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GCSE
FRENCH

Insight report: 2018 results at a glance

Published: September 2018

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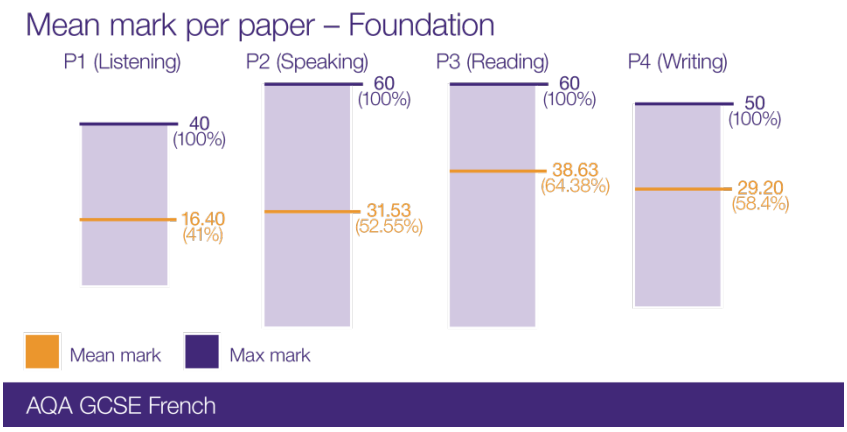
Foundation tier analysis

Conduct your own analysis using data relevant to you. Watch short tutorials on using Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) for school, subject, group or student performance; or log straight in through aqa.org.uk/log-in



Mean mark per paper, Foundation tier

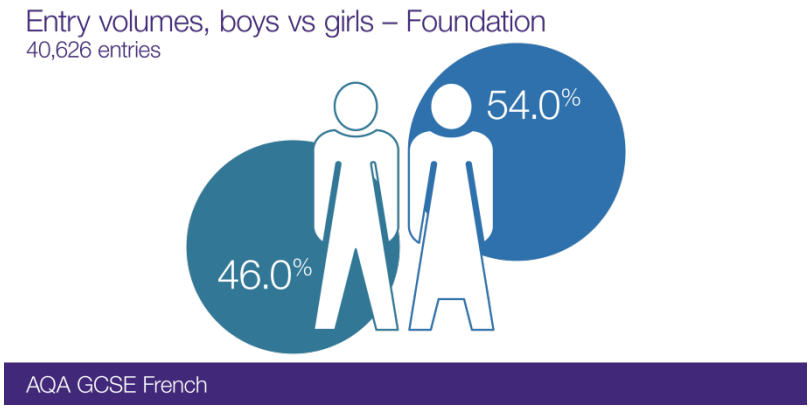
Grade summary

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade. Each colour represents a grade.

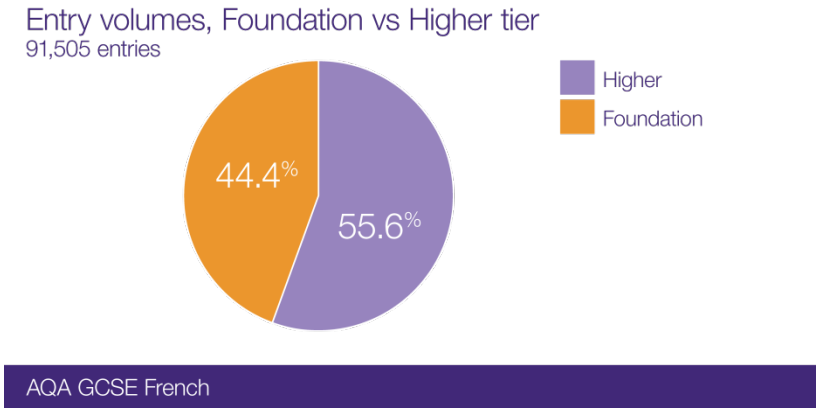
Watch tutorials on using ERA for results analysis, or log straight in via e-AQA.

Foundation tier analysis cont.

Conduct your own analysis using data relevant to you. Watch short tutorials on using Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) for school, subject, group or student performance; or log straight in through aqa.org.uk/log-in



Entry volumes, boys vs girls



Entry volumes, Foundation vs Higher tier

This graphic shows how entries were split between the two tiers (and is repeated on p.13).

See also: our guidance on choosing tiers.

Watch tutorials on using ERA for results analysis, or log straight in via e-AQA.

Grade boundaries

Subject or paper	Max mark	Summer 2018 grade boundaries								
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
French 8658F (Foundation)	240	-	-	-	-	159	143	105	68	31

How to interpret grade boundaries

In this new linear specification, students must be entered for Foundation or Higher tier across all four skills. Their final grade is based on the total scaled marks achieved across the four components.

Grade boundaries are set using a mix of statistics and expert judgement

Our Centre for Education Research and Practice (CERP) uses a range of statistics to make predictions that suggest the most appropriate grade boundaries. The statistical evidence considers the prior attainment of the given cohort as well as the distribution of marks. Senior examiners then review a script sample to confirm the statistically recommended marks are sensible for the grade.

Boundary setting is overseen by Ofqual. To find more grade boundaries and learn how they are set, visit aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums

Qualification summary

Paper 1
This paper proved to be accessible for the majority of students. In some cases, basic items of vocabulary were not well known, with negative expressions in particular proving to be challenging.

Paper 2
Students scored in different ways across the sections of the test. Generally, tests were well administered but teacher-examiners are encouraged to check the quality of recording before tests. Question technique sometimes impeded performance, particularly for lower ability students.

Paper 3
This paper proved to be accessible with many students gaining some marks for each question. Negative expressions continue to be challenging and gaps in key items of vocabulary were evident. There were very few questions, apart from Question 13, which were not attempted.

Paper 4
The quality of work in this first year was encouraging with a wide variety of performance. Where students did not score marks, this was often due to inaccurate verb formation or misinterpretation of the bullet points in Question 2 and Question 4.

Feedback on the exam courses use student responses to explore what happened in each exam series. Visit aqa.org.uk/french-cpd

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Paper 1, Foundation

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2018 series in our reports on the exam. Visit aqa.org.uk/log-in and follow:

e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > Languages > French (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

Highlights from summer 2018

Students should be reminded to maximise the five minutes reading time by, for example, highlighting key words in the rubrics and questions, identifying questions which have two parts (eg 10.1 and 10.2) and signposting Section B as answers in French are required. Students should also be reminded that the papers are structured in peaks and troughs within a steady incline of difficulty and not to give up if they find a particular question or part question challenging. It is also recommended that students look carefully at the questions to ensure the **specific** information required is given in their answers.

There were some key items of vocabulary which were not well known, for example *randonnée, parc d'attractions, glace, désagréable, texto, jeu, pourboire, propriétaire, amour*.

Questions 15-18

It was clear in this set of questions which were targeted at the higher grades that some students did not listen to the whole utterance before deciding on their answer. For example, just hearing *cinq ans* in Question 15 and incorrectly choosing option A.

Questions 23-24

Question 23 was the least well answered question on the paper with fewer than 2% scoring the mark. The lexical item *pourboire* was not well known and very few understood *propriétaire*.

Questions 26-28

This group of questions on *My studies* provided a pleasing end to Section A on a topic which students handle well.

Questions 33-34

These questions were targeted at the higher grades with Question 33.2 proving to be very demanding with only 2.5% scoring the mark, indicating that *amour* was not widely known.

Reports on the exam are written by senior examiners who see more responses than anyone else. Access full reports via aqa.org.uk/log-in

Paper 2, Foundation

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Highlights from summer 2018

Part 1 – role play

Students should be reminded to maximise their preparation time by looking carefully at the role play prompts to ensure they are providing only the specific information required by the prompt. For example, when a prompt requires something specific, such as *deux activités*, the student must produce **two** activities rather than one activity and an opinion for full marks to be awarded for the task. Also, students should be instructed to avoid giving extraneous information **not** required by the prompt as this can disadvantage them and lengthens the task unnecessarily.

Part 2 – photo card

In the photo card task, students generally gave a response to the three prepared questions and managed to say something in response to the two unseen questions. There was often little development of the first response, possibly as a result of a lack of specific vocabulary. The biggest barrier to scoring marks was a lack of development of responses. Students should be encouraged to use their preparation time to prepare developed answers to the first three questions. Any development of an answer has to be in the form of a clause, ie it must include a verb.

Part 3 – general conversation

For most students, this section of the test proved to be where they achieved most highly. There was evidence of some teacher-examiners straying beyond the theme being discussed and some who thought it necessary to cover every topic within a theme which is not the case. The attention of teachers is drawn to question technique, in particular tailoring questions to the ability and interests of the individual student being tested. There were examples of the same questions being asked of different ability students which did not elicit the best performance. Teacher-examiners are encouraged to follow up on what students have said in response to a question, even at a fairly simple level at this tier, to allow them to demonstrate spontaneity and to encourage them to express opinions.

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Paper 3, Foundation

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Highlights from summer 2018

This paper proved accessible to the majority of students, with most gaining marks for each question. Students should be reminded, as in Paper 1, that the papers are structured in peaks and troughs within a steady incline of difficulty and not to give up if they find a particular question or part question challenging.

Some key vocabulary items were not well known, for example *chanson, promenade, s'entendre, aîné, pluie, fâché, cadeau.*

Question 5

Some responses in this question which required a written response in English were too vague to be credited or were guesses based around the topic.

Question 6

This was an overlap question targeted at grades 4/5. Those teachers worried about the use of literary texts in the new specification will be pleased to learn that there were some high scores on this question, with the majority of students gaining some credit.

Question 12

This question was also based on a literary text but students were less successful in this question. The least well answered part was 12.4 (25.6% scoring the mark) where the past tense was not noted.

Question 14 (translation)

This question discriminated very well across the ability range with a wide range of answers. It was pleasing to note that more than 60% of students scored at least four marks out of the nine available. However, it is important that students are aware of the level of precision required in this type of task. Details such as tenses and pronouns must be fully conveyed in English and the original text must be followed closely. Once they have completed the translation, students should be advised to re-read what they have written to check it makes sense.

Reports on the exam are written by senior examiners who see more responses than anyone else. Access full reports via aqa.org.uk/log-in

Paper 4, Foundation

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2018 series in our reports on the exam. Visit aqa.org.uk/log-in and follow:

e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > Languages > French (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

Highlights from summer 2018

Question 1
The most successful responses made use of phrases such as *il y a* or *je vois* to write four sentences about what was in the photo. There were very few instances of students not attempting to write full sentences, which was pleasing.

Question 2
The first two bullet points (*les matières* and *les professeurs*) were the most accessible in that *les bâtiments* and *les repas* were not always known. The most successful responses were concise and addressed all of the bullet points. Where students wrote much more than the suggested 40 words, this did lead to greater scope for error. There were good attempts at variety of language with the majority of students scoring 3 marks and above for Quality of language in this question.

Question 3
It was pleasing to see that virtually all students attempted the translation in this paper. Key vocabulary items which caused problems were 'village' (which was often translated as *ville*), 'computer', 'fish' (misspellings of *poisson* which created a different meaning eg poison), 'healthy' (often translated as *santé*) and *beaucoup de* was not widely known. Students should be advised to check that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately.

Question 4
The quality of work seen in this question was generally good with many students able to provide extended responses, express opinions and refer to different time frames. Where students were less successful, this was mainly due to misinterpretation or omission of a bullet point or an overlong response which led to greater scope for error. Question 4.1 was the most popular choice on the topic of holidays but bullet point 3 proved challenging for some as it required students to describe the journey to their preferred holiday destination. In Question 4.2, some students did not notice the reference to the past time frame in bullet point 3 (*un anniversaire récent*) and wrote about a future birthday.

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Higher tier analysis

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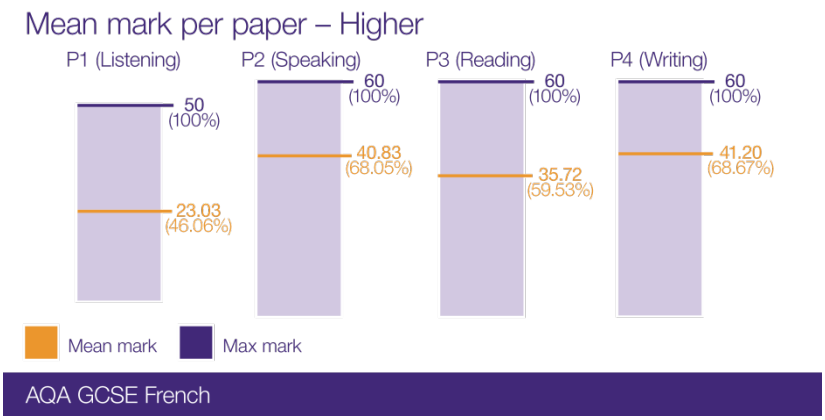
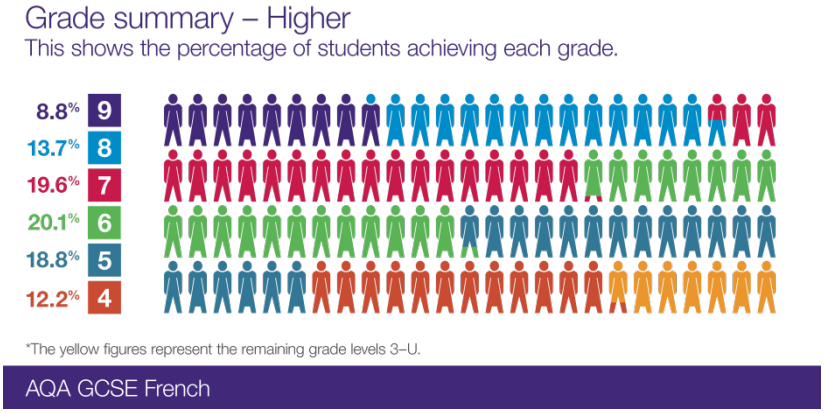


Mean mark per paper, Higher tier



Grade summary

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade. Each colour represents a grade.

Watch tutorials on using ERA for results analysis, or log straight in via e-AQA.

Higher tier analysis cont.

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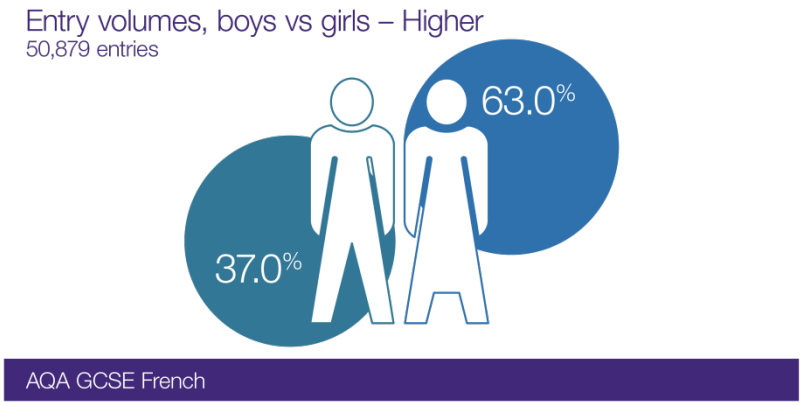
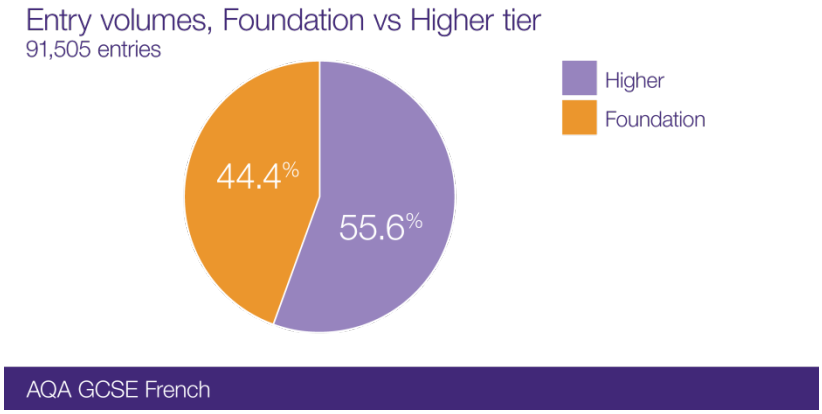


Entry volumes, boys vs girls



Entry volumes, Foundation vs Higher tier

This graphic shows how entries were split between the two tiers (and is repeated on p.5).

See also: our guidance on choosing tiers.

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Grade boundaries

Subject or paper	Max mark	Summer 2018 grade boundaries								
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
French 8658H (Higher)	240	201	176	152	132	112	92	72	-	-

How to interpret grade boundaries

In this new linear specification, students must be entered for Foundation or Higher tier across all four skills. The final grade is based on the total scaled marks across the four components.

For 2018, Ofqual agreed that all exam boards should widen the allowed grade 3 boundary for the Higher tier. This means that the distance between the allowed grade 3 and 4 is the same as the distance between 4 and 5. Ofqual acknowledged that with the structural changes like the removal of untiered controlled assessment – tiering decisions were more complex this year. This decision ensured that Higher tier students who would have been better suited to the Foundation tier were not disadvantaged. Ofqual have indicated this won't be repeated in future, so schools should consider their entry policy carefully for summer 2019.

Grade boundaries are set using a mix of statistics and expert judgement

Our Centre for Education Research and Practice (CERP) uses a range of statistics to make predictions that suggest the most appropriate grade boundaries. The statistical evidence considers the prior attainment of the given cohort as well as the distribution of marks. Senior examiners then review a script sample to confirm the statistically recommended marks are sensible for the grade.

Grade boundary setting is overseen by the qualifications regulator. To find more grade boundaries and learn how they are set, visit aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums

Qualification summary

Paper 1

This paper proved to be accessible for the majority of students. In some cases, basic items of vocabulary were not well known, with negative expressions proving to be challenging.

Paper 2

It is pleasing that the format of the new speaking test appeared to work well and allowed students to demonstrate a level of oral proficiency commensurate with their ability.

Paper 3

Most students coped very well with the demands of this new paper with very few unattempted questions and no evidence that students did not have enough time to complete the paper.

Paper 4

The quality of work was encouraging with a wide range of performance. The paper differentiated well in that students were able to score their marks over a variety of questions.

Feedback on the exam courses use student responses to explore what happened in each exam series. Visit aqa.org.uk/french-cpd

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Paper 1, Higher

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e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > Languages > French (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

Highlights from summer 2018

Students should be reminded to maximise the five minutes reading time by, for example, highlighting key words in the rubrics and questions, identifying questions which have two parts (eg 20.1 and 20.2) and signposting Section B as answers in French are required. Students should also be reminded that the papers are structured in peaks and troughs within a steady incline of difficulty and not to give up if they find a particular question or part question challenging. It is also recommended that students look carefully at the questions to ensure the **specific** information required is given in their answers.

There were some key items of vocabulary which were not well known, for example *nez, lieu de naissance, formation, fier, epuisé, alimentation, compter, se détendre.*

Questions 12-15
These questions were aimed at the most able students and discriminated well. However, many students lacked the precision required at this level. A range of possible synonyms for *désagréable* were accepted but vague or unclear answers were rejected.

Questions 25-27
This section of questions produced a variety of answers and discriminated very well across the ability range. Question 25 was answered most successfully but there was a lack of understanding of *épuisé* in Question 26.

Questions 32-33
As expected, these overlap questions performed significantly better at Higher tier. The mark scheme allowed for a range of spellings which enabled students to score despite minor spelling mistakes. Question 32.2 proved to be the most demanding with *compter* causing problems.

Question 36
This provided a positive end to the paper with 68% of students gaining the mark.

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Paper 2, Higher

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e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > Languages > French (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

Highlights from summer 2018

Part 1 – role play
The role plays at Higher tier proved to be accessible with the question task proving to be the most challenging element. It is clear that practice in asking questions is a key area of focus in terms of improvement as well as recognising common question words such as *où* and *quand*. Again, there were examples of students not providing the specific information required by the role play prompt and also going on to unnecessarily develop answers.

Part 2 – photo card
In the photo card task, some Higher tier students acquitted themselves very well with the open ended nature of the questions, enabling them to communicate a lot of information. At this tier also, the biggest barrier to scoring marks was a lack of development of responses, particularly for the prepared questions.

Part 3 – general conversation
There were some impressive and spontaneous conversations from the highest-achieving students. Students should be encouraged to develop their ideas and produce longer sequences of speech using more ambitious structures and a wider vocabulary. The use of open questions by teacher-examiners and then following up on student answers generated a genuine conversation and allowed students to meet the requirements of the higher bands of the assessment criteria. Good technique included tailoring questions to the interests and ability of the individual student and the use of follow up questions which sought further detail, clarification and examples. Where students attempted to deliver long monologues, teacher-examiners should interject so students can demonstrate spontaneity.

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Paper 3, Higher

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e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > Languages > French (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

Highlights from summer 2018

Most students coped well with the demands of this paper. There were very few unattempted questions and students seemed to have sufficient time to complete the paper. As in Paper 1, students should be reminded that the papers are structured in peaks and troughs within a steady incline of difficulty and not to give up if they find a question demanding.

Some key vocabulary items were not well known, for example *jambe, sel, gentil, déranger, sourire, passer, champs, fier.*

Question 4
This question was targeted at the highest grades but most parts were answered well, except for part 4.4 where confusion over the tense led to incorrect answers. *Ne …. que* caused some difficulties with only 13% of students gaining the mark.

Question 5
This question relating to an app for a smartphone proved accessible to the majority of students with 91.4% of students gaining at least three of the four marks available.

Question 8
Parts 8.2 and 8.3 in this question were well answered but there were difficulties in 8.1 where *aîné* was misinterpreted and confusion over tenses in 8.4 resulted in incorrect answers.

Question 12 (translation)
The translation in this paper proved particularly challenging for most students, with omissions leading to failure to score marks. It is to be stressed that precision is essential in scoring marks in this task and details such as tenses, articles and pronouns must be conveyed accurately in English. Students must follow the original text closely to score well.

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Paper 4, Higher

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e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > Languages > French (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

Highlights from summer 2018

Question 1
As at Foundation tier, the first of the optional questions Question 1.1 on the topic of holidays proved to be the most popular choice. It was pleasing to see how students used their knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task as laid out in the bullet points. The aspect of the task which was least well done was bullet point 2 which required students to describe the journey to their preferred destination. In Question 1.2, some students did not notice the reference to the past time frame in bullet point 3 (*un anniversaire récent*) and wrote about a future birthday.

Question 2
The quality of responses to this question was generally high with most students able to complete both bullet points in each of the optional questions with good ability to express and justify opinions. Where students were less successful, this was due to misinterpretation of the bullet points or very lengthy responses which increased scope for error. Question 2.2 was the most popular choice for students although there were some instances of students misinterpreting the first bullet point and writing about the advantages and disadvantages of teachers, rather than 'being a teacher'.

In Question 2.1, nearly all students were able to write successfully about the importance of money. Practically all students wrote at length on bullet two, describing in detail a visit to town with a range of activities. In addition, the inclusion of information from the topic of poverty and homelessness in responses was impressive and produced a creative response.

Question 3
It was pleasing to see that this task differentiated well across the range of grades with all students making a good attempt at the task and scoring some marks. There were some key vocabulary items which were not well known, for example, 'countryside', 'forgot', 'so', 'a bit' and 'stay fit'. Again, as at Foundation tier, students should be advised to check that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately. It is also important to practice high frequency words and phrases, especially connectives and prepositions.

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Notes

Notes

Notes

‘No school should be without Teachit!’

Vivienne Neale, Teacher

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Alex Brown, Subject Leader for MFL

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Responsible for multiple languages?

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- German
- Spanish

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