FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/01
Speaking

Key messages

For teachers/examiners:

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below) and, if necessary and appropriate, interrupt the Topic Presentation if it overruns significantly.
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section, but answer briefly.
- More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks and examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- In the Topic Conversation do not go back over questions already answered or material already covered in the Topic Presentation.
- In the General Conversation do not return to the topic of the Topic Presentation.
- Cover a range of topics (not a single topic) in the General Conversation, some in depth, vary questions and topics from one candidate to another, be prepared to identify and follow the interests and passions of the candidate (not your own), and keep your own contributions to a minimum.
- Create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit a one-word or purely factual answer.

For candidates:

- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation.
- Ask questions of the examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to qualify for the full range of marks. Make sure your questions are relevant to the topic under discussion.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society: *The presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken.* This must be more than a passing reference, and candidates who live in a francophone country and who speak about an aspect of their own culture must make it clear beyond doubt to which country they are referring.

General comments

It is important for examiners to remember that this examination is an opportunity for candidates to show what they have learnt and a chance for them to express and develop their own ideas and opinions. Examiners should see their role as providing and facilitating this opportunity.

The way in which an examiner asks a question can make a huge difference to how a candidate is able to respond. Examiners need to be aware that:

1 Very long, complex questions tend to unnerve candidates and rarely facilitate discussion.
2 Closed questions usually elicit short answers, sometimes just yes or no, and should be avoided unless they are intended to open the way for a deeper discussion.
3 Open questions such as *Comment?* or *Pourquoi?* are more likely to allow a candidate the freedom to answer at much greater length and in greater depth.

The examination should be a conversation, which can only be achieved by engaging with and responding to what the candidate says, not by asking a series of entirely unrelated questions with no follow-up. Going through a list of pre-prepared questions rarely results in a natural conversation.

Administration

Recordings

1 Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still a surprisingly high number of examples of faulty recording equipment and of the microphone favouring the examiner rather than the candidate. There were a number of cases where recorded material was unplayable or where the recording had not been transferred correctly or where the original recording was inaudible or blank or where the CD was damaged in transit or faulty. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the examiner's own contribution.
2 Centres should keep a copy of the recording(s) in case a second copy is required by the moderator or a broader range of marks is requested.
3 Recordings should be sent on CD as .mp3 files, and finalised correctly, so that each candidate's examination can be accessed for moderation. Files should be identified using precise candidate details (see the paragraph below) rather than just 'number 1, 2', etc.
5 Please ensure that all recording material (including CD cases) is labelled with details of the Centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their full names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a Centre has candidates at both A and AS, they should be recorded on separate CDs.
6 Centres are reminded that the sample of recordings they send should represent candidates throughout the range of the entry, from highest to lowest.
7 Care should also be taken with the packaging of recorded material – CDs are not unbreakable and there have been a few cases of inadequately packaged CDs so damaged in transit that it has been impossible to listen to the candidates. Please also avoid sticky tape or labels coming into contact with the recording side of CDs, as this makes them unplayable and runs the risk of damaging the equipment on which they are played.

Paperwork

1 There were a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transferring them to the MS1. These should be checked carefully before submission and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings. For the size of sample needed, please see the details in the syllabus booklet.
2 Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to send the Working Mark Sheet, a copy of the MS1 (computer mark sheet or equivalent), and any other relevant paperwork.

Application of Mark Scheme

1 There were irregularities in the application of the Mark Scheme. Several Centres awarded marks out of 10 for *Providing* and/or *Seeking Opinions*, when the maximum is 5; others awarded marks for *Seeking Opinions*, even when the candidate had not asked any questions.
2 If a Centre has been given permission in advance by CIE to engage two examiners for the same syllabus, examiners should standardise marks before submitting to CIE for moderation.
4 Many examiners do not halve the mark for *Presentation/Content* if the candidate's topic is not demonstrably and unequivocally related to a francophone country.

Comments on individual tasks

There are 3 distinct parts to the Speaking Test:

1 Presentation – (3–3.5 minutes).
2 Topic Conversation – (7–8 minutes).
3 General Conversation – (8–9 minutes).

The Speaking Test should last no more than 20 minutes in total.

In order to be fair to all candidates across the world, these timings should be observed – where examinations are too short, candidates are not given opportunities to show what they can do, and where conversations are over-extended, an element of fatigue sets in and candidates sometimes struggle to maintain their level of language.

Examiners must also remember that the longer their own contributions, the less time candidates have to develop their ideas. Responses to questions asked by candidates should be kept brief.

Presentation (3 to 3.5 minutes)

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation, lasting about three minutes, on a specific topic of his or her choice, taken from one of the topic areas listed in the syllabus booklet. This is the only prepared part of the examination and the only part for which candidates are able to choose what they want to talk about. There were a number of cases this session where candidates spoke on more than one topic.

The topic list gives candidates a very wide choice – the most popular this year, at both A and AS Levels, remained *L'Internet, La technologie*, *L'égalité des sexes*, *Les médias sociaux*, *Le sport*, *La famille*, *Le tourisme*, *La mode, La cuisine française, L'environnement* and *La pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage, discrimination, racism and immigration, a few dealing with culture or politics (including the recent French elections) in a French-speaking country, as well as personal interests such as art or music. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues.

For the most part, candidates were clearly aware of the need, stated in the syllabus, that the presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where French is spoken. Where this is not the case, candidates will have their mark for *Content/Presentation* halved (see Speaking Test mark scheme). This is the responsibility of the examiner.

Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched quite widely, and have to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3.5 minutes – additional material which cannot be included in the actual presentation because of the time constraint may well prove very useful in the topic conversation section. In general, candidates had no problem speaking for the required time and many were able to give full and interesting presentations.

Candidates would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects – the mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and expand their chosen topic. Sport and family, though popular choices, are often the least successful for that reason.

Candidates only present ONE topic and the Topic Conversation which follows will seek to develop that same topic.

Topic Conversation (7 to 8 minutes)

In this section, candidates have the chance to expand on what they have already said and develop ideas and opinions expressed briefly during the presentation. Examiners need to beware of merely asking questions which allow a repetition of the same material already offered – their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily 'right' answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed. However, differences of opinion can create lively debate (if handled sensitively and purposefully by the examiner) and can give candidates the opportunity to defend their point of view.

At both A and AS Level, questions should go beyond the sort of questions appropriate at IGCSE Level. Candidates need to be able to show that they are capable of taking part in a mature conversation. In some cases, candidates were not able to offer much development or sustain the level of language used in their presentation, but many were successful in expressing additional ideas and seeking the opinions of the examiner.

In each conversation section there are 5 marks available for questions the candidates ask of the examiner: they should ask more than one question in each conversation section and examiners must prompt them to do so. Examiners should make sure that they do not spend too long on their own answers to candidates' questions, thereby depriving candidates of valuable time.

Examiners should note that it is helpful both to candidates and moderators to signal the end of the Topic Conversation and the beginning of the General Conversation.

General Conversation (8 to 9 minutes)

The General Conversation is the most spontaneous section of the examination. Candidates will have prepared their own choice of topic for the Topic Presentation (to be continued in the Topic Conversation), but here they do not know what the examiner will choose to discuss (and it is the examiner who chooses, not the candidate). Clearly the areas of discussion will be those studied during the course, but there seemed to be fewer varied and in-depth discussions this session. In a Centre with a number of candidates, candidates should not all be asked to talk about the same list of subjects – themes should be varied from candidate to candidate and should on no account return to the original subject of the presentation.

This section is intended to be a conversation between examiner and candidate, so it is not appropriate for the examiner to ask a series of unrelated questions, to which the candidate responds with a prepared answer, after which the examiner moves on to the next question on the list! Examiners should display sensitivity in asking questions about topics of a personal nature i.e. religion and personal relationships and should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas.

Examiners should aim to discuss a minimum of 2 to 3 areas in **depth**, giving candidates opportunities to offer their own opinions and defend them in discussion. Although the section may begin with straightforward questions about family, interests or future plans, which can, in themselves, be developed beyond the purely factual (questions asking 'Why?' or 'How?' are useful here), candidates at both A and AS Level should be prepared for the conversation to move on to current affairs and more abstract topics appropriate to this level of examination.

Candidates should be prompted to ask questions of the examiner in order to give them the opportunity to score marks for this criterion, though examiners should once again be wary of answering at too great a length.

Assessment

1 Across the vast majority of the entry, moderation saw marks either not adjusted at all or adjusted by less than 10 per cent, although there were cases of adjustment of 10–35 per cent.
2 The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where topics did not relate to a francophone country.
3 A handful of examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness*, *Accuracy* and *Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.
4 In rare cases, examiners misapplied the mark scheme, most frequently by awarding marks out of 10 for those categories like *Pronunciation/Intonation* and *Seeking Opinions* which carry a maximum of 5 marks.
5 Examiners at Centres with a large entry of able candidates should be aware that marks may be bunched and that it may be impossible to differentiate between candidates to a greater degree than the Mark Scheme allows.
6 Where candidates ask questions to elicit clarification or obtain information during the course of conversation, this should clearly be rewarded, but examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that they are relevant to the topic under discussion.
7 Centres are reminded that, except in extenuating circumstances, they should engage only one examiner per syllabus, regardless of the size of the entry. In cases where the engagement of two or more examiners on the same syllabus is unavoidable, the examiners must co-ordinate with each other to establish an agreed standard. Otherwise, moderation will be extremely difficult. **All** Centres are asked to advise CIE, using form NOE, about the examiners they intend to employ (by 1st April for the June session and 1st October for the November session).
8 In Centres with a number of candidates, examiners were generally able to establish a logical rank order and appropriate marking pitch, but this is more difficult to achieve where Centres only have one or two candidates

Examiners should be congratulated on their efforts to apply the criteria of the mark scheme so conscientiously.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/21
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3** and **4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3** and **4**, candidates should **not** begin the answer by writing out the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of the prescribed word count (total for parts (a) and (b) combined) is ignored
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

Candidates should be instructed **not** to use an additional booklet unnecessarily for a few extra words which could easily be included in the space provided in original answer booklet. In extreme cases, this involved only two or three words written in an otherwise blank 4 or 8-page additional booklet. Apart from the obvious waste of resources, this practice significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Candidates (and invigilators) should be instructed **not** to submit Inserts with the answer booklets. The front page of Insert states that it is not assessed by the Examiner. Submitting it significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Overall, the texts were felt to be of an appropriate level and approachable by the overwhelming majority. The subject matter appeared to be of interest and relevance to the candidates.

The paper was comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

Most candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3** and **4**.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3** and **4** were unnecessarily lengthy. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but some candidates still neglect the simple answer and look to over-complicate things by attempting structures which they cannot handle, producing answers that cannot be rewarded.

Too many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *Un self-service diffère-t-il…* (**3(a)**) *; Les cuisiniers sont-ils responsables …* (**3(c)**) *; Les jeunes adolescents font-ils …* (**4(d)**). Answers beginning with *parce que* or *en* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished somewhat in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complication. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3** and **4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect 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.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realize the importance of the word limits clearly 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. **Material beyond the word limit is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response**. Although there has been some improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but some did not get around to start scoring marks for the first 40 or 50 words. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

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, if only 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?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates knew how to set about this exercise, but answers from sometimes appeared to be chosen largely at random and bore no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question. Candidates would be well advised to narrow the choice down by identifying the part of speech involved.

- Item **(a)** proved challenging for some, but many candidates correctly identified either *ces premiers* or *les cuisiniers* for *ceux-là*.
- In **(b)**, *produisent* was correctly identified by most candidates.
- In **(c)**, offerings included *grande, plus* and *hausse*, perhaps suggesting that candidates had some inkling that *taille* had something to do with size but had not appreciated the need for a word which was connected both in meaning and as a part of speech.
- In **(d)**, the only obvious reason for choosing *assiette* or *assez* here was the fact that they begin with the same three letters as *associé*. The inclusion in the answer of *à* after *lié* would have given *associé à à* and was therefore a violation of the 'precise footprint' principle (see **General comments** above).
- In **(e)**, *fondamental* earned the mark for a good number of candidates.

Question 2

There were some good answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but, as usual, the task proved very demanding for those with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or who didn't observe the basic rules of agreement.

Item 2(a) revealed relatively few candidates who could correctly conjugate *jeter*, even if they understood how to go about the transfer into the active using *on*.

In **Item 2(b)**, the transfer into direct speech was similarly hampered by the conjugation of *comprendre* (*comprennons* being the most common offering) before candidates got to the problem of finding the correct form of *nos* (rather than *notre* or *notres*).

In **Item 2(c)**, some lost the mark by using *avec, pour* or *de* rather then *par*. Others produced incorrect versions with *s'ont* or by unnecessarily altering the prompt to *la situation*.

Item 2(d) saw the tautological retention of *récemment* even amongst those who recognised the *venir de* construction.

Item 2(e) required a subjunctive. Those who recognised the need sometimes lost the mark for not making *soient* plural.

Question 3

Item 3(a) suffered from a confusion between *un plateau* and *un plat* (*on reçoit son plateau à table/on se sert sur un plat*). Successful candidates focused on the fact that one queues up to collect one's food in a 'self-service'. The question of there being more or less choice than in an 'ordinary restaurant' was not really the issue here. The second element involving the role of school canteens was often ignored, but stronger candidates successfully offered *assurer une alimentation saine/que les élèves mangent des repas équilbrés* etc. without resorting to lifting *s'alimentent sainement*.

In **Item 3(b)**, candidates found a variety of straightforward ways of explaining that *les élèves jettent/laissent/refusent ne finissent/touchent pas la nourriture*, and that this is all the more regrettable because *il y a beaucoup d'enfants qui n'ont pas assez à manger/ont besoin de cette nourriture*. Fewer were successful in avoiding lifting *perte d'argent* (best done by using a verb) or *ressources consacrées à la production (les ressources qu'on utilise pour la produire).*

In **Item 3(c)**, an easy first mark was earned by those who wrote *Ils préparent des plats que les enfants n'aiment pas*. The second mark required *trop* rather than *beaucoup, assez* or *très (grande)*. The idea of the appearance of the food implied by *présentation* was not appreciated by many.

In **Item 3(d)**, a simple first mark was scored by writing *la qualité des repas (s'est améliorée).* More difficult for the second mark was the idea of adapting the size of the portions to the age of the children. Attempts at the third mark produced some over-general answers which did not relate specifically to the need to educate children about the environmental consequences of food waste.

Item 3(e) was best answered by re-working the nouns of the original (*compréhension* and *adaptation*) by using verbs such as *comprendre/découvrir/savoir* and *adapter/changer/varier*. The use of the negative in the second question caused quite a large number to make the unlikely assertion that Mme Leroux was recommending serving chips with every meal.

Question 4

In **Item 4(a)**, the first mark was most easily earned by using some part of the verb *équilibrer* to replace the noun, as suggested by the question *Qu'est-ce que les écoles ont dû faire…?* Some did not understand that les *distributeurs* were machines rather than people, even if they resisted lifting *le retrait*. A good number scored the third mark by pointing to the improvement in the nutritional value of the meals, often replacing *amélioration* by a verb.

In **Item 4(b)**, candidates found neat ways of expressing the idea that if pupils still had a choice, there was no guarantee that they would choose the healthy option: *si les élèves ont le droit de choisir, ils peuvent toujours choisir un menu qui n'est pas adapté.*

In **Item 4(c)**, most candidates appeared to understand the need to eat fruit/vegetables and fish and to cut down on take-away meals. Again, the question *(Que faut-il faire… ?)* pushed candidates towards verbs, although *consumer*, *incluir* and *suppresser* were not the best choices. Some suggested it was important to eat a hearty lunch rather than breakfast, but this was probably the most successfully answered item overall.

Item 4(d) required three comparisons which were handled best by those who found the verbs *réussir, mémoriser* and *réagir* rather than the quite common *performer* and *les abilities*. Some curiously thought that having a longer reaction time was a good thing.

Item 4(e) was often successfully answered by candidates who used the adjective *contradictoire* and who kept things simple with phrases such as *Les enfants peuvent manger dans les fast-foods, mais pas trop souvent/de temps en temps seulement*. Some went a bit too far in suggesting that parents must/should take children there rather than that they could.

Question 5

Question 5(a) asked candidates to summarise the causes of food waste in school canteens and the efforts made to improve pupils' eating habits.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. Too many candidates wasted a large number of words in repeating the question or by including irrelevant material such as the hazards of allowing pupils to choose their own food or the harmful impact of the media.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a fair number, with the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified causes included food being thrown straight in the bin untouched by pupils who do not like what has been prepared for them, too much food being prepared and served in too large portions by cooks who may not know with any certainty how many pupils will be eating that day, and the poor presentation of dishes.

The recent efforts most frequently mentioned included the improvement in the quality of the meals, more balanced menus and the inclusion of healthy eating in the curriculum and in advertising campaigns in schools.

There is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, but excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to be penalised in a significant reduction of the quality of language mark.

The **Personal Response** (**5(b)**) asked how candidates might ensure that their future children have a healthy diet. The majority relied quite heavily on material from the text, but the most successful ventured some more ideas of their own which included not allowing them to eat in the school canteen at all but providing them with a healthy picnic so that they knew what the children were eating, teaching children to cook, giving them home-cooked meals using fresh produce rather than ready-prepared dishes, avoiding GMOs, too much salt and sugar etc.

Quality of Language

The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. The very weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects and even the process of making nouns plural appeared problematic for many candidates.

Many incorrect verb forms were observed, even with some very common verbs in the present indicative: *mettre, prendre, jeter, produire, devoir, venir, vouloir, pouvoir, faire, perdre.* This also meant that verbs were often left in the infinitive, thereby destroying comprehension. The use of the infinitive (*-er*) ending was often used interchangeably with the past participle (*-é*) in some scripts. Difficulties in expressing the passive robbed many answers of their intended meaning.

Time spent in studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be time well spent: *perte/perdre ; production/produire ; inclusion/inclure ; suppression/supprimer reaction/réagir etc.;*

There were problems expressing comparisons (*plus bon/bien)* and in distinguishing between *bon* and *bien, mauvais* and *mal, meilleur* and *mieux* or *plusieurs/beaucoup/plus* and *trop*.

That said, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and generally accurate French which made good reading.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/22
Reading and Writing

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Illegibility remains a significant (and growing) problem, partly because of very poor handwriting and partly because of ambiguous and messy crossings-out.

Overall, the texts were felt to be of an appropriate level and approachable by the overwhelming majority. The subject matter appeared to be of interest and relevance to the candidates.

The paper was comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

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There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3** and **4** were unnecessarily lengthy. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but

some candidates still neglect the simple answer and look to over-complicate things by attempting structures which they cannot handle, producing answers that cannot be rewarded.

Too many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *Les pays riches aggravent-ils la situation en…* ***(3b)*** *; Les supermarchés contribuent-ils…* ***(3e)*** *; Les familles jettent-elles…* ***(3f)***. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complication. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3** and **4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect 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.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly 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. **Material beyond the word limits is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response**. Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but some did not get around to start scoring marks for the first 50 words. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

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, if only 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?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Scores on this question were somewhat lower than usual, with fewer candidates achieving full marks.

Answers from weaker candidates sometimes appeared to be chosen largely at random and bore no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question. Candidates would be well advised to narrow the choice down by identifying the part of speech involved.

Where marks were lost, it was quite often through the violation of the 'precise footprint' principle (see **General comments** above).

- Item **(a)** proved challenging for some candidates, but many correctly identified *soit* for *c'est-à-dire.*
- In **(b),** *annocent* was surprisingly common.
- In **(c)**, most of the successful candidates chose *manifeste*. Those who chose *correspond* needed to include *à* to make it fit into the text.
- Item **(d)** was the most commonly correct answer.
- In **(e)**, a large number of candidates invalidated their answer by writing *évidemment insensé*, which would have resulted in *évidemment insensé insensé*.

Question 2

There were some excellent answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but, as usual, the task proved very demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures or to those who didn't observe the basic rules of agreement.

Item 2(a) suffered from the incorrect conjugation of the present tense of *mettre*, as well as the use of *le* instead of *la* as the direct object pronoun.

In **Item 2(b)**, the conjugation of another common verb caused similar problems – *prendu/prenné/prisse/prisent* – compounded by a lack of agreement in the passive. As usual, the gender of *ressources* is indicated by *utilisées*, so it cannot be taken as simply a gender error.

In **Item 2(c)**, most managed to transform *leurs* into *nos*, but the correct form of *jugeons* proved to challanging for many. Candidates should not make unnecessary alterations to the original sentence: e.g. *nous jugeons que cela/c'est un gaspillage*.

Item 2(d) required a subjunctive, a need which was spotted by quite a good proportion even if it was not always correctly executed, making this probably the most successfully handled item. The omission of *toujours* was an unnecessary alteration.

Item 2(e) required the conjugation of *jeter* and a correct construction following *sans*. *Sans la manger* was fine, as was *sans l'avoir mangée,* if more difficult.

Question 3

(a) The first element was well done, although some over-complicated things when a simple *Les pays développés gaspillent plus que les pays émergents* would have done nicely. *Beaucoup de gens n'ont pas assez à manger* offered candidates a straightforward way of earning a further mark by not lifting *sous-alimentation.*

(b) This questions was often handled quite successfully. The first part of the question required candidates to describe the causes of the demographic boom – some misread this as the consequences. The most successful often used *espérance/durée de vie/longévité* to good effect to avoid lifting *vivent plus longtemps*, followed by *le taux de naissances est plus élevé que le taux de morts.* The third mark needed candidates to make the point that (individual) consumption in richer countries had increased.

(c) The question asks *Que faut-il faire*…, intended to push candidates into using verbs to replace the nouns *utilisation/gaspillage* and *partage*. Many took this opportunity to score both of the straightforward marks available.

(d) The question appeared well understood by the majority, a good number of whom found the obvious ways to score marks by avoiding the lifting of *acheteurs (personne ne veut les acheter/ils ne peuvent pas les vendre)* and *la surpoduction (ils produisent trop/surproduisent)* even if the conjugation of *(sur)produire* proved problematic. *La production est plus grande que la demande* was a neat way of scoring both marks in one short sentence.

(e) This question produced some answers which went too far in suggesting that everything unsold in a supermarket at the end of every day was thrown away. The notion of 'buy one get one free' was better handled, although the conjugation of *promouvoir* was sometimes a source of difficulty.

(f) This question was best answered by using verbs rather than nouns: *Elles surestiment… ; elles achètent impulsivement ; elles ne les stockent pas bien.* Other attempts to paraphrase *surestimation, achats d'impulsion* and *stockage* were often either too vague (*elles achètent trop*) or went too far in suggesting that families' kitchen cupboards were too small.

Question 4

(a) The answers to this question were subject to a great deal of lifting, but successful candidates found simple ways of re-phrasing: *ils n'ont pas l'air/aspect joli ; ils sont trop grands ou trop petits*. Others reversed things by praising supermarkets for selling ugly or misshapen produce.

(b) Many went too far by suggesting that a supermarket's entire stock of goods needed to be thrown away at the end of each rather than just those whose sell-by date had been reached. *Sa date d'expiation* was not uncommon for *expiration,* but others showed an impressive range by using phrases such as *date de péremption/périmée/date limite dépassée*. Attempts to express *poursuites judiciaires* and/or *excès de précaution* met with mixed success.

(c) This questions was generally well answered.

(d) The first two marks required the ideas of the associations coming to collect the unsold food and then sorting it (relatively rarely mentioned). *Sans-abri* attracted a variety of successful explanations – e.g. *quelqu'un qui n'a pas de domicile (fixe)/maison/qui dort dans la rue*; others went a bit too far in suggesting that it was all to do simply with a lack money, food or a job.

(e) This question was often successfully answered by candidates who found simple ways of expressing the ideas of feeding the hungry and reducing the waste of resources/food. Some again went too far in equating *faim* with *famine*.

Question 5

This question asked candidates to summarise the causes and consequences of wasting food and then to consider other (non-food-related) problems caused by the demographic boom.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. Too many candidates wasted a large number of words in repeating the question or in defining *le gaspillage alimentaire*.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a good number, with the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified causes included supermarkets throwing away or destroying still-edible food, their refusal to put anything but perfect items on sale, over-production by growers, accidental damage, families over-estimating their needs or impulse-buying and poor storage.

The consequences most frequently mentioned were the economic loss involved, wastage of resources and an under-fed population.

There was a fair amount of irrelevance involving birth rates, the population boom and increased life expectancy, which are neither the causes or the consequences of *le gaspillage alimentaire.*

The rubric of the **Personal Response** specifically excluded the difficulties of feeding the increased population. Some candidates appeared to have misread *les problèmes… causés par le boom démographique* as *les causes du boom démographique* and consequently set off on the wrong track. Those who addressed the question often pointed to the additional strains placed on housing, lack of land on which to build, schools, over-crowded transport system, health care, sanitation, crime rates etc. Stronger candidates provided some interesting responses here but others tended to limit themselves to a single point or two.

Quality of Language

The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. The very weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects and even the process of making nouns plural was problematic for many candidates.

Many incorrect verb forms were in evidence, even very common verbs in the present indicative: *mettre, prendre, jeter, produire, mourir, vivre, naître, détruire, offrir, (pour)suivre, devoir, venir, vouloir, pouvoir, faire, partir, perdre.* This also meant that verbs were often left in the infinitive, thereby destroying comprehension.

The use of the infinitive (*-er*) ending seemed interchangeable with the past participle (*-é*) in some scripts.

The approach to spelling was sometimes phonetic, even with very common words: *le tôt élevé, la ters (terre), la plus par.* As usual, *leur, leurs* and *ses* appeared interchangeable in a large number of scripts, as did *ce, se* and *ceux* ; *sa* and *ça* ; *ces, ses, c'est* and *s'est ; mes, mais and mets.*

Time spent in studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be time well spent : *achat/acheter ; utilisation/utiliser ; promotion/promouvoir ; refus/refuser ; production/produire.*

Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll, in particular *permettre, aider, demander* and *laisser*.

Incomplete negatives (missing *ne*) caused some confusion, as did the unnecessary inclusion of *pas*: *personne ne les achètent pas*.

There were problems expressing comparisons (*plus bon/bien)* and in distinguishing between *bon* and *bien, mauvais* and *mal, meilleur* and *mieux* or *plusieurs/beaucoup/plus* and *trop*.

That said, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and generally accurate French which made very good reading.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not to begin the answer by re-working the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of the word limit is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

It was pleasing this session to note the absence of unnecessary additional booklets and inserts which waste resources and complicate the scanning and marking process.

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one which was approachable and of interest to candidates.

Most candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were very few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. Some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and look to over-complicate things. Others would do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

Some of the most successful candidates chose to lay out their answers by numbering the points made: e.g. full marks (3/3) were scored in **3(b)** by the following:

(i) *Elles écoutent*

(ii) *Elles partagent les informations*

(iii) *Elles persuadent/sont persuasives*

Too many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *Le fait d'inclure plus de femmes peut-il améliorer les conditions parce que…* **(3d)**. *Odile se plaint-elle parce que…* **(4c).** Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications (see previous paragraph). Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect 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.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly 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. **Material beyond the word limit is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response**. Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is not difficult to waste 20% of the available words on this for no reward: *Le premier texte présente les bienfaits que les femmes peuvent apporter aux entreprises où elles travaillent, et le deuxième texte présente les obstacles qu'elles peuvent y rencontrer. Considérons d'abord les bienfaits.* While it all sounds very worthy it earns no marks for content. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

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, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind. 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?*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a relatively straightforward first exercise which was quite successfully negotiated by the majority who understood the principles involved. Where marks were lost, it was occasionally through the inclusion of extra words which violated the 'precise footprint' principle (see **General comments** above): e.g. *mieux* in **(b).**

Item **(a)** saw candidates often finding some (but not all all) of the necessary elements of *passé en revue* in line with the 'footprint' principle outlined in the **General Comments** section above. Candidates who opted for *enregistrées* or *dirigées* would have done well to wonder how a masculine singular agreement could be replaced by a feminine plural.

In **(b),** *marchent* was correctly identified by most.

In **(c)**, *comprennent* misled some into *compréhensives* but others saw the need for a third person plural ending to help them towards *comptent*.

In **(d)**, *automatiquement* nudged most candidates towards an adverb, but some chose the wrong one in opting for *simultanément* or *récemment*.

In **(e)**, a good number found *améliorer,* although some seemed to think that *enrichir* had something to do with being *professionnels.*

Question 2

As usual, the task proved demanding for those candidates whose command of grammatical structures was over-stretched.

Item 2(a) proved straightforward enough for those who understood the *venir de* construction, even if some then included a redundant *récemment*. The large majority to whom the construction appeared unfamiliar inevitably produced some very confused versions – *on vient a été publié par une étude récemment.*

Item 2(b) required a manipulation into the passive, involving changing singular agreements into plurals. Some candidates omitted the element of *pouvoir* in their response.

Item 2(c) depended on the recognition of the need for a subjunctive after *on regrette que*. A good number of candidates did so, but the odd one spoiled things with *sois*.

Item 2(d) required candidates to manipulate direct speech into indirect. Some started well with *se montrent* but then couldn't convert *nos* to *leurs*.

Item 2(e) involved finding the correct agreement for *surmontés*. As usual, the gender of *obstacles* was given by the inclusion of *grands* in the prompt. There was no apparent justification for the omission of *par les femmes*.

Question 3

Item 3(a) Some candidates found successful ways of avoiding the lifting of *meilleures performances financières* (e.g. by using *supérieures*), without resorting to *performer*. Others avoided lifting *étant* to score the second mark, sometimes also finding acceptable alternatives to *climat plus positif* (e.g. *ambiance/environnement/cadre moins negative/f.*)

Item 3(b) The most successful candidates here simply re-worked the nouns *écoute, partage* and *persuasion* as verbs, (as hinted at by the question asking *Qu'est-ce que les femmes font …*), thereby avoiding 'lifting', although occasionally *partage* was thought to derive from the verb *partir*.

Item 3(c) was similarly best handled by using nouns to replace the adjectives *comprehensives, patientes* and *gentilles*, as suggested by the question asking *quelles sont les qualités*…. Others successfully offered *Elles comprennent mieux; elles sont moins impatientes; elles sont plus sympathiques/agréables*.

In **Item 3(d)** it was not just that there were *moins de réunions* but that the meetings did not take place late in the day. Nor does *moins de réunions tardives* suggest that women arrive late less often than men for

meetings or that these meetings are shorter. *Moins d'intrusions dans la vie privée* was sometimes successfully rendered by *moins d'invasion/interruptions/vie privée plus respectée,* whilst the lifting of *plus de souplesse dans les horaires* was avoided by *flexibilité* or *des horaires plus souples/variables*.

Item 3(e) produced some good answers which avoided simply lifting *préjugés masculins: Les hommes les sous-estiment/préjugent/le sexisme/la discrimination* etc. A good number then went on to suggest that women bosses can display *plus de motivation/détermination* and feel the need to *se prouver/démontrer leurs compétences tout le temps*.

In Item 3(f), some suggested that simply employing women was a good thing for a company but missed the point about the benefits of having them in senior posts. Others found it difficult to find ways of avoiding lifting *exclusion* and/or *sous-représentation*, most easily achieved by using verbs *exclure/marginaliser/sous-représenter* etc.

Question 4

Item 4(a) saw a good deal of lifting of *l'égalité hommes-femmes* and the occasional misreading of *le nombre de … femmes … est inchangé* as *le nombre de femmes inchargées* (in charge). The evidence for the failure of the initiatives mentioned caused further confusion, with some candidates suggesting that only 5% of women are employed, others that *Il y a jusque 5% des pays qu'ont des chefs qui sont femmes.*

Item 4(b) saw *se heurter au plafond de verre* being interpreted as self-harming, *se casser* or even attempted suicide. Others expressed the idea successfully with the use of *une barrière* or *elles ne sont pas promues/sont bloquées*. The second and third marks were most easily earned by replacing *fierté* by *fières* and *désespoir* by a verb. The use of *succéder* rather than *réussir* caused occasional confusion.

Item 4(c) was often successfully handled, with a good proportion of candidates managing to express the ideas that *les femmes sont moins appréciées et moins bien payées*. They also pointed to the fact that *les hommes occupent les postes (les) mieux payés*. *Ne m'en parlez pas* was sometimes thought to mean that male employees refused to talk to their women counterparts.

In Item 4(d), a good number of candidates successfully managed to make the point that some men said they did not want a female boss. Fewer managed to earn the second mark by saying that more women than men expressed this view.

Item 4(e) stronger candidates had little difficulty in earning the marks for *les femmes qui ont une carrière : elles sont dévouées à leur métier et ne choisissent pas la maternité*.

Question 5

This Question asked candidates to summarise the benefits which women can bring to a company and the obstacles which they can encounter, and then to name a famous woman whom they admire and explain why.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a good number, with the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material, or repeated points that they had already made.

The most commonly identified benefits included improved financial performance, a better working climate (based on listening, sharing, patience), an ability to manage work and family (with fewer intrusions into private life), and a high level of motivation and determination.

Obstacles commonly mentioned included being passed over for promotion (glass ceiling), having constantly to prove themselves/work harder for recognition, being comparatively under-paid and being the target of sexist remarks and attitudes.

The **Personal Response** prompted some interesting choices of female figures whom candidates admired: Emma Watson was the most frequently named figure, followed by Malala Yousafzai, Michelle Obama,

Melinda Gates and the singers Adèle and Madonna. The reasons given for the choices often centred on their status as role models for young women and their efforts in promoting the rights of girls and women in society.

Quality of Language

The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. Some suffered from a tendency towards verbosity and over-complexity, coupled with the use of impressive-sounding vocabulary whose meaning one sensed they did not always fully understand. The very weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects appeared largely random in a number of scripts.

Incorrect verb forms were common, with some struggling to conjugate verbs such as *devoir (ils devent)* and *vouloir (ils voudrient)*. The formation of comparatives also caused problems, notably the very common *plus bon/plus bien*.

The approach to spelling was somewhat phonetic in some scripts (e.g. *elles sont dessus* for *déçues*).

That said, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates generally enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and generally accurate French which made good reading.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/31
Essay

Key messages

To perform well on this paper, candidates should select an essay title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is relevant, well-illustrated and clearly structured. Candidates should aim to use accurate and idiomatic French, showing a good use of appropriate vocabulary, as well as some evidence of complexity in sentence patterns. Candidates should plan essays carefully, using the introduction to show their understanding of the question and develop a logical and coherent argument supported by a range of well-chosen examples, leading to a balanced conclusion where they show their considered judgment of the issues they have discussed.

General comments

Although some candidates clearly engaged with their chosen topic and wrote coherent and pertinent essays that targeted the question set, many did not consider the precise wording of the question, leading to generalisations and irrelevant answers. Candidates should present their arguments logically, using a range of link words to provide clarity in the progression of their ideas. Bullet points are not appropriate to the task. The conclusion in many instances merely stated what had been included before, often in the introduction. A small number of candidates made no attempt to answer the question and wrote answers which had been pre-learnt and were clearly irrelevant. Candidates need to be reminded that such scripts will be awarded 0 both for content and language.

Quality of language

The quality of the language varied considerably. Whilst some essays demonstrated a fair level of accuracy and some variety in the choice of vocabulary and structures, which enabled candidates to communicate their ideas effectively, there were frequent inconsistencies in the use of basic grammar. Difficulties were much in evidence with the use of adjectival and subject-verb agreements, as well as irregular verbs and prepositions. Some candidates displayed a poor command of basic linguistic structures, vocabulary and register. As a result, content was very basic and communication frequently impeded. There was at times a considerable degree of interference from English and Spanish.

Common errors included:

Incorrect spelling of common words, included some mentioned in the essay title: *organisme, atteindre, beaucoup, pays, conservation, gouvernement, environnement.*

Incorrect gender of common words : *problème, phénomène, rôle, organisme.*
Frequent incorrect use of negatives (*c'est ne pas, ne bon pas, no existe*)
Frequent incorrect word order noun/adjective
Use of *comment* for *comme.*
Use of *faire* for *rendre.*
Use of *parce que/car/grâce à* instead of *à cause de.*
Frequent incorrect use of preposition after common verbs.
Nouns used without articles and verbs used without a subject pronoun.
Lack of punctuation.
Overuse of *chose/choses.*
Inappropriate use of *personnes/gens (e.g. certains gens).*
Inappropriate register: *boulot; trucs ; ben…*
Confusion between: *ces/ses/c'est; ça/sa; son/sont; ce/ceux.*
Confusion between *par/pour.*
Confusion between verb and adjective : *meilleur/améliorer*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Tout ce qui a bon goût n'est pas forcément bon pour l'organisme. Discutez de cette affirmation.

This was with a very popular question. Unfortunately many essays tended to be superficial and did not move far beyond the issue of fast-food, stating excess sugar and fat as key factors in obesity and heart problems. Others wrote about *la cuisine française,* or made no reference to *le goût.* Some candidates however offered a detailed and well-informed response, and supported their arguments with a good range of topic-specific vocabulary, explaining the consequences of processed food on health, including the growing rate of obesity in Western societies and statistics. They considered the negative impact of the food industry with the use of additives, colourings and GMO which leads to young people in particular being addicted to unhealthy food. Some candidates considered the effect of the growing consumption of meat, both in terms of personal health and global impact, which in turns affects individuals' well-being. Flavour enhancers were sometimes denounced, as was the increasing use of palm oil in a range of food products. Some essays went onto discuss the need to educate people so that they can learn to enjoy healthier types of food. Whilst a few candidates were able to offer a good range of ideas and exemplification, many essays were rather limited in scope.

Question 2

Pourquoi l'égalité des chances est-elle un objectif si difficile à atteindre?

This question was not widely chosen, and only a minority of candidates paid heed to the wording of the essay title which asked them to consider the reasons. Candidates obviously held strong views on the topic but few had the general knowledge or topic-specific vocabulary that the question required. Many essays limited themselves to stating inequalities, both in their own countries and abroad, without acknowledging progress made in many areas. The best scripts made mention of legislation which in some countries guarantees in principle equal pay for men and women, the rights of people with disabilities or minority groups and access to education for all, and argued that despite progress, differences remain, with differences in pay being quoted, or the fact that a larger number of women than men have low paid jobs or temporary contracts. It was felt that despite legislation, prejudices are hard to change, so discrimination is still being experienced by some groups when they apply for work. Social background and parents' economic status were frequently seen as the main factor in determining a child's chances, with the cost of higher education seen as a major obstacle to equality of chances. It was felt that whilst individuals and governments should continue to strive to attain their goal, legislation alone is not enough and education is needed to change attitudes. Although most essays included some relevant ideas, many candidates struggled to develop their arguments; there was much repetition, generalisations, and overall a lack of exemplification.

Question 3

Le sport occupe une place de plus en plus importante dans la vie de beaucoup de monde : phénomène positif ou négatif?

This question was a very popular choice, but many candidates didn't to read the question carefully, leading to largely irrelevant answers. A substantial number of candidates wrote basic pieces that were little more than lists of positive effects in terms of health and social life, and often stated at the end that they could see no negative points. Some candidates made reference to the key point, the increasing importance of sport in people's lives, but answers were often limited in scope and merely focused on one or two key issues such as the health benefits. It is important that candidates consider the question from a range of perspectives and offer a balanced response. Better scripts considered the financial aspect and the negative effect money can have in professional sport: they included references to drug taking, match fixing, betting, corruption and recent scandals within FIFA. There were mentions of the pressure on families with expensive specialist TV channels and the cost of football kits and paraphernalia. Even the best answers showed limitations on the language side: *jouer du sport* was a common error, along with misspellings of common sports. Many candidates were not sufficiently in control of the language to communicate their ideas. There was considerable difficulty in particular with the language required to express the growing importance of sport, *de plus en plus,* which was key to a successful answer, despite the pattern being presented in the question.

Question 4

Le premier but d'un gouvernement c'est d'assurer la croissance économique de son pays. A votre avis, jusqu'à quel point est-ce vrai?

This question was not widely chosen, but it led to some mature, well-informed answers. Many demonstrated some ability to develop a logical and balanced argument, looking first at the importance of economic growth for a country whilst considering the impact it may have on individuals and stating that economic growth could not be at the expense of people's well-being. A number of candidates felt very passionately about the need to respect workers' rights and safety, their entitlement to a minimum wage, work/life balance and the right to union representation. Others mentioned the need to protect the environment and the rights of minority groups such as the Aborigines or Bushmen. There were many examples of environmental damage caused by the pursuit of economic growth – high level of pollution in Chinese cities, logging to make space for intensive cattle breeding, diminishing stocks due to over-fishing. Many candidates argued that happiness and the well-being of the people should come first, arguing that a well-educated and healthy population was more likely to promote economic growth for all. Social justice was for many the main aim. Most candidates concluded that economic growth must be a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. Essays for this question tended to be more successful in terms of paragraphing and many candidates were able to include a number of points, with a good level of exemplification.

Question 5

La volonté de conservation a été à l'origine des parcs nationaux. Selon vous, quels sont les principaux bienfaits pour les pays où ils se trouvent?

A number of candidates attempted this question, but it was often used as an opportunity to rehearse what they had prepared on environmental problems with at times no references to *les parcs nationaux*. Others made a brief reference to the title in their introduction, but went on to discuss more general issues, which would suggest that some candidates did not understand clearly what was meant by *les parcs nationaux*. *Environnement* and *conservation* were frequently misspelt, despite one being given in the essay title. The best scripts mentioned parks in their home countries or abroad, and included a range of benefits, such as the protection of animals and plants, the economic benefits for the host countries in terms of employment opportunities and eco-tourism. Some considered their importance in terms of fighting poaching and protecting endangered species and their role in educating visitors on a range of environmental topics. Many however would have benefited from more specific references and greater exemplification.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/32
Essay

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully, take sufficient time to plan their essays (preferably in French), write logical, well-illustrated answers and arrive at a conclusion that does not merely reiterate points made elsewhere in the answer. They also need to use a wide range of grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions in order to attain high marks for language.

General comments

The overall performance of this cohort of candidates was in line with that of previous years. There was a wide range of ability demonstrated from the very poor to the very good. With reference to the mark scheme, most candidates' work fell in the range between the top of the Poor category to the top of the Adequate category for both Language and Content with a few notable exceptions who achieved marks in the Very Good category. The candidates' work was mostly well presented although, where candidates had failed to plan, there were significant numbers of revisions in the text of the essay with arrows and asterisks which can challenge the Examiner to follow the argument. Candidates who did not target their essays fully on the question set inevitably scored lower marks since their answers contained much unfocused and often irrelevant material. Many concentrated their answer on the overall topic heading and avoided the question altogether. Some relevant essays were superficial in tone and content as well as lacking clear development or exemplification of points. They were unconvincing and therefore unable to access the higher mark ranges.

In some cases it was clear that some candidates had a poor knowledge of linguistic structures and appropriate vocabulary and register. Their answers were naively expressed in very simple and often inaccurate language. On occasion, they used inappropriate register, addressing the Examiner as *tu*. More able candidates used a range of complex structures and idioms and argued their case successfully, defining the terms of the question in their introduction, writing a coherent and convincing argument and arriving at a balanced conclusion.

Common errors included:

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *obésité*, *mythe*, *monde*, *effet, problème, manque, travail, pays, environnement, développement, gouvernement, entreprise, phénomène, choix, aspect*

Use of *le taux* for *le nombre and le/la media* for *les medias.*

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de* and *tous que* instead of *tout ce que.*

Use of *car* for *parce que.*

Random and inappropriate use of words and phrases to link paragraphs such as *aussi*, *néanmoins(*usually wrongly spelled*), pourtant, toutefois.*

Overuse of the word *personnes (*for gens*)* and *cela/ça.*

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Inaccurate and careless use of accents including words used in the questions such as *phénomène* and *égalité,* and examples of candidates using one type of accent for all occurrences.

Confusion between/misuse of : *ce/se, ces/ses, les/des, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, c'est que/ceux que, ceux qui/ce qui, ou/où, a/à, sa/ça, est/et, mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs, ils/eux.*

Use of plural verb with a singular subject and vice versa.

Overuse of *plusieurs* and use of *de/des* after *plusieurs.*

Phonetic spelling e.g. *attirait* for *attirer*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was by far the most popular question on the paper. It elicited strong responses from candidates across the range of ability. It was clear that they recognised that obesity is a real problem and is spreading throughout the world as the Western diet takes hold. Much criticism was laid at the door of the food industry for cheapening food by adding sugar and fat in large quantities and not providing enough detail on packaging. Candidates felt that it was incumbent on food manufacturer and producers to inform the public of the content of their goods thus allowing an informed choice. It was felt that the advertisements on the internet and the television were leading people into making the wrong choices with their diets. It was felt that pre-packaged food was very easy to prepare and convenient for those people coming home late from work. Equally, fast food restaurants provided tasty and appetising food (high in calories, fat and sugar) very quickly thus allowing people to satisfy their hunger easily. Candidates seemed convinced that processes such as fattening cattle quickly using hormones would also add to the incidence of obesity in the population. Individual responsibility was not ignored in the responses. Candidates felt very strongly that each person can choose what to eat and that a large part of today's obesity crisis is simply the result of people overeating because they lack self-control or are poorly educated about food. They felt that a healthy diet with fruit and vegetables and a regular exercise programme were the way to counter the problem. There was evidence of a balanced response in all answers with highest marks awarded to those candidates who expressed themselves clearly and logically throughout.

Question 2

Candidates answering this question mostly concentrated on the inequality of opportunity, often not recognising how far society has moved towards equality over the recent past. Some candidates narrowed the essay to talking about male and female roles within society and were clear that women still suffered discrimination in many areas such as education, the workplace, the home and the media. They felt strongly that women were still second class citizens particularly in the developing world where girls often received no education and became essentially the chattels of their husbands. There was a clear distinction made between the developed and the developing world in terms of opportunities for girls and women. Another area of inequality that was mentioned was that between rich and poor with the rich getting richer while the poor get poorer. Candidates felt strongly that governments should do more to equalise the opportunities for all members of society and they spoke of programmes allowing access to education for all and to the higher paid range of jobs. They felt that little progress had been made in narrowing the gap between rich and poor. They also felt that society still discriminates against homosexuals by not allowing them the same rights. Most candidates argued strongly that the idea of equal opportunities was a myth and that society still had a long way to go to make equality a reality.

Question 3

This was a popular question but was not particularly well answered. In many cases essays became lists of popular sports that were now seen across the world because of television and the internet. Candidates who were able to go deeper into the question made some telling remarks about the influence of the media on sport in general. They made reference to widening access, making lesser known sports available, and to sponsorship allowing clubs to develop and prosper. They also recognised that sport has changed as a result of media involvement. They wrote about the pressures on athletes and sportsmen and women to succeed because of being in the public eye. This could lead to a desperate need to succeed, followed perhaps by depression and then the temptation of doping. They also felt that the spirit of sport had changed with money being the driving force and sportsmen and women being celebrities. Other positives included motivating young people to play sport and to have a healthy lifestyle as well as providing the opportunity for people around the world to share in a global event such as the Olympic Games or the World Cup.

Question 4

Very few candidates attempted this question but their responses were mostly well informed and relevant. They talked of the economic growth in countries such as China where vast industrialisation has led to a booming economy but large scale pollution which has devastating effects on the health of those in the country but also on the global environment. Good candidates were able to write persuasively about the effect of economic growth on investment, welfare of the state and job creation. In general they felt that growth was a good thing but that there were unexpected side effects such as the development of tourism which could lead to overwhelming environmental effects on the countries visited. This question was well answered and many candidates had plenty of illustrations to support their arguments.

Question 5

This was the least popular question. Candidates were keen to point out the harm caused to marine creatures by pesticides washed down into the sea from cultivated land and plastics disposed of at sea. They also mentioned overfishing as a result of demand depleting the sea and creating gaps in the food chain which would have long term knock-on effects. In order to protect marine life, candidates felt that governments throughout the world should act together to prevent pollution of the oceans, putting strict laws and fines in place for offenders as well as having in place a global policy to protect all wildlife from environmental damage caused by human negligence.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/33
Essay

Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select an essay title which will give them the opportunity to write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherent. The aim is to use accurate and idiomatic French which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary. Candidates should plan essays carefully using the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title and the conclusion to show their considered final judgment of the issues they have discussed.

General Comments

In this paper, candidates are given a choice of 5 questions and are awarded up to 24 marks for quality of language and up to 16 for content. It was clear that most candidates understood the rubric for this paper and essays were generally of an appropriate length.

Focus on the question set was, however, sometimes poor and the arguments superficial. Most of the candidates did write a plan but it was often short and sketchy and basic in content. Those who did not plan at all wrote essays that were poorly constructed and full of alterations and asterisks making them difficult to follow. Ideas were often presented in a muddled way with no clear prioritisation or sense of balance. It is clear that those candidates who define the terms of the question in their own mind and organise the material into some kind of order before writing in most cases will gain higher marks for content. It is particularly important that essays should target the precise terms of the question and not merely relate to the general topic area. Essays on the overarching topic area (e.g. *le sport*) will always score poorly on content as much of the material used by candidates will often be only marginally relevant given the question title itself. Many candidates wrote very long opening paragraphs in which they explained in detail what they were going to do in their essay and how they were going to do it. Unfortunately, in many cases the scope was far too ambitious and there was an imbalance between the length of the introduction and what followed. Quotations and statistics were often used but in many cases these didn't elucidate any argument. It was clear that word count was more important than content to some candidates. Conclusions often merely listed what had gone before and did not show the candidates' position when all points had been taken into consideration.

In terms of language, awkward use of idiom and a considerable amount of mother tongue interference were fairly common, along with examples of phonetic spelling. Pre-learned phrases were frequently in evidence and in some cases served only to highlight the deficiencies in the candidates' own writing. Occasionally the candidates' lack of grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness meant that essays were rendered incomprehensible. More successful candidates used a range of structures and appropriate vocabulary, were not over-ambitious and managed to express their ideas in accurate, clear and concise language.

Examples of good use of language include:

Appropriate use of linking words and phrases such as *en plus, or, donc, par exemple, lorsque, ainsi, puisque, cependant, pourtant, d'ailleurs, néanmoins, en revanche, d'un côté…de l'autre côté, à mon avis.*

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read a range of media on subjects as diverse as equality of opportunity and the environment.

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive. Use of a range of verbs such as *pour encourager, reposer sur, promouvoir, justifier, mener à, ne cesser de, se faire mal.*

Correct use of idioms such as *il s'agit de, il convient de, en d'autres mots, au revers de la médaille, étant donné que, tel que, de plus en plus.*

Common errors

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *choix, stress, manque, travail, handicapé, loi, pays, voie, développement, bienfait, gouvernement, monde, rôle, exemple, phénomène, problème, aspect.*

Overuse of *aussi* at start of sentences and paragraphs.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de* and *car* for *pour.*

Overuse of the word *chose/choses* and *cela/ça.* Use of *personnes* for *gens.*

Inconsistency of pronouns (*les personnes* followed by *ils*, *son/ses* etc).

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Confusion between/misuse of : *ces/ses, les/des, place/endroit, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, c'est que/ceux que, ceux qui/ce qui, ou/où, a/à, sa/ça (overused instead of cela), mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs.*

Use of *faire* for *rendre*

Use of the past participle after modal verbs, e.g. *elles doivent resté à la maison, on peut allé au gymnase*

Use of the wrong preposition after common verbs followed by an infinitive structure, e.g. *aider de, préférer de*

Use of anglicisms such as *dépenser sur, payer l'attention, travailler* for *marcher, actuellement, capabilité.*

Phonetic spelling such as *attirait* for *attirer.*

Incorrect form of third person plural verb e.g. *ils regardes*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a popular questions and candidates answering it took the view that eating and drinking had indeed become more important in today's world. They felt that there was now an emphasis on food presentation and new tastes and that we had moved away as a society from eating to survive to eating for pleasure and experience. This has resulted in the development of more diseases and conditions related to overeating such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. Candidates were keen to point out that this was mainly a problem in the developed world and that there were still famines in poorer countries. They felt that the disparity between rich and poor was, therefore, being made ever greater. Genetically modified food was mentioned as a way of creating better food supply for the third world. There was a feeling overall that eating and drinking were essential to both social and business life and that it would be hard to change the modern mentality.

Question 2

This question was attempted by few candidates. They felt that discrimination was still too much in evidence towards disabled people and that not enough was being done to improve the situation. They were clear that disabled people were often disregarded for jobs because of their disability and the difficulties it might impose on the employer. A possible solution put forward to help the situation was awareness raising classes in school and the workplace which would allow a better understanding of the world of a disabled person. Candidates were convinced that disability did not have to mean inability and that the problem largely lay with society.

Question 3

This was a popular question but was poorly answered by some. Many candidates chose to write about sport in general without reference to the question set. They clearly felt that sport was important from a health and social point of view but they seemed to completely disregard the *avec modération* aspect of the question. More successful essays talked about the risks involved in playing too much sport such as developing long term injuries or becoming obsessed with exercise to the extent that work and family life suffer. Candidates understood the clear health benefits of regular exercise but were keen to point out that moderation is the key.

Question 4

This question was attempted by few candidates. They mostly tried to define education and then determine whether it was successful or not in determining social or economic development. Some candidates appeared rather uncertain about how education specifically related to either of these functions. They instead wrote in very general terms about education and its role in life with little use of example or real depth of analysis.

Question 5

Candidates held strong views about the environment and, in particular, about how humans were destroying the planet. Their understanding of biodiversity was, however, occasionally rather superficial and many essays were mainly focused on changes to the environment in general such as global warming, the greenhouse effect and destruction of ecosystems. Candidates felt that the best reasons for preserving biodiversity were to allow the conservation of animal and plant species which would provide humans with food and medicines and the slowing of the damage to the ozone layer which would enable us to sustain life on the planet.