

# FRENCH

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**Paper 9779/01**  
**Speaking**

## **Key messages**

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reaction(s) to it
- in Part II, choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where the target language is spoken
- in Parts I and II, be prepared to take the lead in the conversation
- in Parts I and II, be ready to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion.

## **General comments**

In general, candidates performed well. Almost all candidates demonstrated a quality of output consistent with two years of advanced study. There were a few truly outstanding performances.

In the majority of cases, all administrative matters were dealt with in a meticulous way. There were just a few administrative issues to note:

- Complete batches of topic forms in hard copy should be received by Examiners via first class post at least two weeks before the examination date. In the case of large Centres it is helpful if the topic forms are received as early as possible.
- Particular care should be taken to ensure that there are no discrepancies between timetables distributed to candidates, Examiners and invigilators.
- Centres are requested to provide the Examiner on his/her arrival with a working mark sheet which has been completed with name, candidate number etc. It is helpful if the sheet can be completed in the order of examining rather than in candidate number order.
- It is advisable to provide a source of drinking water in the examination room in case it is needed by candidates during the examination.

## **Discussion of Article**

Of the four articles, the one on gay marriage was the most popular by a small margin. The article on the use of technological devices while driving was also chosen by a large number of candidates. A smaller number chose the article on racism and xenophobia. The least frequently chosen article was the one which took as its theme the decline of religious values.

In general, candidates seemed to have given consideration to the wider thematic area of the card when making their choice. Those candidates who had chosen the issue of homosexual marriage as their topic for discussion in Part II judiciously avoided duplication in their choice of article in Part I.

Candidates are reminded not to read out written notes to the examiner by way of the summary. They should also be reminded to try to keep within the one minute time allocation for the summary. The summary is intended to give candidates the opportunity to get into their stride before the Examiner starts to ask questions.

### **Card 1: Human Relationships**

Almost without exception, the candidates who chose this article were in sympathy with its content and able to provide thoughtful and mature responses to the issues raised. Their ideas and opinions were generally supported by strong command of the pertinent lexis. The majority were fully conversant with recent events

and developments in France and were able to make relevant comparisons with the situation and legislative position in the United Kingdom. Most candidates made a clear distinction between the issue of gay marriage on the one hand and the question of adoption on the other. A good number made appropriate reference to the role of the media, the problems of homophobia and gay-bashing, various gay rights movements and religious dimensions of the debate. In the general conversation on the broader theme, discussion ranged over the changing nature of the family, grandparent-grandchild relationships, the generation gap, the age of sexual consent, the surge in the divorce rate, the impact of social network sites on human relationships, and problems faced during adolescence.

### **Card 2: Scientific and Technological Innovation**

Stronger candidates who chose this article were generally able to demonstrate a good command of relevant vocabulary and a considered response to the issues involved. Less able candidates sometimes had difficulty in moving beyond GCSE-level lexis and ideas, and coped only hesitantly with aspects such as sat navs, hands-free telephone equipment and the sanctions appropriate in the case of those who infringe the law. Other causes of road accidents were considered, as was the attitude of young people towards the matter of road safety. General conversation covered such topics as the pros and cons of space exploration, advances in medical science, the use of animals in scientific research, cloning, CCTV, the use of drones and spy satellites, and cybercrime. Again, in a number of cases, a less well developed base of vocabulary proved something of a stumbling block for weaker candidates.

### **Card 3: Equality of Opportunity**

Many of the candidates who chose this article were able to demonstrate detailed knowledge of French politics and current affairs. In general, this was an area of strength in candidates' performance. Sarkozy, Hollande, Valls and the FN featured prominently in discussions which were cogently argued and richly illustrated by references which went far beyond those used in the article. Issues considered included illegal and economic immigrants, political refugees, selective immigration, compulsory repatriation and *les Roms*. Equally impressive was the ability of many candidates to explain in abstract terms the meanings of the two words *racisme* and *xénophobie* and the difference between them. In the general conversation, discussion ranged over issues involving equality in a market economy, the right to work, the status of males in society, positive discrimination, inequalities in sport and education and, of course, feminist issues.

### **Card 4: Religion and Belief**

Although relatively few candidates chose this card, it was generally handled with assurance and a good supply of relevant lexis. Analysis of the decline of Christianity, fuelled to some extent by scandals surrounding certain organised religions, was coupled with a full understanding of the growing strength of Islam in the face of rampant secularisation. The need for moral values in a secular society and the role of the Church as an arbiter of moral values proved to be fruitful springboards for discussion, though the issue of cults and their attendant risks tended to be somewhat less fruitful. Topics covered in the general conversation included New Age spirituality, wars of religion, consumerism as a governing force in society, religious extremism, the place of women in religious hierarchies, religious education in schools and the relationship between science and religion.

### **Topics**

The range of topics chosen was very wide. Topics were invariably rooted in the target culture, and extensive research, knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject-matter were very much in evidence.

A judicious choice of topic is very important. Candidates need to ask themselves if the subject they are considering lends itself well to analysis and the expression of personal viewpoints and reactions or whether it is more descriptive in nature and therefore perhaps less appropriate as a choice of topic. Good topics in the past and in this series have proved to be literary works, films, musical and artistic movements, socio-political features of the target language culture and historical figures. Generally less fruitful as topics have been those that have taken various aspects of food and drink or that have looked at a specific geographical area. Candidates also need to ensure that their focus is not unduly restrictive and that they have plenty of material to sustain an 8-10 minute conversation. Candidates are required to list a minimum of 5 bullet points but if they do limit themselves to just 5, they must be sure that they have sufficient material to generate a wide-ranging, analytical discussion which will allow them to demonstrate good factual knowledge, understanding, illustration and opinion. Not least, candidates need to be aware that Examiners will require them to manipulate the material they have prepared, to think on their feet and to respond spontaneously to

unpredictable questions: just a few candidates this series were over-reliant on pre-learned material and struggled to cope with questions they had not anticipated.

Examples of the wide range of topics chosen in this series are given below.

Literary: Dumas, Hugo, Stendhal, Zola, de Beauvoir, Molière, Gide, Beckett, Ionesco, de Maupassant, Céline, Descartes, Bégat, Flaubert, Voltaire, Vercors, Racine, Apollinaire, Rimbaud

Artistic: Debussy, Messiaen, Monet, Matisse, Jacques-Louis David, Offenbach, Piaf, Gainsbourg, *Au revoir les enfants*, *Trois Couleurs*, *La Haine*, the films of Jacques Audiard, *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des Sources*, *L'Armée des Ombres*, *Amélie*, *Un Héros très discret*, *Diva*

Historical: La France et l'Indochine, Napoléon 1, Napoléon III, Louis XIV, Louis XVI, La Révolution française, Oradour-sur-Glane, Aliénor d'Aquitaine

Social/Political: l'Immigration, le mariage pour tous, l'avortement, le racisme, la République Centrafricaine, le génocide rwandais, les OGM, les Roms, la cohabitation, Marine le Pen, François Hollande, Mai 68, Dieudonné.

### Language

Again this year, the whole range of performance was heard. The discourse of the best candidates bore witness to a very high level of accuracy, to confident and effective use of a wide range of structures and to authentic pronunciation and intonation. At the other end of the spectrum, gaps in knowledge of grammar and lexis sometimes impaired communication as did examples of mispronunciation. There was a certain tendency, especially among less strong candidates, to rely on pre-learned set phrases that frequently came over as more than a little artificial. It was also noted that many candidates misused the phrase *Il s'agit de*, e.g. *Cet article s'agit de*.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9779/02

Reading and Listening

## Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
- pay particular attention to conveying the required information to the examiner in unambiguous language.

## General comments

The range of performance was very wide. In general, candidates coped well with the requirements of the examination, and there were more scripts at the highest end of the range than in previous years. There were a small number of very weak scripts.

## Part 1: Reading

### Texte à lire 1

In general, an improvement was seen in candidates' examination technique: there were fewer instances than last year of responses which did not target the specific questions set. There were also fewer instances of wholesale 'lifting' of phrases from the text. However, insufficient targeting of questions and extensive reliance on wording from the text were areas of weakness in a number of performances.

### **Question 1**

Almost all candidates understood that Frédéric does not pay anything for using the Internet. Some candidates wrote 'Il est libre', possibly prompted by the phrase *en libre-service*. On its own this could not be given credit. Where candidates glossed 'Il est libre' with the correct response – for example by writing 'Rien – il est libre' – credit was given.

### **Question 2**

The two words 'Une famille' were sufficient to score the point here. A few responses were limited to the copying out of the phrase (*ils sont*) *en rupture familiale*; others showed misinterpretation of the following phrase in the text (*et les travailleurs pauvres*), for example: 'Le soutien d'une famille et de l'argent puisqu'ils sont des travailleurs pauvres'.

### **Question 3**

This question was less well done. The essential point is that Morad had shown Frédéric somewhere to live, which is not conveyed by the following answer (which again relies rather too closely on the words used in the text): *Il lui a montré un coin tranquille*.

### **Question 4**

Many candidates were able to demonstrate comprehension of the point here with straightforward answers such as 'Il n'a pas réussi à avoir les documents nécessaires pour rester en France'. Some candidates copied out the phrase *pris dans un labyrinthe administratif et juridique* which was not a satisfactory answer to the question. A small minority of candidates attempted to answer the question with reference to the final

sentence of the paragraph, where we are told that Sir Alfred's story has been made into a film directed by Stephen Spielberg and starring Tom Hanks.

#### Question 5

Most candidates seemed to find this question quite accessible. However, there were a number of unsuccessful attempts. Some candidates simply copied out the words *ils sont en situation d'asile économique*; others focused on the conditions at Roissy airport as if they had been the reason that such a large number of Europeans had left their native countries.

#### Question 6

A significant number of candidates answered the question incorrectly as a result of looking to the information given in the penultimate sentence of the fourth paragraph rather than in the final sentence which is the pertinent one here: the SDF hope to find anonymity.

#### Question 7

The most common reason for scoring less well here was insufficient targeting of the specific question asked – *Que faisaient les SDF...?* The majority of candidates did score both marks, but answers along the lines of 'avec les SDF les terminaux étaient comme des dortoirs' and 'la possibilité d'agressions physiques et verbales' were quite often seen.

#### Question 8

Most candidates answered this question well. A small proportion of candidates did not target the question *ADP que doit-il faire...?* and simply copied out various elements of the final sentence without including the necessary verb, e.g. 'la qualité de son accueil', 'le faible nombre de services'.

#### Texte à lire 2

#### Question 9

Only a very small number of candidates had not registered the correct information, notably that university fees in Quebec are the lowest in Canada. Incorrect answers seen included, for example, the following: 'They are less high than in Canada' and 'They have been raised the least'.

#### Question 10

Just the occasional candidate misunderstood the point here. There were also a few instances of candidates not making clear the link made between increased fees and better teaching. For example, in the response 'It will not mean better teaching', it is unclear what the word 'it' refers to.

#### Question 11

A certain proportion of the candidature seemed not to know the word *interpellations*, which resulted in answers of the sort 'repression resulting in combat', 'there were massive interventions' and 'they intercepted the protesters and fought back violently'.

#### Question 12

The word *démission* was understood by the majority but a number thought that the minister was sacked. There were also a few responses which were wider of the mark, for example 'she committed suicide'. The minister was, in fact, female but candidates who wrote 'he' were not penalised.

#### Question 13

All but a few had fully grasped the import of Law 78 but the possible impact on student unions was misconstrued in a number of scripts. Quite a few candidates thought that the unions might have less rather than more support.

#### Question 14

The sentence *La dernière manifestation à avoir regroupé autant de monde était celle contre la guerre en Irak* was generally well understood. A few candidates responded along the lines of 'The Iraq war was the last demonstration to regroup throughout the world prior to Quebec' or 'The war in Iraq brought the whole world together, the same as this demonstration in Montréal'. There were also a few answers which were too vague to receive credit, e.g. 'The protests had the same number of people'.

#### Question 15

This question was also well done. Where candidates were unsuccessful in scoring the mark, the most frequent reason was over-literal rendering of the phrase *réunion pacifique*: 'pacific/pacifist reunion/union'.

#### Question 16

Two elements were required here in order to explain the irony of the situation, notably that the declaration was made in Geneva and that the law on the notice required in order to hold a demonstration is stricter there than in Quebec. Some candidates thought that the law was announced/passed in Geneva while others confused the details given about the days/hours of notice needed, e.g. 'It took 30 days for the authorities in Geneva to decide to put the law in place but it was only in place for 8 hours'. Notwithstanding, the question was answered well by a good number of candidates.

#### Texte à lire 3

#### Question 17

Performance in the translation exercise spanned the whole range. Marks at the higher end of the range were quite often seen. The stronger candidates demonstrated a very good and sometimes excellent command of lexis and grammar. Among a number of perhaps more surprising gaps that were quite widespread, there figured *Ce que*, the past participle of the verb *lire*, *Canada* (given without the article), *autant que*, *ma femme*, the correct possessive form in front of a vowel (*mon épouse*) and the pronoun *y* (là - with and without an accent - was a fairly common choice) and adjectival agreements after *fenêtres/vitrines* and *vie*. Lexical items that proved problematical in less good translations included *disappointing*, *wave*, *disrupt*, *support*, *law*, *is demanding*, *make the right decision* and *resolve*: invented anglicised forms were numerous in some scripts, e.g. *disappointant*, *disrupter* and *résolver*.

#### Texte à écouter 1

In general, this exercise was done well by candidates. It does not matter here whether candidates use their own words or not but what is important is that when they do elect to transcribe what they have heard, key words and grammatical elements are not omitted or seriously mangled.

#### Question 18

Most candidates correctly gave both of the elements needed here, notably that *un navire/bateau de pêche a été attaqué* (1 mark) *par des pirates armés* (1 mark). Where candidates were unsuccessful in scoring one of the marks, the commonest cause was incorrect transcription of the word *navire*, which was given as *un avir(e)*.

#### Question 19

Most candidates seemed to find this question very accessible, though a certain number did not make it clear that *le moteur* and *du carburant* were two separate items. Others did not demonstrate clear comprehension of the word *carburant* (e.g. *carburon*), and there were also some candidates who did not specify to whom the personal effects stolen actually belonged.

#### Question 20

This question was well done. Just a few candidates only gave one detail rather than two and a few were under the misapprehension that the Guyanese crew had had to abandon ship.

### Question 21

This question hinged on comprehension of the word *caisse*. The majority of candidates scored the mark available, either by explaining that the neighbours came to fish in Guyanese waters *sans payer* or by latching onto the phrase that they had heard, i.e. *en toute illégalité*. A small number were unable to transcribe correctly the latter item which became *en tout(e) inégalité*.

### Question 22

For this question, candidates needed to give two of three possible elements. Most candidates scored both of the marks available. Those candidates who gave as part of their answer what they had already said in **Question 21**, notably that the Brazilian fishermen were fishing illegally, could not be refused the mark but, equally, those who were not successful in their attempts to transcribe *n'ont aucun scrupule à* and *ne disposent d'aucun moyen pour* could not be rewarded since it was not at all clear what they had understood.

### Question 23

Candidates who had not understood that the Guyanese population felt frustrated and/or insecure were very few in number.

### Question 24

Likewise, only a very few candidates did not succeed in transcribing *chercheurs d'or*.

### Texte à écouter 2

### Question 25

This question was well done. The key elements were *manquent cruellement de médecins...surtout en région rurale* and *les médecins qui partent à la retraite ne sont pas remplacés*. The majority of candidates gave both correctly.

### Question 26

A not uncommon misunderstanding here was to take *prix de l'immobilier urbain* to mean the cost of living in urban areas.

### Question 27

Almost everyone had grasped why some medical facilities have closed down but the reason why this is surprising, notably the fact that more and more people are moving to rural areas thereby increasing demand, was less well understood. Quite a few simply provided a literal translation of the phrase *on voudrait voir une augmentation des services médicaux* ('this is surprising because one would like to see an increase in medical services').

### Question 28

The majority had understood that nurses and physiotherapists follow the doctors because the doctors send them clients (*ceux-ci leur envoient des clients*) but a number of answers were too vague, e.g. 'because they get clients'.

### Question 29

Any two of three elements here qualified for full marks and most candidates experienced no difficulty in providing them. Some had clearly not understood *déductions fiscales* but this did not matter provided that they included *aides financières*.

### Question 30

Most demonstrated comprehension of the moral problem involved, notably that of depriving countries of doctors whom they have invested money in/trained. Incorrect responses occasionally seen included 'they are more familiar with foreign medicine', 'it is not very moral to deprive the pay (*les pays*) of the doctor' and 'it deprives people of French doctors that France has produced'. Some answers stopped short of detailing the problem at all and simply said that it was not moral: this was not sufficient.

### Question 31

Answers to this question that were wide of the mark were very much the exception to the rule. Among the handful of misunderstandings that figured were 'to place older doctors in rural areas' and 'replace the vets in the countryside with rural hospitals'.

### Texte à écouter 3

The passage for summary was well understood in the main and there were many good performances in this exercise. However, infringements of the word limit were seen more frequently than in previous years. Material offered after the word limit was reached was crossed out and not credited.

There were also some instances of candidates writing insufficiently clear notes/bullet points. If candidates choose not to write in continuous prose, they must be very careful that there is no possible doubt or ambiguity about the meaning of the statements they make and, moreover, that no key information is omitted. For example, the bullet point '7 million viewers' omits to specify that this is every day; another example of an insufficiently clear bullet point given in some responses is '19 French offices'.

Points that were misunderstood or confused in a significant number of summaries included *le Journal de 13 heures* ('the 3 o'clock news'), *une performance que Pernaut est le seul à réussir en Europe* ('he is the only one to succeed in Europe'), *un réseau de 19 bureaux en régions* ('a network of 19 offices in the region') and *il n'appelle à aucun effort intellectuel* ('he/Pernaut makes no intellectual effort'). There was also a tendency in evidence in some scripts to offer over-literal versions of French words heard in the recording, e.g. 'information' for 'news', 'sympathetic events' for 'happy/uplifting events', 'diffused' for 'broadcast' and 'the little happinesses of life' for 'life's little pleasures'.



# FRENCH

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**Paper 9779/03**  
**Writing and Usage**

## Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, choose a title on which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and lexis
- in Part I, plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments
- in Part I, write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- in Part II, read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence(s)
- in Parts I and II, carefully proofread their responses.

## General comments

In general, candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of the paper and most adhered closely to the rubric. Candidates who do not follow the instruction to keep essays to 350-450 words often penalise themselves since rambling and repetitive essays generally do not score highly on content and are often prone to an accumulation of language errors. Problems with paragraphing were frequently seen in such essays. In some cases, whole essays were written as a single paragraph.

There were some masterly essays at the upper end which demonstrated full engagement with the topic with use of appropriate illustration and a high level of linguistic accuracy, a range of structures and tenses and use of idiomatic language.

Most candidates wrote relevant answers to the essay questions set and it was clear that topics had been well researched, appropriate vocabulary learned and an attempt to present a balanced view was evident. There were a few very weak performances in which candidates seemed to be out of their depth both in presenting a cogent argument on the topic and expressing themselves in French. In scripts at the lowest end of the range, candidates appeared not to have the range of linguistic structures or control of grammar and vocabulary necessary to write an essay of this type at this level. These candidates often resorted to the use of English and/or Spanish words. Their essays were superficial in tone and lacked conciseness and clarity.

It must be said, however, that in the large majority of cases, candidates appeared well prepared for the challenges of the paper and were able to offer some interesting ideas on a range of contemporary issues.

Common errors in the essay section involved:

- Incorrect genders of common words such as *monde*, *avantage*, *public*, *crime*, *manque*, *crise*, *problème*, *service*, *effet*, *compte*, *rôle*, *type*, *programme*, *membre*, *média*
- confusion of *ou* and *où*
- overuse of *le taux*, often incorrectly used for *le nombre*
- misspellings such as *intéres*, *personnellement*, *néanmoins*, *traditionel*, *gouvernement*, *signifiant*
- numerous accent errors such as *société*, *ménace*, *existé*, *créés* (past participle), *électoral*, *professionnel* and *expression*
- anglicisms such as *actuellement* (*en fait*), *espace* (*place*), *change* (*changement*), *stage* (*étape*), *définitivement*, *ils sont très vites de juger*, *ils ont beaucoup d'argent de jouer avec*

- use of *mieux* for *meilleur*, *mal* for *mauvais*, *bien* for *bon*
- failure to discriminate between the forms of *leur* and *leurs* such as *leur enfants*, *leurs donner*
- phonetic spellings as in *car* for *quand*, *ce* for *c'est* or *ceux*, *ses* for *ces* and vice versa
- problems with the formation of reflexive verbs, particularly in *nous* form
- incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*
- paragraphs starting with inappropriate link words such as *aussi*, *ensuite*, *alors*
- overuse of the words *chose/choses* and *cela*.

### Comments on specific questions

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

Candidates generally appeared to have understood the major implications of the questions set and were able to provide some genuine personal insights illustrated by reference to French texts and articles. Opening paragraphs are very important in setting the tone and parameters of the argument to be followed. Some candidates do this very well and define the terms and their own approach to the topic. Others make very extravagant claims which they do not go on to fulfil. Most candidates did adhere to the rubric about the suggested number of words but a significant number wrote in excess of 800 words.

In the discursive essay section of the paper, it is important that arguments are convincing and have a degree of balance. Planning is vital. Most candidates did write plans but these were often somewhat superficial. There was also a tendency for candidates to write plans in English and then struggle to translate them successfully into French in the main body of the essay. Some plans were extremely long and gave the candidate little chance to complete writing the essay. Another strategy appeared to be to write down many learned discursive essay type phrases instead of planning, and then attempting to incorporate all these phrases into the essay. These phrases designed to provide a framework to a discursive essay with serious arguments were often used to pad rather short and often weak pieces where the candidates' own ideas were expressed in very much less accurate and high-flown terms. The consequent contrast in styles is very apparent to the reader. Some examples of where candidates have tried to use learned idiomatic phrases with limited success include *ce point de vue ronge mon être* and *il ne fait aucune doute que ce rôle des médias a récemment poussé comme des champignons dans le monde développé*. There was also a tendency to overuse subjunctives, which often resulted in a forced and clumsy style. A simpler and more concise structure may well be more appropriate, clearer and more French.

#### **Question 1**

**(a) On dit que les rêveurs sont plus heureux que les réalistes. Êtes-vous d'accord ?**

This question gave candidates the opportunity to explore the nature of happiness as experienced by two different groups in society. Some interesting responses were given. Some candidates referred to philosophers such as Sartre to explain their view of the situation. Others anchored their arguments in the everyday, referring to the different views of current global crises expressed by dreamers and realists. The idea of happiness was discussed in relation to the degree of control people felt they had over their lives and events surrounding them. Some candidates clearly believed that it was sensible to be a realist because then you are never surprised by anything and have made mental preparations for most eventualities. This control leads to satisfaction and happiness for some. Other candidates felt that being happy meant avoiding issues and living one's life day by day in blissful ignorance of outside influences. The capacity to dream and imagine what might be would instil happiness in many because no paths are shut off and all is possible. In general, it was felt that both approaches had their merits and that it was prudent to temper idealism with realism but it was also generally felt that true happiness is hard to achieve for anyone.

**(b) « Les jeunes de nos jours ne s'intéressent plus à la politique. » Discutez de cette affirmation.**

This was the most popular question and was answered by a third of candidates. It elicited some strong responses both agreeing and disagreeing with the statement in the title. At the upper end there were some very mature answers which explained the reasons why young people might seem less interested in politics today such as lack of confidence in politicians and political parties, the sense that nothing changes in politics and also the rise of technology and media to occupy young people's minds. It was clear to many that candidates in the developed world have less need to demonstrate and fight since their lives are generally unaffected by politics. Many candidates were keen to point out that they could not care less about the infighting in the EU parliament and were tired of hearing about the economic crisis. It was a different matter for young people in countries where massive injustices are taking place on a daily basis and dictatorial regimes are affecting the lives of all, or indeed where issues affect young people directly such as increases in university fees or human rights issues such as equality for women or the acceptance of gay marriage. Many candidates argued that young people are generally apathetic and obsessed with the trivial such as social media sites, fashion and celebrity news. These candidates felt that politics is perceived as boring and for old people only. Some essays had a volte face in the middle where suddenly a strong agreement with the title became a disagreement. Candidates who appeared to contradict themselves in an attempt at discussing both sides of the question scored less well.

**(c) « Le facteur clé de la réussite scolaire est la classe sociale. » Qu'en pensez-vous?**

This was the third most popular question and it invited candidates to explore the reasons behind academic success. It provoked a strong response and many candidates were clearly in agreement that one's social class was a very significant factor in one's success in life. Others took a more balanced view and showed that other factors were equally important such as parental encouragement, inspirational teaching, intelligence and determination to succeed. More able candidates explained that there are many kinds of academic success and that not everyone should be measured according to the same criteria. It was felt that belonging to the middle and upper classes gave children an advantage because parents could afford private schools where groups were small and teachers of high quality. Even those who could not afford private schools or who did not believe in private education could choose to live in areas where state schools were outstanding and also have private tutors for their children. Candidates were certain that opportunities were provided for children from deprived backgrounds with schools awarding bursaries and grants and universities using positive discrimination techniques to allow candidates from a wide range of backgrounds to go to university. The question was, on the whole, well answered with plenty of illustration.

**(d) « Dans les pays développés, la dette personnelle représente une forme d'esclavage moderne. » Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?**

Fewer candidates attempted this question. Some made the mistake of thinking the question was about the developing world and spoke about third world debt problems and foreign aid. Others understood the significance of the title and discussed the issues involved with living in a consumerist society where instant gratification is a requirement. They explained that debt was a way of life for many creating unhappiness and a feeling of impotence. They described very well the vicious circle of misery with the consequent effects on family life, mental health and work.

**(e) « Le rôle des médias est d'informer, pas de moraliser. » Dans quelle mesure est-ce que vous partagez ce jugement ?**

This question was popular with candidates and a wide range of performance was seen. The title gave candidates the chance to explore the role of the media with specific reference to its capacity to inform and present a point of view or a suggested course of action. There were some very sophisticated answers which made reference to the media in all its forms, including newspapers, TV, radio and the Internet and to its impact in different countries. Candidates were in favour of freedom of the press and were critical of those regimes which imposed strictures on the press in order to retain power. It was felt that the role of the media in its broadest sense was to keep people informed about what was going on in the world on a daily basis. This was seen as its most important function. It was also felt that it had a role to play in providing people with an opinion with which they could agree or disagree. Some pointed out the influence of newspapers such as the UK tabloids which have a particular slant on the news and on a range of current issues such as fashion, celebrity, religion, politics and sexual mores. Some candidates took *moraliser* to mean providing a sense of morality to consumers and described how people needed guidance in a secular society on how to behave. They felt that it was the role of the media to provide this type of guidance by its presentation of certain stories. All in all, the question gave rise to some excellent work with some very clearly argued and well illustrated essays that fully engaged with the subject. All candidates were able to understand the parameters of the question and show some personal response at their particular level.

## Part II: Usage

### Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well understood by candidates with most achieving between 3 and 5 marks. The discriminating questions were **Question 4** and **Question 6**. Incorrect answers given by candidates included:

Obéie  
Obée  
Obéié  
Obésent  
Obéit  
Ayons trouvé  
Avons trouvés  
Trouvions  
Trouverons  
Avons eu trouvés

### Exercise 2

This exercise tested a range of grammatical points. Few candidates achieved full marks but many achieved 3 or 4 out of 5. The following incorrect answers were seen:

**Question 7** – *que mon père vendes, que mon père soit vendre, que mon père vendra*

**Question 8** – *lavions, se laver, vous laviez*

**Question 9** – *ni elle ni sa mère ne parle pas, ni elle ni sa mère parle, ni sa mère ni elle parlées*

**Question 10** – *a été gagné, était gagné,*

**Question 11** – *desquelles je fais, dont je fais, que je fasse référence*

### Exercise 3

In general, performance on this exercise was good. **Questions 16, 22, 27** were some of the clearer discriminators although incorrect answers were distributed across the whole exercise.

# FRENCH

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**Paper 9779/04**  
**Topics and Texts**

## Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, 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 attention to the question
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid simply retelling the story.

## General comments

In general, candidates performed very well in this examination.

The vast majority of answers to **Part I** engaged well with the terms of the questions. The best answers revealed detailed knowledge of the texts and films used as supporting evidence in a cogent and coherent line of argument. The level of language was, in the main, of a satisfactory to good standard. The majority of candidates managed to strike a good balance when approaching two texts and/or films and also showed the ability to draw considered comparisons between the two works according to the terms of the question, either in the conclusion or in the main body of the essay. The narrative approach was less often in evidence.

In **Part II**, many more candidates attempted commentary questions than has been the case in previous years. For the most part, candidates seemed well prepared to tackle this type of question. They showed an ability to analyse themes, characters and stylistic considerations with close reference to the extract. However, a number of candidates seemed less familiar with commentary techniques and used the extract as a platform for a general discussion of the text, often making little or no reference to the extract. Such answers cannot gain high marks.

Many candidates structured their essays effectively, particularly in **Part II**. However, paragraphing was not always clearly signalled in scripts, as a number of candidates did not indent their first lines.

There were a few instances of candidates seeming to rely on previous or prepared essays which lacked relevance. Credit can only be given for material relevant to the title in the question; the best approach is to adapt knowledge to the specific question asked and plan the essay carefully.

## **Part I: Cultural Topics**

### **Question 1A**

There were some well-informed answers on war-time behaviour. However, in this topic particularly, scripts showed an imbalance in discussion of the two sources, with the novel by Némirovsky referenced far more extensively than the film. Indeed, in some essays, analysis of the film was reduced to one short paragraph. Candidates should be reminded that a reasonable balance between the two sources needs to be maintained in order to access the higher mark bands.

Candidates wrote well about selfishness and greed as motivating factors of behaviour and attitude. This was straightforward and was covered in detail by many candidates. The remainder of the question was often given proper consideration, though less persuasive answers gave little or no evaluation of whether the French were their own worst enemy.

### Question 1B

Answers to this question chose to concentrate broadly on identifying patriots in the film to contrast with unpatriotic characters in the novel. Some answers made assumptions or took for granted that resistance activity was patriotic, without providing some explanation or link; there was thus a danger here of an answer descending into narrative. Stronger essays analysed characters both showing and lacking patriotic tendencies within each work. Many named, for example, Hardy/Didot as a traitor, although it was very rare to see an acknowledgement that he was spared arrest by the Gestapo outside the doctor's surgery, but was injured by them, and the *résistants* were quite divided in their response to him. There was also little mention of the *résistants* who succumbed under pressure to betray their *confrères*. The best essays gave an evaluation of the '*jusqu'à quel point*' element of the question; in general, though, this was overlooked. Again, answers tended to offer greater consideration of the text than the film.

### Question 2A

The quality of responses ranged from satisfactory to very good. The best scripts showed a balance of discussion and wide-ranging detail to corroborate argument. One of the main challenges here was for candidates to provide their own structure to their consideration of how young people are presented. Good answers compared the differing circumstances and time frame of each source and discussed the director's or author's intentions. There was a tendency to seek similarities between the characters in different sources, rather than refine the contrast or differentiate situations. Thus, for example, some candidates chose to try and link the behaviour of Antoine and that of Souleymane, but overlooked the many differences between the two. There was thoughtful discussion of, and perceptive points made about, *Les 400 coups* and the novel. Answers which analysed Pennac's book ranged from those concentrating on Pennac's own experience as a student to those which thoughtfully evaluated the range of situations which are discussed throughout the book. Better answers made mention of the influence of home background, the readiness –or otherwise – to learn, and the learner as an unreflective consumer. Answers on *Entre les murs* were often less detailed and convincing; the best answers considered not just individual candidates but also how the school authorities and teachers responded to or categorised the students, and how these elements colour our judgement.

### Question 2B

Candidates mentioned a range of different problems faced by teachers. Many answers engaged thoughtfully with the question and framed discussion either thematically or by each work in turn. In Truffaut's film, all candidates mentioned the punishment received by Antoine for his disobedience in class and for the perceived plagiarism. Good answers discussed the expectations of schooling at the time the film was made, and contrasted the methodology and discipline of class teaching with that apparent in the other source. Answers on *Entre les murs* ranged from style of teaching, the ill discipline shown by Souleymane and the language problems of Wei, to a broader consideration of the social problems of a School in the XX<sup>e</sup> arrondissement, the fairness or otherwise of the administration (*conseil de discipline*). Similarly, in *Chagrin d'école* some pertinent episodes were discussed, and good answers showed awareness of the situation in a number of schools and Pennac's message of the problems at a national level. Some candidates did not devote enough attention to analysing why teachers do not always respond in the right way.

### Question 3A

Most candidates wrote that the loss of life meant that the price was too high, but more nuanced responses upheld that the eventual independence for Algeria made it worth paying. It was encouraging to see that the Tavernier documentary and the Djebbar text were discussed with equal distinction.

### Question 3B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 4A

This was a popular choice, and usually satisfactorily answered. All candidates chose to contrast *Un aller simple* with the film. Some gave greater weighting to the film in their answers, and these could be a little superficial in their treatment of the novel. There were a good number of compelling essays, but those who tried to deal with both works at once in a thematic way were the least successful in answering this question. For this question, dealing with each work separately was a more effective approach. The terms of the question produced some varied readings. Some thought that *la perception de l'identité* was that of the

spectator or reader: how our perception changes. A good number thought the question asked them to analyse the way in which the main characters' view of their own identity changed.

In commenting on the film, most candidates gave a rapid treatment to many characters, and some less convincing ones concentrated on M Charrier and Jacob. Thoughtful answers not only framed the problem of presenting an inauthentic identity in order to gain approval for Laurent's marriage, but went on to consider how perception and identity interact in the film. Candidates concentrated more successfully on two or three characters in the novel. There were some good answers which showed a subtle understanding of the young man's paradoxical search for himself and that of the older man who seeks to reinvent his identity.

#### **Question 4B**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

#### **Question 5A**

Many candidates answered with reference to the two plays. All answers engaged with the question, some concentrating almost exclusively on Hoederer and Kaliayev. The contribution of other characters (Stépan, Voinov, Foka, for example) to the debate was often not mentioned. Good answers came to the conclusion that the end justifies the means for the unscrupulous activist but that the intellectual would not agree with this. They explored the difference between the approach of Camus and that of Sartre to this question, and a good number of essays showed awareness that Kaliayev's vindication of the individual's moral conscience, whatever the political dogma, contrasts with Hoederer's position. For Camus, the ends do not necessarily justify the means; there are always lines to be drawn in the name of an ethical stance which, ultimately, protects human dignity from moral compromise. There were some excellent, well-written and sophisticated answers which showed a detailed knowledge of the text and a thorough understanding of the moral and political aspects of both plays.

#### **Question 5B**

There was a wide range of opinion on this question. What was important was not so much whether candidates felt women or men were the better revolutionaries, but the effectiveness of their justification and analysis. Considerable originality and verve were seen in some candidates' answers. Most candidates concluded that the female characters were more nuanced in their view of the task of a revolutionary than the male characters. Some thought Dora was sentimental, therefore less revolutionary, to want to be reunited in death with Kaliayev; others seemed to consider her to be a hard-core revolutionary. There was some thoughtful discussion of Olga's role too and her treatment of Hugo. Stronger answers explored what makes for a 'good' revolutionary and went on to explore questions of commitment to the political cause, the role of violence and the meaning of death for the fighter. Answers showed good knowledge of the text, and there were some thoughtful and detailed analyses of this question.

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

#### **Question 6A**

Answers to this question displayed not only a good knowledge of the play and its background, but also indicated that candidates had been well-trained in commentary technique. The best answers were able to relate the significance of the conversation between Oreste and Pylade for the play as a whole, and how it prepares for a tragic outcome. A good number of candidates were able to analyse the passage in a sophisticated way with the use of effective vocabulary.

#### **Question 6B**

Candidates showed that they were well acquainted with the text and the background of French tragedy. Answers were generally good, though some candidates failed to define how the supernatural forces influenced mortals. They needed to say how the gods light fires of passion in people which make them act irrationally and render them incapable of doing their duty. Many answers analysed the situation of each character in turn before concluding that Andromaque is the character least influenced by a current passion, though she is still in thrall to the past.

### Question 6C

There were a number of good answers to this question which showed a detailed understanding of the historical background. Most candidates argued that the majority of relationships followed the pattern of war or trade, but excluded from this group either the relationship of Hermione to Pyrrhus or that of Andromaque to her son. These were seen as examples of love as an end in itself. Answers were well-informed and made appropriate reference to the text.

### Question 7A

Most candidates identified the context accurately and showed a good understanding of characters and events. In the best responses, candidates supported the points they made with precise references to the extract and confined their comments to a detailed study of this passage. Sound answers explained the comedy of the extract satisfactorily, though very good scripts also mentioned the predictability of Orgon's stubborn behaviour as well as the incongruity of Tartuffe's remarks. There were also some responses in which candidates seemed not to have understood the requirements of the task and wrote instead about the play as a whole.

### Question 7B

In the best responses, candidates gave a brief definition of tragedy and mentioned the potentially tragic weakness of Orgon, the (mock) tragedy about to unfold in the lives of Marianne and Valère, and the potential of Tartuffe to ruin the family in terms of reputation and wealth. A number of candidates were not sure how to define tragedy, and a few thought that the play was representative of the tragic tradition in theatre. Almost all, with varying detail, pointed out that the plot does not end in a tragic way, and that character, situation and language all contribute to maintaining a comic tone.

### Question 7C

There were good analyses of Tartuffe's wickedness, but less convincing in a number of answers was the attempt to define its relevance to Molière's satirical aim. Most answers showed an awareness that Molière had had to make the play unambiguously about a bad man, not an attack on the clergy, and a good number mentioned the political and social sensitivity of the subject matter for the audience of the time.

### Question 8A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 8B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 8C

There were some very impressive responses to this question. Answers showed a very good understanding of the novel as a whole, as well as a mastery of detail. Candidates had a sensitive appreciation of the place of Balzac within the context of French social history and the author's intention of offering a panoramic depiction of public and private life in France. Answers were thoughtful, balanced and perceptive.

### Question 9A

Candidates used appropriate vocabulary to produce often sophisticated commentaries on Baudelaire's poem, mentioning the formal structure of the extract, as well as contrasting lethargy and stagnation in the poem with moments of sunshine, and comparing other poems in the anthology with similar features. Grammatical features were also highlighted and their contribution to the poem considered. Progressively working through the lines of the poem tended to be more successful than general discussions, unless the essay could be structured thematically by the candidate.

### Question 9B

There were some very thoughtful responses in which candidates examined the importance of sensory experience in Baudelaire's poetry. Candidates wrote persuasively about this key theme and showed good knowledge of the poems. They could often use as a starting point 'les parfums, les couleurs et les sons' of



the key poem *Correspondances* and make pertinent comments about the complex stimuli for Baudelaire's imagination and expression.

**Question 9C**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 10A**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 10B**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 10C**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 11A**

Those candidates who chose this question wrote thoughtful and perceptive commentaries, and their answers showed sensitivity to and enjoyment of the novel. Most showed proper consideration of the differences between Janine and Hubert in their attitude towards Louis and judgement of him. There were some interesting remarks on Hubert's refusal to let Janine read Louis's letter. Stronger answers made mention of religion or spirituality and a good proportion mentioned the hypocrisy, self-righteousness and materialism which characterise many members of the family and bourgeois society in general. There were also some weaker answers, in which candidates attempted to paraphrase the extract rather than analyse it.

**Question 11B**

Answers to this question were generally assured and showed a good understanding of the relationship between Louis and Isa. There was also consideration and analysis of information filtered through Louis's letter. All candidates gave an account of the early happiness ruptured by the revelations about Rodolphe, the hostile silences and the contemptuous judgement 'tu n'étais que mère', and most mentioned Louis' criticism of her form of Catholicism. Good answers identified that Isa did not really understand Louis, and in particular his inferiority complex and latterly, his search for meaning because of their sour relationship and her own limitations.

**Question 11C**

Candidates approached this question in many different ways. Some candidates were tempted to focus on Louis's suffering and wrote, often persuasively, of his youth, his marriage with Isa and the relationship with his children. Analysis was generally assured, and good answers pointed out his jealousy, resentment and neurosis. Some candidates felt that he was lucid from the outset, and confused his behaviour and feelings as a young man with the torture of his self-assessment when he is close to death. Stronger answers indicated that his lucidity comes later, when he is reflecting on his life, pointing out the largely futile efforts made by Louis to change his behaviour towards the end of his life, and understood why he felt the need for some spiritual fulfilment. All candidates showed solid knowledge of the novel.

**Question 12A**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 12B**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 12C**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### **Question 13A**

Responses to the commentary question mostly ranged from satisfactory to good. There were often perceptive comments about the interchange between Meursault and the defence lawyer. Candidates were aware of the lack of communication between the two characters, and many were able to show how the theme of estrangement from society's workings was symptomatic of Meursault's life. Very good answers included points on the style of the passage, linking the reported speech to the distancing of the viewpoint of the first person narrator, for example.

### **Question 13B**

Most candidates identified the theme of 'awakening' towards the end of the text, though some answers were rather vague or unfocused and omitted to mention, for example, the episode with the prison chaplain. There were a number of essays which dwelt at length on the events in the first part of the story. Good answers gave an analysis of Meursault's version of events in the light of these facts, and a critique of the court's inability and refusal to accept these facts at face value.

### **Question 13C**

This question was generally satisfactorily answered. Candidates showed that they had a good knowledge and understanding of the text. A number of responses were apt to focus on 'Meursault's behaviour at his trial' or on 'the nature of the trial itself', and only the better answers were able to explain what the one expressed about the other. Strong answers were written by candidates who analysed the hypocrisy, false logic and arbitrary judgements of those who concluded that Meursault was a threat to society.