

## **Advice and guidance to candidates**

### **Paper 1 Speaking**

Please bear in mind, in both Parts, that the Examiner is not trying to catch the candidate out. S/he is only interested in finding out what level each candidate has reached, in terms both of language and knowledge of subject.

#### **Part I Discussion of an article and related themes**

The task of reading and discussing a text is not one about which candidates need be apprehensive. The texts themselves are there to serve as a springboard, and are chosen to avoid excessive difficulty in structure or vocabulary. In choosing which text to prepare for the examination, candidates are recommended to consider whether they have something to say about the topic, rather than worrying whether they will be able to understand the text. Familiarity with the format of this part of the test is important: candidates may prepare by practising short spoken summaries and spontaneous speaking, and by acquiring the language used to express opinions about relevant topics.

In the test itself, candidates should:

- use the preparation time fully
- plan a short overview of the text content
- consider the issue in question and their own reaction(s) to it
- be prepared to take the lead in the discussion
- give their reactions to the ideas and information in the text
- be prepared for discussion of broader issues relating to the general heading on the card.

#### **Part II Prepared oral topic**

In Part 2, the choice of topic is very important. It should be neither too broad (which can make it hard to cover the topic or to say anything concrete) nor too narrow (there may not be enough to say).

The best conversations often occur when an element of controversy or debate is brought into the presentation. This could be implicit in the title (e.g. *Was Dalí a great artist or a charlatan?*), or it might be introduced under one of the sub-headings (e.g. *The battle of Verdun: [point iv] the tragic aftermath of a great victory*). Candidates who go beyond the purely descriptive and who express personal views can expect to be rewarded, as long as they are able to support their opinions in the discussion.

In preparation for this section, candidates are recommended to:

- avoid trying to find an 'impressive' obscure topic
- choose a subject which genuinely interests them
- be clear about which aspects of it they wish to discuss
- focus in depth on a few aspects of the topic rather than try to cover it all.

In this Part, candidates should:

- fill in the oral form correctly
- present their introduction 'naturally', even if pre-learnt
- be ready to lead the discussion and talk freely about their topic
- show interest in, and personal engagement with, their topic
- show evidence of research
- support opinions with evidence.

They should also expect to:

- be interrupted
- be asked to support, clarify and justify statements
- answer unexpected questions
- give examples
- be stretched to their linguistic 'ceiling'.

## **Advice and guidance to candidates**

### **Paper 2 Listening and Reading Comprehension**

#### **What skills are required?**

- inference – candidates have to work out the answers from what is read or heard
- manipulation – candidates may be expected to change language so the answer makes sense
- explanation – candidates may need to give reasons for their answers
- synthesis – points of information may need to be combined in an answer
- writing with accuracy and sophistication: quality of language in answers should be high.

#### **Answering target language questions (Reading and Listening Exercise 1)**

Candidates are advised to:

- remember that full sentences are not required – although all the required information must be given
- highlight the key words in the question, so that it is clear what information is needed
- note how many marks are awarded for each question (e.g. if 2 marks are available, two separate points are required)
- try to use their own words and avoid reproducing the language of the texts word for word
- practise building a wide vocabulary in the target language, so that they are at ease with finding synonyms for words in the passages
- remember that their answers must make sense.

#### **Answering English questions (Reading and Listening Exercise 2)**

Candidates should:

- write their answers in correct English and check spelling
- beware false friends (words that look alike in the target language and English, but have different meanings)
- realise that some target language words can have more than one meaning. They should choose the correct meaning (e.g. in Spanish *local* can mean 'local' or 'place', depending on the context)
- find the appropriate English word, not necessarily one that looks similar to the target language word (e.g.: *velocidad* in Spanish or *vélocité* in French is usually translated as 'speed' in English, not 'velocity')
- make sure the answer sounds like real English and makes sense
- make sure that they give all that is required, while taking care not to omit any essential points.

## **Advice and guidance to candidates**

### **Paper 2 Listening and Reading Comprehension**

#### **Reading Exercise 3 Translation from English to the target language**

Translation involves moving material from one language to another. Good translation is a real art that needs much practice, which is often neglected. The ideal is a translation that reads well and that conveys accurately the sense of the original.

In this exercise, candidates are recommended to:

- study the original text in Reading Exercise 2 carefully: it gives vocabulary and structures that can be used and re-worked
- read the English passage carefully to understand what is required
- study the setting, context and tone of the extracts
- use sensible and intelligent guesses where vocabulary is not known
- avoid leaving gaps
- think carefully about the grammar of the sentence being translated. (candidates often encounter problems in translating tenses correctly, spotting adjectival agreements and linking pronouns with the nouns to which they refer.)
- beware literal translation: the result can easily be a meaningless text
- beware paraphrasing, and not stray too far away from the original (but, on the other hand, not be afraid to change word order, parts of speech, etc.)
- remember that accuracy is more important than creativity.

#### **Listening Exercise 3 Summary skills**

Writing a good summary is a matter of regular practice and also of acquiring the correct technique. An unsuccessful attempt at a summary may be due to lack of understanding of the original text but, more often than not, it is the way the exercise has been tackled that is at fault.

To write a good summary, candidates should:

- listen to the passage carefully until they have a good idea of what the whole text is about
- not start summarising (or even translating) every sentence. (They will not discard the less significant details, and will quickly run out of words.)
- make rough notes rather than a full draft on the question paper. There may not be time to write out a full draft version of the summary and then write out a clean copy.
- remember that it is not necessary to know the meaning of every word in the text
- remember that this is a summary – an exercise in selection – it is impossible to include every piece of information
- make sure that all the bullet points are covered
- spread the words: it is a common error to say too much about the first half of a passage and too little (or nothing at all) about the second half
- 'prune' written summaries, removing unnecessary words without deleting the main points that must be conveyed
- stay within the word limit – 100 words must not be exceeded.

Finally, candidates should check that:

- all the bullet points have been covered
- the gist of the passage has been understood
- there is detail and it is well selected
- the material is expressed concisely
- the summary reads well and is informative
- there is no incorrect information.



## **Advice and guidance to candidates**

### **Paper 3 Writing and Usage**

#### **Part I Writing**

When choosing a title in the examination, candidates should:

- spend some time reading all the titles
- think carefully about what each topic is and what is being asked in the title
- think about whether they have something to say in response
- consider whether they possess vocabulary in the topic area
- make a very rough plan before choosing a title
- decide what they think and write an essay plan.

When writing the essay, candidates are advised to:

- use the plan to construct a real argument
- write an introduction, discussion and a conclusion
- keep the essay title in mind throughout
- check whether the points made are relevant
- avoid repetition
- write in paragraphs, making a clear, relevant point in each one
- try to use a variety of language and demonstrate linguistic ability
- write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- remember to try to interest and/or persuade the reader.

#### **Part II Usage**

In this Part, the three tests of verbal knowledge, structural manipulation and other aspects of usage cover a wide range of structures, but should not present major difficulty to candidates who have broad experience of the language and an awareness of the need for accuracy in writing. It is useful to be familiar with the format of the tests: this will help candidates to be aware of the type of knowledge required. Intelligent, careful reading of texts in the target language, attention to personal linguistic development in terms of structures, and experience of working through similar tasks can all help in preparation for this section.

In this Part of the examination candidates are recommended to:

- read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence
- avoid leaving any questions unanswered
- use their experience of and 'feel for' the language as well as their knowledge when deciding on an answer (e.g. ask themselves 'Have I heard or seen a similar sentence?')
- proofread carefully their answers to Exercises 1 and 2.



## **Advice and guidance to candidates**

### **Paper 4 Topics and Texts**

In both Parts, candidates should:

- read the question with care, and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close relation to the question
- define the terms of the question in the introduction
- keep the question in mind throughout
- support any assertions with close references to the text and/or film
- make sure quotations, if used, support the argument
- make sure all quotations are accurate
- use paraphrasing and allusion as an alternative to overlong quotations
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid narrative
- demonstrate knowledge by using it as supporting evidence for the argument
- exclude information that is irrelevant to the question.

### **Part I: Cultural Topics**

Candidates should:

- make sure that they learn the necessary vocabulary to write about their topic, when preparing for this Part
- remember that the rubric requires reference to only two of the works. Writing about all three may lead to a lack of depth
- try to demonstrate their knowledge of underlying themes, and mention comparisons and links between the two works
- proofread carefully after writing, paying special attention to verb forms and agreements.

### **Part II: Literary Texts**

In context questions candidates should:

- make sure they analyse the extract showing how its content is related to the rest of the work
- avoid using the passage as a springboard for a general essay
- be careful to analyse, rather than re-tell the story of the extract.

# FRENCH – PRINCIPAL COURSE

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Paper 9779/01  
Speaking

## General Comments

The administration and execution of this new specification was faultlessly smooth. Centres are to be congratulated on their diligent following of instructions, and candidates and teachers on the great care taken to produce optimal performance in both sections of the speaking component.

## Comments on specific parts of the examination

### **Part I: Discussion of a newspaper article and related topics**

Of the four articles, the most popular choice was the one on the environment, followed by the piece on health and fitness. The least popular theme proved to be equality of opportunity. In making their choice, it should be stressed that candidates should consider not merely the “friendliness” of a particular article, but also the theme heading on which extended questions will be asked. In a small number of cases, candidates failed to take this into account and this might have affected their performance. A prevalent grammatical error involved the *il s’agit de* construction, *Cet article s’agit de* being a very common introduction: future candidates might wish to consider *Cet article examine....* and its variants. Less frequently, *issue* was used in its English sense where *question* was intended.

#### **Card 1 – Equality of Opportunity**

Most candidates were able to explain adequately the concept of *tarif social* but were less clear in explaining why France Telecom’s contribution was greater than that of Orange. Almost all promoted the mobile to the rank of social necessity, with few questioning the priorities at play in apportioning government subsidies. Vocabulary which caused problems in a few cases involved *chiffres d’affaires*, *rabais* and *marges*. The broader discussion was wide-ranging, covering issues such as women’s rights, those of the handicapped, positive discrimination, equality in education, sport and medical treatment, and the question of whether true equality is possible in a capitalist society.

#### **Card 2 – Health and Fitness**

All candidates who opted for this article were able to differentiate adequately between gambling as an acceptable leisure activity and the risk of it developing into a pathological condition. Occasionally, a candidate saw it merely as a youth problem (the gambler being the teenager) and was unable to expand on the *grandes difficultés* which might involve grave consequences for an adult’s family or children. Most were clear on the specific perils of online poker, though a few were unable to explain the “immediate gain” factor represented by *machines à sous*. The article seemed to present no problems at a lexical level. The extended discussion ranged over subjects as diverse as government intervention, drug addiction and decriminalisation, prophylactic measures, parental control and alcohol addiction.

#### **Card 3 – Law and Order**

Candidates generally approved of a government initiative involving tracker bracelets, though a few saw it as a money-saving alternative to the building of more prisons. All were clear, however, that it should be reserved for non-violent crimes, and many were able to expand with insight on the issue of potential *déshumanisation*. Perhaps surprisingly, they were less forthcoming on the *effets dévastateurs* of imprisonment, only a few citing potential recidivism, family breakdown and lack of income. Again, no widespread difficulties with vocabulary seemed to be encountered here. Areas covered in the extended discussion included surfeit of laws, excessive repression, drug-related crime (several candidates using *droguez* for *drogués*), political manipulation of and media emphasis on

perceived rising crime rates, CCTV, tagging and ASB in general, along with police presence in schools.

#### Card 4 – Environment

Given that this was the most popular topic, it is understandable that it generated the broadest range of quality of performance. The weaker candidates were patently passionate about the subject but often lacked the detailed knowledge and vocabulary to convey their ideas, whilst the strongest performers were able, for example, to explain the apparent contradiction with regard to the tarnished image of gas and its continued use in French homes. Equally, the latter were able to point to the journalistic hyperbole in the use of the term *révolution* with regard to French attitudes to the environment. Some candidates, quite appropriately, questioned the unsupported generalisation that the French now fear pollution over unemployment, suggesting that the issue is an obsession of the *bobos* middle class rather than that of *la France d'en bas*. Several candidates misunderstood the term *emballage*; and *géothermie* (also occasionally misunderstood) was often mispronounced. The ensuing general discussion encompassed sustainability, renewable sources of energy, the nuclear question, hybrid technologies, sound and light pollution, recycling, green politics, budget airlines and the like. Equally, candidates happily spoke of the practical measures they themselves take to protect the environment within their home and school context.

#### Part II: Prepared topic discussion

Without exception, candidates chose to cover this part of the test after completing the article discussion, though they are of course at liberty to do the sections in reverse order if they so wish. The spirit of the specification had been universally adhered to in the sense that there was no evidence that centres had class-taught a specific topic. Indeed, the range of subjects chosen for discussion was dazzlingly broad and in only one case did a candidate need to be nudged into relating his material to the target language context. The bulk of candidates were able to display that they had very carefully, and in many cases very profoundly, researched their elected topic, regaling the examiner with an astonishing grasp of detail and richness of insight. In a few cases, candidates very briefly indicated their sources of research (a book, a magazine article, a documentary etc.), and this was most welcome, though it should be stressed that such references to sources should be brief. The heading forms were, with few exceptions, very helpful and phrased in scrupulously accurate French, whilst the sixty second introduction was used, by and large, to provide a sensible exposition of the aspects of the topic to be explored, rather than an *in medias res* assault on the first bullet point. In a few cases, candidates delivered a one-minute “speech”, meticulously prepared, but quite at odds, from the point of view of register particularly, with all that followed. The most proficient candidates were very much at ease with questioning which ventured beyond the limits of their headings.

The sheer variety of chosen topics, referred to above, can be seen in the following selection:

Literary: Pagnol, Flaubert, Radiguet, Racine, Zola, Baudelaire, Hugo, Dumas, Leblanc, Maupassant

Historical: Marie-Antionette, Charlemagne, Verdun, Missak Manouchian and the Resistance, Alsace-Lorraine, French Colonialisation and the Chad, May 68, the Wars of Religion, the July Revolution, Haiti, the Napoleonic Wars

Artistic: Messiaen, Marcel Duchamp, Cinema of French Canada, the Nouvelle Vague, Yves Tanguy, Luc Besson, Cartier-Bresson, Cézanne, Tintin, Marcel Marceau, Astérix, l'exposition “à corps ouvert”, Toulouse-Lautrec, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Street Art and JR, David

Social: the French wine industry and associated problems, *le gavage* and associated cruelty, immigration problems in the Midi, *la canicule de 2003*, *la laïcité*, illegal immigrants and the jungle, *le vélib*, the French judicial system

#### Response to Examiner

Overall comprehension (with the odd exception) was excellent, and the level of alertness quite remarkable. Indeed, it was only rarely that examiners were asked to repeat or reformulate questions. Candidates' sheer enthusiasm for their chosen article and topic shone through universally even in those who were grammatically less proficient.

### **Language ability**

We are clearly looking for a linguistic output which reflects two years of advanced study of post-GCSE French, in terms of lexis, mastery of the sound system, structural sophistication and sensitivity to appropriate idiom and register. It was heartening to observe that such advances had been made by the majority of candidates. Only very rarely did lack of vocabulary impede overall understanding and, as far as pronunciation is concerned, tonic stress was, by and large, accurately placed and the u/ou distinction observed. Even the modestly proficient were able to generate quite complex subordinate clauses in their responses. Tense usage was mostly accurate (though a few struggled, as ever, with the perfect conditional) and it was good to note that only very rarely did the past historic cause any problems. Aside from the occasional stilted, over-prepared introduction to the personal topic, linguistic register remained stable at formal/neutral conversational, with thankfully no lapses into argot.

### **Factual knowledge**

Clearly a balance needs to be established between the display of factual knowledge gleaned from personal research and an ability to show personal response to that knowledge in terms of opinion, attitude, agreement or otherwise, hypothesis and the like. Some topics lend themselves more easily to achieving this balance than others. Strings of dates, proper names, memorised statistics and storylines are less helpful than critical reaction to briefly outlined facts. Choosing, as a small number of candidates did in this session, topics such as *La Baguette*, *Les Vins d'Alsace* or *La Cuisine Française* makes it all the more difficult to express personal opinions of any substance. Fortunately, it was possible to nudge candidates to express some appropriate reactions on these subjects, but it is a problem of which the candidate should be aware in making his or her choice.





# FRENCH – PRINCIPAL COURSE

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Paper 9779/02

Reading and Listening

## General comments

It is gratifying to be able to report that, though there were a few examples of weak attainment in evidence, they were greatly outnumbered by high-quality scripts. Generally speaking, candidates fared better on the Listening Comprehension than on Reading: in the latter skill, many were too happy to transcribe sections of the original text, making little or no attempt to manipulate or explain what they had read. In their English answers, candidates were frequently guilty of “transliterating” the original French, with the result that their answers were often not very meaningful.

## Comments on specific questions

### Part I: Reading

#### Reading text 1

##### Question 1

Most had understood that the reason why ‘the impossible’ is now demanded of sporting heroes is the fact that money has become such an important factor in the world of sport. However, a few made no attempt to manipulate the key phrase from the text, notably *l’arrivée de l’argent dans le système*, and a few gave answers that completely missed the point, e.g. “*Parce que le sport aujourd’hui n’est pas non plus exceptionnel, mais impossible.*”

##### Question 2

Some candidates simply wrote *Les personnes financières, nationales et médiatiques*, again making no attempt to explain the words they had copied from the text. In order to score full marks, it was sufficient to supply just two of the three items mentioned in the text, so that an answer as simple as *Les médias et le public* received maximum credit. In a number of cases, *médiatiques* was understood as referring to the medical profession.

##### Question 3

This question presented few problems to most candidates. However, there were some exceptions which resulted in such suggestions as “*Ils veulent que les athlètes aillent au delà des limites connues*”, while a certain number included the reference made to the *jeu de cache-cache* in a way that suggested that they had not really understood what they had read and were simply hoping for the best.

##### Question 4

Better candidates usually had no problem in explaining the phrase given. Quite a common misconception was that it was a question of avoiding detection by taking the drugs a sufficient length of time before the drug test was administered.

##### Question 5

Most candidates were successful in explaining the contrast but a certain number of answers omitted one or other of the two contrasting elements. Another mistake was to include material from the end of the paragraph in question which refers to retired athletes rather than those who are still competing.



### Question 6

This was another question which presented few difficulties for the majority of candidates. However, “*au début de leur carrière*” sometimes figured, as too did answers which were based exclusively on the material contained in the final paragraph of the passage, resulting in such flawed suggestions as “*Il faut qu'ils soutiennent un moment socio-psycho-médical de sa carrière*”.

### Reading text 2

#### Question 7

This question was generally well answered. The commonest error was to give information taken from the first rather than the second sentence of the extract, which resulted in answers of the sort “Spontaneously and naturally”.

#### Question 8

Inference skills were often found wanting here, many candidates relying on literal renderings of the original, e.g. “New habits of presenting goods based on the abundance of products offered”. What was looked for was the idea of large shops opening on the edge of or outside towns.

#### Question 9

The phrase *profitent d'un revenu élevé* was often not understood or else it was not clearly explained (e.g. “profit from a raised revenue”). Likewise, some candidates did not understand that the last sentence of the second paragraph refers to a preference for small, local businesses. Some searched for the answer in an entirely erroneous direction, e.g. “It was negative because the people had less money and so tended to buy things cheaper and on a larger scale, not in the local shops.”

#### Question 10

This question was done well by most candidates, though when it came to the second part of the answer (...*et qui jouent un rôle important pour créer le lien entre les différents groupes sociaux*), a certain vagueness sometimes prevailed which meant that the mark could not be awarded, e.g. “who played an important part in maintaining its social atmosphere.”

#### Question 11

Many candidates contented themselves with a transliteration of the phrase “*l'énergie de tout un pays*” – “the energy of the whole country”. Better candidates made the effort necessary to demonstrate comprehension: answers that were accepted included “the backbone”, “the spine”, “the life blood”, “the power behind” and “play a pivotal role”.

### Reading text 3

The majority of candidates did quite well on this exercise. Minor spelling and accent errors were overlooked, but errors in verb forms, tenses, genders and concordances were penalised. Items of vocabulary that proved the most problematic were *businessman*, *a warm welcome*, *furniture shop* and *retired people*. Sometimes candidates failed to make good use of the words and phrases given in the previous text, offering such translations as *ses publicités de radio*, *sa commerce* and *un clientèle*, while *accueil* and *développer* were both commonly misspelt. Other quite frequent errors included the use of *savoir* for *connaître*, *vivement* and *beaucoup des*. However, a pleasingly large number of scripts had no trouble providing the correct PDO agreement in *les conseils que je lui ai donnés* or the correct form of the subjunctive after *je ne pense pas que*.

## Part II: Listening

### Listening text 1

#### Question 13

The majority of candidates grasped that the peculiarity of Alain Robert's climbing exploits was that he specialised in climbing buildings. However, because of its obvious ambiguity, the verb *monter* was not accepted, nor were transcriptions of *gratte-ciel* that left doubt as to what had been understood, e.g. "graciel". Some answers could not be credited because they focused simply on the fact that he climbed solo and made no reference to what he climbed.

#### Question 14

Most candidates were successful here. Candidates who used the verb *monter* for a second time were not re-penalised but it was not deemed appropriate to credit those candidates who wrote *escaler* instead of *escalader* since a question mark again hung over what they had understood – *il a pris l'escalier???*

#### Question 15

The essential point here was that Alain had been taken on to feature in a film advertising extreme sports. Suggestions that he had starred in a film about extreme sports were not credited. Pleasingly, those who registered the all-important word *publicitaires* were in a majority.

#### Question 16

Correct answers were again in the majority. However, some answers focused on the wrong part of Alain's comments about how he prepared himself and thereby failed to target the question asked (e.g. "*il repousse les limites de sa peur*"), while others gave *voie* as "*voix*".

#### Question 17

Unfortunately, quite a high percentage of attempts to transcribe *rééduqué* were unsuccessful, but most candidates scored the point attached to *mentalement et physiquement*.

#### Question 18

On the whole, this question was answered quite well. However, attempts to transcribe *vertical* were not always successful (e.g. *verticle*, *verticelle*), while a number of scripts failed to relate *le vertical* to buildings.

#### Question 19

The verb *maîtriser* seemed to be unknown to a fair proportion of the entry (*metriser* figured in a good many scripts) but this failing did not prevent most candidates from scoring the two marks available, which they were able to do by demonstrating comprehension of *j'ai aussi réussi à gagner le respect des autres* and of *j'ai réalisé mon rêve*.

### Listening text 2

#### Question 20

A number of scripts omitted one of the two elements required, while others suggested that Coluche's disgust had been provoked by two different sets of people rather than one, i.e. firstly by people living on the streets and secondly by people who were hungry.

#### Question 21

This question posed few problems, though in a small number of cases, the popularity of the *Restos du coeur* rather than Coluche's own personal popularity was given as the answer.



### Question 22

Again, most answered correctly, although in a few scripts the number of meals served in the first year was given as 5 million rather than 8.5 million.

### Question 23

The significance of the two figures was fully understood by all but one or two candidates.

### Question 24

- (a) Some candidates omitted either *les jeunes* or *les personnes âgées* and thereby forfeited one of the two marks available. Just a few gave *chômeurs* as “homeless people”.
- (b) Failure to recognise the word *loyer* caused a number of candidates to stumble here – “to pay their way” and “to pay their bills” often figured in such cases. Just a few scripts were rather wider of the mark, witness “People who work but want a free meal”.

### Question 25

Most candidates gave accurate and full answers, but there were some who misunderstood and ventured that Florence was angry because people with jobs abused the system just to get a free meal. *S'en sortir* proved to be a stumbling block for some who confused it with *sortir*.

### Listening text 3

Scores in the summary exercise were, in the main, good and very good. No candidate scored less than half marks. Marks were lost not only because major points were omitted but also because important circumstantial detail was not provided: in the opening section, for example, simply to state, as some did, that the train journey from Paris to Toulouse produces 5 kilos of CO<sub>2</sub> without specifying *per person* is tantamount to distortion. Elsewhere, detail had clearly not been properly understood; witness those summaries that suggested that there was a fixed compensation payment per flight of 21.49 euros. The point that really sorted out the very best candidates was the last one of the passage. Some candidates were quite happy to transliterate what they had heard, making no attempt to manipulate and explain: one only has to compare the two versions “Compensation payments are dangerous because they are a validation of the emissions” and “The compensation principle is dangerous because the payments make people think that it’s acceptable to pollute” to see which one is worthy of credit in an exercise whose aim is to test whether the candidate has really understood.



# FRENCH – PRINCIPAL COURSE

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Paper 9779/03  
Writing and Usage

## General comments

The Writing and Usage paper (Paper 3) is designed to test candidates' ability to write a discursive essay on topics that have been studied over the two years of the course and also their ability to use correct verb forms, to manipulate language and to demonstrate comprehension of a current affairs article by filling in gaps with the appropriate word or phrase. The paper gives all candidates the chance to perform according to their ability with stretch at the upper end provided by some testing grammar points and essay topics allowing scope for critical thinking and cogent argument.

The selection of essay topics covered young people, technology, the environment, religion and the challenges created by increasing life expectancy. The usage section of the paper (Part II) tested knowledge of verb forms in Exercise 1 including subjunctives, preceding direct object, sequence of tenses and present participle formation. Exercise 2 tested candidates' ability to manipulate language and included subjunctive formation, passive voice, use of *depuis* in a time clause and use of *ni...ni*. Exercise 3 provided candidates with a newspaper article about the restructure of the police force in the rural areas of France. Candidates were given a number of possible words and phrases to fill in the gaps in the text. For the essay question, 24 marks were awarded for language and 16 for content, Exercises 1 and 2 were worth 5 marks each and Exercise 3 was worth 10 marks. The paper was well understood by all candidates and there was a significant cohort of very good marks at the top end.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Part I: Discursive Essay**

It was very pleasing to note that candidates were able to write relevant answers to the essay questions and there was clear evidence that topics had been well studied, appropriate vocabulary learned and genuinely balanced opinions formed. The best essays were characterised by a high level of accuracy and a wide range of vocabulary and structures. At the lower end of the spectrum, verb forms, concordances, prepositional usage and the like were sometimes haphazard, and self-expression was rather laboured, as candidates tried to commit their thoughts to paper within the confines of a narrow lexical and structural range. It must be said that candidates, whatever their ability, demonstrated clearly that they had been exposed to the French language in a variety of forms, and had ideas about a range of contemporary concerns.

The essay question gives candidates the opportunity to interpret the question in any way that they wish and there is no correct answer or viewpoint. Most candidates planned their essays carefully and adhered to the instructions in the rubric about suggested number of words. They had all acquired good insights from their reading of French texts and articles and demonstrated a real intellectual engagement with the subject areas.

**1(a)** This question was attempted by few candidates. The question raises issues about today's young people who are often considered to be selfish, acquisitive and lacking in empathy. It was, on the whole, well answered. Candidates generally understood the implications of the question and demonstrated a strong reaction. They were quick to point out that although young people do seem to be concerned with their own lives, this is largely because they are on the cusp of adulthood and have major decisions to make about their lives just at a time when they are being asked to take multiple examinations, adjust to dramatic hormonal changes and begin to assert their independence often through conflict with the older generation. They pointed out that the media view of teenagers is overwhelmingly critical with tales of drunkenness, drug taking and casual sex. They felt that, overall, this was an inaccurate portrayal and that although young people did enjoy themselves and seek out the pleasures of life that they were often caring and considerate, with many doing voluntary work in their gap years and showing a keen interest in politics, the environment and the arts. References

were made to the generation gap and the unrealistic expectations made by parents and teachers. The candidates generally were of the opinion that if young people were sometimes selfish and apparently unconcerned about other people's feelings or opinions, this was the fault of today's capitalist society where we are all encouraged to achieve at the expense of others and money is the main driver in our lives. Some of the better candidates made it clear that, in their view, young people often do lack respect for teachers, parents and those in authority and idolise those celebrities who have made their name by being boorish, superficial and money-driven. They pointed out that teenagers often feel invincible and are unable to think of the future but that this has always been the case. They were keen to demonstrate that some behaviours are just a result of being young and irresponsible before the pressures of adulthood take over. The good essays, of which there were many, were wide-ranging and well argued. Candidates with lower marks provided fewer examples and presented their arguments in a more personal way, with narrower focus.

- 1(b)** This was the third most popular question with candidates and there was a variety of responses across the mark range. This was a very open question, providing candidates with a chance to explore technological advances and assess their importance in the contemporary world. Technology is an all-encompassing term and candidates described a number of different forms, the most common being the Internet, mobile phones and television. Candidates handled the question well, providing good evidence for both sides of the argument. Good candidates were able to show that technology has a vital role in our modern world and that we are too far along the track now to turn back. They pointed out the problems associated with a dependence on computers including economic, environmental and personal factors. They expressed fears about unemployment as people's jobs are taken over by computers which are increasingly powerful and intelligent. Some mentioned the wastage and problems of disposal as new machines are constantly coming on the market. Other essays talked of the huge social changes brought about over the past ten years with the growth of the Internet, social networking sites and online gaming. They pointed out the dangers to health associated with the sedentary lifestyle adopted by most of the population, particularly the young whose addiction to computers renders them unable to move from their seats and thus prone to obesity. Mention was made of the dangers of the Internet, TV and video games with young people being constantly exposed to violent and sexual imagery in an apparently unregulated way and putting themselves at risk from the attentions of paedophiles and perverts on social networking sites. Other candidates mentioned the dependency culture, the time wasted on the Internet and the frustrations caused when it stops working.

Candidates were very balanced in their views of the role of technology. While understanding the pitfalls and disadvantages, they were keen to point out that the world is a better place for having it. They pointed to medical advances allowing complicated life-saving operations to take place, new drugs to be developed and the population to live a longer and better quality life. They stressed that technology has brought us better communication by means of computers, mobile phones and information sharing on TV news. It has also brought us cars and planes to enable us to travel widely (admittedly with implications for the environment). It has also brought us the third umpire in cricket! Candidates were able to provide multiple examples of the two sides of the question with the result that essays were generally well balanced and had a conclusion. Most candidates explained that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages and were confident in their reasoning.

- 1(c)** This was the second most popular question and the candidates generally wrote very well, with good knowledge and insights. There were some very impressive essays at the upper end, in which candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the topic area and were able to express their carefully considered and mature arguments in idiomatic and accurate French. In this question, candidates were invited to discuss the current state of the environment and the underlying factors. They were at liberty to agree with the statement or to decide that it overstated the case. There was an opportunity to describe possible solutions or ways forward such as energy saving measures, renewable sources of energy, electric cars and then assess their potential for improving the situation in the long term. Candidates might also choose to discuss the role of governments in providing information to the public and setting 'green' policies in place and also, on a more personal level, the roles and responsibilities of each individual.

Essays were wide-ranging and described the current state of the planet. Good candidates raised issues of global warming, melting of polar icecaps and rises in sea level. They were able to explain the process, using appropriate vocabulary. It was generally understood that we are at a crucial stage in the life of the planet and that the actions of the current generation could have very far-reaching effects for those to come. Most candidates agreed that we are heading for an environmental disaster because of our lack of awareness or inability to accept the seriousness of our

position. It was pointed out that what is needed is international accord but that the meetings in Kyoto and Copenhagen appeared to have resolved very few issues. The needs of the affluent West are at odds with those of the developing world. Candidates were, on the whole, quite optimistic in the face of the impending disaster and were able to suggest various methods in which we could help to improve our chances. They spoke of different forms of energy such as nuclear, wind and solar power which could help to reduce the dependence on oil and of electric and hybrid cars which would result in a significant cut in carbon emissions. They also mentioned the need for taxes on consumption and emissions for businesses which would curb excesses. Lack of awareness was often cited as a reason for the current apathy and candidates felt that there should be more governmental intervention by means of public information films, advertisements and brochures. On an individual level, candidates felt that people could recycle more, use public transport and cut back on electricity usage. Some of the very good essays argued for the need to disconnect economic progress from ecological disaster factors, to enable countries such as China and India to develop without destroying the planet. They also expressed the view that negativity engenders passivity and that we, as a world, need to remain positive and to work together. Candidates in the mid-range wrote essays that were less well illustrated and while making some positive assertions, they seemed convinced that we are subject to nature and can do little if she responds to global warming by creating tsunamis, eruptions and floods. Candidates at the lower end of the spectrum tended to list environmental catastrophes without analysing causes although they generally felt that simple solutions such as recycling and cutting down on car use could make a difference.

- 1(d)** This was the most popular question and was answered in the main by candidates in the mid range with a variety of results. Those essays that were well planned and looked at the benefits and disadvantages of religion with appropriate examples and arrived at a conclusion were well rewarded. Those which were dogmatic or simplistic or too personal did less well. It was generally recognised that religion is a great force in society but that, certainly in the west, people are becoming less religious and beginning to think more of religion as being a force for evil. It is seen as a dangerous force causing hatred and intolerance, and is often used to justify hideous crimes and wars. Many candidates mentioned the dispute over the wearing of the burka in France which had generated fierce debates about religious freedom in a secular country. Candidates were also keen to point out that religion can limit personal freedom and prevent scientific advances by imposing a strict and unforgiving moral code. Reference was also made to corruption in the various churches and to the scandal of paedophile priests in the Catholic Church.

On the other hand, candidates were keen to point out that religion can be a unifying force, bringing people together, providing hope and comfort in times of distress. It can provide a spiritual dimension to life and a moral code from which laws and ethics spring. Religion can bring about positive improvements in society, through the good works of charities and aid workers, particularly in the developing world.

The candidates were all able to make some significant contribution to the argument which showed that they had fully engaged with the topic and considered its implications. Some essays came to the conclusion that religion has a contradictory role in society and that it is not religion itself but rather humanity which may be an evil force.

- 1(e)** Few candidates answered this question. It offered candidates the chance to consider how the profile of society is changing and how structures may need to change to cope with the increasing number of old people. This might include a discussion of the financing of retirement, the raising of the retirement age and the provision of expensive medical facilities and drugs. Candidates understood the implications of the question and pointed out that the economy cannot cope with the needs of increasing number of people beyond retirement age. They suggested that taxes would need to be increased and that the retirement age would need to rise. This, however, would inevitably lead to unemployment figures rising and an increase in benefit payments. Candidates recognised that this is a real challenge to society but were, like the governments around the world, mostly unable to provide any concrete answers.

### Common errors in the essay section:

- incorrect genders of common words such as *siècle*, *pays*, *question*, *Bible*, *réchauffement*, *manque*
- confusion of *penser à* and *de*
- misspellings such as *existence*, *chaqu'un*, *personnellement*, *agressif*, *délinquance*, *néanmoins*
- numerous accent errors such as *prèsque*, *ménace*, *existé*, *créés* (past participle)
- anglicisms such as *place* (*endroit*), *change* (*changement*), *stage* (*étape*), *définitivement*
- failure to discriminate between the forms of *leur* and *leurs* such as *leur enfants*, *leurs donner*
- phonetic spellings as in *en mène* for *emmène*, *ce* for *c'est*, *ses* for *ces* and vice versa
- preceding direct object errors as in *la destruction qu'elle a causé*
- inability to form reflexive verbs correctly particularly *se rendre compte* in *nous* form
- paragraphs starting with inappropriate link words such as *aussi*, *ensuite*, *alors*
- overuse of learned phrases such as *un thème brûlant d'actualité*.

## Part II: Usage

### Exercise 1 Questions 2–6

This exercise was generally well understood by candidates, the discriminating questions being **Question 5** and **Question 6**. Many candidates missed the feminine preceding direct object agreement in **Question 5** and wrote *envoyés*.

A number of candidates answered **Question 6** incorrectly. There were a range of answers including:

*se lever*, *nous nous levons*, *nous être lever*, *nous étions levés*, *s'être levé*, *nous ne sommes levés*, *nous nous sommes levés*, *nous nous levés*, *nous nous levions*.

### Exercise 2 Questions 7–11

This exercise tested a range of grammatical points with **Question 11** being a true discriminator. Common mistakes were:

**Question 7** *pendant 3 ans*, *il y a 3 ans*

**Question 8** *l'équipe aië* or *ait*

**Question 9** *servait*, *ont été servi*, *avait servi*, *ont étés servi*, *a été servies*, *on a servi*

**Question 10** *le livre de qui*, *dont*

**Question 11** missed *ne*, added *non plus* or *pas*.

### Exercise 3 Questions 12–32

Candidates mostly achieved good marks on this exercise, showing that they had a good understanding of the content and grammatical structure of the passage. **Questions 14, 22, 23, 26** and **28** were the clear discriminators.





# FRENCH – PRINCIPAL COURSE

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Paper 9779/04  
Topics and Texts

## General comments

The Examiners were pleased by the candidates' preparation and engagement with the paper. Both the quality and range of answers from this cohort of candidates confirm that the aim of the syllabus to raise cultural awareness and to develop critical faculties is being fulfilled, often impressively so.

The time available for the paper did not appear to be a constraint for candidates. The majority rightly gave thought to planning their answers before starting their essays. One candidate even wrote out both answers completely in rough before writing them out again in neat, a practice which in the candidates' own interest should not be encouraged. Candidates were able to communicate a variety of good ideas in generally cogently argued prose and anchor their assertions with close reference to the text or film. The effectiveness of the essays varied according to the quality of discussion and development (or otherwise) of argument. The Examiners felt that the structure of essays was frequently better on **Part II** than **Part I**, and in a number of cases, notably in answers on film, the structure suffered where candidates preferred a narrative approach over analysis or argument. The quality of language was generally satisfactory, and often very good. The answers in French were articulate on the whole, and it was clear that candidates were comfortable writing extensively in French and that the vast majority had acquired the requisite vocabulary to express opinions effectively, though careful checking could have improved wayward verb forms and adjective agreements. The answers in English were, overall, couched with appropriate regard for spelling and grammar. Teachers are to be congratulated on the preparation of the candidates for this paper.

The Cultural Topics section of the Paper enabled candidates to develop their cultural awareness alongside their French language skills, and it was pleasing to note that Centres had been imaginative in their approach to some of the topics. Some scripts showed that all three elements of a topic had been studied; others demonstrated that a certain amount of additional background material had enriched the teaching programme, notably for *La France pendant la guerre* and *Regards sur la guerre d'Algérie*. This material was often deployed to good effect in answers. Some candidates, in their eagerness to show their breadth of knowledge, were able to demonstrate awareness of common themes and refer to all three elements of a topic, but Examiners noted that this information was not always marshalled effectively to enhance the underlying argument of the essay.

The vast majority of answers engaged well with the terms of the questions, with the best answers revealing detailed knowledge of the texts and films used as supporting evidence in a cogent and coherent line of argument. The level of language was variable, yet in the main it was of a good standard, and often quite sophisticated in the use of both vocabulary and syntax. The overwhelming majority of candidates managed to strike a good balance when approaching two texts and/or films and also, either in the conclusion or in the body of the essay, showed the ability to draw considered comparisons between the two works according to the terms of the question. The paramount wish of some candidates was to demonstrate their knowledge of the film and text, and the answers here tended to be driven by narrative rather than argument.

In terms of topic selection in the examination, *La France pendant la guerre* proved to be the most popular choice, though there was good support too for *L'enfance et l'adolescence*, *Regards sur la guerre d'Algérie* and *La Ville francophone*.

The best answers to the second part of the Paper, Texts, showed an excellent ability to organise material in direct reference to the terms of the question and also showed great command of detail of the text studied and proved to be cogent and considered arguments. Some candidates did have problems structuring their answers, notably in defining the terms of the question in a clear introduction and conclusion. But all scripts showed a sound acquaintance with textual detail. The Examiners noted the generally high quality of English and the use of appropriate register in the vast majority of scripts.

There was a choice of three questions on each set text. The first, a context question, was written with a precise rubric asking candidates to look at a particular extract, to refer it to its context and then to analyse specific elements within it. Such questions proved popular but responses were not always well executed, and this exercise accordingly provided a wide spread of marks. The better answers were able to make convincing cases by close analysis of the text before widening the perspective to show how such elements were evident elsewhere in the work, or to show how such a theme or character developed. Some candidates used the passage as a springboard for a wider, more general essay which therefore did not target the question fully, while others rather than providing an analysis of the passage tended towards a more basic narrative approach to the passage before them. The extracts from Voltaire and Mauriac were particularly liable to this response.

The remaining questions were of a conventional discursive nature, and candidates responded rather more evenly to these, some showing excellent analytical ability. On occasion some candidates did adopt a rather narrow approach to the question rather than weighing up alternative arguments; this was particularly apparent in answers on Molière and Voltaire.

A number of candidates had pre-learnt quotations from their particular text and often used them tellingly when combined with analysis; however, others seemed to structure their efforts around such quotations and lose focus in their argument as a result. Paraphrasing and direct allusion to the texts can be just as effective as direct quotation and certainly more effective than overly long quotations which do not target the terms of the question.

Candidates' answers reflected a preference for the better established authors in the French pantheon: the most popular texts chosen were *Les Femmes savantes* and *Candide*, followed by *Le Nœud de vipères*, *Andromaque*, *Madame Bovary* and Maupassant's Short Stories.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Part I: Cultural Topics**

##### **Question 1**

- A** Candidates showed a good knowledge of their chosen works and were able to use evidence to develop their argument. The most common comparisons were drawn between the film and *Le Blé en herbe*. The majority of answers focused on Vinca and her relationship to Phil, with some references to Mme Dalleray's importance in initiating Phil's advance to manhood. Vinca was seen as a symbol of innocence, even naiveté, especially in relation to the mystery and physicality of Mme Dalleray, though candidates did not see this as a judgment by Phil. The instrumental effect of both female figures on Phil's development as an adolescent was analysed reasonably well, and there was some appreciation of the psychological complexities of adolescence; the conclusions pointed to the female figures as having greater emotional maturity. In the film, Alice was identified as a symbol of maturity and the primary focus of affection and love in Thomas's mind, as well as providing the pivotal link between, or being the leitmotiv through, Thomas's childhood memories and adulthood and his relationship to Kant. More discerning answers also gave consideration to the role and importance of Evelyne in his psychology.
- B** Just a few candidates opted for this question. The passage of childhood innocence through adolescence was traced in the film and *Le Blé en herbe*, and useful comparatives were drawn between Phil's lack of understanding of adult life after his initiation into physical love, and Toto's compulsion to compare his childhood with his adult life. Answers concurred that the male characters were much happier in childhood than at the end of the book or film, though there was thoughtful consideration of the end of the film, where Thomas had finally substituted himself for Kant, that Thomas's posthumous laughter represents a release from torment. Good knowledge of content was demonstrated in the scripts and used generally effectively in a discussion of development and ageing. It would have been interesting for candidates to contrast Vinca and Alice/Evelyne with the male protagonists to highlight the degree of dissatisfaction and unhappiness present to add further substance to their conclusions.

## Question 2

**A** This was a popular choice of question, and candidates demonstrated a generally good grasp of detail, though not all were successful in providing supporting evidence to advance their discussion: a few candidates tended to narrate the content of the works with little attempt at comment. Nevertheless, the overall picture was of a topic area which had been well prepared and researched. The answers on *Tanguy* were informed and well argued. The importance of friendship was clearly established through examination of episodes with Gunther and others: it was key to his survival. There was some sensitive analysis of the lessons Tanguy learned in the concentration camp, particularly the philosophy of not hating one's fellow man, and this was developed to discuss Tanguy's relationship with his mother and father. Discussion of the film was frequently uneven, in that a few salient points of love and friendship were mentioned, notably a brief description of the Julien – Jean interface and the role of the priests in sheltering Jews in war-torn France, and then concluded. Other candidates analysed the friendship in much greater depth, including the invitation to lunch in the restaurant and the treasure-hunt in the woods, and more discerning answers highlighted the contrast of contemptuous behaviour (Joseph), collaboration with the Germans (milices) and the impact of Nazi ideology on breaking up friendships. Only a minority of candidates distinguished between the Christian love of the priests (which transcends religious boundaries) and the other types of human support and friendship, and more discerning answers argued that friendship was vital for people to function, and that human behaviour, with all its foibles, continued in much the same vein as peace time. The major focus in *Le silence de la mer* was on the central characters, and in particular on the nascent but unspoken attraction between the niece and von Ebrennac, and there was good textual reference to illustrate the points made. Some candidates opined that their love increased because it was conducted in silence. Most answers went on to mention the patriotic love of the uncle (for France) and von Ebrennac's love of culture in general and his initial enthusiastic support for the German invasion which then fell to disillusionment. A thoughtful distinction was drawn between the relationship between two individuals and the contrasting needs and constraints of two countries at war which prevented any personal relationship from blossoming.

**B** This was another popular option, and candidates wrote with gusto about the contrasting approaches to occupation and war. There had been some good background work undertaken, and candidates were able to deploy their knowledge of history and the division of France to good effect. Quite a few answers took a binary approach and argued that France was divided between collaborators and resistance fighters, whereas others suggested that whilst collaboration and resistance were important, the overriding concern for the average Frenchman was to survive, and there was discussion of how everyday life was affected by the war. The more convincing answers were able to interweave elements of both everyday life and details from the film and book.

Discussion of the film focused broadly on the presence of the two boys Julien and Jean in the boarding school, both from the point of view of their own security – for different reasons – and also as a sign of resistance by the priests to the Nazi menace. Many answers made mention of Joseph, his black market operations, and the reasons leading to his eventual collaboration with the Nazis. Discussions of the film were generally very well anchored with careful reference to detail. Analysis of *Le silence de la mer* focused naturally on the resistance to the German army and occupation. Some answers mentioned that the story was itself written during the Occupation as an encouragement to the French resistance movement. There was some generally thoughtful discussion of the actions of the uncle, the imposition of silence as an act of resistance (*l'attentisme*), and the difficulties on a personal level for the niece and the youthful German officer to bring mutual attraction to blossom into romance. The denial of love and communication was essential; fraternisation with the enemy, as some answers pointed out, would lead to disaster. Good candidates pointed out that it was important that normal routine should not be disrupted, and there was some perceptive assertions about the subtlety and psychology of this approach to resistance. On the whole, many pleasing discussions of the question.

## Question 3

**A** The answers to this question were of a generally high quality and displayed excellent background knowledge to the Algerian conflict as well as a good command of detail of books and film. A majority of answers were in favour of the idea that violence was the worst element. The best answers sought a balance with references to other aspects, taking into account that war cannot take place without violence. There was proper consideration of the violence of acts of terrorism, torture and the actions of state security operatives, and the best candidates distinguished also the need to consider ethics, political morality, human rights and the state's role in manipulating the memory of the conflict, and

indeed, its view of history. All candidates referred to the film and examined the impact of the scenes of violence and torture, often with the nuance of political or military expediency. There was also good analysis of the conflict on everyday life, both for the French and the Algerians. The references to Camus's journalism were well-attested, and discussions on the treatment of the Algerians were informed by good knowledge of the economic conditions and the political stalemate. The Daeninckx text was used to illustrate how Algerian activists were treated in Paris, and perhaps just as sinisterly, redacted files and reports to manipulate truth and memory. The Examiners were pleased by the breadth of discussion and with the success that many candidates were able to produce answers with strong analysis and cogent argument.

- B** The Examiners were impressed by the level of response to this question, and pleased that that a good number of answers pointed out that the victims were not just ethnic Algerians, but sought to distinguish who were the victims of the war. Here too, answers were well-informed about the historical and political background of the war, and candidates could deploy the information to good effect in their discussions. Some answers pointed out that the production of the film was designed to evoke sympathy for the FLN's armed struggle, and that the ethnic Algerians were its prime focus. There was some good commentary on film scenes to illustrate these points. Nevertheless, it was also pointed out that the French and *pieds noirs* also suffered during the terror campaign, and there was plenty of illustration from scenes such as the bombings, murders, repression in the Casbah, and the arrival of Mathieu. Camus' articles were cited as being a plea for help for all sides in the conflict and an end to the violence, and judiciously chosen quotations backed up candidates' assertions. The Daeninckx text was used to point to the vulnerability of Algerians in Paris in 1961. The book was further discussed to illustrate the role of the state in the manipulation of history and memory, particular with regard to the portrayal of the Algerian war. Conclusions frequently pointed out that the intentions of the books and films were much more complex than the question suggested.

#### Question 4

- A** This was the more popular option for those who chose to answer on *La Ville francophone*, and the majority of answers focused on *La Haine* and *C.R.A.Z.Y.* Some candidates used material from all three films, and where the discussion was lead by argument, this provided some good comparative analysis; the tendency, however, was to produce a narrative approach, thus the quality of discussion was diluted.

Discussion on *La Haine* was well informed, and references to the film indicated that candidates had observed the characters and events with a critical eye. The best answers pointed to the representative nature of the characters (*black, juif, beur*) and outlined the reasons for their alienation from mainstream society. The means by which the characters seek to impose their own will (rebellion) takes many forms, and good candidates distinguished between acts of violence, social rejection and nuisance (tagging, the scene in the art gallery). Whilst a number of scripts showed that the film was an essay in violent rebellion, and Vinz was depicted as an archtypal angry young man, more discerning candidates pointed to the sense of hopelessness in Hubert's change from helping the community through his fitness Centre to ultimate frustration with his situation and willingness to embrace murder (the Mexican standoff at the end of the film). Some candidates usefully went on to analyse other aspects of the film, such as the role of music, the register of spoken language and the impact of the documentary style, to assess their contribution to the theme of rebellion, and sound points were recorded.

Whilst *La Haine* was discussed confidently and effectively, some of the answers on *C.R.A.Z.Y.* showed a reasonable analysis of Zach's rejection of various constraints and influences, but a rather more limited understanding of Zach's psychological problems. Candidates tended to see him fighting against homophobia in society and falling out with his father, but did not see the rebellion as an inner struggle, where atheism, homosexuality, drugs and music all have their part to play. Other points which could have been analysed include his desire to try to purge himself by fighting Toto, his journey to Jerusalem, both physical and emotional, and the reconciliation with his father at the end of the film. There could have been useful analysis of the roles of mother, father and friends in shaping his development.

*La Vie est une longue fleuve tranquille* was a less frequent source for comment, though candidates did demonstrate good knowledge of the plot. There were some scripts which showed sound analysis, but a good number preferred a narrative approach over analysis. However, better candidates did explore the moral decline of the du Quesnoy family with relish and explained how the

carefully wrought family structure was undermined by the surprising revelation of children switched at birth.

- B** This option attracted few candidates. Reasonable knowledge of *La Haine* and *C.R.A.Z.Y.* was demonstrated in scripts focusing on this question, but the discussion remained general. Thus, there was some analysis of the types of social problems in *La Haine*, for example urban violence, drugs, unemployment, and a superficial analysis of homosexuality and alternative music in *C.R.A.Z.Y.*. However an assessment of how social problems were portrayed in the films, and whether there was more to urban life than the question suggested, would have been appropriate.

## Part II: Literary Texts

### Question 6

- A** The Examiners were pleased with the generally very good answers on the commentary exercise. Candidates had clearly been prepared effectively to analyse the text logically and thematically, and answers showed not only an excellent understanding of the characters and workings of the play, but also a thorough knowledge of the seventeenth century cultural and intellectual context, and this information was deployed to good effect. Many answers brought out the dramatic interest of the exchange as well as touching on the huge importance of Pyrrhus' offer to Andromaque for the course of national events. A few candidates placed the passage at a much later part in the play, and this undermined some of the assertions in the interpretation. Some answers evidenced a tendency to provide unnecessary paraphrase rather than developing discussion and analysis with brief reference to line numbers.
- B** Candidates responded well to this question, and whilst there was some consideration of how the action of the play develops, the major focus of discussion was on the dramatis personae whose baggage of the past burdens them even at the outset. There was sound knowledge of the Trojan war, the struggle between duty and desire in Oreste and Pyrrhus, and the pivotal role played by Andromaque who is a bridge between the past (Hector, Troy) and the tragic denouement. The candidates had a good knowledge of the tradition of seventeenth century tragedy, and were able to use this information to good effect in their answers.
- C** This question has handled very competently by candidates, and it was clear that there was a sound understanding not only of the plot, but in this case the psychological mechanism of the play and the importance for dramatic structure. Essays were well-structured and used textual reference and quotations generally to good effect.

### Question 7

- A** Answers to the commentary question were generally sound. There were few problems in placing the passage appropriately in context, and the relative qualities and role of the characters mentioned were well known. Only the best answers were able to identify with the drama of the interaction between the characters, though. For example Henriette's reluctance to remain for the poetry reading is as much an unwillingness to admire Trissotin's work as it is to avoid Trissotin himself, whose less lofty intentions are clear to her; connected with this, many candidates did not identify Philaminte's *secret* (line 9) which is her intention to force Henriette to marry Trissotin. Thus, while most answers correctly saw Philaminte as an overbearing character, rather fewer identified her as a representative obsessive type in Molière's plays, and the source of interest and comedy which stems from this. There was some good analysis of the other characters and some of the comic features, for example the slapstick of the servant falling over. There was sound knowledge of the build-up to Trissotin's poem, though most failed to analyse the two comic images for the poem being a new-born child and a meal, nor mention Armande's delight at Trissotin's joke. There were some good responses which showed an understanding of the target of Molière's humour, that is the bogus *précieuses* rather than the genuine bluestockings. The analysis of the preoccupation with science in this context would not be complete without reference to the inappropriateness of a pseudo-scientific response to the servant's accident. Some felt that the women in this scene were unkind and unhelpful. Such answers would have benefited from showing that the women demonstrate a loss of touch with reality and a mechanical reaction which is comically out of place.
- B** There was a variety of approaches to this question: some felt strongly that knowledge of the 17<sup>th</sup> century French court scene was essential to appreciate the full flavour of the satire, and others who

argued cogently that Molière's comedy was timeless and that it lampooned archetypal human characters and relationships such as the bullied husband and the petty rivalry and jealousy between sisters. Similarly there was good appreciation of the role of servants in highlighting the shortcomings of their masters (or mistresses). Most answers struck a fair balance, and it was pleasing to note that candidates had a good knowledge of the play as well as its background. However, there was insufficient awareness shown of the distinction between the genuine aristocratic salons and the pretentious imitations.

- C** All responses demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the play. Those candidates who understood Molière's aims produced convincing and thoughtful arguments which were well illustrated. Answers showed understanding of the underlying mechanism of the comedy and could point to why potential tragic elements (Henriette's forced marriage and Martine's dismissal) are prevented from coming to full realisation in the drama. Quite a few candidates felt that tragic elements equated to misfortune at every turn, and the ensuing discussion often gave detailed analysis of twists and turns in the plot without examining how the 'tragic' elements were undermined by the inability of the 'villains' to pose a serious threat.

### Question 8

- A** This commentary exercise was generally well done by candidates. Answers showed a sound appreciation of the text and more specifically of the extract, and much of the analysis was thoughtfully developed with appropriate reference to the broader context. Good answers were quick to identify the snobbery of the nobility, represented by the baron, the incongruity here of manifestations of religion, violence and Pangloss's teaching, and there was proper consideration given to the role of Cunégonde. Weaker answers were less disciplined in their analysis of detail, but rather used the extract as a springboard for more general comments on characters and themes in the book.
- B** There seemed to be two general lines of approach to this question. The first, and better argued one, was to examine the final chapter and use the points raised via the figures of the dervish, and the elderly Turk and discussed by the characters culminating in *il faut cultiver notre jardin*, to weigh up to what extent this constitutes an ending or solution. There was useful discussion of the El Dorado myth, of Martin's extreme views, and some fair points made regarding different characters' positive pursuits and the preference for creative activity as opposed to theorising; there was an awareness too of the need for compromise rather than advocacy of a particular type of solution. In the second approach, a good number of candidates did not focus sharply on the emphasis of the question, but rather used their essay to narrate the problems described throughout the story, and too little time was devoted to analysing the ending.
- C** Candidates were able to give plenty of examples of challenges to Optimism through the saddening events in the story. Better answers were those which sought to structure the material thematically, as opposed to those who recounted in a more random order a number of experiences which eroded Candide's confidence in Pangloss's philosophy. Some answers suggested that candidates had lost sight of the nature and purpose of the plot: to challenge the view that disasters and instances of man's inhumanity to man were part of an ultimately harmonious universal plan; instead they seemed to take the misfortunes at face value, taking the plot line to be realistic. Less attention was directed to those structural elements of the text such as the ridiculous pace of events and the series of coincidences which point to deliberate parody of life's incoherence which sets out to undermine the Optimists' world view.

### Question 9

- A** This was not a popular choice of question for those candidates studying Flaubert. The approach to the commentary was sensible in analysing some of the salient features of the extract, but there were limitations in interpretation. There were some points made about the importance for Emma's state of mind following the ball at La Vaubyessard, and there was evidence of a sound understanding of some links with the rest of the novel. However much of the discussion was periphrastic or used the text as the basis for general discussion. The addition of some discussion of Flaubert's narrative style would also have been valuable.
- B** Very few candidates attempted this question. There was a fair sketch of Homais' role and function in the novel, though analysis gave way to narrative on more than one occasion. The answers identified Homais as a member of bourgeois society, but could have developed ideas further by discussing the

importance of his superficiality and complacency for the novel, and elaborated on Homais' function as a tool for Flaubert to target the pretentiousness and self-interest of provincial society.

- C** Some candidates wrote censoriously about Charles' inability to provide for Emma's needs, whether physical, emotional or material, and recognised that the quotation was a refusal by Charles to understand or take responsibility for the tragedy. Whilst they understood that Emma felt the need to marry in order to escape from life on the farm, some candidates stopped short of laying any of the blame for the failure of the marriage at the door of Emma herself. Other candidates did focus on Emma and her yearnings, her capricious behaviour and her infidelity, and developed a good case for seeing the irony of the quotation. Another approach targeted the word fate and interpreted much of the plot as the hand of fate at work, including Emma's gender, a rather literal appreciation of the question.

#### Question 10

- A** A good knowledge of the conte was revealed by the contextualisation of the extract, and answers developed close textual analysis to identify the elements of hypocrisy and selfishness of Boule de suif's fellow travellers following her self-sacrifice. The Examiners were pleased to note the candidates' success in tying appropriate stylistic analysis to the development of the commentary's main thrust.

#### Question 11

- A** Most candidates were able to place the passage appropriately in context and gave a competent account of Louis's sense of defeat with regard to his relationship with Isa, and there was well-informed discussion of the Rodolphe episode and his feelings of bitterness and resentment. Some answers attributed to Isa the entire blame for Louis's unhappiness; other scripts took a more balanced view by showing that some of the responsibility for the breakdown in communications might be apportioned to Louis himself or to the circumstances surrounding his marriage. The relationship with his mother was often described as one of love, and an examination of why Louis was feeling in such a highly charged emotional state was well done. His inability to communicate his feelings to his mother, and the importance of this trait for the novel, were only touched on by the better answers. There was little mention of the incipient spiritual awareness which is repressed or his refusal to respond to religion, which becomes a tragic flaw in his life.
- B** This question attracted a handful of responses, and Examiners noted that, in general, candidates tended to lack focus on the question, and included a lot of narrative detail rather than an examination of how the perceived shortcomings of the bourgeoisie (e.g. snobbery, hypocrisy, shallowness) are presented. Some candidates encountered problems with the term 'bourgeoisie' itself, and perhaps were confused by the narratorial standpoint: they felt that Louis was permanently separate from this social class, even though they recognise that he was a successful lawyer and his children are middle class. Louis' attitude to religion was discussed with some success, and some candidates usefully related this to his own search for spirituality. Money and materialism too come in for analysis, and the background and importance of his union with the Fondaudège family were key to this discussion.
- C** This was a popular question amongst those who had studied the Mauriac novel, though it was approached with varying degrees of focus. The best answers revealed a clear knowledge of the opening chapters and discussed such elements as his feeling of hatefulness, his social inferiority, the lack of emotional development and the origins of his anti-Catholic views, and related their impact on and importance for Louis' adult life. Some candidates showed partial knowledge of relevant detail of Louis' youth; for example, his schooling was evoked, but only to point out the origins of his sense of social inferiority when he came into contact with wealthier candidates, but not the rivalry with other candidates, nor his unwillingness to bond with them. His childhood illness, which has a bearing on his relationship with his mother, was often not alluded to. Whilst candidates had a pretty good knowledge of the text, some answers failed to focus on the relevant section of the novel, but rather discussed other aspects of Louis's life (e.g. avarice, religion) with only passing references to his childhood.