercise, the availability of pornography, back ache, addiction to violent games. On the other hand, stronger candidates did focus more accurately on the implications of *avoir peur* and *un monde où l'ordinateur est roi*. Job losses, hacking into government and armed forces' files, Internet fraud, and viruses were some of the things we could be afraid of in today's world where the computer does to an extent dominate our lives. Most candidates came to the conclusion that although society could become too dependant on computers, it will never be ruled by them.