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## AS Unit 1 (6441) - Listening and Writing

Some 13,000 candidates sat this paper. Both the style of the paper and time allocation were familiar, and the vast majority of candidates attempted all parts.

The candidate's cassette or for the first time, compact disc, contained its usual four passages, whose total duration was a little less than 5 minutes.

Passage 1, relating to Q1, was a multiple choice exercise worth 4 marks, concerning a festival with regional specialities in Normandy.

Passage 2, divided into two parts which related to Q2 and Q3 respectively, was about how policemen in Deux-Sèvres have increased their mobility, and accessibility for tourists. In Q2, worth 5 marks, candidates produced short phrases, and in Q3, also worth 5 marks, candidates were required to write the synonym for the word(s) offered in the question.

Passage 3 related to an initiative proposed by *le ministre de l'Économie* for supermarkets to pay a minimum guaranteed price to farmers for their produce, and provided the stimulus for Q4, a target language comprehension test worth 12 marks, and for Q5, worth 16 marks. In Q5, candidates were required in (a), to give their opinions of the initiative based on Passage 3, and in (b), to respond more personally and generally with their views of supermarkets.

Passage 4 detailed a new sticker campaign, which aimed to help the environment, by reducing the volume of junk mail received. Q6 was a guided summary in English from Passage 4, worth a total of 8 marks.

### Assessment Principles

In Q1 and Q3, only 0 or 1 could be scored for each part. In Q3, if the response was not wholly correct, but was recognisable, it earned the mark. However as a single word or expression corresponding to the question was required, wholesale lifts, even if they included the correct word, did not score. In Q2, too, recognisable and unambiguous spellings were accepted, allowing for the fact that candidates were generating their responses in French, rather than selecting from a pool of items. As is now customary for this Unit, examiners assessed responses in Q4 and Q6 in the order that elements were presented by the candidates, and considered no more elements than the number of marks available. For instance, in a two mark question, only the first two elements of the response offered would gain credit. Repeating the question, or preambles to an acceptable response, did not count as elements in the response. While harmless additions did not cause credit to be withheld, vitiation through incorrect additions did. In Q5, (a) and (b) were considered independently of one another. In either case, candidates needed to gain at least 1 mark for Content to access any marks at all for Language, and *vice versa*. The practice of enforcing word limits in Q5 and Q6 was unchanged: in Q5, examiners read no further than the end of the sense group after 40 words in either response. In Q6, where summary skills, not necessarily whole sentences, are required, examiners did not credit responses after the 60<sup>th</sup> word.

## Candidates' responses

### Question 1

This question provided many candidates with full marks, as intended at the start of the paper, and few gained no credit. (a) was straightforward for many, given the context implied by other parts. *une course* was the most frequent incorrect choice, perhaps given confusion with *les courses*, and the reference later to cheeses from *Corse*. (b) was less successful, and a significant number of candidates did not appear to realise that all the areas named are at least partially within France, thus (ii) was the most frequently chosen incorrect response. In (c), (ii) again featured erroneously, and *charcuterie* appeared not to be considered meat by a number of candidates. (d) was generally well answered, but the slight inference needed, that *fumantes* and *four* referred to *chaudes*, escaped a minority of candidates, of whom most chose (i), mistaking *fumantes* for *brûlées*.

### Question 2

This question was attempted with varying degrees of success, but almost all candidates gained some credit. Candidates not infrequently offered too many elements, or attempted, often inaccurately, to transcribe what was heard from the passage, in an attempt to include the correct response. Such untargeted responses did not succeed on the whole.

#### Q2(a)

The most frequent score (47%) in this part was 2 marks, and 0 was the least common. Since any notion of *vélo*, whether *VTT* or not, and wide-ranging spellings of *camion* were tolerated, many candidates scored. *camjon* as an incorrect spelling was regarded as too inaccurate, and *patron* for *patrouille* invalidated the idea of bicycle transportation.

#### Q2(b)

60% of candidates gained the mark in this part, aided by a generous acceptance of the spellings for *bord* and *canal*. The most frequent cause for the loss of the mark was *sur la place principale et au bord du canal*, since this offered the correct response as the second element of a 1 mark question.

#### Q2(c)

Many candidates appeared to understand the passage relating to this question, but targeted their response incorrectly, focusing on *ils voulaient trouver un moyen original*, rather than on attracting tourists. If the means of transport was presented as a preamble, credit could still be given, but if given as a separate element, and offered first, the mark was not awarded. *tourists*, spelt in English, did not score, as here, it was a key concept.

#### Q2(d)

The tourists' general approbation was successfully conveyed by 40% of candidates, but others responded too generally to score, and suggested attitudes which did not relate closely enough to the new initiative. Hence *ils sont contents* or *ils aiment* were insufficiently specific, but *ils en sont contents* and *ils aiment ça* target the outcome of the initiative more felicitously.

### Question 3

Most candidates gained respectable marks in this question, and except for (a), it was more common to gain the mark than not. A number of candidates failed to target their response to the question, and in offering extra information which did

not form part of the corresponding expression, forfeited the mark. Examiners accepted, at the very least, recognisable verbal and adjectival forms, where the sound was unaffected, and in some responses, even less accurate forms. Therefore in (a), *adapte* was accepted, as clearly the correct word had been chosen. Incorrect spelling, such as *adopté*, which constituted another French word was not awarded credit, nor was the English spelling *adapt*. In (b) the most frequent error was *s'amuser*, where the sound was different. *ils* was accepted as the logical subject pronoun, but *les gens* is not implicit in *prennent plaisir*, so invalidated the response, as in *les gens s'amusent*. 90% of candidates scored in (c), and *discouter* was tolerated as a comprehensible spelling. *se discuter* did not score as the reflexive added a sense which was not implicit in the question. *dire* was offered by some candidates as a plausible synonym, but did not score, as it was not in the relevant part of the passage. In (d) and (e), 74% and 72% respectively of candidates gained the mark. In (d) the singular was accepted, but incorrect or absent renditions of the nasal were considered too far from the correct spelling, *enformations*, *formation(s)*, *ammportant*. The Spanish spelling *informacion(e)(s)* was not acceptable. In (e), *important(s)* gained the mark, despite the changed sound, as it was treated as a grammatical error. However the nominalisation *l'important* did not reflect the adjectival question, so received no credit.

#### Question 4

Overall, candidates responded well in this question, and displayed a generally reasonable understanding of the initiative to help French farmers. Most frequent misunderstandings involved the demonstrations, which the Minister was trying to stop, not incite, and erroneous price comparisons with the Netherlands. The vast majority of candidates attempted all parts. The least successful responses involved candidates seeking to transcribe possibly long lifts from the passage, with little understanding, and inattention to grammatical considerations. Such responses were often largely incomprehensible. Candidates also lost marks in (d) and (f) where they did not write in a tense logical to the question. If *tomates* were referred to as *ils*, this was tolerated, if comprehensible within context.

#### Q4(a)

70% of candidates gained the mark. Targeted lifts scored, such as *de nombreux producteurs*, as did *producteurs* without *agricoles*. However *des difficultés rencontrées par de nombreux producteurs* did not focus on who was suffering, and thus gained no credit. Similarly, *les associations agricoles* was not rewarded, as the individuals, rather than their group, were in difficulties.

#### Q4(b)

56% of candidates scored in this part. The minimalist *prix bas* was fully rewarded. As *ils sont victimes* was therefore not essential, the English spelling *victims* was tolerated, but the necessary *prix* could not be rendered acceptably by *price*, as it is English, nor by *pris*, as this is ambiguous. *baisse* was also ambiguous, and therefore unsuccessful. A whole lift was able to score, as it provided a correctly targeted response. *bas* could be conveyed acceptably by *mal* or *mauvais* in this context.

#### Q4(c)

76% of candidates gained both available marks, making this the most successful part of the question. Again examiners accepted a succinct response: *fruit(s) cher(s)* earned both marks. Candidates who did not mention *fruits* scored if they mentioned *nectarines et pêches*, even in the generic singular, but *produits* was the most common error, which invalidated 1 mark. Candidates could access each mark

discretely, thus naming only one of the required fruit, such as *pêches chères* scored 1 mark.

#### Q4(d)

Candidates gained 0, 1 or 2 marks in roughly equal proportions. Once again, examiners awarded marks discretely. The notions of *hypermarchés* and *supermarchés* were regarded here as synonymous. If *d'achat* were not mentioned, the government's enforcing role was needed. Therefore either *un prix minimum d'achat aux hypermarchés* (verb omitted) or *le gouvernement impose un prix minimum aux hypermarchés* (including the enforcement idea) gains both marks. Responding from the other viewpoint was acceptable. *les hypermarchés paient un prix minimum aux producteurs* gained 2 marks. Many candidates invalidated 1 mark by the use of a past tense. Unsuccessful responses included *un prix minimum aux hypermarchés*, since this suggests that customers were paying a minimum price to the hypermarkets, not the hypermarkets to the producers.

#### Q4(e)

81% of candidates failed to gain credit in this part, thus making this the least successful part. Scoring 0 was most often due to misunderstanding or omitting *cesser*, or writing *ils doivent manifester contre les hypermarchés*. If placed in the negative, the formulation *ils ne doivent pas manifester contre les hypermarchés* scored 2. Omission of the target of the would-be demonstrations forfeited 1 mark: *ils doivent cesser de manifester*.

#### Q4(f)

Responses, as in (d), were roughly evenly spread, with slightly more candidates (37%) scoring 2. If a verb were included, it had to be in the past tense, and use of the present tense invalidated 1 mark. However, incorrect, but comprehensible attempts at the past passive were tolerated, *les hypermarchés ont incité d'acheter à l'étranger*, as its formation is not an expectation of the AS Programme of Study. *tomates* were an acceptable example, but if portrayed as the only imported good, 1 mark was forfeited.

#### Q4(g)

Around two-thirds of candidates gained some credit here, and examiners accepted responses from either the Dutch or French perspective. If the Dutch perspective were selected, an explicit response was needed. *les tomates coûtent 20 centimes le kilo moins en Hollande qu'en France* gained 2. The English spelling *Holland*, essential in this part, invalidated 1 mark. From the intended French perspective, the wording of the question allowed the succinct *20 centimes moins le kilo* to earn both marks. Many candidates conveyed the sense that tomatoes on sale in France were dearer, but failed to communicate either the quantity involved, or price differential, thus forfeiting 1 mark. A number of candidates vitiated otherwise correct responses: *les tomates coûtent 20 centimes le kilo plus qu'en France*.

#### Question 5

Over 70% of candidates scored in the 2 to 3 range in each skill for (a) and (b). Word count remains a consideration, particularly where candidates repeated or re-worked the question, even though little or no information was conveyed by doing this. 5% of candidates failed to score in either (a) or (b). Happily, some 10% obtained full marks in either or both parts.

### Q5(a)

Of the candidates who did not score, many of these did not offer any opinion, not even implicitly, and simply detailed, rather than discussed, the initiative. The most frequent misunderstanding in (a) concerned the *prix minimum*. Little credit could be given for responses which applauded customers having to pay a minimum price to supermarkets, or where *minimum* was mistaken for *minimal*, going on to approve the consequent low prices for customers. Praising demonstrations by the producers was a frequent error. Successful responses gave an opinion, and often, though not necessarily, discussed both sides of an economic argument, for example, the laudable principle of guaranteeing a fair price, but also the potentially ill-advised and unworkable price-fixing strategy in a European-wide market. The most successful responses were not necessarily the most complex or linguistically ambitious, but those which included correct agreements and tense formation, along with clear and logically presented arguments.

### Q5(b)

In this part, better candidates widened the discussion beyond pricing, and food retail, to consider the availability of a broader range of goods, and the repercussions for employment in the area, and the impact on other shops. Many re-worked elements from (a), and gained only limited credit, since such treatment produced a narrow discussion of (b). Again, successful candidates often contrasted two arguments: the convenience of supermarkets with their impact on smaller shops and their ethical records, for instance. Full marks were also available for responses which treated one side of the argument thoroughly, including a positive view of supermarkets, for their convenience, range, value, worldwide products, long opening hours, job opportunities and disabled parking.

### Question 6

The English summary yielded mixed fortunes, ranging from excellent, succinct responses which gained full marks, to verbose responses which did not score at all. *prospectuses* was often translated erroneously, but lost credit on the first occasion only. *stop pub* and *boîte* caused a number of misunderstandings involving alcohol restrictions and bottle recycling, despite clues to the contrary in the question of (e). Especially (a) was frequently answered at length, leading to latter parts sometimes falling beyond the 60 words permitted.

### Q6(a)

44% of candidates gained some credit for this part. Erroneous translations of *prospectuses* were the most common reason for loss of credit. Also frequent were misunderstandings of *boîte aux lettres*, or candidates who did not specify where stickers were to be placed, as in *a sticker to stop junk mail* which gained just 1 mark. The untranslated *autocollant* could not score in this or any other part, since it was essential.

### Q6(b)

Examiners exercised some latitude when assessing communication of the slogan, and rather unnatural English scored fully, for example, *junk mail is bad for my planet. Please none in my letter box*. Sequential errors, such as the use of *rubbish* for *prospectuses* in (a), followed by (b) did not lose credit twice. Candidates who used vague pronouns, such as *it is bad for my planet. Do not put it in my letter box*, could not gain both marks, if the pronoun did not refer clearly to the correct noun. Treatment of *junk mail* with a plural pronoun caused not infrequent ambiguity. Erroneous references to the French Republic and rectangular stickers were clearly taken from the passage, but without regard for demands of (b).

#### Q6(c)

37% of candidates scored in this part, where it sufficed to indicate a reduced volume of junk mail. References to *once a week* or *5 times less* were frequent and acceptable. *1/5 of the junk mail compared to before* or *4/5 less junk mail than before* both scored, but a number of candidates confused the fractions involved: *1/5 less junk mail* did not score, as it was an incorrect proportion.

#### Q6(d)

Due to excessive words earlier, a significant minority of candidates had already reached 60 words before this part, so were among the 72% who did not earn the available mark. There needed to be an idea of throwing junk mail straight away, so *too much junk mail* was inadequate. *too many things in my letter box thrown straight away* was acceptable, as this paraphrased sufficiently junk mail being thrown away.

#### Q6(e)

52% of candidates scored in this part, and word count affected many of those who did not. One mark was gained if the order of elements caused the 1<sup>st</sup> element to be incorrect, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> elements to be correct, in this 2 mark part, where only the first two elements offered were credited. *40kg. 17kg per inhabitant* scored one. *habitant* was frequent, and unacceptable, as it was a key concept in the wrong language. Often there was no indication of what the weight related to, *17kg t.c.*, and some candidates vitiated their response by illogical suggestions: *17kg per person, 4kg per household. 16kg* was a not infrequent error for *17kg*.

#### Advice and Guidance

1. Centres are discouraged from the increasing practice of providing additional paper for rough work. A significant number of candidates drafted and then copied up certain parts of the paper, but, given the time constraint, then failed to attempt all questions.
2. Candidates should revise basic tense formation and adjectival agreement, since inaccuracy may impede comprehension.
3. Practice at responding directly to questions, and avoiding untargeted lifts from the passage greatly benefits candidates.
4. Candidates should heed the tense used in the question, and respond accordingly.
5. Given that marks are awarded following the order in which elements of a response are presented, candidates should avoid offering more elements than the marks available for a given question part.
6. In Q5, candidates must ensure that they give opinions, even if implicit, in both (a) and (b), and that the focus in their response to (b) extends beyond simply re-working the contents of (a).
7. In especially Q6, candidates must ensure that no more than 60 words in total are used.

8. In Q6, candidates should choose one translation for a word, for example of *prospectus* this session, and use it consistently, so that credit is withheld for the first incorrect translation only, rather than for each further false rendition.



## AS Unit 2 (6442) - Reading and Writing

### Description of the Unit

Four passages were set to test comprehension using a range of verbal and non-verbal question types. In addition, there was a test of continuous writing in French in response to a structured outline based on a stimulus passage, both expressed in French. In setting the material, the examiners consulted the tables of assessment objectives on pages 8 and 13 of the Specification, General Topic Areas 1 - 3 on page 15, the description of the Unit on page 19 and the Notes for Guidance on page 88. There were no changes to the paper.

Q1, worth 5 marks, was an exercise based on a short passage about the conditions under which French people would move abroad. It was a multiple-choice question. Passage two was in two parts and concerned Michelin maps both past and present. Q2 (6 marks) required the finding of an equivalent in the text. Q3 (6 marks) was a true/false question. Candidates had to correct statements which were false. Passage 3 concerned an incident of racial discrimination involving the sale of land to an Algerian of impeccable background. Q4 (10 marks) required answers in French to questions in French about the passage. Passage 4 concerned the use by French people of government Internet sites. Q5 (12 marks) required answers in English to questions in English about the passage. In Q6 (40 marks) candidates had to write an article of 140 - 160 words in French about mobile phones.

### Assessment principles

The 28 marks available for questions 1 - 4 were awarded positively for correct information successfully retrieved and conveyed. Credit was withheld if understanding was not conveyed. No half-marks were awarded. For all questions, the draft mark scheme was amended in the light of the candidates' responses.

For Qs 1, 2 and 3 candidates received 1 or 0 for each part of the question.

In Q4, credit was given for the required information in French, whether in complete sentences or not, provided that errors of language did not obscure transmission of meaning.

In Q5, the marks were awarded for transfer of meaning from French into acceptable and unambiguous English.

In Q6, under a generic mark scheme for content, candidates were assessed for their degree of success in completing the task (20 marks). 20 marks were awarded for quality of French. For Communication, the examiners took account of factors such as the candidates' understanding of the scenario, their degree of success in addressing and developing the four bullet points within the word limit, the overall structure and coherence of the answer and the suitability of the format adopted for the article. For Quality of Language, marks were awarded for correct French which conveyed meaning, within the confines of the Grammar syllabus on pages 47-48, and for the range and variety of structure and lexis used; there was no negative marking. Language falling outside the defined grammar syllabus was ignored, e.g. the conditional perfect tense.

## Candidates' responses

A wide range of achievement was represented.

Generally, the basic meaning of the passages was understandable and the subject matter was accessible and largely familiar. Nevertheless, large numbers of candidates once again lost marks probably within their grasp because they did not read the passages and the questions closely enough, or did not pay sufficient attention to the articulation of their answers.

### Passage 1 Question 1

Marks were lost most commonly by misunderstanding the words *favorable* and *sûr*.

### Passage 2 Question 2

Most candidates understood the passage and the requirements of the question. However, many candidates lost marks in questions (b) *publie* and (f) *banales*.

### Passage 2 Question 3

Many candidates did not correct the false statements or simply gave a negative form of the original statement (with ne...pas) which was not credited, as this does not demonstrate understanding.

### Passage 3 Question 4

- (a) Few candidates could produce *la vente*. This was also noted as a problem in January's report.
- (b) Many candidates were confused about who signed what.
- (c) Most candidates managed a correct answer.
- (d) Many candidates did not read the question closely and simply gave a description of Mme Monet's reaction rather than their own opinion of that reaction.
- (e) This point was central to the text but many candidates showed a lot of confusion. Few understood *cadre*, most ignored the significance of the acute accent on *diplômé* and more worryingly many did not understand the gender significance of *Monsieur*.
- (f) There was widespread misunderstanding about the meaning of *rencontrer*.
- (g) Most correctly identified M Ferraud as the injured party.
- (h) There was again a lot of misunderstanding of the gender of *Monsieur*.

### Passage 4 Question 5

Apart from *milliards* there were few key words that were misunderstood in this passage. Most errors were created by not reading the passage and questions closely or by careless spelling and idiom.

- (a) Queue was often written as que, *déplacements* was rendered as displacements; *paperasse* was translated as paper waste or paparazzi.
- (b) Few candidates would seem to have *download* in their active vocabulary and instead favoured *procure*.
- (c) A lot of candidates recognised the central notion of majority.
- (d) This question was generally misunderstood and led to some wild guesses.
- (e) Too many candidates guessed an answer from outside the text.
- (f) This was well answered by nearly all candidates.
- (g) Many also correctly answered this question but many did not translate the names of the government sites.

## Passage 5 Question 6

### Content

The subject was dear to many candidates' hearts. There were few answers that were too short or too long. Most candidates addressed the points in order. However, bullet one was often answered as a description of the uses of a mobile phone rather than the candidate's own dependence. The second of the bullet points was often confusingly answered when the candidate did not understand *détruit*. The notion of respect was given an adolescent slang spin by a surprising number of candidates. Bullet four was often well answered. The most successful candidates fully addressed all parts of the four bullet points in order and in separate paragraphs. They also developed each of their points with a clear sentence or two of explanation or illustration.

### Quality of language

The main problems were poor use of tenses (especially confusion of imperfect and conditional) and lack of agreement and concord. Subordination was mostly limited to *parce que*, hypothetical clauses were problematic, the subjunctive was lacking after a negative verb of opinion and there was abundant inappropriate use of the subjunctive. More than in the past, candidates quoted at length from the stimulus material. This of course cannot be rewarded. The most successful candidates managed to produce grammatically accurate sentences that contained subordinate clauses.

### Notes for Guidance

- 1 Candidates should read the paper carefully. They should not begin answering a question until they have read the specific instructions for it. The wording of the question should be studied closely and answers should be related to the stimulus passage.
- 2 The whole text of passages 1 - 4 should be read before the questions are attempted. Candidates should try to identify the overall theme and the thread of any argument.
- 3 Candidates should be aware that the questions on passages 1 - 4 will be of varying difficulty, and that some will require deductions to be made or inferences to be drawn.
- 4 In answering questions on passages 3 and 4, candidates should try to ensure that their answer provides a **direct response** to the question set.
- 5 Answers in English should be checked for clarity and logic.
- 6 When attempting Q6, candidates should: (i) read the whole rubric carefully (ii) write within the word limits, since short answers will be self-penalising and excess beyond 160 words will not be marked (iii) try to allocate time for systematic checking of basic grammar.
- 7 In preparing for Q6, candidates should have experience of writing letters (formal and informal), reports and articles. The answers may be discursive as well as descriptive.

- 8 The instructions and guidance given in the Specification and the Teachers' Guide should be followed.
- 9 Candidates should write their final answers in dark ink.
- 10 Candidates should write within the borders of the page and avoid use of supplementary pages whenever possible.

## AS Unit 3 (6443) - Prepared Oral Topic

The purpose of this unit is to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their level of oral proficiency while allowing them a considerable degree of personal choice and freedom. The required personal research will enable them to “*explore and develop their understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of one or more of the countries whose language is being studied*” (Specification Page 7).

The test is designed to:

- assess the candidates’ ability to present information and opinion about a topic relating to a francophone country.
- assess the quality of language used by the candidates when doing this.
- assess the extent of the candidates’ knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- assess the candidates’ ability to engage in a genuine, spontaneous discussion on their chosen topic.

### Preparation for the Test

#### 1. Choice of Topic

“*Students will be required to prepare a topic dealing with an aspect of culture and/or society in the relevant country of the target language...*” (Specification Page 21)

Appropriate choice of topic is essential in this Unit as AO4 is only tested in the Oral examination at AS level. Most examiners commented on the pleasingly large variety of topics chosen by candidates this session and the obvious amount of research that had been done. Many candidates displayed a high degree of both knowledge and understanding as well as considerable enthusiasm for their chosen area of study.

A large number of candidates chose an appropriate topic, which was firmly based in a francophone context. Recent events in France meant that many opted to talk about various aspects of “*Les Emeutes*”, “*Les Problèmes des banlieues*”, “*Le CPE*”, often leading to discussions on secularism, racism, immigration, unemployment and crime. There was also a resurgence of interest in the film “*La Haine*”. There were many instances of good discussions based on facts, although more than just a few were rather vague and one-sided, full of unsupported assertions.

Geographical topics were once again very popular. “*La Bretagne*” came top of the list of regions, closely followed by “*La Provence*” and “*La Côte d’Azur*”. Cities figured frequently: “*Paris*”, “*Bordeaux*” and “*Lyon*”, in particular. The advantage of such topics is that they are of necessity totally rooted in the francophone context. The danger is that they can lead to a purely factual descriptive approach lacking in displayed understanding and expressed opinion. Francophone African countries figured frequently and were usually dealt with in the spirit of the examination, although some candidates strayed from the French cultural, historical or linguistic contexts; but travelogues on “*Le Liban*”, “*La Syrie*” and “*L’Île Maurice*” which did not refer to French cultural, historical or linguistic influence could not be rewarded.

Biographies of famous French people abounded. From the world of fashion, “*Coco Chanel*” was the favourite by a long way, followed by “*Christian Dior*” and “*Yves*

*St. Laurent*". *Monet* was the top artist, ahead of *Degas* and *Renoir* whilst *Marie Curie* from the world of science was often spoken about, as well as *Louis Pasteur*". *Edith Piaf*", *Johnny Halliday*" and rap singers such as *Diam's*" and *MC Solaar*" were the more popular choice of singers. Sport was dominated by footballers (*Henri*" and *Zidane*"). The list of famous composers was headed by *Debussy*", historical figures often included *Napoleon*", *Charles de Gaulle*" and *Pétain*". From the "cinquième art" we had actors like *Depardieu*", *Tautou*" and directors like *Truffaut*" and *Jeunet*". Biographies can work very well since there is an obvious shape to them. They can also go totally wrong if a candidate chooses to speak about, for example, a basket-ball player who plays all his basket-ball in the American League.

Relatively few candidates chose a literary text. *L'Étranger*" was probably the most popular and led to useful and interesting discussions, although this tended to happen in centres where all or most candidates chose the same work. Whilst this is not against the rules, it is not in the spirit of the specification and can lead to very repetitive tests where the spontaneous and unpredictable elements are difficult to discern. Authors provided some good tests (*Flaubert*", *St Exupéry*", *Victor Hugo*"), but difficulties did occur when it became clear that candidates had either only read one work (often in translation) or, in some cases, none at all.

Candidates who also study History often spoke well on topics which were relevant to their chosen periods, although there was a danger of choosing topics which were much too large for the scope of a 12 minute oral examination, such as *La Révolution Française*", *La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale*", *La Guerre de Cent ans*".

There was a lot of interest in various aspects of health. Interesting tests were heard on *Les Problèmes de la Sécurité Sociale*" and *Le SAMU*" for example, but topics such as *L'Obésité*", *L'Anorexie*", *La Boulimie*", *La Santé des Jeunes*", *L'alcoolisme*", *le Tabagisme*" *La Grippe Aviaire*" often led to very general discussions, often totally lacking in francophone focus, even when the title on the oral form included "En France", sometimes almost as an afterthought.

It was pleasing to hear so many candidates who had chosen ambitious or unusual topics such as *Les Philosophes du Siècle des Lumières*", *Le Musée des Abattoirs et le Grand Répertoire des Machines*", *Les Femmes Artistes de France au XVIIIème Siècle*", *Le Contrat Social de Rousseau*", *Les Relations entre la France et la Côte d'Ivoire*", *La Délocalisation en France*", *L'Hausmanisation de Paris*". On the other hand, GCSE style accounts of *Mes Huit Jours à Caen*", or *Mon Echange*" failed to produce much evidence of research and understanding, whilst the new topic of *Le Parkour*" presented by a small number of students, was difficult to sustain and to keep rooted in the francophone context.

Material which is not rooted in a francophone context cannot be given credit under Knowledge and Understanding.

## 2. Source Material

*“In preparation..., students will need to research their chosen area and undertake extended reading from a variety of sources in order to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the contemporary society and/or cultural heritage of the target language countries or communities.”* (Specification, page 21)

Thorough research is an integral part of the preparation for this unit. The Examiners remain very concerned by the fact that a number of candidates gave little evidence of having addressed this area of preparation. A few facts from a course book or a single newspaper article are insufficient; the evidence gleaned from research should underpin the tests, enabling candidates to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding.

Anecdote is no substitute for genuine research and topics based on personal experience of, for example, an area of France visited on holiday, only rarely demonstrated an appropriate level of research. Proffered facts must be accurate; there was an alarming number of wrong pieces of information being accepted by the teacher examiners without question.

As in previous sessions, the best tests were those where the candidates had a genuine interest in the topic chosen, had carried out sensible research and were given every opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of facts and their understanding of the French context, supporting what they were saying with evidence.

Many centres are to be commended for facilitating this research and supporting their students in this integral element of the Unit.

### *Oral forms*

*“[Students]...will be permitted to take into the examination a list of 5 - 10 target language headings, as a prompt to remind them of key aspects of the topic.”* (Specification page 21)

This is a very important document and great care must be taken when filling it. Advice given in previous reports seems to have been followed in most cases, but some problems were experienced again this session.

Forms should give the **title** of the topic selected and between five and ten brief **target language** headings. (If for any reason a teacher examiner is unable to conduct the oral tests, another examiner should be able to work from these forms with no difficulty.)

Headings should indicate to the examiner the areas of research undertaken by the candidate. There is no value in including in the headings *Introduction, Mon opinion* or *Conclusion*.

Headings should **not** be the first 3 - 4 words of each sentence of the presentation; such headings are completely meaningless and give no indication of the research undertaken. It is also very difficult to credit the “unpredictable” discussion (see below). Some candidates simply list up to 10 questions that they are prepared to answer and these are addressed in the same order by the teacher examiner, with no addition or variation. Yet others list all the factual information, dates, figures, statistics or proper names required in various headings; if these provide the only factual information proffered in the test the candidates are unlikely to attain a

high mark for Knowledge and Understanding. It is also important that the overall title, in French, be given.

Centres are reminded that the forms should be completed by the candidates themselves, although teacher examiners may check them and ensure that the candidates submit forms completed in accurate French. There were instances of teacher examiners completing all their candidates' forms.

The correct version of the form (with mark grids) can be downloaded from the Edexcel website and copies of all oral forms were sent to all Centres with the *Notice to Centres - Changes to GCE MFL specification - Issue 1 - June 2003*. They can also be copied from the current *Handbook of Instructions for Centres - Edexcel GCE Oral Tests*. Centres should ensure that they are not using out-of-date versions of the forms.

### **3. Practice**

Preparation for a genuine oral discussion must clearly form a vital part of the AS course.

This does not, however, mean rehearsing the entire test beforehand. If the candidates carry out careful research and have regular linguistic practice in maintaining a discussion on any topic at all, recognising and responding correctly to the various means used by Examiners to seek further information, opinion, exemplification or clarification, they will be prepared for a lively and spontaneous discussion on the chosen topic. One effect of this test should be to give candidates confidence in maintaining a discussion in French; over-preparation or excessive rehearsal will mean that they lose confidence in their ability to say anything if it has not been scripted and learned by heart beforehand. This would seem to run counter to the aims of language-learning in general and this examination in particular. Although the majority of tests were conducted in the correct spirit, those tests that were not at all spontaneous stood out for their lack of authenticity and candidates' marks suffered accordingly.

#### **Conduct of the Test**

There were many examples of excellent practice. However, there remains some confusion over the intention of the examination, the requirements and the conduct. It is vitally important that candidates be given every opportunity to reach the highest mark of which they are capable.

The test should last for 10 - 12 minutes. The candidates are first invited to make a presentation of the chosen topic lasting 1 - 2 minutes. This presentation may well be learned by heart, as it gives the candidates the opportunity to overcome initial nerves and feel ready to face the discussion. If possible, candidates should be dissuaded from presenting their topic unnaturally fast. The best presentations are those that set out clearly the candidates' line of thinking and the aspects of the topic that they have prepared. Less successful are those which consist of a simple reading of the headings on the form, or alternatively, use up all the factual information and statistics that the candidates have learned.

At the end of the presentation (or at two minutes if the candidates seem likely to speak for too long) the examiner will effect a move to the discussion, seeking information from the candidates supported by example, clarification, detail and opinion. The examiner will be prepared for the general lines of the discussion by previous study of the Oral Form (see above) and will also develop it further by responding to points made by the candidates or by selecting an aspect indicated on the form. It is vital for the teacher examiner to listen to what candidates say and

to respond appropriately; there were examples of candidates making factual errors that could well have been corrected had the teacher examiner sought brief clarification. It is also important that the conversation be as natural as possible in the circumstances. This discussion will be pursued in such a way as to enable the candidates to demonstrate their control of the language as well as knowledge and understanding of the topic chosen.

It is not necessary to cover all the headings offered on the form in the course of discussion, and it will not have a negative effect on the candidates' marks if they are not.

Although it is not wrong to work through the headings as they stand, this tends to lead to an unnatural discussion, encouraging the production of pre-learned speeches, which should be avoided. Between 10 and 12 minutes the test should be brought to a smooth conclusion; there is no benefit to be gained by long tests, since examiners are instructed to stop marking after the allocated time.

*"Examiners will also be expected to test students on their ability to engage in a conversation that goes beyond the target-language headings but remains within the chosen topic area."* (Specification, Page 21)

This is the element that is referred to as the "unpredictable" questions, that is to say questions on the topic but not to be anticipated from the headings submitted. It may be that these unpredictable areas arise naturally in the course of the discussion; if they do not, it is part of the examiner's responsibility to ensure that this requirement is addressed. "Unpredictable" questions should **not** be general ones on eg the candidates' taste in films, leisure activities, future or holiday plans or their smoking and drinking habits. Nor should they be on totally different topics in the style of Unit 4.

The candidates should be sufficiently in control of their material to develop answers with additional information or examples to illustrate the point being made. This is not the same as allowing the candidates to control the entire test. In too many Centres this session, candidates were allowed to produce lengthy pieces of pre-learned material, thus turning what is supposed to be a discussion into a series of recitations. If candidates are to do themselves justice they must be deflected from regurgitating such language.

*"Students should not attempt to read aloud from their Oral form or recite material learnt by heart: this will earn no credit and wastes valuable time."* (Specification: Notes for Guidance Page 89); they also tend to lose control of pronunciation and intonation at such times. It is important that the dialogue is authentic in that the examiner's questions respond to what the candidates have previously said and that the candidates actually answer the question asked.

Examiners have expressed concern at the lack of complex questions in a number of tests.

If the "questioning" is restricted to *«Parle(z)-moi de»*, *«Je vois que vous voulez parler de... Allez-y or Continue(z) »*, the candidates cannot achieve the upper mark ranges for response. Opinion is not a mere proffering of personal response, but considered thought supported by evidence drawn from the candidates' research; understanding and more abstract ideas cannot emerge if questions are not asked beyond the purely factual. It is also important that candidates demonstrate that they have undertaken research in the evidence they produce to support what they are saying. Vague, unsubstantiated assertions and sweeping generalisations do not demonstrate understanding. In some tests the level of questioning, and therefore response, showed no advance on GCSE.

In many centres the examination was conducted in the right spirit and it was a pleasure to listen to candidates who sounded as though they were enjoying the experience and therefore achieved the best that could be expected of them.

Teacher examiners should also resist the temptation to help candidates by providing vocabulary or completing phrases or sentences; nor should they offer alternative ideas or rephrase questions before the candidates have had time to formulate their initial response. No benefit is gained if the teacher examiner summarises the points that the candidates have made (or intended to make) or if a possible answer is given in the phrasing of the question. The teacher examiner's role is to facilitate the performance of the candidate by asking a range of open questions, pressing for clarification or development without becoming too intrusive.

### Assessment Principles

The candidates are assessed positively for: **quality of language**, including pronunciation and intonation, accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and structure, idiom, grammar and ability to deal with the unexpected; **response**, including comprehension, spontaneity and the ability to develop answers; **knowledge and understanding**, including information, evidence of research, organisation of material, awareness of implications of topic, relevance, presentation, opinion and justification.

### Candidates' Responses

Many candidates were well-prepared and understood what was required of them; they had clearly conducted careful research and were able to give examples to support their assertions, encouraged by skilful questioning from well-prepared teacher examiners.

Although many teacher examiners conducted the test appropriately, varying questions based on the candidates' responses with requests for further information, using the headings on the form or 'pushing' the candidates to develop and substantiate their ideas or assertions, there were areas of difficulty in some tests:

- candidates were allowed to speak uninterrupted for too long, using pre-learned material (a very frequent problem this session).
- candidates made factually incorrect assertions, which were allowed to pass unchallenged.
- candidates were not pressed when they did not answer the question asked.
- candidates were asked directly for comparisons with the UK or other non-francophone countries (thus losing focus on the francophone context).
- candidates were not asked about the specific situation in France (or the relevant country).
- candidates were not asked to engage in a conversation going beyond the target language headings (candidates will not be able to access higher grids for Quality of Language and Response if they have not moved away from predictable areas.)
- candidates were allowed to remain at the narrative/factual level even when it seemed clear that they could have ventured into more complex areas of discussion.
- candidates were not given the opportunity to develop responses.

**Quality of Language:** Many candidates had clearly researched carefully appropriate lexis for their chosen topic and some were able to produce a good range of structures. The best candidates were able to make spontaneous use of subordinate clauses and natural linking phrases and expressions, some subjunctive structures as well as a range of tenses when the questioning allowed. There were good examples of candidates at ease in dealing with abstract notions, who had the necessary language at their disposal. On the other hand, there were far too many tests conducted purely in the present tense, where no complex questions were asked and it was clear that insufficient thought had been given to the possible linguistic development of the topic. In the worst cases the standard reached showed little or no progress from GCSE.

Pronunciation is a growing problem, even with some of the best candidates: there were particular difficulties with the following:

- vowel sounds (crier for créer, idie for idée, ouvre for œuvre, célébritie for célébrité, seulement for seulement, essailler for essayer, aillant for ayant, lycie for lycée, debout for début)
- final silent consonants were very frequently pronounced (et, effet, cas, Paris, art, ils regardent, blanc, beaucoup, trop ) as were other consonants (the s in c'est, the g in magnifique, ignorant and other similar words)
- endings of words not pronounced (tout le mond, ensuit) and other consonant problems (sucér for succès, fil for fils, démocratie)
- confusion between the ss and z sounds (bassé/basé, ils ont/ils sont, mesures/messures, établissent/établisent, produisant/produissant)
- nasals (la fin, en principe, enfin, important, symbole)
- key vocabulary for the selected topic (l'alcool, peindre/peintre/peinture, l'extrême droite/droit/doigt, tabac, Jean d'Arc, musulmain)
- anglicised pronunciation (parents, dangerous, communitie, ethnique, couple, racisme, problème, Européen, exploiter, scène, société, nation, rare, monarchie)
- regular problems (vie/ville, pays/paille, pour cent/per cent, magasin/magazine fille/file, faim/femme/fême, gens/gènes, gens/jeunes/jaunes / jounes qwalification, guerre/gare, l'amour/la mort, couture/culture, joue/jeu, juillet/jouet, qwand, producshion, internashional)
- Particular concern was expressed by examiners that candidates were unable to pronounce correctly key lexis for their chosen topic, even, in some instances, the title eg Médecins sans Frontiers. Other examples include Cézain, les restos du Corps, la Nouvelle Vage, Jean d'Arc, pieintre and la douzième gare mondial, la Pamme d'Or and le Festival de Can/Canz)

Pronunciation errors can, and frequently do, impede comprehension and cause candidates to gain lower marks for Quality of Language. Intonation is often an additional difficulty under the pressure of trying to recollect pre-learned material. An Australian style rising intonation was mentioned by several examiners. Many candidates made impressive attempts to pronounce French correctly.

It seems clear that the greatest linguistic difficulties remain at a basic level, and particularly in terms of conjugation; in these areas there is not much evidence of progress from GCSE. On the other hand, good structure or lexis acquired more recently can be used with a certain degree of confidence. However, very high language marks cannot be gained just by the insertion of several good phrases if there is a consistent incidence of basic errors. It is unimpressive if candidates can produce a phrase containing a subjunctive, but are unaware that the same structure still requires a subjunctive later in the discussion. In order to attain a

good mark for quality of language the candidates need to demonstrate a consistent ability to manipulate the language. It is the opinion of the examiners that candidates should be actively dissuaded from the use of *tutoiement* in the examination.

Common errors noted this session were:

- wrong or unclear genders (particularly of key vocabulary for topics eg *une/une problème, le mère, le femme, une manque, une pays, le nationalité, la monde, la risque, la Tour de*
- France, un chose, un personne, un loi, le police, un fin, une lycée, la public and la porte de la voile) This is sometimes exacerbated by careless pronunciation, so that it is difficult or impossible to tell which gender is intended.
- basic noun/adjective agreements
- subject/verb agreements (*les femmes doit...*), particularly, but not solely, with *qui*
- basic verb forms in all tenses (*ils buvent, ils choisent, elle envoyera, ils prendent, j'allerai, vous di, nous doivons, il a prendu, ils sont travaille, ils ont vaincre*)
- problems with tense sequence and tense choice
- anglicised lexis, structures and word order (*pour le gouvernement solver la situation, ils seulement jouer, le français langue, un beaucoup de, il ne prend pas de interest, il a voulu Henry jouer*)
- inability to produce contracted forms of articles or misuse of contractions eg *aux les*
- confusion of *avoir* and *être* (*il est raison*), (*c'est/il y a*) and as auxiliary verbs (*il a mort*)
- dependent infinitives not used when required (*il doit fait, on peut choix, on doit pense*)
- wrong, inappropriate or invented vocabulary (*agricultural, un area, mosque, polluter, distributer, reflecter, un range, avoider, résoudre, l'améliorement, constructer, objecter, le commence*)
- faux amis (*supporter/support, assister/assist, place/place effectif/effective, location/location, caractère/character, usé/used, audience/audience*)
- possessives (*les livres de moi, s'aventure, son mère, Zidane's famille, sa père, ses/leur(s) confused*)
- selection of pronoun (*les femmes/ils, le/lui*)
- *assez/très/plus/trop* - frequently confused
- *il est/il y a* - especially in other tenses than the present
- prepositions (*en Paris, dans (la) France, dépendre sur, rencontre avec, sur/dans la télévision*)
- *mal/mauvais, bon/bien, gens/personnes, huile/pétrole, temps/fois, monnaie/argent,*
- *ministère/ministre, matière/sujet, dictateur/dictature*
- *parce que/à cause de, avant/avant que/devant*
- *qu'est-ce que/ce que, qu'est-ce qui/ce qui, qui/que*
- omission of *que* (*je pense il est...*)
- *on/tu/vous* - sometimes all used in the same sentence
- number (*quarante-vingt-trois, il est mort à dix-neuf quarante-cinq*), including decimals (*six point cinq*)
- there was considerable confusion over nationalities, countries and languages eg *la France aux Françaises !, un Allemagne, il parle Espagne*

- gens, personnes and chose in particular les gens français, un gens intelligent, les personnes suisses and un bon chose confusion of dire and parler (je vais parler à Marie Curie but je dirai sur le racisme)

**Response:** Many candidates listened to the questions, answered them appropriately and were able to develop the discussion. However, too many were allowed to regurgitate pre-learned material without interruption, frequently using the next “question” as a cue to move on to the following area of “script”. The teacher examiners’ responsibility must not be underestimated if their candidates are to achieve the best standard possible. **The oral examination is supposed to be a genuine discussion, not a series of pre-learned monologues.** Examiners are not always convinced that candidates actually understand what they are saying in such circumstances. Unpredictable areas of discussion, complex and varied questioning and thoughtful preparation by the teacher examiner all play a part in reaching an acceptable mark in this section of the grid.

**Knowledge and Understanding:** A number of candidates had obviously enjoyed research into their chosen topic and were able to produce a wealth of facts and examples as well as pursue more abstract aspects. However, candidates cannot score highly for Knowledge and Understanding if their tests become too general and lack the French or francophone focus **throughout**. In addition, the teacher examiner needs to have considered how to enable the candidates to demonstrate Understanding; this is where informed opinion should come to the fore, with candidates having to consider the information they had provided and formulate views on it. Difficulties were compounded by those teacher examiners who asked for candidates’ personal views on issues of a general nature that had little or nothing to do with the topic. There were a worrying number of examples again in this session of inaccurate pronouncements from candidates, which the teacher examiner accepted uncritically. It is incumbent upon teacher examiners to do a minimum of research of their own in order to be in a position to ask useful and helpful questions, as well as to query any confusion. It is also important for the teacher examiners to listen carefully to what candidates say in order to offer them the opportunity to correct something that may be a genuine slip of the tongue, but not to correct the error.

There were again instances of native or bilingual candidates who had assumed that they would be able to perform well in this Unit and had therefore neglected careful research.

Indeed they sometimes did not attain the highest grid for Quality of Language as their French lacked range and was sometimes in the wrong register for such a discussion.

### **Problem Areas**

Particular areas are detailed below in the hope that Centres will be able to avoid such difficulties in the future.

### **Topics**

- Some were too general and lacked focus on the French context eg les problèmes des jeunes, l’environnement, l’anorexie, la boulimie, le tabagisme
- Some candidates spent too long comparing with (and therefore talking about) the situation in the U.K. or in another non-francophone country
- Some topics offered insufficient scope or were clearly not based on any research
- Some topics were too wide eg la France !!, la musique en France, l’art en France, la révolution française, la culture française dans le monde

### **Presentation**

- There was no presentation or it lasted under 1 minute or it was interrupted too soon.
- The presentation contained everything the candidates knew and they could offer nothing in response to questions for the remaining 8 - 10 minutes.

### **Oral Form**

- There was too much factual information eg dates, statistics, proper names
- Headings related only to material mentioned in the presentation and were not developed
- There were only 1 or 2 headings
- No title was given or the title on the form was different from the title on the tape
- Headings were in English
- It was a vocabulary list
- Headings were part sentences used to cue in the presentation or answers to questions
- Out of date forms were used
- Forms were not submitted with the cassettes

### **Timing**

- The presentation was too short (15 - 30 seconds) or non-existent
- The test was too short (some were under 5 minutes)
- The presentation was too long (e.g. 7 minutes out of an 9 minute test)
- The test was too long (some were over 20 minutes; marking will stop shortly after 12 minutes)

### **Recordings**

Centres are responsible to their candidates for the quality of the recording sent to the Edexcel examiner. Inaudible material can gain no credit.

- The background noise made the candidates all but inaudible
- Noisy machines were used
- The examiner's voice was far louder than the candidate's - the placing of the microphone should favour the candidate although both parties should be clearly audible
- Some candidates spoke so quietly that the volume had to be at maximum to hear them at all
- The examiner's questions could not be heard; this made it impossible for the Edexcel examiner to discern unpredictable questions
- Old tapes were used, so that the recording was blurred or the previous recording could also be heard. In the worst cases tests could not be marked
- There was interference from mobile phones. Mobile phones have no place in the examination room
- Tests were recorded at the wrong speed

### **Advice and Guidance**

Attention to the following should ensure that the candidates are well-prepared:

- careful selection of an appropriate topic, avoiding the general or insufficiently focused
- avoidance of a comparative approach
- availability of appropriate source material

- thoughtful preparation of the Oral form so that it serves its purpose for both candidate and examiner
- a clear and thoughtful presentation which will give the candidates confidence and provide a secure springboard to the discussion
- preparation for development of the topic, including examples to substantiate assertions made
- consideration of problems/solutions/implications of the topic chosen
- thorough and accurate grasp of topic-specific lexis
- avoiding rehearsal, but rather making sure that the candidate knows the essentials of the topic and is equipped linguistically to deal with them
- ensuring that candidates have practice in answering questions directly and that they will actually recognise the relevant interrogatives

Centres should study carefully the Specification (including Notes for Guidance pp 90-91), the Teachers' Handbook pp 30 -33, previous Subject Reports and the Oral Training Guide (July 2003)

Teacher Examiners should study carefully the Handbook of Instructions for Centres in advance of conducting the examination.

### **Practical Matters**

Attention to the following would make the marking process operate more smoothly:

- ensuring that recording is of good quality
- ensuring that both candidate and examiner are audible
- ensuring that all tapes are rewound to the start of Side A
- using C60 tapes for Unit 3 with 2 tests on each side
- ensuring that cassettes themselves (as well as boxes) are labelled with centre and candidate numbers
- ensuring that centre and candidate numbers are announced on the tape
- ensuring that Oral forms are sent to the marker with the cassettes and that the correct forms are used
- ensuring that correct timing is adhered to
- ensuring that cassettes are carefully packed so that everything arrives intact

### **Administration**

There were few administrative problems this June. Some attendance registers were not sent, but the examiners appreciated the fact that some Centres included a register of their own giving candidate names and numbers. A number of Centres conducted their examination outside the specified examining period. The dates are available on the main timetable and can be confirmed with Edexcel. Some Centres entered for the wrong option.

A very small number of Centres recorded Units 3 (AS) and 4 (A2) on the same tape.

The Examiners greatly appreciated the impeccable manner in which some Centres carried out the administrative procedures.



## A2 Unit 4.1 (6444/01) - Oral Discussion of Issues

### The aim of the Unit

- to enable candidates to achieve their linguistic and conceptual ceiling in fulfilling the task set, according to the rubric in the Specification
- to assess candidates' ability to undertake research into the issue to be debated
- to assess their grasp of their chosen issue with the knowledge acquired and support their arguments during the debate in the first five minutes of the test: such knowledge may include relevant laws, practice, statistics, mores, attitudes, precedent or data drawn from sources which may be historical, economic, geographical, social, political, moral, scientific etc.
- to assess candidates' ability to engage in a *spontaneous* discussion during which a minimum of two further, *unpredictable* issues will be covered. In this part of the test (10 minutes) specialised or factual knowledge is not required and questions should aim to stimulate justified opinions and views and to provide opportunities for candidates to show independent judgment and to develop and sustain ideas. Factual and personal questions are not appropriate.

### Outline of test

Unit 4.1 is a test that seeks to assess a candidate's ability to debate. This is taken to mean the ability to explore ideas, to argue and to discuss, to convince by reasoned thought and by arguments supported by evidence rather than relying on assertion, re-assertion or personal conviction. Debate encourages critical thinking and rational questioning of received ideas.

The test is essentially in two parts. The first is a 5 minute section during which candidates make a short personal statement, setting out their position concerning an issue of their own choice and then defend this position in the face of vigorous challenge from the examiner who for this part of the examination plays devil's advocate and adopts the opposite viewpoint. The remainder of the test is a discussion of 2 or 3 further issues during which the examiner encourages the candidate to express and defend views on them. Although there is no open challenge during this section, examiners will probe candidates' views to see whether they are able to justify and debate.

A third of the total marks are awarded for this ability. This has implications for both the examiner and the candidates.

Examiners must prepare thoroughly to be able to challenge candidates' stated views in the first section whilst at the same time offering them the opportunity to demonstrate their grasp of the issue. Attention should also be given to the subsequent topics to ensure that debate can continue to take place and is sufficiently demanding to give them the opportunity of gaining credit in the Justification and Debate mark box.

At the same time candidates have a responsibility to observe the rubric in the Specification which requires them to carry out reading and research to support their arguments. They are rewarded for their overall "grasp" of the issue, which means that as well as having a position, they must demonstrate awareness of its wider implications. Relying solely on assertion and failing to produce evidence to back their stance will be self-limiting.

## Timing

- Up to 1 minute for initial declaration of stance
- Up to 4 more minutes for debate
- Up to 10 more minutes for discussion in further unpredictable areas

**TOTAL: 14 - 15 minutes**

In some cases presentations of stance ran well over one minute, and / or the subsequent debate exceeded the time specified, thus limiting the opportunity to respond within unpredictable wider areas. A few tests were devoted entirely to the initial issue or to associated themes. There were some instances of short tests, where clearly candidates did not have the maximum time and space to express and justify views, thus restricting potential mark achievement in all three categories, but overlong tests were more frequent, the longest lasting over 20 minutes. Long tests can gain no additional credit, since markers are instructed to stop marking after the allocated time, and in cases where the debate section has overrun, as explained above, the time remaining for further areas will be cut short.

## Common misconceptions

There have been no changes since last year in the format or the criteria of the test. However, some centres appear still to be unaware that the issue does not have to be rooted in a French specific area of interest since the AO4 element is now tested only in Unit 3 (AS) and in Units 5.1 and 5.2 (A2).

Similarly, a significant number of teacher examiners persisted in treating the unit as if it were similar to Unit 3, asking for French-based factual information in the debate instead of presenting an immediate and robust challenge. Such an approach will naturally be reflected in the marks gained for the ability to debate.

In Further Issues some teacher examiners requested French-focused facts - for example about the immigration situation, the health service or the education system - instead of offering opportunities for candidates to express opinions and use the language of debate and justification.

## Clarification of terms

### *What is an issue?*

An issue is a subject for debate involving an exchange of views, where the organisation of evidence, justification, up-to-date factual bases and opinion are presented to persuade someone else (in this case, the examiner) of the validity of the stance taken.

The criteria necessarily require issues which must be:

- areas of concern or controversy, i.e. 'arguable'
- clearly defined to permit of analysis and directed evidence
- areas which it is morally possible to debate

### *What is 'a definite stance'?*

This should be a clear statement of opinion, entered on the Declaration of Issue form, normally in the form of *je suis pour/ contre...*, and re-stated and introduced in the initial one-minute presentation.

### *What is 'spontaneous discussion'?*

Spontaneity is not the same thing as novelty. The unit does not require candidates to have to deal with issues they have never previously encountered. They will have been prepared for the A2 examination by teachers seeking to introduce them to ideas that people in France and elsewhere are discussing. An awareness of these and possible countervailing arguments, will make for a challenging and satisfying debate / discussion. Familiarity with such issues is a pre-requisite for gaining the confidence to discuss them effectively under close examination. However, being prepared is not the same thing as restricting one's self to rehearsed positions from which all creative reaction is absent.

### **Teacher Preparation**

Teachers will prepare candidates for their oral discussion of issues as for all aspects of their work, but such preparation should not involve total rehearsal with pre-determined responses, which removes the opportunity for genuine self-expression and authentic reactions and goes against the spirit of the test. Indeed, in their preparation for the actual test, Teacher Examiners should seek ways of investigating their candidates' ability to react to the unpredictable as the mark scheme specifically rewards this.

Training candidates in debating techniques in the appropriate language register, and how to express and parry opinion with evidence and exemplification, should help to provide the necessary support and confidence.

By implication, Teacher Examiners will need to research the issues chosen by their candidates thoroughly in order to provide meaningful challenge during the initial section. Such preparation should not involve a rigid list of questions and arguments but rather be an exploration of possible pathways enabling them to lead candidates into other areas and challenge opinions without either dependence on pre-determined programming or undue hesitation while wondering what to ask next.

Much of the advice in this report will also prove useful for candidates examined by a Visiting Examiner.

### **Candidate Preparation for the Test**

Candidates should familiarise themselves with the rubric and be fully aware of the requirements of the test.

They need to undertake reading and research to provide supporting evidence for their arguments and to show that they have a thorough grasp of their chosen issue and can draw on a range of references and examples during the debate, which constitutes the first five minutes of the test. They should acquire a good command of lexis relevant to their area of debate and learn to use the language of argument and justification.

They should practise the skill of re-formulating ideas so that when the preferred avenue of expression is closed off for whatever reason, they can continue the discussion using alternative forms.

### **Choice of Issue**

This is a crucial area. Centres should encourage candidates to choose issues that present several possibilities for development. The best ones are probably those for which opposing views can be readily identified as they are easier to prepare

counter arguments for. The worst are those that preclude debate - i.e. *je suis contre l'obésité*. One dimensional subjects result in candidates returning to their initial and often unique debating point which means they fail to meet the requirement to demonstrate the ability to parry counter argument.

Most candidates chose traditional ethical favourites, such as *pour / contre la peine de mort, l'euthanasie* and *l'avortement*. Such choices are entirely valid but need to be addressed properly to be fully effective. This comment applies generally to all issue choices. For example, despite a number of reports illustrating such cases having been aired recently in the media, many candidates chose to ignore this source of informed opinion and offered only their own reactions in support of their stance. In the worst cases, candidates retreated to confessional positions that effectively precluded any objective discussion. Whilst faith-based positions are perfectly acceptable, centres should advise candidates that they will need to do more than re-iterate sincerely held tenets if they are to show a genuine ability to debate. It has been suggested by one commentator that it may not be in the average candidate's best interests to choose issues of this kind for while they are arguable, the degree of knowledge and subtlety will be beyond them.

Similarly, a number of candidates chose to discuss variations on *le foulard islamique/ la laïcité*, but it was rare to hear a candidate with a grasp of the historical background to the French position and an understanding of the implications of a secular society and a non-religious-based education. Arguing for human rights and against what they saw as discrimination was not enough to convince. In some cases the argument developed into a debate rather closer to *contre le racisme en France*. Again, this re-iterates the point already made that candidates must show "grasp" of the wider implications of the issue to score well but also highlights the need for the approach to remain focused on the title.

Nevertheless, it was encouraging that many candidates exercised independent choice and offered some refreshingly different issues, though some complicated stances involving more than one issue lacked focus and organisation.

Some, such as *pour/ contre l'uniforme scolaire, le concours de l'eurovision*, did not lend themselves easily to research.

The requirement to choose a genuinely debatable issue appeared to be heeded generally; in a very few cases the 'issue' was not suitable (egg. *La Ville de Lourdes, l'Impressionnisme, la santé, l'environnement*) and no debate took place. There were examples again this year of issues which were morally difficult or impossible to debate, such as *contre le dopage, contre la torture, contre l'alcool au volant, contre le hooliganisme, contre la violence conjugale, pour la protection de l'environnement*. It should be noted that inappropriate choice of issue will limit access to higher marks for Justification and Debate.

Other political, moral and social choices included *l'énergie nucléaire, l'union / la constitution européenne, l'entrée de la Turquie à l'union européenne, l'annulation des dettes du tiers-monde, les lois anti-terroristes en Grande-Bretagne, les cartes d'identité, la chasse au renard, l'expérimentation animale, la dépénalisation du cannabis / des drogues douces, le mariage homosexuel / le droit à l'adoption, la pilule du lendemain, la chirurgie esthétique, le clonage, la manipulation génétique, les OGM, le droit/l'interdiction de fumer dans les lieux publics, l'Internet*. The aftermath of the war in Iraq, immigration, animal welfare and fast food were other recurring choices.

## Declaration of Issue Forms

Centres are reminded that the form:

- should be completed by the candidate
- should include the date of the session
- should include all details relating to the centre and candidate
- should be stated in the Target Language - not in English
- the candidate's stance "for or against" should be clearly indicated
- should also show what topic was chosen for Unit 3 and what coursework is being undertaken for other units
- should be signed by the candidate

These requirements are infringed too often.

Failure to provide any indication of a candidate's stance means that the Visiting Examiner then has to establish with the centre what the stance is prior to their visit. This involves unnecessary phoning or e-mailing and is an extra burden and inefficient use of that person's time.

## Quality of Recording

In the main, clear tapes were produced but some were of poor quality or there was distracting background noise, such as people entering the examination room. In a few cases recordings were barely audible and marking was difficult.

Centres are reminded that they are responsible for ensuring that candidates and teacher-examiner can be clearly heard. They do their candidates a great disservice in not checking equipment, choice of recording environment and quality of tapes and recordings before submitting the tests for marking.

Problems included:

- incorrect placing of the microphone, so that the voice of the candidate and / or the examiner sounded muffled or distant
- automatic microphones create much fade and warp and are not recommended
- old tapes were used which had not been adequately wiped
- defective recording equipment
- persistent hum/clatter/whirr on the recording
- unacceptable levels of extraneous noises, many avoidable, including talking and laughing in adjacent rooms, background music and drumming
- unfortunate proximity of the examination room to building sites and traffic
- telephones and mobiles ringing in the examination room.

## Administration

The majority of centres carried out all the administrative procedures correctly and efficiently, which is much appreciated.

Unit 4 should not be recorded on the same tape as Unit 3.

Only 2 candidates should be recorded on each side.

Cassettes themselves and their boxes should be labelled with centre and candidate numbers.

This stipulation is not always observed and can result in tests going astray when packaging breaks and tapes fall out of boxes at some remote warehouse. A significant number of teachers failed to label both the tapes and the cassette boxes with the centre and candidate numbers - far more important than the date of the exam.

## Conduct of Tests

### The crucial role of the teacher examiner

It cannot be stressed too much that the outcome of the test for candidates is closely linked to and dependent upon the way teacher examiners conduct the tests.

Teacher examiners are required to invite candidates to initiate a debate by introducing a stance on their chosen issue and then to offer a clear and robust challenge to enable them to justify and defend their viewpoint with supporting evidence. After five minutes, the teacher examiner is instructed to indicate that this section of the test is over and effect a smooth transition to a discussion lasting a further ten minutes of at least two other unpredictable issues, moving on and away from the initial issue and not returning to it.

The best teachers demonstrate skill and sensitivity in their dealings with candidates in what is a very stressful situation.

The following techniques were admired:

- being encouraging without over-intervention,
- facilitating without over-emphasis
- challenging and discussing productively
- stimulating discussion without prompting or manipulating
- respecting the time allocation

Good teacher examiners had clearly understood the requirements of the test, relinquishing their role as teachers and launching the debate with a strong challenge which gave candidates the opportunity to argue and debate, then seeking out objections and suggesting counter-arguments, but without adhering rigidly to a pre-determined routine. At the end of the debate they indicated clearly that the first part of the test was over, then proceeded smoothly to wider areas of discussion.

Unfortunately many others did not respect the rubric and their candidates were sometimes disadvantaged as a result.

## Shortcomings

- being unprepared
- failing to interrupt an overlong presentation
- failing to offer robust challenge
- failing to adhere to the allocated time (total 5 minutes) for the initial section
- failing to indicate that the initial stage has passed and that the test is moving on to more general discussion
- choosing a transitional issue not germane to the initial one
- returning to the initial issue
- developing areas that are merely extensions of the initial one and do not develop new pathways
- introducing unexpected issues subsequently
- failing to explore subsequent issues satisfactorily
- introducing too many subsequent issues
- failure to encourage justification and debate during the remainder of the test
- following a pre-agreed line of development
- requiring factual information rather than expression of opinion and argument
- allowing recitation
- talking too much
- asking convoluted questions
- asking personal questions
- inviting candidates to indicate which issues they would like to discuss next
- interjecting
- prompting
- correcting
- summarising and clarifying candidates' responses
- pursuing unproductive issues

It should not be assumed that all the above are found widely but they occur more often than they should.

All the above areas will have repercussions in respect of the mark obtained by candidates. Eliminating them will greatly enhance the chances of their scoring well. Failure to do so will result in exchanges that contain little explanation or clarification as to why the issue had been chosen and tend to produce narrative or anecdotal material rather than stimulus for the language of debate, and in some cases the 'debate' turns into a general conversation or a question and answer session.

Some questioning was only on the level of Unit 3. Teacher examiners should be aware of the degree to which candidates' performance is affected by having no substantial argument to oppose.

## Good practice

The best examiners had grasped the purpose and spirit of the examination sequence and made it clear that they were now continuing to the next section of the test and introduced the first 'wider' unpredictable issue, which usually had some connection with the initial issue to facilitate a smooth transition and to enable the discussion to develop naturally.

Then they moved on and away to other areas, maintaining continuity to avoid a series of disjointed themes and introducing new issues only when they had given the candidate every chance to sustain and develop ideas on the current theme. Candidates had the opportunity to enter into interesting and thoughtful discussions spontaneously and to develop their responses to questions designed to elicit opinion and justification.

## Performance of candidates

### Quality of Language

#### Accuracy

Though some candidates were able to demonstrate that they had mastered correct use of basic syntax and sentence structure, it was disappointing to see that, at this level, accuracy showed little improvement overall compared with performance at AS level.

Examiners noted a discrepancy in the level of accuracy between the initial debate and the further areas of discussion. There was a widespread inability to use correct verb forms and to show a grasp of how grammar works in the composition of a sentence. Many examples of such difficulties were listed in the Examiners' Report for June 2004, but recurred in this examination series.

All the shortcomings highlighted in last year's report were to be found in exactly the same form this year and included:

- the use of the nameless 'non-tense' infinitive-sounding ending, *les gens penser / il n'aider pas / je préférer / tout le monde connaître / il améliorer / le gouvernement introduire /*
- incorrect forms of verbs in the present e.g. *le gouvernement doit / peut // ils doivent / ont / ont // je va / il reflète / vous dites / ils font / ils font // ils apprennent / j'étudie* and problems with attempts at other tenses (*j'aura / elle morte / beaucoup de gens ont mouru / il est devenu / j'ai utilisé / ils ont survécu / j'ai resté*) and with tenses often used indiscriminately, particularly confusion over perfect vs. imperfect and future vs conditional
- problems with use of negatives, *ne* or *pas* being dropped, or *pas* included with another negative, e.g. *je ne suis d'accord / il ne va pas jamais, / ils n'ont pas*
- *aucun droit*, or incorrect word order or format, as in *n'être pas obèse / pour ne parler pas / de non payer*)
- concord of subject and verb (often a plural subject with a singular verb) such as *les médecins qui n'a pas... / la famille ont... / les politiciens fait ... / les gens qui produisent ... / les personnes qui dit ... /*
- finite verbs needing dependent infinitives (*ils veulent travailler / il peut donner... nous pouvons préparer*)
- difficulties with pronouns ( [*les filles musulmanes*] *ils portent le voile / ils aident leur-mêmes* and with direct / indirect objects, eg. *le gouvernement les a donné ... il faut aider aux gens de s'intégrer...*

- problems with partitives ( il existe beaucoup des gens / il y a des autres choses / il gagne un peu de l'argent/ quelque chose intéressant)
- basic gender errors (with consequent adjectival agreement errors) including choix, chose, drogue, emploi, état, façon, femme, livre sterling, manque, monde, pays, sa père, phénomène, port, problème, qualité, racisme, règle, risque, santé, sondage, voile
- problems with adjectival agreements eg. une culture différent, l'année dernier, l'état française
- à + le(s) and de + le(s), eg. de le monde / aux les problèmes / de les situations
- articles omitted eg. France a besoin... / il y a problèmes
- incorrect plural forms, eg. les animals, les hôpitals, les problèmes sociaux
- incorrect prepositions (sur la télé, en Paris, il dépend sur, au même temps, sur le sujet de...différent à...encouragés de... ) frequent confusion between penser à and penser de ; incorrect use of preposition (plusieurs de..) and incorrect insertion of prepositions after espérer, chercher, préférer, écouter
- confusion of adjectives and adverbs (eg. bon / bien , meilleur /mieux, mauvais /mal ; le seulement chose / )
- omission of que after je pense / je crois etc.
- confusion over intensifiers (trop beaucoup / plus mieux)
- difficulties with comparisons, eg. aussi grand comme / plus que cinq millions /moins de l'année dernière
- inability to use peut-être correctly

A feature that continues this year is the overall inability to produce correct subordinate constructions. Invariably, the subordinate verb will not be in a finite tense and on many occasions is simply omitted. Utterances such as *le gouvernement veut les parents s'occupe leur enfants* are encountered far too often and even the better candidates are not exempt from this type of lapse.

### Pronunciation and Intonation

The quality was very variable. While some candidates had generally good control of sounds and intonation and most spoke in a way that did not destroy intelligibility, others were not able to produce authentic p/i and first language patterns intruded. Sounds and stress patterns were often inauthentic. This was exacerbated in cases where candidates were over-prepared and launched into long learnt monologues.

Among other problems were:

- poor intonation and a flat monotone, sometimes a characteristic of pre-rehearsed, regurgitated material as indicated above
- problems with nasal sounds such as important, inacceptable, injustifiable, intention, inutile, censurer, compréhension, compte, principal, contemporain,
- éolien, infidélité, enceinte, enseignant, symbole
- anglicised pronunciation of words such as circulation, société, identité, introduction, nationalité, immigration, éducation, tradition, varié, exploiter, gouvernement, racisme
- pronunciation of unsounded consonants in words such as tabac, et, est, cas, coût, dans, droit, ils / elles pensent, les jeunes, succès, beaucoup, gens, hommes, cas, mort, temps, corps, succès, trop
- incorrect pronunciation of aide, alcool, créé, danger, dignité, distingué, drogue, emploi, environnement, équilibre, ethnique, eu, euro, européen, eux, famille, femme, fille, fils, gagner, idée, ignorer, Le Pen, méthode, qualité, question, religieux

- poor vowel sounds resulting in unclear distinction between créer and crier, deux and douze, guerre and gare, interdire and introduire, jeunes and gens, pays and paille, l'amour and la mort, ait and aille, chose and choix, magasins and magazines
- mispronunciations such as fable [for faible] , meilleur, amigrés, innocent, tout le monde, les déchets, attendre [for atteindre] les attentes [for attentats], un pêche [for un péché] l'obésité, communauté, basse for base, baiser for baisser, le beef, le Grand Béton [la Grande Bretagne] la pain [peine] de mort

## Range

Most candidates were able to express their ideas, though with varying degrees of competence. There were some very good linguistic performances from non-native speakers with an impressive range of lexis and structures. Some candidates were able to handle the language of justification and debate, using abstract concepts and expressions which conveyed reflection, hypothesis and considered opinion. Candidates should be advised not to adopt an informal register and to avoid conversational *mots familiers*.

Centres need to be more aware that tests for Unit 4 should be conducted in the register of debate. It is accepted that many teacher examiners prefer to address their candidates as 'tu' but not that candidates use 'tu' in their responses. Certainly visiting examiners would not expect to be addressed as 'tu'. *Tutoiement* would not be regarded as appropriate at this level within French culture. On many occasions candidates used *tu* as a substitute for *on*. Similarly some candidates used colloquialisms, slang or abbreviated forms as if these were acceptable in formal debate ( *bosser, le boulot, ça fend la tête, je m'en fous, la pub, ces trucs- là je suis plutôt contre, les flics, les manifs, les profs, les ados ...*) Some native speakers who relied on "café chat" mode and failed to adopt an appropriate register or did not choose to exercise the facility of expression at their command could not be awarded the high marks for language which might have been expected.

The following expressions were given in a previous Report as examples of appropriate language and it may be helpful to new examiners and centres to repeat them here.

Candidates are familiar with '*Je pense que... je considère que... il me semble que... je ne suis pas d'accord*' but could widen their bank of expressions to support and develop their arguments with expressions such as:

- *Je vous concède que...*
- *je suis convaincu que...*
- *on va trop loin en disant que...*
- *par ailleurs...*
- *il n'a pas été démontré que...*
- *on exagère quand on affirme que...*
- *on a tort de croire que...*
- *incontestablement...*
- *jusqu'à preuve du contraire...*
- *il est inexact de dire que...*
- *par contre ...*
- *j'estime que...*
- *il faut constater que...*
- *il faut aborder la question de...*
- *afin de changer cette situation, il faudrait ...*
- *tous ces facteurs semblent indiquer que...*
- *à titre d'exemple, je cite...*

- *au niveau de...*
- *il est manifeste que...*
- *il est nécessaire d'envisager une situation où...*
- 

The admonition of last year's report regarding inappropriately aggressive and even rude interpellations bears repetition. Phrases such as *tu es fou ou quoi? Sur quelle planète vis-tu? Mais non, c'est idiot! C'est une idée ridicule! Tu racontes des bêtises!* (and worse!) are not to be encouraged if for no other reason than that they could occasion a potentially physical riposte from an offended interlocutor.

Use of expressions such as *et comme ça / des choses comme ça / eh ben ouais*, and *chose / choses* and *il y a* as fillers should be avoided as they are interpreted as an absence of something worthwhile to say.

Some candidates displayed the ability to use a variety of structures and had acquired a range of lexis appropriate to their chosen issue, but were then let down by simple words, though it must be pointed out that some francophone candidates did not make an effort to use the full range of structures at their disposal. Better candidates showed a confident use of tenses including the conditional, especially *devrait* and *voudrait*, though correct sequence of tenses in unprepared sections sometimes eluded them. Occasionally there were problems when a second verb, usually *être*, was dropped, eg *ça pourrait une bonne idée*.

There were very few examples of *dont, lequel / laquelle, celui/ celle*, but *ce qui / ce que* was more infrequent.

For weaker candidates, satisfactory completion of sentences was often difficult and there were basic lexical errors and anglicisms such as *political, physiquement, obvieusement, définitement, absolument, chimiques, controversiel, cosmopolitain, significant, obsédé, financier, un change, investir, prévenir, réduire, joindre, exercisé, le catholicisme, la desséccration, l'argent d'Etat, l'interdire du publicité, le criminel, ministère for ministre, les scientifiques, La Bretagne for La Grande-Bretagne, en particulère, à une certaine extente, la patrimoine, vous êtes droit / vous êtes vrai* [= you are right, addressing the teacher examiner], *ça ne travaille pas, un Maghreb, plus et plus, moins en moins d'une choix, la Belge* [for *la Belgique*], *l'Allemand* [for *l'Allemagne*] *la Russe* [for *la Russie*] *il incombe aux écoles, le fumer, le tabagisme* [meaning 'smoking'], *faire mieux cette situation, autour du monde or dans tout le monde for partout dans le monde or dans le monde entier, c'est une issue intéressante, c'est un bon point, ce n'est pas le point / quel est le point ?*

Other difficulties included :

- misuse of *parce que* ( to mean *à cause de*)
- confusion between *place* and *endroit, passer* and *dépenser, devoir* and *devenir,*
- *gens* and *personnes, le mode* and *la mode, le médecin/ les médicaments / la*
- *médecine, savoir* and *connaître, faire* and *rendre*
- use of *les gens français* rather than *les Français*
- confusion of *les gens* and *les jeunes (or even les jaunes!)*
- use of *les Françaises, les Anglaises* for *les Français, les Anglais*
- use of *d'après* and *depuis* to mean 'after', *devant* for *avant*

## Response

The general level of comprehension overall was high.

There were some good spontaneous performances with genuine and well-developed debate and discussion. Unsurprisingly, these tended to gain higher marks for Response, even for less able candidates. Regrettably there will still too many tests that failed to meet the requirement for linguistic creativity and thus did not score well in this department.

The differentiating factor in reaching marks in the higher boxes is the ability to develop ideas. Response is often described as a 3-part thing. The first stage is the initial response to the examiner's question, the second occurs if a candidate expands on this initial reaction and adds pertinent views or argument and the third is achieved if candidates can sustain their input appropriately over a more extended period. Few achieve this but it remains the target to be achieved.

Conversely, too many candidates were prepared to sit back and wait for the examiner to prompt or move on. They offered a one or two sentence response to each point or question, or tailed off with phrases such as "*Il y a des problèmes*" or "*c'est difficile*." If they cannot develop their responses the teacher examiner has to move on to other areas to give them further opportunities and this will often move them down into another category of performance description.

It cannot be stated too often that Response rewards spontaneity and the ability to react to "unpredictable" situations. Therefore it should not surprise that candidates whose teacher examiner encouraged a natural exchange of ideas had the opportunity of attaining the highest marks for Response. Candidates who were asked inappropriate questions (see Conduct of Tests above) were accordingly disadvantaged.

### **Justification and Debate**

This feature extends over the entire test and not just the initial section. The one-minute presentation should not reveal all the arguments the candidate intends to use subsequently. Where both candidate and examiner had prepared properly there were some lively exchanges. The best were those where both candidate and teacher examiner engaged in a mature and developing debate, with suitably justified supporting evidence from the candidate.

It was evident that many candidates found the test both stimulating and interesting. Some commented to visiting examiners that they had enjoyed the challenge and had been glad to have the chance to debate and discuss. Candidates who performed well were those with a lively and genuine interest in their chosen issue and its background, and in rational questioning and critical thinking.

Weaker candidates had little to contribute once they had voiced their main prepared points and they relied on repetition, re-assertion of opinion or anecdote. Examiners reported that in many cases inadequate research had been undertaken to provide evidence and support for the candidate's arguments and to parry contrary views.

Even candidates who felt passionately about their issues were in many cases unable to argue convincingly by producing suitable justification and evidence to show that they were aware of the moral and social / political / historical background and its implications.

Some who had carried out research on their chosen issue presented their material as information in isolation from their arguments and failed to make effective use of it.

In respect of the further issues, candidates in centres where attention had been paid to the possible avenues of development open to the examiner, were able to sustain interesting contributions on a variety of themes.

Where no thought had been given to where the discussion might go after the first 5 minutes, candidates experienced difficulty in maintaining informed debate and the exchanges degenerated into Question and Answer sessions.

Reference has already been made to the crucial role played by the examiner in making it possible for the candidate to demonstrate ability by choosing appropriate areas for development and allowing the candidate space to respond. Centres are reminded of the importance of proper examiner preparation.

### Summary Advice and Guidance

- a clear understanding of the Specification is essential for both teachers and candidates if the maximum reward is to be extracted from this test. This will for example, avoid it being conducted in a manner more appropriate to a Unit 3 and thereby attracting lower marks than might otherwise have been the case.
- In addition, Centres should read the **Teachers' Handbook** and the **Oral Training Guide**.
- Teacher-Examiners need to study carefully the **Handbook of Instructions to Centres** in advance of the Oral Examination
- it is no longer a requirement for the Issue to be target-language focused. Nor is it necessary to reference subsequent issues to a Francophone context.
- in the initial section, the 5 marks available are awarded proportionately to the candidate's ability to demonstrate a rounded "grasp" of the fuller implications of the issue under discussion.
- Timing:
  - up to 1 minute for declaration of stance
  - up to 4 more minutes for debate
  - up to 10 more minutes for discussion in further unpredictable areas

TOTAL: 14 - 15 minutes

- Choice of Issue:
  - it is not advisable for candidates at a Centre all to choose similar issues or to have a restricted range of issue choices
  - an appropriate issue is one that is
    - an area of concern or debate, i.e. 'arguable'
    - is morally possible to debate
    - is clearly defined to permit of analysis and supportive evidence
- candidates will need to be supervised in their research to ensure they produce sound knowledge of their issue in the first five minutes of the test and detailed supporting evidence for their subsequent arguments

## Preparation for the debate

Candidates should be encouraged and trained to:

- consult a wide range of sources to maximise comprehensive coverage of their issue - i.e. individual exploration of texts, radio, TV, internet, foreign language assistant
- argue and debate - both for and against the same issue in paired work
- voice opinions - favourable and unfavourable in open debate
- present and support ideas - in teams in simulated seminars
- challenge and parry contrary points of view with relevant evidence
- justify opinions -( including those they might not share) in simulated press interviews
- acquire appropriate lexis and register by transcribing from one source to another
- remain objective and rational

Teacher examiners should:

- be as familiar as their candidates with the issues selected by them
- listen to what the candidate actually says
- acknowledge their input by a form of "reflective" question
- push their candidates by asking for further explanation, clarification or example
- give candidates the space and best opportunities to express and sustain ideas and to embark upon independent discourse.

## Conclusion

Debate is increasingly seen as the means of encouraging informed comment and consideration of other points of view. The performance and achievement of many candidates suggest that this examination is a challenging and successful means of training and testing conceptual abilities and linguistic competence. It is seen as successful because on a personal level it involves candidates intellectually and emotionally, promotes valuable research and expositional skills and is a worthwhile and useful exercise preparatory to embarking on a career or university education.

## A2 Unit 4.2 (6444/02) - Interpreting

### Preamble

There was a further small increase in the entry for Interpreting this year. Candidates were required to carry out one "consecutive bi-lateral interpreting" task between two interlocutors neither of whom spoke the other's language. The tests were recorded and marked externally. The syllabus prescribes the topic areas of School/College, Work, Business, Leisure and Travel. As before, two pairs of tests were set, each pair consisting of variants on the same scenario. The topic areas were School/College (the candidate interpreted between a young French person joining a college in the United Kingdom and the Director of Studies) and Business (the candidate interpreted between a Parisian estate agent and British business person seeking office premises in Paris). Candidates were given one of these tests according to a prescribed sequence, which depended on the day the test was conducted.

The overall standard this year was slightly better than in 2005 and the candidates are to be congratulated on their efforts in this testing option. There were many extremely good performances scoring 50 and above; some from candidates who seemed to have been entered unadvisedly; and a good range in between. It is clear that a positive choice has to be made for interpreting. It is also clear that an apparently innocuous dialogue may present a considerable challenge, particularly taking into account the need for precision of thought and accuracy of language. Although in professional interpreting terms this is a low-level test, it must be understood that it is very demanding for non-specialists at GCE A level.

The most successful candidates were those who had obviously practised the role of interpreter and experienced its demands. They were able to retain an awareness of their task, did not lose sight of the overall situation and avoided illogical sequences of ideas. They considered what they were saying, understood the difference between interpreting and translation, and deployed strategies to deal with unexpected difficulties, such as processing unfamiliar or complex language under time pressure or re-casting a previous phrase in the light of what followed. Less able or less well-prepared candidates found the flexibility required for the best performances difficult to achieve.

### Preparation for the Tests

The Interpreting option is skill based and candidates should be trained for it, systematically and on the basis of an informed choice. Relevant linguistic knowledge should be built up over the course. This option should not be taken lightly; it is a specialism and candidates should not be entered for it without training. It should not be assumed that all the personal and linguistic qualities required for the parallel Unit 4.1 Oral Discussion of Issues are easily transferable to Interpreting; Edexcel can only offer options where the tests are clearly different from one another.

All five topic areas should be prepared in equal depth, not least because in the scenarios there can be some overlap. The impression was gained that in some centres candidates had had insufficient experience of working through previous tests. There was also some indication that an adequate lexis for the topic areas had not been prepared; this was particularly noticeable in the Business tests.

Advice on preparation for this option and the qualities required of the candidates can be found in previous Examiners' reports as well as in the Teachers' Handbook (Pages 37 - 40). Edexcel will provide a relevant INSET meeting in the autumn of 2006.

### Assessment Principles

(See Specification Issue 4 pp 27-28 of the paper version or pp 30-31 of the online version in [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk))

The qualities assessed are Accuracy of the target language; Appropriateness of the target language and Transmission through both languages. The three criteria are equally weighted at 20 marks. Wherever possible assessment is positive but inevitably errors do impinge and must be taken into account.

### Assessment of Accuracy

Assesses correctness of grammar, structure and syntax used, and pronunciation/intonation.

Grammar: Gender and number of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, articles. Forms and endings of verbs: tense, auxiliary, agreement, past participle, finite and infinite.

Structure & Syntax: Infinitives after prepositions; distinction between direct and indirect object with personal and relative pronouns; varieties of relative pronoun eg dont, lequel; difference between qui & que, ce qui & ce que, qu'est-ce qui? & qu'est-ce que?; correct use of negatives; word order eg pronouns, nouns and adjectives; interrogatives; presence or absence of conjunctions eg que; comparatives & superlatives; use of appropriate article (definite, indefinite, partitive, reduced partitive); the passive.

Pronunciation & Intonation: Pronunciation and precision of vowels inc nasals; anglicised versions of vowels as opposed to the authentic eg in j'ai, français; consonants eg r; treatment of mute endings; awareness of the difference between spelling and sound; effect on grammar; intonation, eg authentic placing of tonic stress on words, phrases, sentences; appropriate rise and fall; rhythm; pace v speed; proper articulation eg aujourd'hui, oui; awareness of homonyms eg parents.

### Assessment of Appropriateness

Assesses availability and suitability of modes of expression, including lexis; idiom; register (see Spec page 27); nuance/discrimination; avoidance of anglicisms & 'translatese'; awareness of cross-language equivalence; economical phrasing; difference between translating and interpreting; treatment of difficult utterances eg to need; cross-cultural concepts eg weights and measures; suitability for context eg formal/informal, modes of address eg tutoiement/vouvoiement/ non sequiturs; attempted use of subordination; subjunctive - when and when not appropriate; success with common idiom eg peut-être, venir de faire; use of tense with 'depuis'.

### Assessment of Transmission

Assesses the whole interpreting performance. In the Specification "Transmission" is defined as "conveying the relevant information from one interlocutor to the other" (in both languages). This has quantitative and qualitative aspects.

Quantitative: Effective transmission of meaning, inc any cross-cultural concepts; completeness of gist and detail; precision eg number, time, date; importance of

tense; difference between probability/certainty/possibility; avoidance of misleading or downright wrong messages/misinterpretation/illogicality; presence or absence of significant detail.

Qualitative: Pace/flow; engagement; insight into scenario; frequency of requests for repetition or clarification; ingenuity; good techniques eg backtracking/correction of non sequiturs; help or hindrance to interlocutors; fluency, hesitancy and tone; clear enunciation; quality of English.

## Candidates' Responses

Significant features of candidates' performance in 2006 were:

- A wide range of achievement, with some excellent performances from non-native-speaker candidates, and a number from candidates who were obviously struggling with the language and the nature of the task
- Ability to keep going under pressure
- Pronunciation and intonation which were at least very acceptable overall but with frequent incorrect or careless pronunciation of common words, eg *parce que, pense, leçon, matière (= métier / métère), cours, pour* (usually *por*), and a tendency to sound silent endings, eg *ils doivent*
- Better performance in the French-English mode than the reverse though there were some particular difficulties in transferring meaning accurately from French to English, especially the conditional perfect tense and some topic-specific lexis, eg *locataire, immeuble*
- Inability in the English-French phase to produce certain obvious items of general or topic-specific lexis, eg *bureau, journal, annonce, propriétaire, matière, cours, facultatif, passer un examen, rez-de-chaussée, rendez-vous, parking, périphérique, lycéen, quitter, disponible, commode/convenir*, use of articles with days of the week. Many of these items have appeared in previous years' tests
- Problems with more difficult lexis, in both phases, eg *meuble, mètre carré, range, what are you good at?*
- An inconsistent performance in retrieving phrases which have appeared regularly in previous tests, eg uses of the subjunctive, *valoir mieux, avoir besoin* and *peut-être*
- A frequently cavalier attitude towards gender, number, agreement and tense in both interpreting modes, often affecting transmission as well as accuracy
- Problems with word order of object pronouns and negatives; omission of one or other of the negative particles
- A tendency to omit significant detail, eg *Nous ne (le) faisons pas ici, vous connaissiez (assez d') anglais (vous-même), demain (matin), est venue (ici), baccalauréat (international)*
- Failure to relate the evolving scenario to the situation as described on the Candidate Card, eg the fact that in all the tests there was a hypothetical element
- A tendency to regard each phrase as a discrete task with no connection to the previous or succeeding ones. Illogicality or non sequitur often resulted.
- Difficulties with sound discrimination leading to wrong transmission of information, eg *vous avez des idées / vous avez décidé, c'est de savoir / c'est d'avoir, serait / sera, les accompagner / les compagnies, some days / Sundays, meuble / immeuble* (the teachers' reading was often a factor here)
- Failure to seek clarification when obviously in difficulties

A detailed commentary on all the tests is given at the end of this report.

### **Improving Performance in the Tests**

Specific areas in which candidates might acquire more practice are:

1. Using their three minutes' preparation time to much better effect. It was clear in the 2006 tests that many candidates had not absorbed and retained key elements of the scenarios as outlined on the Candidate Card. Thus, in tests 1 and 2, few candidates demonstrated convincingly that they realised the young French person had moved permanently to the United Kingdom, and that in part s/he was talking about what s/he would have done had the family not left France. Similarly, in tests 3 and 4, a thorough study of the scenario would have shown the context was business-related and that the client was seeking offices, not apartments.
2. Building up a topic-specific lexis whilst retaining transactional and more general conversational phrases possibly learned at GCSE.
3. Regarding accuracy of verb tense, agreement and form as important, in both interpreting phases. Many candidates seemed unaware or unconcerned that the future and conditional tenses have not only different meanings but also different implications. For example, in sections A4 and A5 of test 3, it matters that the agent is talking about a possibility rather than a certainty.
4. Trying to ensure they have communicated all the detail expressed in a particular phrase.
5. Taking time to reflect on what they hear and to think about the sense of their versions in the developing situation. The sequence of events should be coherent. If it is not, candidates should practise the technique of backtracking to correct a previous version.
6. Knowing when it would be beneficial to request a clarification.
7. Experiencing difficulties and being able to deal with them.

The above assume that students are systematically trained and prepared for this option.

### **The Conduct of the Tests**

Though the tests were conducted correctly in most cases, with good-quality recordings, it has to be said that in some 30% of centres there were major faults in the conduct and/or administration of the tests. Sadly, in many instances these had an adverse effect on the candidates' marks. The requirements are laid out clearly in the Teachers' /Interlocutors' Instructions and in the Interlocutors' Scripts booklet. The Candidate Cards give instructions to candidates, many of whom seemed not to understand their importance.

It remains a concern to Edexcel that the instructions were flouted. This examination is unique at Advanced Level and has its own peculiar set of requirements. Edexcel depends upon all teachers to follow the instructions in the same way so that as far as possible the tests are standardised and the integrity of the examination is preserved. It is disturbing that teachers who would never remotely contemplate giving unauthorised help to candidates in an externally-set written examination, eg by indicating to them an error or an omission, were quite happy to do so in these tests. Teachers should note that credit will be withheld for any advantage gained from departure from the required procedure.

In some centres attention needs to be given to the following:

1. Advance reading aloud of the tests in order to be fully familiar with them so that reading is smooth, meaningful and error-free. The scripts must be read exactly as printed (including observance of the pause marks) whether a particular teacher approves of the text or not. The candidates are given marks for their success in dealing with the tests as printed. They can receive no marks for alterations to or omissions from the scripts. Readings of 'it's been possible to do ..' as 'it's impossible to do ...'. 'I thought it was impossible ..' as 'I thought it was possible ..', 'although we do not need ..' as 'although we do need ...' cost the candidates marks.
2. Readiness to give on request useful clarifications of words which are relevant to the context and enable the candidate to render the sense of the original. Some helpful explanations were heard of 'locataire' (une personne qui paie pour utiliser une chambre ou un bureau) and 'informatique' (c'est travailler avec les ordinateurs). Good explanations were given of other terms such as 'langue vivante', 'début', 'par rapport', 'ravi', 'accueil', 'sous-sol' and 'mobilier'. In other cases the teachers were caught unawares. An explanation of 'commode' as 'confortable' or 'pratique' misled the candidate; 'convénient' (sic) amounted to telling the candidate the English word. Others of no benefit to the candidate were: se débrouiller = arriver and mètre carré = c'est la superficie. A number of instances were heard where legitimate requests for a clarification were either ignored or answered with a simple repetition of the phrase in question.
3. Full understanding of the requirements about repetition of phrases. Briefly, repetition of a complete phrase may be given once only on audible request from the candidate in the appropriate language. Thus, a part of a phrase only may not be repeated, however pressing the request from the candidate. The candidate must be heard to request a repetition, in French in the French-English phase and in English in the English-French phase. Candidates must understand how these requirements operate in practice.
4. Full appreciation by the B interlocutor of the implications of the assumed role of non-speaker of French.
5. Observance of punctuation and appropriate tone of voice. In test 3, the B interlocutor was frequently heard to alter the sense of section B4. Thus 'That seems a reasonable price. Although we do not need a lot of space, it is ...' was heard as 'That seems a reasonable price, although we do not need a lot of space. It is ...'. Candidates were misled into rendering 'although' as 'mais' followed by an indicative verb, which lost marks. Candidates' versions of 'on some days' (test 4) depended in part on the clarity of the enunciation and the rhythm of the reading.
6. Maintenance of an appropriate pace throughout. It is misguided to think that slow reading benefits candidates. The slower the reading, the longer will be the test and the more the candidate will tire. In addition the 15-minute limit might be reached before the candidate has completed the test, which is clearly to their disadvantage, as tests are not assessed beyond 15 minutes.
7. The sound quality of the recording. Even with a high-quality recording, candidates' voices can be obscured by extraneous noise, some of which must be within the centre's control. Everyday sounds which go unnoticed, like doors opening or closing, chairs moving and footsteps outside, are magnified on the recording, especially if the acoustic of the examination room is poor. The participants should try to avoid kicking the table or

nudging the microphone. It is most unfortunate that some candidates lost marks because the examiner could not hear them. Elementary precautions can be taken, such as choosing a quiet location, ensuring all nearby mobile telephones are switched off, notifying colleagues about the examination, listening to a sample recording and changing the equipment before recording the tests, if necessary. New cassettes should be used at each examination session.

## Administration

Cassette boxes and the cassettes themselves should be clearly labelled with Centre and Candidate names and numbers. It is important to be able to identify cassettes; cassettes without labels identifying the candidate or even the side of the cassette lead to errors and waste of time. Examiners greatly appreciated the thoughtfulness of those teachers who indicated the test numbers on the tape and the cassette label. The current **Interpreting Form** should be completed in full, including the correct test number and candidate number and the candidate's signature.

## Advice and Guidance

### *Candidates*

- need specific training for the necessary interpreting skills.
- need to understand the psychological stresses, such as the relentlessness of the experience, lack of control over the content, peaks and troughs of difficulty, increasing tiredness, loss of individuality.
- should be aware of the acceptable use of strategies such as seeking repetition or clarification, use of paraphrase or circumlocution. They should also be prepared to backtrack if a previous error is recognised.
- should prepare all five topic areas in equal detail.
- need to be aware of the importance of feeling secure in the basic structure of the language - this will remove some of the stresses of the situation.
- should be reminded that the interpreter conveys the utterances verbatim, not as reported speech.
- should revise verb forms and tenses, especially irregular past participles; the passive voice; more complex word order eg with infinitives and object pronouns; dependent infinitives; articles; object pronouns; relative pronouns; interrogatives; words and phrases which recur in the tests from year to year.

### *Teachers should*

- be fully prepared for the requirements of the test by reading the *Teachers'/Interlocutors' Instructions* thoroughly and by doing trial readings.
- ensure that the equipment is properly sited and adjusted.
- use new cassettes each year and ensure the cassette cases are robust.
- record two tests per side of the cassettes and use only one label per cassette case.
- ensure the test number is entered on the oral form.
- enter the centre number on the cassette label.

Test 1

A1	J'ai beaucoup de questions à vous poser.   D'abord, ce qui m'inquiète le plus,   c'est de savoir   comment je pourrai apprendre l'anglais.   Je n'en ai jamais fait chez moi.	Generally an approachable opening for the candidates, but there was occasional confusion of 'savoir/avoir' and inappropriate versions of 'chez moi', eg 'at my house'.
B1	You can learn English here.   We have a specialised department   which gives lessons   to people who don't know any English.   They make progress quickly,   because the classes are small   and the students are very motivated   - they've got to communicate at school or at work.	Many very acceptable versions. 'Tu' considered inappropriate register. Form of 'apprendre' occasionally incorrect (apprende). Anglicised pronunciation of 'département (accepted for lexis) spécialisé'. Only a few candidates offered 'section'. Errors with forms and agreement of verbs and sounding of final consonants: 'qui donner des cours à des gens qui ne sait/connait pas ...ils fait des progrès ... ils doit communiquer ..'. Confusion of 'classe/cours/leçon', and gender of 'small'. Frequent mispronunciation of 'cours': corps/coeur and 'leçon' (as English).
A2	Quand est-ce que les cours commencent ?   Ils ont lieu combien de fois par semaine ?	'course' inappropriate for 'cours'. Stilted literal versions of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> question, but meaning conveyed.
B2	The first one will be at five o'clock today.   They will take place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays   and they will last two hours.   A young French woman who came here last year   attended these lessons,   and she was soon able to say   everything she needed.	Very frequent mixture of genders in 'the first one'. Present tense accepted in first 3 sentences for Transmission but not for Accuracy. 'commencer' offered frequently for 'will be', which was not accepted. Many candidates were able to recycle 'avoir lieu' from A2, in the correct tense. Confusion of 'le(s) lundi(s)' and 'lundi', etc. Days and times (douze heures) often incorrect, affecting Transmission. 'duront' a common error. 'une jeune Française' offered by a number of candidates, but 'un jeune fême français' typical. Frequent incorrect auxiliary with 'venir', and mixture of genders in 'tout l'année'. Widespread ignorance of topic-related 'assister à' resulted in the use of 'attendre', though acceptable alternatives did transfer meaning, eg 'aller à'. Perfect or imperfect tense of 'pouvoir' commonly correct, but few candidates were able to produce 'bientôt' or an acceptable

		<p>synonym. The final phrase 'everything she needed' was very testing, and various versions of it were well conveyed, eg 'tout ce qu'elle avait besoin de dire / devait dire', but by a minority of candidates only. Credit was given for a correct form and tense of the verb even where the pronoun was incorrect.</p>
A3	<p>C'est très bien,   j'espère pouvoir apprendre l'anglais aussi vite qu'elle.   J'ai fait des progrès très rapides en allemand,   donc en principe   je devrais réussir en anglais aussi.   Voici ma prochaine question :   quelles études pourrai-je faire ?   Est-ce que le baccalauréat existe dans le système britannique ?   Si nous étions restés en France,   j'aurais préparé un bac général.  </p>	<p>First sentence well done, but occasional ambiguity (I hope to speak English as fast as her) and incorrect choice of language - 'French' particularly illogical. 'good progress' did not convey full message; 'allemand' often rendered as 'Germany'. 'en principe' often imitated Spanish (at the start); full implication of 'devrais' not always conveyed. Various tenses were accepted as transmitting 'pourrai-je faire?'. Knowledge of 'le baccalauréat' in the context of this set topic was less wide than expected. 'British/English system / in England' etc conveyed 'système britannique', but transpositions of 'baccalauréat' into UK terms (A level) illogical. Widespread inability to convey tenses in final sentence, and most versions showed lack of appreciation of the scenario. Some incorrect word-for-word versions of 'si nous étions restés' showed a lack of awareness of structure (if we were to stay). Common other versions were 'if I/we stay/stayed' or even 'if you stayed'.</p>
B3	<p>In British schools,   it's been possible to do the international baccalaureate for several years,   but we don't do it here.   What subjects does one have to study for the general "bac"?  </p>	<p>'anglais' accepted in first phrase, but frequent mixture of genders. Usage of tense and 'depuis' often correct, but 'pour' a common error. 'international' often absent or mispronounced, and 'plusieurs' not widely known. There was very frequent omission of the object pronoun 'le', and incorrect forms of 'faire': 'nous ne fait pas ici': possibly due to confusion of agreement with 'on' and 'nous'. Errors with 'étudier' common (étuder, étude, étudié).</p>

A4	<p>Moi, j'aurais fait le bac littéraire.   Comme matières obligatoires,   j'aurais dû étudier, par exemple,   français et littérature, mathématiques-informatique, philosophie,   éducation physique, une langue vivante étrangère   - pour moi cela aurait été l'allemand -   et une deuxième langue vivante étrangère ou régionale.   Je crois que j'aurais choisi le breton.  </p>	<p>Conditional perfect generally not recognised throughout. The description of the 'baccalauréat littéraire' taken from the French Ministry of Education was understood in outline, though (perhaps surprisingly in view of the candidature) there were some literal (a living/live language) or convoluted renderings of 'une langue vivante étrangère' (a language which is not dead and is not French), and the concept of a regional language was often not grasped or wrongly expressed through transposition of the adjective (a regional foreign language). Mishearing of 'langue' led to notions like 'a long stay abroad'. Very few candidates recognised 'breton', but most made an attempt (Britain, British, Gaelic) or simply repeated the French word. 'the language of Brittany' was accepted.</p>
B4	<p>That's similar to the international baccalaureate,   up to a point.   Unfortunately in our system you can't study such a range of subjects.   What are you good at?   Although you can do German, French,   History, Geography and IT,   we don't do Philosophy,   and Physical Education is optional.   At your age most British students sit examinations   in a maximum of four subjects.  </p>	<p>It was felt that the topic-specific lexis in this section ought to have been within the candidates' grasp, but largely this was not the case, even the obvious 'matière' being ignored in favour of 'sujet'. Transmitting the concept 'such' proved very elusive. The notions of a 'range of subjects' and 'What are you good at?' generally elicited anglicised versions, though those skilful enough to search for an alternative phrasing often enjoyed success: 'une telle variété / autant / tellement / un si grand nombre de matières' and 'quelles sont vos meilleures matières?', but versions of 'vous êtes fort(e) / doué(e) en quoi / en quelles matières?' were heard from time to time. Knowledge of the conjunction 'bien que' and the use of the subjunctive in its clause were less widely known than had been anticipated. Consistency in the use or not of articles in the list of subjects was required; when it was expressed, gender tended to be random. Many were unable to recall 'informatique' from a few minutes earlier. 'EPS' was heard occasionally for 'Physical Education', but only a handful of candidates produced a version of the topic-related 'facultatif'. A favoured circumlocution was ' .. n'est pas obligatoire', which was accepted.</p>

		The notion of 'sitting' an examination was rarely correct, either in terms of lexis (faire / apprendre) or form (la plupart ... passer ..). 'des examinations' and mispronunciations of 'examen' (examon / examène) were common. Strangely, 'sixth-formers' was rarely conveyed (les élèves terminales) or even attempted, and 'British' was usually omitted.
A5	Par rapport au système français,   ça me semble plutôt bizarre,   mais en même temps j'y vois un côté positif.   Vous voulez dire que je ne devrai faire que trois ou quatre matières ?	The placing of first the pause mark caused unintended difficulties for some candidates, who seemed unaware of the non sequiturs such as 'in the French system that seems strange'. Only a few well-trained candidates backtracked to correct the error. The significance of 'ne ... que' and 'devrai' in the next sentence was perceived only by those with an acute ear for detail. Many incorrect approximations were heard: 'You mean / you want to say I must / should / can do three or four subjects?'
B5	Yes, that's true.   Do you know what you want to do   when you leave this college?	Only about a third of candidates produced a correct relative pronoun in the second sentence. Few perceived the need for the future perfect tense: credit was awarded for any version conveying the future notion. Finding the right lexis to convey 'leave' was also a problem: 'quand vous partez cet collège' was a common version. The anglicised 'après le lycée' was not felt to transmit fully.
A6	Pas encore, mais je ne suis pas pressé de décider.   Je vais en parler avec mes parents.   Merci beaucoup de vos conseils.	The meaning was well transmitted in its entirety by most candidates, though a few did not recognise 'pas encore' (not really) or omitted to convey 'pressé', with resultant loss of detailed meaning. Many versions of the second sentence were stilted and incomplete: 'I am going to talk with my parents'. The past tense altered the message.
B6	You're welcome.	Most candidates ended the test appropriately.

Test 2

A1	See Test 1.	
B1	See Test 1	
A2	See Test 1	
B2	The first one will be on Monday. / They will take place every Monday, Tuesday and Friday / and they'll continue all year. / ... who came here a year ago .../, then as Test 1.	See Test 1 for tenses, gender and lexis in the first two sentences. Many correct versions of the pronoun and the verb 'continuer', but mixed gender in 'tout (sic) l'année'. Next sentence: see Test 1.
A3	First two sentences: see Test 1. Mais au début, / comment est-ce que je vais me débrouiller en classe ? /	About half the candidates transmitted 'me débrouiller' acceptably.
B3	You could study French and German. / In your other subjects, / the people doing French could be your interpreters / until you know enough English yourself. /	The importance in the context of the conditional tense of 'pouvoir' was not always perceived. 'ceux qui font le français' conveyed the next idea well, as did 'les étudiants de français'. The plural possessive pronoun was correct in about half the tests; the singular was felt to gloss over essential detail, as well as representing incorrect concord. Ironically, and as has been pointed out in previous reports, 'interprète' was widely unknown; 'traducteur' and 'interlocuteur' were not accepted as a synonym. Given that in the event the conjunction 'jusqu'à ce que' seemed beyond even the most able candidates, a flexible approach was taken to versions of it and the use or otherwise of the subjunctive. An incorrect article following the intensifier 'assez / suffisamment', also previously mentioned, was treated as an error of accuracy.
A4	See Test 1, A3	
B4	See Test 1, B3	

A5	Moi, j'aurais choisi l'option bac physique-chimie. / Comme matières obligatoires, j'aurais dû étudier, par exemple, / français, physique, chimie, / mathématiques, philosophie, éducation physique, / une langue vivante étrangère - pour moi cela aurait été l'allemand - et une deuxième langue vivante étrangère ou régionale. /	Most of this section overlaps with Test 1, A4. There were no other problems.
B5	See Test 1, B5.	There were some errors with the genders of 'physique' and 'chimie', and 'mathématiques' was often masculine singular.
A6	See Test 1, A5	
B6	See Test 1, B5. A7: see Test 1, A6. B7: see Test 1, B6.	

Test 3

A1	Alors Monsieur / Madame, j'imagine que vous avez des idées / sur ce qu'il vous faut. / Le plus important, / c'est de savoir / si vous voulez louer ou acheter des locaux. /	Lack of discrimination between similar sounds led to confusion of 'des idées' and 'décidé', though this difficulty was not intended. Good candidates who had opted for the latter backtracked upon hearing the next phrase. There were some stilted versions of 'sur ce qu'il vous faut', 'le plus important' and 'c'est de savoir', but most candidates transmitted the meaning fully. In the final sentence, 'locaux' caused problems (locality, locals, apartment, house). It had been anticipated that the outline given on the Candidate Card would have been of assistance here. Plausible terms such as 'offices' were accepted. 'hire' for 'louer' was tolerated as transmitting meaning.
B1	We would like to buy something. / However, we must find some premises as soon as possible, / so we would be prepared to rent. / We had found some offices / that seemed ideal, / but unfortunately the owner decided / not to sell them. /	In this section problems occurred with verbs (forms and tenses) and lexis. Productive uses of the conditional and pluperfect tenses were particular difficulties. Those choosing 'devoir' in the second sentence were generally more successful than those opting for 'falloir' (il faut que nous trouve/trouver) though a pleasing number used the subjunctive correctly. Many candidates retrieved 'locaux' from A1, but some alternatives were accepted. Conveying 'we would be prepared' was difficult (nous préparons), and attempts such as 'nous louerions' did not transmit meaning. There was a surprising inability to produce 'bureaux': 'offices' was often offered. Only the best candidates were able to construe the syntax of the final phrase, but clauses with an appropriate tense sequence were accepted.
A2	Je comprends. / Avez-vous décidé / dans quel quartier vous voulez être? / Vous savez sûrement que les prix varient énormément. /	Apart from some inappropriate versions of 'quartier' (quarter, region) this section was largely done well, though 'surely you know that ...' was felt to imply something different.
B2	I don't think that the area itself is important. / The essential thing for us / is to find a place / that is close to the ring-road and public transport. / Do you have any offices that are	Conveying 'area' ('quartier' was not commonly picked up from A2) and 'place' posed problems for many, as well as 'ring-road' and 'available', which have featured in previous tests. 'libres' was accepted for the

	available now? /	latter, but not 'prêts'. Other local terms for 'ring-road' applicable to the candidates' situation were accepted, eg 'le ring' applied to Brussels. About 25% of candidates perceived the need for the subjunctive in the first sentence. Where 'chose' was used in the second sentence, its gender was frequently incorrect. The use of articles in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> phrase was more often than not incorrect (près de la périphérique et le transport public).
A3	Vous avez de la chance. / Je peux vous proposer des bureaux / qui sont disponibles immédiatement, / mais pour une période de six mois seulement. / Est-ce que cela vous conviendrait ? /	This section was done well, despite some stilted versions of 'proposer', but transmission of the plural in 'des bureaux' was considered essential to the context. This use of the verb 'convenir' last appeared in the 2005 tests.
B3	Certainly. / But I thought it was impossible to find something to rent / for such a short period. /	A few problems occurred with lexis (quelque chose à louer, une période <u>si</u> courte - cf Tests 1 and 2 - and the gender of 'période') and the pronunciation of 'certinement' and 'courte' (certanement/certement, corte). Misreading by some interlocutors of 'impossible' as 'possible' penalised the candidates.
A4	Vous avez raison, cela n'arrive pas souvent. / Un de nos clients vient d'investir / dans un immeuble moderne. / Il a déjà trouvé des locataires / et sa propre compagnie va s'y installer / mais pas avant l'année prochaine. / Je sais qu'il serait ravi / de trouver un locataire pour une période courte, / et ce serait à un prix très intéressant, / c'est-à-dire à huit euros le mètre carré. /	Problems arose with what were thought to be common general idioms or items of lexis, eg 'avoir raison', 'arriver' (you have a reason to arrive often), 'venir de faire', 'immeuble' (flat, apartment block), 'ravi' (usually an approximation eg 'pleased'). Detail relevant to the situation was often glossed over, eg 's'y installer' = to instal it, 'il serait' = he is / will be, or simply incorrect, eg amounts other than eight euros. Better candidates realised the sense of 'intéressant' was 'good' or 'advantageous'. Widespread problems arose with 'locataire', felt to be a topic-specific term, and especially with 'mètre carré', admittedly a difficult concept for candidates who might not have done a systematic study of business terminology. Interlocutors' attempts to explain its meaning (c'est la superficie) were usually fruitless; commonly-offered versions were 'per month/up front'.
B4	That seems a reasonable price. / Although we do not need a lot	Finding a way to convey adequately 'space' and 'reception area' ('une

	of space, / it is essential to have two separate offices, / as well as a small reception area. / Is that possible? /	petite réception' was deemed to transmit) was a greater problem than the verb 'to need', the latter being well known as an item of lexis. However, the main difficulty for candidates was the precise transmission of 'bien que nous n'ayons pas besoin', which was felt to be a reasonable test. Firstly, unstressed articulation of 'although' by some interlocutors misled the candidates into using 'mais' and the indicative (read as : '... a reasonable price, though we do not need a lot ...'). Secondly, mispronunciation of 'ayons' (aillons, allions) obscured the message.
A5	Oui, bien sûr. / dans l'entrée de l'immeuble, il y a l'accueil / où le réceptionniste pourrait recevoir vos clients, / les accompagner à vos bureaux s'il le fallait, / ou bien prendre des messages pour vous si vous n'êtes pas là. /	Again, the full nuance required by the tenses and the plural 'vos' was often missed, and some stilted versions of 'recevoir' were heard. Most of the detail was conveyed adequately, with the exception of 'les accompagner'. Though the word 'accompagner' itself ought to have been recognised, candidates seemed not to have perceived it as being dependent upon 'pourrait' and/or confused the object pronoun 'les' with the definite article. Most struggled to make some sort of sense of the phrase, eg 'the company needs the offices'.
B5	Very good, but you haven't told me / where this office block is. / And is there a car-park? /	The word order in 'vous ne m'avez pas dit' defeated most candidates. 'immeuble' proved elusive despite its earlier appearance, as well as 'un parking', thought to be a common enough item.
A6	J'ai oublié de vous dire / que cet immeuble se trouve à dix minutes du périphérique / et à cinq minutes à pied d'une station de métro. / Il y a des emplacements réservés dans le parking au sous-sol. /	Most of the necessary information was transmitted, but incorrect versions of 'dix' and 'cinq' were felt to affect the situation, and renderings of 'périphérique' such as 'suburbs' or 'periphery' lacked the necessary precision. Omission of 'à pied' affected the message. The sense of the final sentence was well conveyed, but often by dint of some effort.
B6	I think this is exactly what we're looking for / and it would give us more time / to find permanent premises. / First of all, / may I speak to my partner, / who is in the United States at the moment, / and let you know our decision later? /	This proved to be a difficult section for various reasons. As before, verb tense needed to be precise in order to reflect the provisional nature of the situation. Thus, the future was not adequate for 'it would give us more time', nor were versions of 'let you know' rendered in a past tense. Lexis was also a difficulty. 'trouver' was often chosen instead of

		'chercher', and 'premises' still presented problems (des premises). Some meaning was conveyed, but awkwardly, in expressions like 'dans les États-Unis' and 'à ce moment'. Le Petit Larousse supported the acceptance of 'partenaire' in a business context as an approximation for the technically-correct 'associé'; 'collègue' was also felt to be effective; 'mari' and 'copain' were not. Incorrect grammar often hindered transmission in attempts at 'ce que nous cherchons' (qu'est-ce que nous cherche) and 'vous dire / communiquer / transmettre / informer de / faire savoir notre décision' (et je dira vous mon décision ..).
A7	Bien sûr./	Inserted in order to break up an otherwise very long and complex English-French phase.
B7	Thank you, I shall ring you tomorrow afternoon / when I've consulted my partner.	The first element 'je vous téléphonerai / appellerai' was done very well, but surprisingly 'demain après-midi' was beyond many candidates. The best candidates were able to demonstrate their grasp of the niceties of French tense usage with the final verb. The simple future was treated sympathetically by the examiners, but most candidates used a past tense here.

Test 4

A1	See Test 3	
B1	We would like to buy something. / However, it is important that the offices are well situated. / Our offices in other European cities are near the centre. /	Problems of lexis and accuracy hindered correct and full transmission. First sentence: see Test 3. Topic-specific 'bureaux' often rendered as 'offices'. 'Locaux' accepted. Subjunctive required for Appropriateness. Possessive adjective often singular. Difficulty in conveying 'cities': frequently 'vies'. The adjective 'européennes' often missing or masculine. 'près de le centre' quite common.
A2	Overlap with Test 3, apart from 'Vous voulez vous installer dans un certain quartier?'	Generally done well, but there were some stilted versions and difficulties in conveying 'quartier' and 'vous installer' - see Test 3.
B2	I realise that. / What possibilities are there? /	A range of phrases was accepted as conveying 'realise', eg Je comprends, je (le) sais, je le réalise. 'Je m'(en) rends compte' was credited as good Appropriateness. The second sentence was done well, but the interrogative was often a problem (qu'est-ce que c'est les possibilités?).
A3	Alors, il y a plusieurs possibilités. Par exemple, il y a deux bureaux dans une vieille maison rénovée / près du boulevard Montmartre. / C'est assez commode / parce qu'il y a deux stations de métro à cinq minutes à pied. / Les bureaux sont à vendre / à trois mille euros le mètre carré. /	Mostly done well but some difficulties in conveying detail adequately. 'Plusieurs' often conveyed as 'many' and 'métro' as 'train'. A correct version of '3 000' was required for accurate transmission in the context. Despite its appearance in previous tests, 'commode' was widely unknown and often rendered as 'comfortable' or misheard as connected with 'mode', therefore 'fashionable'. Most candidates did not perceive the non sequitur this produced given the following phrase; a few showed good technique by backtracking. The small number who sought clarification of 'commode' were usually left unenlightened, eg 'c'est confortable/ convenient (sic), / pratique'. Some stilted versions of 'à cinq minutes à pied' affected transmission, eg 'at five minutes by foot'. 'nearby' was too approximate. 'Le mètre carré': see Test 3.

B3	That's too expensive. / In any case, we need more space. / Perhaps it would be better to be in a larger building / where the security is good / as there will be no-one in the office on some days. / I saw an advert in a newspaper / for a modern building close to the ring-road. /	Finding appropriate lexis was a considerable problem, especially common everyday nouns such as 'advert' ('avertissement' and 'un pub' which obviously did not transmit), 'newspaper' (un journal), and 'ring-road' (see Test 3). Very few candidates were able to convey 'good' with the correct gender or lexis - 'bien' was the most favoured version - and the adjective 'larger' tended to elicit 'large' or 'grande'. Idiomatic use of 'peut-être' was recognised only by the best-trained candidates, and few were able to produce correct tense and lexis in the following phrase, eg 'ce sera millieur'. Though the future 'il y aura' was known widely enough, the negative defeated most candidates (il y n'aura personne / il n'y aura pas person (sic)). The phrase 'on some days' was not intended to be a difficulty, but a combination of mishearing, incorrect stress by the reader and a plausible supposition on the candidates' part misled many into saying 'le dimanche', which could not be credited.
A4	En fait, je viens de recevoir / les details d'un immeuble moderne près du périphérique. / Les bureaux se trouvent au cinquième étage / où il y a aussi une petite cuisine et une salle de bains. / Il y a un ascenseur et le bâtiment est climatisé. /	Most of this section was transmitted well, but 'immeuble' ('block of flats', despite the context) and the sense of 'venir de' were often not recognised. The many singular versions of 'les bureaux' were felt to transmit wrong information to interlocutor B.
B4	That would be more convenient, / especially if there is a reception area on the ground floor. / In our offices in England / we shared a receptionist with another company / and she took messages for us as well / which helped us a lot. / Is there a security guard? /	In this section the choice and form of the verb tenses was done well. Imperfect and perfect were accepted in 'avons partagé / partagions', 'a pris / prenait' and 'nous ont aidés / aidaient', where the positioning of the pronoun was usually correct. Examiners were surprised by the general ignorance of 'rez-de-chaussée' which had not been expected to cause problems. Most candidates opted for 'au premier étage', which transmitted wrong information. However, it was recognised that 'security guard' was a difficult item, and coinings such as 'garde de sécurité' were accepted for transmission; the few who produced 'vigile' or 'surveillant' were duly credited for appropriateness.

A5	Oui, il y en a un vingt-quatre heures sur vingt-quatre, / la réceptionniste est là de huit heures jusqu'à dix-sept heures / et recevrait vos clients s'il le fallait. /	This section was done well. Versions such as '24/7' were accepted. The 24-hour clock foxed a number of candidates, with '17 heures' rendered as '7/10 o'clock'. 'if she has to / if she must' did not convey the spirit of 's'il le fallait', and few candidates transmitted the full provisional sense of the discussion.
B5	Are the offices furnished / or would we have to pay extra for that? / We have been told that some new buildings are fully equipped. /	The interrogative ideas in the first sentence were generally conveyed well, but some candidates had to resort to lengthy circumlocution to convey 'furnished', often unsuccessfully. The future of 'devoir' was not consistent with the context. Most candidates produced 'on nous a dit' correctly, but often there was minor lack of detail (on m'a dit) and some resorting to anglicism (on a entendu que).
A6	Le mobilier est fourni. / Si cela vous intéressait, / je crois que vous auriez le droit de choisir entre trois styles. / Mais je vous conseille de faire vite. / J'ai d'autres clients qui pourraient s'y intéresser. /	A wide variety of ways of conveying the first idea was accepted. Despite some inconsistency with tenses, the idea of the second sentence was largely conveyed successfully. In the third sentence, 'do it quickly' was felt to go further than 'faire vite'. In the final sentence, failure to convey the sense of 'pourraient' altered the agent's intended message.
B6	I must consult my partner, / who is coming back from the United States tomorrow morning, / and I think we should visit the premises. / Could you make us an appointment / for tomorrow afternoon at about four o'clock? /	Versions of 'partner' - see test 3. Better candidates were able to differentiate between 'retourner/revenir/rentre'. 'revenir' was considered to be the most appropriate, 'rentre' was accepted, but not 'retourner'. Numerous versions represented the partner going in the opposite direction (qui réteurnera aux EU) and many could not convey 'demain matin' correctly. Finding the correct tense and form of 'devoir' and 'pouvoir' was problematic, and the topic-related noun 'rendez-vous' was rarely heard; 'réunion' was accepted.
A7	Je le ferai aussitôt que possible / et je vous appellerai / pour confirmer l'heure du rendez-vous ./	A well-done section, but some wrong versions of the first phrase (I'll do it if possible) and some stilted versions of 'l'heure'.
B7	Thank you very much. /	Intended as an easy finish, but misled some into thinking it was the closing English announcement.



## A2 Unit 5.1 (6445/01) - Topics and Texts

There were two new prescriptions this year. *Candide* and *Les mains sales* replaced *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *La clé sur la porte*. It is not anticipated that there will be any further changes to the prescriptions during the life-time of this specification. In all other ways the paper remained the same, the style of the questions, the amount of time available for the paper and the method of assessment were as in previous years. The paper continued to be marked in the traditional way.

### Assessment Principles

Candidates' answers were assessed positively using the published grids. Thirty marks were allotted to the assessment of the Knowledge and Understanding of each topic or text chosen by the candidate, nine marks were available for the Organisation and Development of each essay and six for the Language used to convey the ideas. Candidates were required to write two answers and, thus, the paper was marked out of a total of 90 marks. Under the heading of Knowledge and Understanding credit was given for grasp of the implications of the chosen question, relevance, clarity, analytical ability and for evidence of independent judgement. When assessing the Organisation and Development of the answers examiners looked to reward a clear shape to the essay, control of the material, coherence and a logical development of the argument. The accuracy, range, register and general comprehensibility of the Language were all taken into account but with only six marks available in this category subtle discrimination was not possible. Largely irrelevant answers or those showing sketchy knowledge did not score good marks. Answers considered to be totally irrelevant gained no credit but there were only a tiny number of such responses.

### Candidates' Responses

The wording of the questions on this year's paper did not seem to lead in itself to any misinterpretation or misunderstanding. In Q4(a) those who managed to write exclusively and strictly about cinematographic techniques were rewarded appropriately but it was felt that the mention of more general features or characteristics of the Nouvelle Vague could also be considered relevant. By formulating the evaluation section of Q9(a) as : *Jusqu'à quel point les garçons ont-ils les memes experiences que leur père dans leur relations avec les autres?* it was intended that the candidates should simply discuss the extent to which the two boys encountered a mixture of good and bad people. Some candidates appeared to stop reading the question at *leur père* and consequently tried to find similar general experiences between the boys' adventures and their father's escape from Russia. Since there is little factual detail on the latter in the book this was found to be rather difficult. Candidates often find questions on literary style and structure quite taxing and this again proved to be the case in Q10(b). When asked to concentrate on very precise parts of a literary work such as in both questions on *L'avare* and in Q8(b) many candidates could not resist the temptation to talk about the work in general. Overall, however, the paper worked well and all questions gave the candidates the chance to demonstrate factual knowledge of the topic or text and then to move on to analysis of a particular aspect.

The two new prescriptions gave rise to quite a good number of essays and, as they become more established, they may increase in popularity. *Candide* and *Les mains sales* replaced works which had lost widespread appeal and thus there was a greater spread of interest in the individual texts. The literary topic on Camus continues to

attract a fair number of committed candidates. Amongst the topics the Occupation and the cinema of Truffaut remain the most commonly studied. Topics 3 and 5 still attract the least interest. Of the small number of candidates who produce essays on these areas a few still seem to think that very general essays which reveal no detailed study of the French context will be sufficient.

The majority of candidates used the time effectively and produced well-balanced scripts which gave equal time and attention to both essays. There was a wide range of performance and a considerable difference in the length of the answers produced. There were many excellent essays. These showed a full appreciation of the implications of the whole question and were typified by, in the first place, deep and detailed knowledge of the book, play, film or topic under discussion. Secondly, indicating that they had been very well prepared, careful planning and organisation of this knowledge almost always resulted in an essay confining itself to the requirements of the question without irrelevance or repetition. Good candidates were rewarded for independent thought and for the fact that their personal judgements were substantiated by specific, appropriate references. This contrasts with the sweeping, unsubstantiated statements made by less successful candidates. The latter sometimes did not address the whole question or failed to read the question properly.

Most essays had an identifiable shape and it was possible to follow a logical thread to the argument. Many candidates this year, however, began answers with unnecessarily long preambles about the topic or text in general before embarking on a discussion of the question itself.

The language was usually good enough to convey the desired message and most essays captured a suitable tone and register. It is disappointing to note, however, that many examiners reported a higher than average frequency of grammatical errors. These commonly included such things as the incorrect formation of the Perfect Tense, the failure to achieve concord between subject and verb, misplaced pronouns, confusion of the Future and Conditional Tenses and an inconsistent application of adjectival agreement and common genders.

#### Q1(a)

This was the less popular of the two questions and it did not give rise to particularly good answers. Unfortunately most of the candidates who chose this option simply did not have enough knowledge of la presse clandestine to do the question full justice. Very few mentioned an actual publication and certainly not within a geographical or a resistance context. It was rare to come across any titles, specific details or factual information on this arm of the struggle against the occupiers. The second part of most answers was limited to a description of different forms of resistance with no assessment of relative significance.

#### Q1(b)

There were many good responses to this question. Candidates showed sound knowledge of the ways in which political collaboration was given to the Germans. Some candidates seemed a little confused over chronology. The willingness to collaborate was often convincingly explained by reference to Pétain himself, to the personality cult which was built around him and to historical events. Many candidates found justification for at least some aspects of collaboration, demonstrating a pleasing historical perspective.

### Q2(a)

Answers to both questions on this topic were often generalised and lacking in specific details, facts and figures. Most candidates managed to say something about environmental problems but they were not particularly associated with a region and could have come from general knowledge rather than from detailed study of the topic. Candidates found it even harder to discuss solutions which had been attempted.

### Q2(b)

This question led to some very shallow responses. Many essays consisted of little more than a list of foods. Gastronomy often seemed to be confused with food production or agriculture. In the evaluation of importance the stock point made, which was rarely substantiated, was that gastronomy helps the regional economy. A few candidates noted its importance in the region's tradition and culture and mentioned ways in which it reinforces a sense of regional identity and how this helps to create a reputation that others admire.

### Q3(a)

There were very few answers to this question but those which were seen were mostly very good. These answers revealed very clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of vocational education in France and were impressively supported with statistics and dates. It was generally felt that, whilst these diplomas definitely suited some young people, they were widely considered to be the poor relations to more traditional qualifications.

### Q3 (b)

This question was not at all well done. References were made to causes of violence in society in general. Such material could have referred to anywhere in the developed world and, indeed, some essays did not mention France at all. Even essays which were purportedly on education sometimes made no reference to France. Others often consisted merely of anecdotal experience gained from exchanges and rarely tackled the wider question. Some of these essays made it seem that violent acts were happening everywhere all the time. It is disappointing to note again that some candidates seem to think that they can tackle questions in this section with minimal study of the topic.

### Q4(a)

There were many very good answers to this question which revealed real enthusiasm for film in the candidates. Many essays contained sophisticated, detailed reviews of the actual techniques used, whilst others spoke of general features of the Nouvelle Vague which was deemed relevant, as mentioned above. The notion of success was a bit more difficult to handle but some excellent answers dealt with this aspect in the body of the discussion rather than as a separate element and this worked well and avoided repetition. A fair number of candidates, however, relied on predictable, uninspiring assumptions and assertions that the techniques they had chronicled were an unqualified success, without any convincing proof or illustration.

### Q4(b)

This question often resulted in long, rambling essays with a lack of examples from the films to substantiate the claims which were made. Very general points were made about the two female characters which did not necessarily bring out their attitude to love. Most candidates concluded that women dominate relationships and here there was quite often some good analysis. A significant minority, however, felt that men had the upper hand and they often made out a good case to back this up.

#### **Q5(a)**

This topic remains the least popular, there were very few answers on either question and most of these were extremely general, often lacking a French dimension. In answers to Q5(a) there seemed to be a lack of understanding of what constituted a holiday activity. Watching television and using the Internet were surprisingly considered as specific holiday activities. Candidates could not explain the tendency to take short holidays which included a range of activities.

#### **Q5(b)**

Most answers to this question were also very general and could have applied to almost anywhere. Discussion rarely strayed outside television and film with perhaps a little on radio, the huge recent changes in the audiovisual world were largely ignored.

#### **Q6(a)**

Camus again appeared to have been studied by many competent students who produced some thoughtful essays on both questions. In answer to Q6(a) candidates produced a comprehensive review of those people who tried to influence the two main protagonists. More notice could have been taken of the word 'Comment' in the question and this might have enabled candidates to produce some livelier explanations. There were some sensible appraisals of the two condemnations, although there were some rather vague discussions of existentialism and associated topics which did not lead to very clear analysis.

#### **Q6(b)**

Most candidates found it easier to give concrete examples of Meursault's love of life but some relevant material was found on Kaliayev too. Some candidates slightly misread the second part of the question and discussed whether they thought the two main characters were optimists or pessimists. When properly discussing the book rather than the characters the evaluation section of this question often led to some interesting work which relied on original, personal reactions.

#### **Q7(a)**

This question focussed on a very specific incident in the book but few candidates discussed the whole lesson. Many limited their treatment to the socks and, thus, missed much of the significance of the episode, ignoring the preamble about washing in general and the eventual angry scene in class, including Moussaoui's reaction. Part of the importance of the episode lies in the different attitudes of Azouz and his Arab classmates and this was often not brought out.

#### **Q7(b)**

Candidates found quite a lot of material in answer to this question and there were many good answers. Firstly they usually spoke of the newly found comforts of the flat but then thoughtfully moved on to discuss less tangible changes to their lifestyle not all of which were initially pleasant. There were some good evaluations of varying degrees of difficulty in adapting. Bouzid was usually nominated as the person to suffer most. There was some disagreement about whether Emma gets on well or not in her new surroundings but Azouz was thought to settle well after a few early problems. Some less successful reviews did not separate the family into its component parts and just produced a general assessment which tended to consist of rather sweeping assertions.

#### Q8(a)

There were many good, clear answers to this question. Candidates probably found it quite straightforward to organise their answers, describing the two characters in order and then proceeding to an analysis of the degree to which each was worthy of sympathy. It was also found to be easy to differentiate between Jessica and Olga, slightly greater emphasis was placed on Jessica. Both characters were felt to have their merits but most candidates were eventually more disposed towards Jessica. A couple of examiners felt they detected a gender bias with boys favouring Jessica and girls Olga but this was probably based on a non-representative sample.

#### Q8(b)

This question was another which focussed on a very precise section of a work but many candidates could not resist the temptation to describe other parts of the play. Those who did concentrate on the final tableau usually produced a succinct account of what happened in a matter of fact way. A few candidates dealt very well with the question of tension, pointing both to melodramatic, theatrical elements and also to the unresolved philosophical debate, which has its own tension. In less successful treatments the whole concept of suspense was ignored. It is no doubt difficult for some candidates to consider the play as a work to be staged rather than studied from a reading of it.

#### Q9(a)

There was strong evidence of enthusiasm for this text in answers to both questions. It has already been noted above that candidates were a little confused as to what was required of them in the evaluation part of this question. Most candidates, nevertheless, succeeded in describing in some detail at least two people encountered on the journey and there was a common division of others into good and bad elements.

#### Q9(b)

This was an extremely popular question which produced some very good answers full of precise, relevant knowledge of the text. Although some candidates lapsed into a rather unfocussed narrative mode, most were able to identify in detail the means the boys used to earn money. Essays then commonly moved on to tie in the sequence of events with the developments in the boys, bringing out their ( mostly ) admirable qualities.

#### Q10(a)

In this question candidates found it a little hard to concentrate on Anne and her attitude to the two men. Thérèse was brought in at every opportunity. Parallels between Anne and the fils Deguilhem and Thérèse and Bernard were perhaps legitimate but all too often the second part of the question turned into a general assessment of the marriage of Thérèse and Bernard.

#### Q10(b)

Difficulties experienced by candidates with the concept of structure have already been alluded to above. Some candidates felt that they had to compare and contrast the beginning and the end of the story, others found it hard to decide what exactly constituted the start and the end of the novel and proceeded to summarise large parts of the narrative. Very few mentioned the way in which the central character goes over events in her mind in the form of a flashback which would seem to be an essential element of the book.

#### Q11(a)

This was the less popular of the two questions. It may well be that this tale is not given as much attention as others in the collection by students. There were relatively few good, succinct portraits of Masserel. The evaluation part of the question often led to a lengthy analysis of characters in other contes or it was taken as an invitation to narrate all the other stories.

#### Q11(b)

There were a large number of responses to this question and many of the answers were full and competent. A few candidates wasted time describing Boule de suif and some failed to understand the irony behind the quotation. Most candidates, however, knew the text very thoroughly which enabled them to describe the passengers in appropriate detail and they proceeded to show how Maupassant discredits them from the very beginning by saying that a lack of moral principles, pretence, fraud, cowardice and dishonesty are already suggested in their descriptions. Many essays thus showed an impressive amount of appreciation.

#### Q12(a)

This was another question which concentrated on a precise part of a work and most candidates found it hard to focus on the scene in question, often straying into other parts of the play. A small number of essays contained astonishing detail of the relevant scene, including substantial quotation from Harpagon's monologue. Their reaction to him at this precise juncture often displayed mature balance, seeing him as a comic but also pathetically tragic figure. A few prolonged the discussion to take in the ending and this was felt to be relevant, given the wording of the question. Many candidates, however, wrote in very general terms, they did not restrict their treatment to the nominated episode, preferring to give other examples of the central character's avarice from earlier in the play, some merely noted down anything they knew about Harpagon.

#### Q12(b)

This question also required candidates to select precise scenes from the play, they needed to tease out examples of conflict between Harpagon and his son from a lot of material. Many found this difficult and wrote generally of the family situation. The more successful essays contained descriptions of the actual scenes in which Harpagon and Cléante are in conflict and gave specific reasons for Harpagon's anger but many essays were more vague, discussing the relationship between the two characters or, indeed, just miserliness in general. Irrespective of the first half of the answer, however, the evaluation was often well done, the better candidates produced thoughtful, balanced assessments of Cléante's behaviour. Whilst many quite clearly identified with Cléante, he was rarely seen as entirely blameless.

#### Q13(a)

It was pleasing to see that Voltaire was studied by a number of centres. Most candidates who chose this question were able to describe Eldorado in some detail in the description of both the fabric of the place and of the way of life which the people led there. There were many tenable accounts of what Voltaire was trying to do, the commonly held opinion was that Eldorado was meant to offer an illustration by contrast of all the imperfections of the real world.

#### Q13(b)

This question offered the opportunity to indulge in some straightforward narrative in the first part which most candidates did very well. They then moved on to some

clear analysis of the heretic who was in fact a true Christian. Many candidates, who had obviously studied the work carefully in its historical context were able to give the objects of Voltaire's satire.

### Advice and Guidance

The work this year was found to be very similar to that met in previous sessions so that the advice and guidance which examiners are able to offer are also very much as in past reports. As ever candidates must be encouraged to read carefully the title selected for their essay, perhaps underlining key elements. Candidates should then address the precise terms of the question. Some time devoted to a correct, apposite introduction is always well spent, since this tends to put the writer on the right track and helps to avoid irrelevance. An introduction which is not focussed on the precise terms of the question usually leads to a development that is more a memory of a past essay or to generalities about the topic or text. On the other hand students should refrain from writing long, general introductions which have little to do with the question. This uses up valuable time and leaves little opportunity to answer the question set. The habit of merely repeating the question, either verbatim or in different terms, also seems largely a waste of time. In the body of the essay students should be discouraged from making assertions which are unsubstantiated. They could perhaps practise organised and focussed essay plans and structures with each point developed and substantiated with references to the text or specific examples from the topic. Often candidates seem to know their text or topic well and make valid points but do not follow them up. They should not be afraid to develop their ideas, either with a relevant explanation or with precise details. It would seem a good idea to make students familiar with the marking grids, so that they know how credit is awarded. With regard to some topics, and particularly L'Éducation en France and Le Mode de Vie des Français, students should be reminded that they need to master a body of facts before they can construct decent arguments. In the section of the paper devoted to single texts, when a question refers to a particular part of the text, candidates must ensure they concentrate their attention on the relevant section. Before embarking on an answer they should be confident that they have enough knowledge of the specific piece to be able to produce a full response. Finally candidates should ensure that their essays lead to a well thought out conclusion which is relevant and appropriate.

As far as language is concerned, many candidates would be well advised to review their knowledge of basic grammar. It is also essential to learn vocabulary which is appropriate to the chosen topic. They could also learn vocabulary which will help with the topic essay format. This should include transition words and opinion indicators. Words and expressions which contribute to smooth analysis include such things as : *Considérons d'abord, en plus, d'ailleurs, cependant, quant à, rappelons que, toutefois, sans doute, par conséquent, pour conclure.* Lengthy, all-purpose essay phrases, however, are often not helpful, they tend to interrupt the flow of analysis, especially when they are used repetitively.



## A2 Unit 5.2 (6445/02) - Coursework

(Page numbers refer to Edexcel Advanced GCE in French Coursework Guide - First Examination 2002, Issue 2, October 2003).

### Preamble

Candidates were required to produce two pieces of coursework, one of 450-500 words and one of 900-1000 words of French, on two clearly distinct topics firmly rooted in the life and/or culture of a French-speaking country. The popularity of the option grew again this year. As before, candidates properly supported by their teachers and schooled in the necessary techniques tended to produce good coursework (see page 4, The Role of the Teacher and page 16, Management of coursework). In centres where commitment to the option was lukewarm or where Edexcel's requirements for coursework had not been absorbed, the work tended to score lower marks. Most of the work was rooted in a target-language country (page 5), but there were still some general treatments. Most subjects were suitable, but some teachers could have taken greater note of page 8, Unsuitable topics, especially 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7. There is no additional tolerance for length beyond the word limits specified above. Work that does not respect those limits should be treated as per page 22, Long and Short work.

### Application of Mark Schemes

Each piece of work was assessed out of a total of 45 marks, using the principles and the mark grids given on pages 19-21. The mark for the long essay was doubled, giving a total of 135 for the paper. Much of the marking was realistic and within tolerance. The grids for Organisation and Development and Language continued to produce better standardisation; however, a number of marks for Knowledge and Understanding were too high. Unrealistic marking resulted in the doubling of any reduction applied by the moderator in essay 2 when the final total was calculated. Reasons for mark reductions included: unsuitable subjects, unfocused titles and essays, thinly-resourced pieces, excessive credit awarded for sheer volume of study, absence of analysis and/or argument, insufficient use of evidence and source materials. Unsubstantiated personal feelings about a topic were often credited as "analysis" or "independent judgement". In some centres candidates seemed to have received credit for the insertion of quotations irrespective of the use made of them. Some pieces with no coherent structure, or with an essentially simple sequence based on chronology, were overmarked for Organisation and Development of material.

### Candidates' Responses

A range of achievement was represented. Compared with 2005, there were fewer truly excellent pieces, but also fewer candidates who were out of their depth. Much of the work was pleasing to read because it showed evidence of individual research and reflection, and conveyed the candidates' enthusiasm for their subject. In contrast, there were a number of undemanding factual essays, or unimaginative treatments of universal themes such as obesity or euthanasia with passing or specious reference to the TL context.

The most popular format was the discursive essay, followed by literary topics, then creative writing, of which there were notably more examples this year. The phrasing of titles did not always encourage an evaluative/analytical approach. The usefulness

of the plans varied. The range and suitability of the bibliographies was not uniform either; some, especially for Essay 2, were unsatisfactory, particularly with regard to the lack of a TL book.

Candidates should be aware that coursework is a demanding academic and intellectual exercise. To produce good coursework, they must: work in consultation with their teachers, acquire the skills peculiar to coursework (see the section "Coursework Skills" below), choose challenging topics, research them thoroughly, select and discard material as appropriate, understand the key issues, reflect upon them, use their material to illustrate an argument or a creative development, reach a sustainable conclusion derived from the material. The degree of the candidates' interest and engagement depended upon the extent to which their choice of topic was genuinely personal; individual response to the material tended to produce better work. This was often the case with literary and creative pieces and with new or demanding angles on established topics. Candidates who settled for factual treatments of perennial topics tended not to produce purposeful and analytical essays. See also page 9, "Treatment of topics" and "Creative writing as coursework".

In most cases the balance in demand and scope between the short and the long essay was appropriate, although a number of candidates' titles for the short essay were too broad in scope. Provided that suitable fields of study and tightly-focused titles were chosen, and the advice on page 6 was followed, it was perfectly possible for candidates to produce interesting analytical treatments of a theme within 450-500 words. It is intended that the short essay be done first, both to enable the candidates to benefit from a staged development, and to allow feedback before the writing of the long essay. The majority of centres adopted this approach. Where this was not the case, it seemed to the moderators that the candidates had been deprived of one of the benefits of the scheme. However, teachers are entitled to reach their own decision on this matter. The two essays should be clearly distinguished on the candidate record card.

## **Titles**

With both the long and the short essay, two crucial but often neglected aspects of preparation - the wording of the title (page 10) and the plan (page 14-15) - governed the candidates' chances of writing a good essay. Titles modelled on the examples given on pages 10-13 were more likely to lead to successful essays. They should be expressed succinctly in correct French which gives a clear idea of the purpose of the essay. Unclear, unfocused or rambling titles led to aimless essays with no clear direction (see page 6, "Evaluation/interpretive skills", and page 9, "Coursework topic titles"). It is permissible for teachers to correct titles.

Titles couched as questions tended to be the most helpful to candidates. Those prefaced "Dans quelle mesure ...?" or "Jusqu'à quel point ..?" had the best chance of success, always provided the evaluation implied by these phrases was carried out. Where titles were flawed, likely reasons were: they defined only the overall topic area rather than the angle of enquiry; they were convoluted and tried to define the whole content of the essay, leaving the main focus unclear; they encouraged departures from the TL context; they were closed, leaving no scope for argument or exploration; they were based on a false premise; they were narrative or anecdotal. Candidates should ensure that the content of the essay is relevant to and addresses the title. It is essential that candidates understand the sense of key terminology in

the TL context, eg "la delinquance", "un delit", "la banlieue", "l'intégration", "les SDF".

## Plans

Examples of good practice were seen, but generally the quality of the plans, agreed by teachers, has deteriorated. In many centres little regard seemed to be given to this part of the process, which meant that the opportunity for teachers to assist in the preparation of a good essay was lost. Too often the document was simply an index or a synopsis, content-specific rather than directional, lacking in conceptual development, and ending with a meaningless heading such as "Conclusion", "Mon opinion personnelle" or "L'avenir" with no elaboration. Some plans had clearly been written after the essay and consisted only of sentences taken from the essay. The moderators consider this to be short-sighted: the effort devoted to the design of a good plan, showing clear conceptual development, which is then followed, will be repaid in terms of the quality of the essay and argument and consequently, the marks awarded.

The moderators believe that many candidates had no awareness of the purpose of the plan as the driving force behind the essay. They needed to appreciate the impact of a good (or a poor) plan on their essays, and to understand the notion of "conceptual development". A structured and organised piece of work does not necessarily show conceptual development. The "conclusion" tended to be the part of the plan which was least helpful to the candidate and to the reader. It should be presented in detail, and should draw together the threads of the essay, leading to a "prise de position" based on the material. Any analysis present should not be reserved until this stage of the essay. In the event, it was usually nothing more than the final paragraph of the essay, in which the candidate offered a subjective and unsupported reaction to the issue. This tended to say more about the candidate than about the topic.

Examples of plans, with comments, can be found on pages 14-15, 27, 32, 38, 43 and 49.

## The Standard of the Work

Most candidates were able to demonstrate **knowledge** of a suitable and relevant topic, but only those who showed **understanding** were able to access the higher mark ranges; these candidates were able to undertake analysis and criticism. The best work was produced where candidates had chosen a clear and succinct title which implied that an enquiry would be undertaken, and where a reasoned conclusion was reached based upon the material adduced. Such pieces were effective because the candidates had understood their sources, made reference to them in the work, (eg by using footnotes) and were prepared to take a critical view of them. Candidates who were prepared to research and consider contrasting views of an issue, to question the commonplace, to probe beneath the surface, to be sceptical, to challenge biased opinions and in conclusion to address such terms as "Dans quelle mesure ..." were more likely to merit the higher mark ranges.

All too often, however, it seemed that the source material had not been understood but simply incorporated uncritically into the essay. Candidates who have not assimilated their material are unlikely to be able to reflect about it; they may well demonstrate knowledge of their theme, but not understanding (see mark grid, page

19). The result was often a collection of facts about a topic, to be used at all costs with no apparent thought about sequencing or about the real significance of the material. Many were prepared to accept without question that the unemployed will inevitably become homeless, that "la semaine de 35 heures" means that nobody works more than 35 hours, that "le foulard islamique" equates only with repression, that the causes of the recent "émeutes" are solely down to racism and integration problems, that excessive youth drinking results only from childhood trauma, that failure at school leads inevitably to a life of crime, that legislation on any problem automatically resolves it. Broad conclusions tended to be drawn from isolated examples. Candidates do not need to explain their choice of subject; this merely consumes valuable words, especially in the short essay, and is impossible to assess according to the criteria. "Independent judgement" should consist of the candidates' own critical comment upon the material, woven into the text rather than as a separate final personalised paragraph. Reproducing critics' ideas or restating other people's "prise de position" or making extensive use of quotes in order to state points cannot be credited with a high degree of independent judgement or analysis. A subjective or emotional addendum about the issue in general, ie a form of "personal response", is not "analysis in depth". The mere pronouncement of an opinion does not suffice; it must be supported by evidence.

### Coursework Skills

Coursework is a demanding option for which training is needed.

- (i) Candidates need to devote more thought to the overall structure and coherence of their work; many essays comprised lists of facts showing no purposeful sequencing and no overall thread. Some essays presented facts in the first section, leaving the analytical element for the latter part. The essay should be viewed as a cohesive whole in which the candidate provides knowledge but also undertakes argument throughout. It is a great advantage if students are convinced about what they are doing and can reach reasoned conclusions of their own. At the outset they could ask themselves what they are trying to achieve or argue in the essay, and how best to use their material in the process. They need an enquiring, sceptical frame of mind. They should ensure that the title is addressed.
- (ii) Not only must students learn the obvious techniques of introducing and concluding, they also need to acquire the skills of sequencing their points effectively, of expressing an analytical or critical examination of an issue, and of making explicit the relationships between different paragraphs or sections. The best candidates possessed more refined skills, eg methods of attribution, stating clearly the purpose of a paragraph and developing balanced points within it, reaching interim conclusions and synthesising them in the conclusion. These candidates made effective use of a variety of "mots de liaison".
- (iii) The moderators were pleased to note the good quality of the French in many candidates' work, but it must be said that meaning was sometimes obscured by inaccurate or unclear language. Accuracy of basic grammar and use of tenses (apart from the pluperfect) were generally good, but more checking could be done of endings and genders, eg "le/la voile", "les Français/Françaises". More thought could have been given to improving idiom and widening range through the correct and judicious use of relative pronouns, reflexive verbs, the passive voice and variations of word order and subordination; candidates could be encouraged to use sophisticated language in order better to express

sophisticated ideas. Candidates could have shown better mastery of the language of speculation, and of syntax generally. Without the more complex tenses such as the pluperfect and the conditional perfect, or a range of conjunctions, analysis and evaluation cannot be adequately conveyed. The language of a few candidates suffered from excessively literal translations and where candidates had not worked with target-language materials, the French tended to be awkward and anglicised, with key terminology not known.

- (iv) The moderators also expressed continuing worries about lack of attribution or convincing use of source materials in the essays. The general criteria for Knowledge and Understanding (page 19) include "ability to use evidence and source material" and the mark grid (page 19) includes phrases such as "ability to analyse and use evidence and source material". Candidates must attribute any quotations they use, and should show in some way how they have used other evidence and source material. Whilst footnotes are not required, they are a simple device for referring to sources and one which makes any piece of work more authoritative and readable. High marks should not be awarded where candidates make assertions which they do not or can not support by reference to a source. Illustrative material such as graphs, statistical tables or photographs should lead to the drawing of conclusions rather than the simple re-stating of their contents. The less the candidates referred to their sources, the more the treatment of the topic tended to be generalised. Weaker candidates tended to take an uncritical view of their material. It was clear that some lists of sources had a merely cosmetic role. It is not necessary to list dictionaries, text books and grammar reference works.

### Choice of Topic

The vast majority concerned metropolitan France, with a fair number focusing on Francophone countries in West Africa, eg La Côte-d'Ivoire, and on L'Algérie.

When choosing their topics, candidates should not be guided simply by a personal affinity for a subject. Strong feelings about issues like pollution, social justice, euthanasia, the death penalty, hunting, fairness and unfairness, moral right or wrong are not necessarily a good foundation for coursework. Before proceeding to study such issues, candidates should consider the availability of resources and the possibilities for an objective, evaluative approach to a question.

Perennially popular socio-political topics were much in evidence again - immigration; education, violence in schools; health issues; crime; youth issues; sources of energy and their effect on the environment; pollution; unemployment; homelessness; AIDS; drugs; the media; le PACS; the family, marriage and divorce; religion; transport; Corsica; science and technology, including ethical dilemmas; mai 68; tourism and holidays; the role of women; les banlieues; sport; antisemitism; the "Loi Evin"; Médecins sans Frontières, "Les Restos du Coeur". It must be stressed that these and other enduring subjects studied for coursework (eg unemployment, les SDF, La Loi Evin, the health system) need to be re-examined periodically in the light of events, and the source materials updated; otherwise they risk becoming hackneyed, outdated and ossified. Recent events which have lost some or all of their topicality were less in evidence, eg Le Mondial 1998, the 2002 elections; Paris' candidature for the Olympic games, "la canicule", "les 35 heures". Candidates who chose these rarely rose above narrative, and often struggled to demonstrate the lasting impact of the topics. The most useful essays on "la canicule" explored the question in the context of more outreaching issues such as the health system and those on "les 35

heures" analysed them in the light of new developments.

The most popular authors were again Camus, Sartre, Voltaire, Pagnol, Molière, St-Exupéry, Baudelaire, Racine, Zola, Beaugrand, Maupassant, Mauriac, Ionesco and Joffo. This year some very challenging studies of authors or their works were presented and there were again some in-depth pieces on the concepts of "l'existentialisme" and "l'absurde" as well as "l'optimisme" in *Candide*. The moderators reported that Edexcel's requirements concerning literary coursework seem now to be better understood, although some candidates suffered from too narrow a focus in their pieces or from insubstantial research. It was clear that many centres had insisted that their candidates read widely, including works of criticism, and that they refer to more than just one book, but a number of candidates did not show the necessary wider reading. Some bibliographies were limited to the book or books studied; film versions of the novels do not contribute to extensive and wider research. In some cases, many candidates submitting essays on the same works or authors showed little independent and personal research and there was similarity in analysis or illustration of points across the different pieces. Better candidates rose above narration of plot or pure character study, exploring instead how different authors depicted similar themes, or how concepts such as existentialism, optimism or didacticism was represented in a series of works by one or two authors. Some essays explored how an author's life was reflected in his or her works; it was felt there was a tendency towards conjecture and towards artificially forcing material to fit the question.

Of the cultural themes, the cinema, painting, French music, both contemporary and classical and the fate of the French language were the most popular. Historical topics continued to be popular, especially the Revolution, de Gaulle, Petain, World War II, Resistance and Occupation, Algeria, Marie Antoinette and Napoléon. Those that rose above a narrative treatment and did not rely too heavily on reported opinion were generally done well.

Many candidates profited from the freedom allowed in the scheme to study highly topical or recent issues or personalities, eg "les émeutes d'Octobre 2005", "le CPE", "les incendies dans les squats à Paris", the role of judges in the light of the Outreau affair, "le parkour", "la réforme du BAC", the current concerns in the wine industry, "les assouplissements de la loi sur les 35 heures", "la loi sur la laïcité" and "Sarkozy". These enjoyed a greater or lesser degree of success depending upon the resources available and the candidates' understanding of the whole scope of an issue. For example, although more candidates demonstrated an understanding of the peculiarly French notion of "laïcité", some still approached the question from an anglo-centric point of view and few analysed the current issue from different perspectives. Usually it was presented in simplistic and subjective terms of right or wrong / fairness or unfairness. Treatments of "les 35 heures" or "le CPE" and the response to them tended to be better researched and more objectively evaluated as long as candidates were fully informed of the latest available developments. Some of the essays used works of fiction such as films and novels as evidence of facts for events, for example in essays on the "émeutes" and inner city tensions, where "La Haine" was used. The less successful essays on the consequences of the Outreau affair demonstrated little understanding of the French justice system and made erroneous statements or came to facile conclusions.

There were a few original topics, such as "Est-ce qu'il sera possible pour les bergers français de vivre en harmonie avec le loup?", and "Jusqu'à quel point est il possible de développer l'Auvergne sans perdre l'identité de la région?" although these were noticeably less in evidence compared to previous years.

Creative writing tended to be done well in accordance with the requirements (page 9). Diaries, letters and debates were popular formats, eg, "Journal intime d'un membre de la Résistance en France". There were some excellent creative essays, one, for example, in the form of a newspaper editorial entitled "Au Revoir M Chirac" and another in the form of a report from a recently qualified judge presenting his recommendations to a commission on the selection and training of judges. There were a few instances of pieces using an email format. As long as there was an attempt to structure the material coherently and not as a series of disjointed email responses to a question, candidates used this format successfully on the whole. Candidates must be aware that the creative option, like any other, must demonstrate a firm basis in TL source material, with reference to sources. Some creative pieces did not take full advantage of the opportunities to show a manipulation of source material, with the result that there was a tendency to show knowledge rather than understanding. Some of the creative pieces also lacked plausibility of language and tone.

There were some undemanding studies, for example of French football, fashion, Coco Chanel, Edith Piaf, Brigitte Bardot, "l'immigration" where this consisted of a historical recount; and some general titles such as "l'obésité", "la peine de mort", "l'anorexie", "l'euthanasie", "le tabagisme", "le végétarisme" or "la constitution Européenne" which, though referring to France in the title, tended to digress from the target language culture and encourage over-personalised responses.

### **Duplication**

See page 5. Teachers should not approve choices where there is any doubt that the two essays focus on completely different topics. In some cases the overlap is obvious, eg two essays about the works of Camus, the films of Jeunet, two transport issues (Concorde/TGV). In others it is less so, eg two essays on different aspects of pollution (La pollution de l'air à Paris / La marée noire) or health issues (diet/obesity). Candidates must not be allowed to use the same bibliography for both essays. In cases of blatant overlap, moderators will reduce content marks commensurate with the degree of duplication.

It is also reminded that candidates should not closely share source material or collaborate on essays with identical or similar titles.

### **Layout and Presentation**

The moderators commented again upon the generally high standard of presentation of coursework and the associated documentation by candidates and teachers (pages 3 and 16). Some teachers could have taken more care over the addition of marks or the accurate transfer of these to the OPTEMS. Unfortunately, it has to be said that there was still a number of poorly-presented pieces. Candidates who submit no checklist (page 74) or a fictitious one are doing themselves a disservice. Those who casually tick all the boxes are in effect ignoring the guidance given. It is recommended that candidates be familiarised with the checklist before doing their work rather than afterwards. The inclusion of an accurate and complete Title Page for each essay is essential (page 76); without it, the essay cannot be identified once the moderator removes the record card. Several pieces lacked clear or accurate identification of word length. It should be noted, as regards word count, that only quotes and footnotes can be discounted and that proper nouns and numbers should form part of the final count.

## **Bibliographies and source materials (see page 15)**

As in 2005, the moderators reported on the reducing demands some teachers are placing on their candidates in terms of breadth of study. Bibliographies for the long essay seemed to be increasingly limited. Some literary studies and film studies were not supported by the required wider reading. A worrying number of candidates had undertaken coursework with inadequate resources at their disposal. Candidates whose work was based on nothing more than a few newspaper articles, their A-level course book or ill-defined material from the Internet produced superficial work. Bibliographical references such as "college dossier", "fiches du prof", "l'Internet" or "google.fr" are not adequate. Some bibliographies on the surface appeared to have a broad range, but it became clear in the essay itself that only one or two sources had actually been used and some bibliographies included items, most commonly a book for essay 2, that were then never referred to or used in the essay itself. Nevertheless, there were many detailed, relevant and well-presented source lists. Candidates should not be allowed to use as reference material within their coursework sources originally in languages other than French. Source materials should be as up to date as possible, depending upon the topics. See page 3 for the amount of definition required. Study of an unsatisfactory bibliography for Essay 2 should be reflected in the marks for use of evidence and source material.

## **The Internet**

The concern expressed in the 2005 report seems to have gone unheeded; indeed, websites represented an even bigger proportion of the sources used. Whilst articles from the Internet are recommended as source material for the short essay (page 7, no 8), they must be regarded as secondary sources for the long essay, for which extensive reading from a number of sources is required, the equivalent of one substantial TL book plus other sources (page 7, essay 2). Many candidates were allowed to prepare Essay 2 on the basis of study only of Internet material, often quite inadequately defined, originally in English, or impossible to trace. Where bibliographies dominated by Internet sources do not meet the specification requirements, the centre should reflect this in its marks. If necessary, moderators will adjust marks to take account of this. The moderators are now seriously concerned by the reduction in candidates' reading of TL books, and in the type and range of material being studied. It is feared that the status of coursework is being eroded.

## **Plagiarism**

While not as widespread as in 2005, plagiarism continues to threaten the integrity and existence of coursework. Blatant unattributed copying from sources was still evident. In most cases, the teacher had authenticated the work in contradiction of the declaration on the record sheet. Candidates must understand what constitutes plagiarism (page 22) and be warned about the consequences, which range from proportionate reduction in marks to complete disqualification from the coursework unit, ie they cannot obtain an A-level French qualification. University places may well be at risk. Teachers need to supervise the activities of their candidates closely, and to follow the advice given in the 2003 report: "Teachers are advised to have sight of all source materials used by their candidates and to instruct them only to use materials produced and listed in the bibliography." Teachers must report to Edexcel any suspected malpractice, and should not sign the candidate Record Sheet in cases of doubt.

## The role of the teacher

This is resumed on pages 4 and 16. There is also a requirement to complete the associated paperwork, to take part in internal moderation, and to provide comments upon the marking. Many teachers ignored this last requirement, which conveyed the impression that the marking of the work had been cursory; indeed many pieces were submitted without a single inscription or comment from the teacher. On the other hand, it should be noted that no inscriptions should be made in the body of the script (see page 22). The opportunity to provide the candidates with useful feedback after the first essay seemed often to have been lost. It was noticeable that teachers who had marked the work as required (page 22), giving detailed marginal comments throughout the essay about strengths and weaknesses, were those whose marks were the most accurate and the least likely to be adjusted. Less detailed marking often led to unrealistic interpretation of the criteria for assessment, especially on the Knowledge and Understanding grid. The various forms devised by centres for recording marks and comments were much appreciated by the moderators.

Edexcel coursework does give students and teachers considerable freedom to choose topics and working methods. The corollary of this for the teacher is increased responsibility. Coursework should not be taken on lightly or seen as a non-examined version of Module 5.1 in which the teacher plays a passive role. Candidates should not be left to their own devices; it is not satisfactory to expect or allow candidates to "work independently". Teachers should play an active part in advising candidates on the suitability of topics, not only in terms of the TL country and of good taste, but also in terms of the intellectual demands of this examination (page 2). The teacher also has an active part to play in supervising the research and planning phases of the work. The section "Subsequent work" (page 15) defines clearly the limit on teacher involvement, in particular that any re-drafting of work must be done on the candidates' initiative; page 17 makes it clear that the submission of trial essays is not allowed, and that once submitted, the work cannot be amended, abridged, edited or altered in any way.

## Notes for Guidance

1. Coursework is not necessarily a wise option for all centres and all candidates.
2. Close study of the new Coursework Guide for Edexcel Advanced GCE in French, first examination 2004, is essential. Attendance at the relevant INSET meetings would be useful. This and earlier subject reports provide much relevant guidance.
3. Centres should take account of the feedback given by their moderator on the U9 form. This is intended to provide confirmation of good practice and useful pointers for improvement, where necessary.
4. Students need gradually to develop the skills required for the production of good coursework (see above, Coursework Skills)
5. Students should be encouraged to reach their own conclusions based on material, and to justify them logically.
6. Teachers should take an active and critical role in candidates' choice of topic, and in the planning of the work.
7. Bibliographies must satisfy the specification requirements.
8. Teachers and candidates should ensure that the work is firmly rooted in the life/society/culture of a TL country. Europe-wide treatments must be avoided.
9. The importance of a good title and plan should be stressed.
10. Candidates should treat the checklist seriously.



## A2 Unit 6(a) (6446/01) - Listening and Writing

### Examiner's Report

Some 6000 candidates sat this Unit, which was again marked on-line. The style of the paper was similar to that used in previous sessions, and most candidates appeared able to complete the paper in the time available, producing a range of scores, thus indicating that the Unit differentiated well. The format of the paper was unchanged: it comprised two passages, of a little less than four minutes in total, dealing with ozone pollution in France, and an initiative to tackle this problem. In Q1, candidates were required to respond to nine target-language questions in French. In Q2, seven bullet points guided candidates to transfer the meaning from the target language passage into a structured English summary, in no more than 100 words of continuous prose.

### Assessment Principles

In Q1, 15 marks were available in response to nine target-language comprehension questions, which ranged in value from one to three marks. In order to gain credit, responses had to focus on the questions. Therefore, lifted sections could be rewarded, if targeted or appropriately manipulated. However, lifted answers, where the tense or the viewpoint adopted in the response were illogical to the question, could not score. As in previous sessions, examiners assessed responses in the order of their presentation, and only considered as many elements, as marks available. Thus in answer to a question worth three marks, only the first three elements of the response were considered. This principle was applied throughout Q1. Preambles or repetition of the question were not counted as elements. Harmless additions were tolerated, but incorrect additions which vitiated the response or caused self-contradiction, led to credit being withheld. Words in English, the incorrect language for Q1, could not be credited. Similarly, misspellings in French which constituted another word were ambiguous, and did not score. In each case, if the error were repeated, credit was not withheld more than once. Q2 was worth 20 marks in total: up to 15 marks were available for the contents of the summary, and a further 5 marks were available for the quality of grammar, punctuation and spelling. The two grids published in the Specification were used. In Q2, candidates had to gain at least one mark for their summary skills, in order for grammar, punctuation and spelling to be credited, and *vice versa*. In counting words, examiners considered responses in Q2 up to the end of the sense group after 100 words. As it was foreseen that many candidates would refer to *the Minister of the Environment* (or similar) and *the Green Party*, these concepts each counted as a single word.

### Candidates' responses

#### Question 1

##### Q1a

Over half the candidates gained 2 or 3 marks for this part, and the three elements were assessed discretely where possible. 0 was scored most frequently when candidates lifted *les mairies ont reçu par fax le message d'alerte...* since this does not respond directly to the actions of the *préfecture*. The English spelling of *alert* and the ambiguous French spelling *mari(e)* for *maire* both caused 1 mark to be withheld. Mistaking the timing of the alerts, *en avril* not *depuis le mois d'avril*,

invalidated 1 mark. Pleasingly, many candidates scored well, and this was helped by the succinct *elle a alerté*, being worth 2 marks in its own right, and by the acceptance of *mairie* and well as *mairie*, since the correct target was comprehensible in either case. There was some confusion over who was sending the alerts, and credit could not be given when the mayor was considered to do so. As long as comprehensible within the context, masculine pronouns were accepted for *la préfecture*, as in *il a donné l'alerte...*, but candidates need to bear potential ambiguity in mind.

#### Q1b

Over two-thirds of candidates gained the mark in this part. While a wide range of prepositions was acceptable, *dans*, *au moyen de*, or *par la presse*, *la presse* without a preceding preposition was not rewardable. *press* was an unacceptable English spelling, which accounted for many candidates who did not score. One of the problems with the warning system was that only newspapers were used to inform the public. Therefore responses, such as *dans les journaux par exemple*, which suggested that newspapers *inter allia* to convey alerts, did not score. The same comment regarding ambiguous pronouns applies as in Q1a, in that *la population* was tolerated as being masculine, but was potentially unclear.

#### Q1c

Around half of the candidates gained the mark available, many aided by the fact that a lift could be credited here: *on apprend le lendemain*. It was essential to communicate that the message was too late, not simply that it was slow. Therefore *le message arrive tard* was credited, whereas *ce n'est pas rapide* forfeited the mark. Some candidates attempted to draw inferences which were not based on the text. *certains ne lisent pas un journal* may be true, but it cannot be inferred from the passage, and therefore could not score.

#### Q1d

Some 57% of candidates scored 2 in this part, and a further 28% gained 1 mark, making it the most successful part in Q1. Only the present tense was acceptable, given the formulation of the question. The 2 marks were available discretely. The most common source of error was from candidates who believed that speeds fell *à 30 km/h*, rather than *de 30 km/h*. Others understood the reduction correctly, but wrote a distance, not a speed: *Ils réduisent la vitesse de 30 km*, thus invalidating the second mark. In contrast to the 6441 paper, at A2, past passive formation needs to be correct, and consequently *la vitesse a réduit...* could not score. *ralentir* which also gained the mark, was an economic alternative to *réduire la vitesse*.

#### Q1e

Slightly under half of all candidates earned the mark in this part. Of the others, incorrect tense usage frequently cost the mark, despite the fact that the question logically precluded a past tense: *ils ont arrêté de travailler*. Similarly the unmanipulated lift *certains industriels pourraient être appelés à arrêter leurs usines* did not gain the mark, whereas a lift, with the tense changed to the present tense, earned 1 mark. Pronouns in either gender or number were acceptable. A number of unsuccessful candidates did not target the impact on factories, and referred erroneously to travel restrictions on factory workers.

#### Q1f

This part was the most unsuccessful in Q1, with over three-quarters of candidates failing to score. The over-riding difficulty for candidates was to target the response correctly, and the majority focused on the responsibilities of *le préfet*, not on those

of *les conducteurs*. A number of candidates vitiated their responses by attributing responsibility ambiguously: *Ils ne doivent pas conduire. Il lui faut interdire la circulation*. In the 20% or so of cases where 2 marks were gained, some very succinct responses were successful: *pas conduire* or *arrêter de conduire* scored fully. It is vital for candidates to observe the focus of the question, since relevant, but oblique information, cannot score.

### Q1g

Over half of the candidates gained some credit, with some 10% accessing all 3 marks. However, around 45% did not score, and this was largely due to untargeted lifting, where candidates selected correct elements, but did not focus on the groups of people involved: *il faudrait accepter de fermer un certain nombre d'usines* did not identify *les employés des usines*, so was unsuccessful. Paraphrases scored, so instead of *les conducteurs*, *ceux qui conduisent une voiture* was acceptable. The question sought to elicit three distinct groups of people. Therefore, credit could only be given once for each group: *les chauffeurs, les conducteurs et les routiers* scored 1 mark in total, not 3. Some candidates offered numerous elements, with the result that correct information, sometimes lying beyond the third element, could not gain credit. *le préfet* gained 1 mark, as an individual who suffered, but was offered by very few. A significant minority of incorrect responses mistook the price to be high in terms of health consequences, but this was not borne out in the passage, so was not rewarded.

### Q1h

Around two-thirds of candidates gained the mark, and if the English spelling of *alert* had already caused credit to be withheld, it was tolerated in this part. *tous le quatre(s) jours* was just acceptably rendered by *chaque quatre jours* or, better, simply by *souvent*. *la fréquence des alertes* was acceptable, since high frequency was implicit. *des alertes* was therefore insufficiently specific. As in Q1g, more general comments about health implications crept in, sadly without positive effect on scoring.

### Q1i

Almost 80% of candidates failed to gain the mark in this part, and most of those who did lifted directly from the passage: *moins on aura de pollution, mieux on se portera*. Since this lift required no manipulation, examiners insisted on wholly accurate versions. Therefore, for example, *moins en aura de pollution...* made no sense, so did not score. Phonetic approximations of *se portera* such as *supporta* or *s'apportera* were equally meaningless, so did not gain credit. More general statements, unrelated to health implications were unsuccessful: *moins on aura de pollution, mieux ça va être*. Some candidates scored simply by writing: *c'est bon pour la santé*, as references to reduced pollution were sufficiently implicit from the question.

## Question 2

This question yielded a wide range of achievement. There were few candidates at the extremes of the spectrum, with only 1% failing to score, yet almost no scores above 12 for the summary. A number of details were accessed and conveyed satisfactorily by most candidates, whereas others eluded almost all. Equally, for grammar, punctuation and spelling, there was a broad spread of achievement: 5% of candidates accessed the full 5 marks, and pleasingly, more than 70% gained 3 or more. Examples of very poor English expression, with major flaws, were restricted to the 6% who scored 1 for grammar, punctuation and spelling. Candidates generally heeded the 100 word limit, but a minority exceeded it, sometimes by a quarter to a

third. These extra words could gain no credit. The vast majority of candidates wrote in continuous prose, but a minority responded using bullet points, which was not the preferred summary style. Where an excessively detailed rough draft had caused time to run out, the candidate sometimes requested the examiner to consider some or all of the notes. This caused an immediate departure from the desired register of the formal response in continuous prose. Elision and inconsistent use of capital letters were widespread. Singular nouns with plural verbs and *vice versa* were not uncommon: *The authorities are introducing measures which is against ozone pollution*. Punctuation, as in the last session, was at the most generous rather casual in many candidates' work, with many omitting full stops and commas: *The Green Party wants more funding for public transport the government has cut funding* A number of French spellings crept in unhelpfully, and had to be regarded as less desirable style in the English summary: *cyclistes, mesures, ministre* and the untranslated *Pastille verte*, as did Gallicisms: *cars circulate in town, means to give prevision of an alert, a performing public transport and the public powers*. Numbers and percentages, certainly at the beginning of sentences, should be written as words: *three-pronged plan* or *three million euros*.

1: Some succinct responses succeeded in conveying both relevant details, while other lengthy ones, giving an account of the causes of ozone pollution, did not score. It was key that candidates realised that authorities, not the Government generally, were not only struggling, but struggling to implement measures. Also vital was that the responses discussed ozone pollution, whereas many thought that the ozone layer was under consideration.

2: This was the most successfully attempted bullet point, and most candidates gained credit for two details. The third detail requiring *during peak periods* for full credit to be given was more elusive. A number of candidates selected an infelicitous verb, therefore accessing less credit: *providing public information programmes* is not as specific as *improving*.

3: As pollution was already mentioned in responses to bullet point 2 above, it was accepted as implicit in answers such as *Industrial, transport and individual reduction is especially targeted*. Many candidates gained credit in both parts of this bullet point. *Prevention of pollution from industry...* did not gain full credit, since prevention is probably impossible, and not the same as *reduction*. *Individual activities* proved the most difficult element for candidates to communicate in good English, but most succeeded in approximating the sense of the initiative. The two details were taken discretely, thus misunderstanding of the first element did not invalidate the second: *The initiative means a reduction in industry, transport and individual activities* still gained some credit in the second part, as the correct areas of action were identified.

4: The three details sought from this bullet point were treated discretely, in order, as in bullet point three, that a single misunderstanding did not invalidate all three details. The notion of fewer vehicles was understood by most candidates, but the correct percentage proved elusive, and the group to whom the percentage related was also challenging. *80% of green cars can currently drive on high pollution days. In future only half of them will be allowed* was sought, but 40% was frequently offered, as half of 80%, and many candidates thought that 80% of all cars were concerned. *la pastille verte* was often untranslated or ignored, hence reducing credit for the first detail. In the second detail, *circuler* was often left unsatisfactorily as *to circulate*. Similarly, in the third element *pic* appeared in a number of candidates' English summary, spelt as in the original, thus limiting scoring potential.

5: This bullet point was generally well answered, although the figure was seldom written as word, as required in formal register, especially at the beginning of a sentence. A number of candidates wrote incorrect sums and even currencies, such as *3000 euros* or *£3 million*. The sum need not have been specified, since the bullet point required the use, not the amount. The emphasis needed to be on warning measures, so *Funding will be provided to inform the public* was not wholly correct, as it was too general.

6: *The Green Party* had all possible combinations of initial capital and lower case letters. The majority of candidates understood the demands of this bullet point. *Performing public transport* was translated directly from the passage, and did not communicate fully the necessary English sense. A significant number of candidates focused on either cycle or pedestrian provision: *The Green Party emphasises cycle paths* or *The Green Party wants more pavements*. *The Green Party wants better public transport, and better cycle and pedestrian provision* was most suitable and appropriately general, as reference to cycle paths precludes cycle racks or bicycle sharing facilities, for example. However the passage did not state, as believed by many candidates, that the Green Party sought to ban private cars entirely.

7: A reasonable proportion of candidates gained credit for the reduced funding notion, but others erroneously referred to a reduction in public transport itself, which is not necessarily the case. *propre* caused much confusion in the final detail, as candidates believed the Green Party discouraged having one's own car, rather than challenged the idea of an environmentally clean car. In a notable minority of candidates' responses, treatment of this bullet point lay beyond the 100 words being assessed.

### Advice and Guidance

1. In Q1, candidates must ensure that their French is sufficiently comprehensible so as not to hinder communication.
2. Candidates should practise correct pronominal usage. Incorrect usage can be ambiguous, such as when a feminine noun, *la population*, is alluded to as *il*. Examiners attempt to give credit if at all possible, but if ambiguity is caused, credit cannot be given.
3. Candidates should heed the language required in the response: even single words in English in Q1, and French in Q2, cannot be credited.
4. Untargeted lifts in Q1 will not be rewarded. Q1f for example yielded many true statements about what the *préfet* should do, but the question requires the drivers' responsibilities.
5. Centres are urged once again not to distribute rough paper, as excessive rough notes often lead to insufficient time being devoted to the actual response. If a candidate requests the examiner to consider the notes as part of the response, since time did not remain to complete a fair copy, the register of a continuous prose summary has already been partially ignored.
6. Candidates might wish to plan their summary in Q2, but attempts at full translations from which 100 words are then extracted are seldom successfully achieved in the 45 minutes available.
7. As grammar, punctuation and spelling are assessed in Q2, candidates need to practise writing in formal register under time pressure.
8. Examiners mark to the end of the sense group after 100 words, giving no credit thereafter. Candidates should therefore seek to include some response to all bullet points within this limit.



## A2 Unit 6b (6446/02) - Reading & Writing

### Description of the Unit

One passage was set to test comprehension, using questions in French. In addition, there was a test of transfer of meaning from English into French based on the passage. In setting the material, the examiners consulted the tables of assessment objectives on pages 8 and 13 of the Specification, General Topic Areas 1 - 5 on page 15, the description of the Unit on page 38 and the Notes for Guidance on page 88.

Question 1, worth 15 marks, was a series of questions in French based on a short passage about the mutual effect of English immigration into France. Candidates answered the questions in French. Incorrect spelling and grammar did not vitiate correct answers. However, the ideas put forward by the candidate were considered in the order they appeared and had to be comprehensible to the examiner. Eight marks were awarded for correct information correctly retrieved, and a further seven marks were awarded for the quality of French in the answer.

Question 2, worth ten marks, was a passage in English, which had to be translated into French. The English passage was based on the passage for question one and contained several elements that could be either copied or adapted from the original text.

### Assessment principles

The 8 marks available for the comprehension part of Q1 were awarded positively for correct information successfully retrieved and conveyed. Credit was withheld if understanding was not conveyed. No half marks were awarded. For all questions, the draft mark scheme was amended in the light of the candidates' responses. Candidates received 1 or 2 marks for the answers, whether in complete sentences or not, provided that errors of language did not obscure transmission of meaning. The marks were allocated to the ideas contained in the answers. If the same idea was repeated there was no additional mark. The seven marks for quality of language were awarded according to the published grid. The criteria used to judge the quality of language were complexity of structure, idiom and nuance.

In Q2, the marks were awarded for translation from English into equivalent French. The passage was divided into thirty marking units. Each unit received 1 or 0. There were no half marks. Marks were awarded only for fully correct material (correct spelling, gender, tense, agreement, concord). Non-grammatical accents were ignored. The mark was then divided by three and the total rounded up to a mark out of ten.

### Candidates' responses

A wide range of achievement was represented. Generally, the basic meaning of the passage was understandable and the subject matter was accessible. Nevertheless, large numbers of entrants lost marks, which were probably within their grasp, because they did not read the passages and the questions closely enough, or did not pay sufficient attention to the articulation of their answers.

## Question 1

In Q 1(a), both parts of the question were generally addressed even if the quality of language was poor. Candidates often did not emphasise the idea of learning or studying and simply wrote “on devrait parler français”. Savoir was often used instead of connaître.

In Q 1(b), where candidates did not gain a point, it was because one part of the answer was missing and thus the answer did not make sense. Candidates sometimes did not address the question but decided instead to analyse it and gave a personal opinion rather than using the text.

In Q 1(c), sometimes no mark could be awarded because there was no reference to the country that had the strong economy or else candidates thought it was France that had the strong economic climate. Bretagne was often given instead of Grande Bretagne. The concept of santé économique was frequently misunderstood.

In Q 1(d), the time frame was often misunderstood.

In Q 1(e), there was a lot of superfluous language but candidates didn't always put it into the simple context of France having a stronger, more efficient health service than the UK. Not many understood the first part of the question pertaining to “circonstances” and being ill, so there were many replies starting with “s'il y a un meilleur service de santé en France”.

### Quality of language

Candidates struggled to conjugate apprendre. Grande Bretagne and Angleterre had numerous different spellings. The comparative adjective “better” once more created problems. Dependent infinitives continue to present difficulties.

Candidates should be told to answer in full sentences and to answer the question directly using their own words where possible. They should also be told to check their work carefully to avoid basic errors of spelling, gender, concord and agreement.

## Question 2

There were many excellent, accurate translations. There were very few highly inaccurate answers.

The nouns that caused most difficulties were:

*area, beauty, properties*

The determiners that caused most difficulties were:

*many*

The adjectives that caused most difficulties were:

*delighted, old, other*

The verbs that caused most difficulties were:

*know, discover, make friends*

The tenses that caused most difficulties were:

*perfect and conditional*

The connectives that caused most difficulties were:

*even if*

The pronouns that caused most difficulties were:

*myself*

The following words and phrases were available from the passage for inclusion in the answer:

*britanniques, propriétaires, connaître, avant de, nouveaux arrivants, déçus, achetées, anglophones, explique*

### Notes for Guidance

1. Candidates should read the paper carefully. They should not begin answering a question until they have read the specific instructions for it. The wording of the question should be studied closely and answers should be related to the stimulus passage.
2. The whole passage should be read before the questions are attempted. Candidates should try to identify the overall theme and the thread of any argument.
3. Candidates should be aware that some questions may require deductions to be made or inferences to be drawn.
4. In answering questions, candidates should not assume that verbatim copying from the passage can provide the required answer. They should try to ensure that their answer provides a direct response to the question set.
5. Candidates should be aware that some elements to be used in the translation passage are always provided in the French text.
6. Candidates should check their work carefully for agreement and concord as well as accuracy of spelling and gender.
7. It would be helpful if candidates practised question two using double spacing.
8. Candidates should use dark ink, write within the boundaries of the page and avoid use of supplementary pages.



## A2 Unit 6(c) (6446/03) - Writing in Registers

For the first time this paper was marked electronically. In all other ways the paper remained as in previous sessions. Candidates were required to answer one question from a set of nine tasks, choosing either a piece of creative writing, a discursive essay or a task-based assignment.

This year, as before, there were three choices in the creative writing section, one required the continuation of an extract from a novel describing an arrested man being taken into custody in a police car. Candidates were asked to develop the situation using past tenses and to maintain the atmosphere of the original passage. The second question was based on a cartoon depicting two men seated at a table, one poor with nothing to eat and the other a glutton who had a surfeit of food and money. A card reading Nord-Sud on the table was no doubt meant to associate the picture with the gulf between the developed and the undeveloped world. The task was to write in dialogue form the development of the conversation between the two men. The third choice required a journalistic account based on a newspaper headline about a fatal accident in an alpine avalanche. There were four choices of discursive essay. In the first candidates had to discuss whether governments should try to control the personal behaviour of their citizens. Another asked if war is an effective way of solving conflicts between nations. The third sought opinions on television reality shows. Finally candidates could choose to discuss whether state funds devoted to the arts represented a waste of money. In the task-based assignments two possibilities were offered. The first was business orientated and required a UK based employee of a French firm to compile a report for the Chief Executive outlining arguments he or she might use in an effort to persuade workers to relocate to France. In the second candidates were asked to react to a letter published in a magazine in which a 17 year old girl expressed her determination to leave home and live independently with her loved one. Several of these questions proved quite difficult and led to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. This may have been the result of the failure by some candidates to read the question properly or of some ambiguity in the questions. This will be discussed in the section on responses to individual questions.

### Assessment principles

The candidates' work was marked positively out of 40, using the published grids, with half the marks being allotted to content and half to quality of language. The language marks cover a consideration of Accuracy, the Range and Appropriateness of Lexis and the Manipulation of Language. The content grid was used to assess the relevance and appropriateness of the response to the question or stimulus. Accuracy in the forms of the language could earn up to 5 marks. Aspects to be judged here included verb endings, agreements, concord and gender and structural accuracy. Ten marks were available for the range and appropriateness of lexis which included the variety and suitability of the vocabulary used for the given task and the aptness of the tone and register. Finally 5 marks were awarded to the skill with which candidates manipulated the forms of the language in terms of the variety and sophistication of structures used.

### Candidates' responses

Section B was again by far the most popular sub-division of the paper. The electronic marking system reveals the exact numbers of answers to each question and this

makes interesting reading. Take-up of the different questions was as follows: Q1 - 128, Q2 - 58, Q3 - 107, Q4 - 1016, Q5 - 1806, Q6 - 1091, Q7 - 573, Q8 - 420, Q9 - 566.

Overall the word limits were quite well respected. If a piece of work did not fall within the range stated in the rubric it was much more likely to be long rather than short. Excess length was sometimes very much in evidence. Any work beyond the upper limit was not marked and the content score was likely to suffer. Candidates on the whole tried to write relevantly but the precise terms of the question were sometimes not addressed closely. Hardly any essays were deemed to be totally irrelevant and, therefore, worthy of no credit. There is some evidence to suggest that, by the time they get to the Writing in Registers section of Unit 6, having already completed several exercises, candidates are a little tired and not thinking as clearly as they might and consequently miss some of the subtleties in the wording of the questions. There is also considerable evidence that some candidates go out of their way to 'recycle' old essays or material they have used in other parts of the examination and this rarely fits, leading to irrelevance.

There was a huge range in the quality of language used. As has already been explained, under the heading of Accuracy examiners consider the forms of the language. Even when the language was not assembled very expertly, the forms used, when looked at in isolation, were often quite accurate. It is also true, however, that some of the French produced was woefully inaccurate. The mistakes committed are too numerous to note but common errors included the incorrect genders of everyday words, a lack of adjectival agreement and proper concord between subject and verb, poor spelling, *avoir* used instead of *être* and vice-versa, wrongly conjugated verbs. A pleasing number of candidates produced the required amount of French which was virtually error free but an equal number, if not more, wrote a piece which throughout was compromised by consistent basic error. It is disappointing to note that many of these errors involve language which is printed on the question paper - *le guerre, la conflict, controller, personelle comportement* for example.

Most candidates generated enough suitable vocabulary to gain at least a satisfactory mark under the heading Range and Appropriateness of Lexis. The tone and register adopted were usually also suitable for the task. However, few candidates were able to deploy very rich language which would gain them a mark at the very top of this grid. Key words associated with the chosen topic were often not known and there was much repetition. The least successful essays contained misused words and pure inventions and such work is typified by the widespread use of anglicisms - *involvé, indulger, protéger, victeur, comiter des erreurs, remover, les civilians, relocation, communauté* to name but a few. Some questions led to the inappropriate use of *tu* and *vous* and often a mixture of both. Overall the range of language used was adequate but it remained true that most candidates lacked the breadth of vocabulary to be really impressive. This applied not only to topic specific vocabulary but also to conjunctions and expressions for analysis and personal opinion. Some candidates had learnt a whole range of such set expressions but often used them for the sake of it rather than appropriately.

The majority of candidates tried to write in something more than just simple sentences. Some were able to deploy successfully a wide range of sophisticated structures. Most scripts contained at least some subordination involving *qui, que, parce que, quand, lorsque, puisque* but also commonly *tandis que, pendant que, bien que*. The subjunctive was often used appropriately and seemed to appear less often ad nauseam in a misplaced attempt to impress. Choice of tense and the

sequence of tenses still caused many problems, particularly when *si* clauses were involved. There was also much confusion between the Future and Conditional Tenses.

### Report on individual questions

Q1. Some able candidates who felt comfortable with a narrative style and had a good imagination to continue the story chose this option. An impressive range of vocabulary was often used in the answers produced by these candidates. Virtually all candidates tried to maintain the air of mystery and perhaps menace contained in the original passage. Some candidates were unable to develop both the reasons for Gerbier's arrest and the outcome of the situation within the desired word limit. There were a few unlikely scenarios with implausible endings but overall this question worked well.

Q2. This did not prove to be a successful question. Very few of the small number who attempted it understood the full implications of the cartoon and thus there was very little treatment of the North / South divide in the way that had been foreseen. The Nord / Sud notice was perhaps not prominent enough and it was felt to be unfair to insist on this intended interpretation. However, it was felt legitimate to expect a conversation between 'haves' and 'have-nots' or at least a glutton and someone who has little or nothing to eat. In reality many candidates took it as an opportunity to write a conversation about anything at all with no reference to the stimulus and often on the most ridiculous subject matter. Candidates did write in a dialogue form, often using suitably conversational language, tone and register.

Q3. Overall there was greater success this year at giving a journalistic tone to a piece on a skiing accident. The majority of candidates concentrated on the incident, describing how it had come about and how a rescue operation had been attempted. Several essays included an interview with someone involved, a friend of the unfortunate skiers or, more commonly, one of the rescue workers. This was a good idea and added to the authenticity of the article. Many pieces finished with a warning about the dangers involved and some advice on how to behave in the local area. Unfortunately few candidates seemed to understand that the skiers had been responsible for setting off the avalanche, perhaps *déclenchées* was a difficult lexical item but its meaning seemed obvious from the context. For whatever reason most candidates did not deal with this aspect of the stimulus. A small number of candidates gave little attention to the incident at all, preferring to enter into a general discussion on the pleasures and dangers of skiing. Such pieces were more akin to a discursive essay and could not be said to have captured the correct tone.

Q4. A large number of candidates chose this question but it proved to be extremely difficult to deal with since it gave rise to a great range of interpretations, hardly any of which had been intended. It was, therefore, quite hard to decide which approaches could be considered legitimate. The fact that so many candidates saw the question in so many different lights suggests that there was something inherently ambiguous or confusing in the wording of the question. The problems centred around *contrôler* and particularly *comportement personnel*. When the question was set it was felt that it would invite discussion of the 'nanny state' and to what extent a government should protect its citizens from themselves and their own behaviour. This, it was thought, would open itself up to considerations of such things as obesity, smoking and drugs, subjects which, to judge from what they choose for oral topics, strike a chord with many candidates. For whatever reason hardly anyone treated the question in this way. It was decided, therefore, to allow a fairly wide interpretation but it was felt that, whatever approach was adopted, candidates should treat in

some detail, and preferably with examples, the idea of personal behaviour. However, this seldom happened. A small number of candidates merely took the question as an excuse to write about a particular social problem, usually adding that the government should do something about it. Examiners had the impression that these candidates were merely reusing material they had called upon in other areas of the examination. The next approach was to discuss whether we should have laws at all, most seemed to think that a state of anarchy would not be a good idea. Many candidates wrote about the control of bad behaviour, this mostly involved drinking in the streets and associated bad behaviour, *les émeutes* and *les banlieues* were very often mentioned here. This often led on to something which was much closer to the original intention, as candidates discussed whether a government should only be responsible for our personal behaviour when it adversely affects others. Many candidates went into civil liberties and in this area they considered freedom of speech, ID cards, CCTV, the need to protect society against terrorism and this certainly seemed a more acceptable way of dealing with the question. Most advocated a fine balance between individual freedom and responsibility. Most commonly candidates focussed on how to deal with violent, criminal behaviour which could be made reasonably relevant, what they did not often do was to consider how our lifestyle affects our own personal welfare and whether this is the responsibility of the government or ourselves.

Q5. As shown above, this was the most popular item on the paper. However, most candidates did not deal with the full implications of the question. The vast majority of the essays were an answer to the question 'Is war a good or bad thing?' It was quite difficult to find arguments in favour of war per se and thus there were many one-sided treatments, although most candidates did try to achieve balance. If they had considered the real question, which asked if war was an effective way of solving conflicts between nations, candidates may have found it easier to make points on both sides. Fortunately very few essays concentrated solely on the justifications for the Irak war but it was often used as an example of a war which solved nothing, as was the First World War. It was often said that war was a good way to get rid of dictators, again the Irak conflict was cited along with the Second World War. Some candidates felt that what ensued from such wars was sometimes worse than the situation beforehand. Candidates again sought to recycle material when answering this question, there was widespread mention of immigration, racism, asylum seekers and Parisian riots none of which could really be said to constitute war. Amongst those who concentrated on the idea of war in its proper sense the prevalent view seemed to be that war should be declared when everything else has failed.

Q6. This was also a popular question, the subject matter was obviously something with which many candidates identified. The open-ended nature of the task probably made it fairly straightforward, thus adding to the appeal. Examiners did note, however, that many of the responses were expressed in very indifferent French. Because it was on the screens at the time of the examination Big Brother was used almost exclusively as an example. It was understood that Loft Story was outside the experience of most who wrote on this question but it would have been nice to see references to a few other programmes. Some essays tended to go off the subject and discussed the amount of time spent watching television in general and the effects of this. This was perhaps another example of recycling previously used material. Most candidates, however, did manage to write relevantly and they found something to say both against and in favour of reality shows. On the one hand they were seen as amusing, harmless fun and useful as a way of relaxing. A few candidates felt they provided interesting psychological studies and gave insight into the problems experienced by some people, thus leading to greater understanding and harmony.

The money raised from phone-ins went to charity. In general candidates had more to say against reality shows. It was considered boring to watch ordinary people interact 24 hours a day, the contestants used obscene language and behaved badly which was not good for young viewers. Contestants were hand-picked as oddities and then exploited for financial gain. Worthless people gained fame for nothing. The money could be better spent on more worthwhile programmes. A few candidates mentioned the ill effects of voyeurism. Quite a number of candidates produced a strongly argued case that reality shows were silly, worthless and even dangerous only to admit, rather disarmingly, that they were addicted to them and spent a lot of time watching them.

Q7. The single word *activités* in this question caused a few problems. It had been intended that candidates should discuss state subsidy for the whole range of arts in the varied ways it is applied. However, *activités* led many candidates into a very narrow set of examples. A lot of essays talked of workshops in schools or community centres, even simply the provision of art teaching in schools. Others wrote of art as therapy in various ways or as something to occupy young people who would otherwise rob, deal drugs and burn the *banlieues* - more recycling. This was all legitimate but the concentration on *activités* in a literal sense did cause candidates not to use some fairly obvious material. This question was often attempted by obviously committed candidates who tried to argue strongly in favour of art. They were familiar with appropriate lexis but did find it quite hard to contend convincingly that art enhances our lives. The stock point to make against art was that the money would be better spent on a whole range of pressing social needs. Some candidates claimed that the end products engendered by artists who had enjoyed state help was often worthless, puzzling or even a downright blight on our lives. This was the least popular of the discursive essays but it seemed to lead to the most heartfelt opinions.

Q8. This question was not particularly well answered. Many candidates did not follow the explicit instructions. The rubric called for a report but often the answer took the form of a letter and some even read like a tourist brochure. Candidates who are specifically prepared for the business orientated task-based assignment should be used to the production of a report but most found this formal type of writing difficult, the style was often too personalised and inappropriate. Data was widely merely copied and made no sense as such. Candidates did not read the scenario carefully enough. Many thought that the planned relocation was from Paris to Nantes. The biggest problem, however, concerned the recipient to whom the report was supposed to be addressed. The task clearly stated that it was aimed at the Chief Executive but the majority were addressed to the employees themselves, often with an inapt tone and register. Those pieces which were directed properly at the Chief Executive often told him things he surely knew, such as the commercial advantages of Nantes as a business centre. Few suggestions were made on how to overcome the reluctance of the workforce to move abroad, which was the crux of the question. Some candidates ignored any disadvantages completely, few rounded off with a personal recommendation, as instructed. Many of the responses to the task were not well thought out, sensible or intelligent. The stimulus perhaps contained a little too much data, as there was a temptation to copy out too much of it. This also made it quite difficult to assess the language since it was often not generated by the candidate.

Q9. Many candidates set about this task with gusto. They identified with Sophie and her dilemma. Perhaps because of the structured nature of the question most candidates covered the ground thoroughly and gained good content marks.

Treatment of the bullet points was often conflated into a couple of lengthy paragraphs but the instructions were usually followed closely. A great deal of advice was offered. As with the previous question there was a little uncertainty over who should receive the letter. A few candidates directed their recommendations through the editor of the magazine which had originally published the letter but most addressed Sophie directly and personally. Because of the wording of the question either approach was acceptable but the correct tone and register varied according to the choice of recipient. The Content side of the task was thus quite straightforward but linguistically it was demanding since, to do it well, candidates needed to be very proficient in the use of the Future and Conditional Tenses, aspects of the language which are commonly found to be difficult. The advice offered to Sophie was in general very conservative. Very few recommended that she should follow her inclinations and leave. Most said quite firmly that she should return home and finish her education. There were many stark warnings about how difficult life would be if she tried to set up home independently. Most seemed to think that the relationship was likely to fail and warned Sophie that she ran the risk of being left with nothing. The importance of education and qualifications loomed large in many answers and the advice given was almost always to return home. Some candidates related their own experiences at length and often went beyond the word limit. Whilst the language was not always of the highest standard, the Content score was almost always at least satisfactory.

### **Advice and guidance**

Candidates should :

- Observe the word counts. Lengthy answers are less likely to score well on Content.
- Review basic grammar, particularly verb forms and revise the use of tenses.
- Make a plan in French before writing the essay. It does not necessarily seem a good idea to produce a check-list of expressions, phrases, structures and terms that are going to be inserted into the essay come what may. This does not lead to natural fluency and often gets in the way of the expression of ideas.
- Make sure they have a body of lexis appropriate to the task before embarking on an answer.
- Read the question carefully, taking particular note of key words and ensure that the whole question is answered.
- Adopt the correct tone and register for the task.
- Not attempt to rehash material they have used in a different context.
- Not undertake a type of writing for which they have not been prepared.

## Statistics

### Unit 1 Listening and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	31	27	23	19	16
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Unit 2 Reading and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	80	54	49	44	39	35
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

### Unit 3 Prepared Oral Topic

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	43	38	33	28	23
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Unit 4.1 Oral Discussion of Issues

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	45	40	35	30	26
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Unit 4.2 Interpreting

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	44	39	34	29	24
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Unit 5.1 Topics and Texts

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	90	60	52	44	37	30
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

## Unit 5.2 Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	135	103	91	79	68	57
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

## Unit 6 Listening and Writing, Reading and Writing & Writing in Registers

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	62	55	48	41	35
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48



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