

# FRENCH

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<p><b>Paper 9779/01</b> <b>Speaking</b></p>
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## **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; this subject should also offer opportunities for candidates to express their opinions
- 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**

### ***Administrative matters***

In the vast majority of cases, administrative matters were dealt with by Centres in a very efficient way. Centres sent details of the candidates' chosen topics in digital form as well as in hard copy.

Chaperones were provided this year, which did not seem to add to the stress of the candidates. However, some chaperones felt a need to be overly helpful by offering help to the examiner between each candidate. This tended to break the examiner's train of thought in those precious couple of minutes where marks are being considered.

Attendance lists were not ready in some Centres.

### **Discussion of article**

Candidates had a marked preference for cards 1 and 5.

In choosing which card to prepare, candidates should pay attention to the Topic Area. Discussion on wider topics was sometimes far less fluent than that on the specific topic.

Candidates might like to consider that it is better to show an awareness of a dilemma rather than present a simplistic solution. For example, in card 3, some candidates rather blandly said that education is better than punishment, and did not mention that using 'educational' activities as sanctions might be counter-effective. They showed a rather naïve faith in redemption through 'responsabilisation'. They then went on to describe the sanctions at their school as necessary.

Some candidates have difficulty with the use of 'il s'agit de'.

### Comments on specific tasks

#### **Card 1: Health and Fitness**

This was the most chosen card. The pronunciation of key words was the most frequent error – *alcool*, *cerveau*, *cannabis*. Many were able to give anecdotal evidence of addiction. Some took the effect on ‘scolarité’ literally and talked about students taking drugs whilst in class. ‘Addicté’ was a frequent incorrect past participle.

#### **Card 2: Law and Order**

The point about lobbying was mainly overlooked. When talking more generally about criminality, candidates were more comfortable talking about crime induced by alcohol than other types of crime.

#### **Card 3: Education**

This was tackled very well. Many were happy to talk about sanctions and implications in their own school.

#### **Card 4: The Media**

Very few chose this card. The concept of personalisation caused a few problems as did ‘fausses nouvelles’ in the general discussion.

#### **Card 5: Environment**

This was the second most popular card. Most candidates had stock answers ready about what they thought to be the biggest environmental issue. ‘Vélib’ was frequently misunderstood, but dealt with well once given a definition.

#### **Card 6: Urban and Rural Life**

The least chosen card. Those who did select this card, however, were able to deal with the issues intelligently.

### Topics

It should be noted that the introduction should not exceed one minute and that if it does, candidates should expect to be interrupted.

In general, political and philosophical themes, for example, *Le Front National*, *la laïcité* and *L'existentialisme est un humanisme et la Nausée* – were less well discussed than historical and cultural ones. Those candidates who had chosen a novel or play, for example, *En attendant Godot*, *Kiffe kiffe demain*, *Nana*, *Meursault contre-enquête*, *Candide (entre autres)* did well, as subjects such as these can include biography, social and philosophical themes, studies of the main character and literary observations all within a defined boundary. The same can be true of many films and works of visual art.

Candidates in general did not produce pre-planned answers to the questions on their sub-headings. They listened to the precise question and answered it. There was a tendency then to add to their answer at excessive length, as if they felt they had to use all the information they had gathered.

Very few candidates took advantage of the possibility of bringing three pieces of visual material into the exam – even where an artist was to be discussed. Candidates who spoke about the Algerian war of independence could have used a map; those talking about Marine le Pen could have brought a picture of the new FN logo.

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

- Social topics : Laïcité / La jungle de Calais / Médecins sans Frontières / La Communauté LGBT en France / La représentation de la femme dans les médias en France / Le mariage pour tous: 4 ans après
- Literature : Albert Camus / Simone de Beauvoir / Cyrano de Bergerac / Mme Bovary / Baudelaire / Samuel Beckett / 'Un Sac de Billes' / 'Candide' de Voltaire et 'Justine' du Marquis de Sade / 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' / Aimé Césaire, 'Cahiers d'un retour au pays natal'
- Film: 'Intouchables' / 'Du Rififi chez les hommes' / La Nouvelle Vague
- Art / Music : L' impressionnisme ( in music and art) / Serge Gainsbourg / Matisse / Manet / Rodin
- History/politics : François 1er / Jeanne D' Arc / Alfred Dreyfus / Nicolas Sarkozy / Blaise Pascal / 'Le Contrat Social' de JJ Rousseau / La politique française / La France et la Côte d' Ivoire / Haïti.

## Language

There were a significant number of students who demonstrated very good knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary and syntax and a commendable level of accuracy. However, in general, accuracy was an area for improvement.

Particular areas of weakness included:

- Possessive pronouns / indirect / disjunctives
- Subject / verb agreements
- Gender agreements e.g. *problème / loi / polémique*
- *les gens* etc. followed by correct 3rd person plural
- *de le / de les / de autres pays*
- *tous (sic) les personnes*
- quantities that should be followed by *de*
- the conjugation of *interdire*
- *ils* instead of *elles*
- gender of *problème, désir, manière, question, sucre, meurtre*
- *égal / égaux*
- conjugation of the verb *boire*
- *especialement* (sic) still occasionally cropped up.

# FRENCH

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<p><b>Paper 9779/02</b> <b>Reading and Listening</b></p>
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## 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

Performances spanned the whole of the ability range. In the strongest scripts, candidates made a good attempt to express themselves in their own words, and their answers were concise and to the point. In weaker scripts there was sometimes a tendency to write over-long responses, copying substantial chunks of text from the question paper. In some cases, candidates provided various alternative answers or they incorporated surplus, contradictory information that invalidated correct information given elsewhere.

The paper produced a good spread of marks: at the lower end, there was only a relatively small group and a pleasing number of candidates who scored marks in the forties and fifties.

## Part I - Reading

### Texte à lire 1

This was the most challenging exercise, the principal reason being that many candidates copy out sections of the text, rather than making the manipulations needed to answer the question asked.

### **Question 1**

Candidates were asked *Quelles qualifications académiques les espionnes doivent-elles avoir?* Many copied out the wording used in the text – *elles doivent être ultra-diplômées* instead of explaining what is meant by *ultra-diplômées*, namely that the spies have to have qualifications of a high level or several diplomas/qualifications.

### **Question 2**

Most candidates gave the correct answer here, namely that national security is at stake in the work the women do with the result that, when they are at work, all other considerations take second place.

### **Question 3**

A fair number of candidates copied out word for word part or the whole of the second sentence of the second paragraph. A significant implied Corinne was faced with violent scenes that actually took place at her office or used the phrase *des images insoutenables* taken from the text without giving an explanation as to why they were *insoutenables*, notably because they depicted violence. The better candidates picked out the 2 essential points with ease: Corinne has to keep her work secret and cannot avoid seeing violent images.

### **Question 4**

There was substantial copying of the text which resulted in candidates not properly targeting the question which required candidates to say that 'she did not talk to her husband about her work'.

### **Question 5**

A fairly common answer was a straight lift of the phrase used in the text *elle est parfaite arabisante*, which does not demonstrate enough comprehension of the point that she speaks Arabic. We remind candidates of the importance of the need to paraphrase.

#### Question 6

There were 4 possible pieces of information here, 2 of which were required and most candidates managed to score at least 1 of the 2 marks available.

#### Question 7

The subject of the question is *les agents masculins* and not *les agents féminins*, so a straight copy of *Elles voient des choses que ces derniers ne voient pas et elles ont une pugnacité rare* could not be given any marks. In order to score the 2 marks available, candidates needed to say that masculine agents see fewer things than their female counterparts and are less pugnacious.

#### Texte à lire 2

Candidates tended to fair better in this exercise than in the first reading exercise.

#### Question 8

There were 3 possible pieces of information here, any 2 of which scored full marks. A number of candidates seemed not to know the word *accueil* and a mark was sometimes lost for failing to specify what sort of help the association Pierre Claver gave or for simply transliterating the word *juridique*, resulting in *juridical help*.

#### Question 9

Quite a lot of candidates did not know the word *fonctionnaire* for which such suggestions as *worker*, *aid worker*, *manager*, *official* and *CEO* all figured.

#### Question 10

A good proportion of candidates understood that the teachers were volunteers. Fairly common answers that could not be credited were *They are kind* and *They are generous*.

#### Question 11

The first part of Mme Sureau's statement about the aims of the literacy programme was less well understood than the second part since *qui leur permettra de d'obtenir la reconnaissance de compétences professionnelles acquises à l'étranger* was quite often taken to mean allowing them to obtain skills that would enable them to work abroad.

#### Question 12

Most candidates had understood that the cultural shock was dancing with a stranger *une danse en couple avec un inconnu*. Among suggestions that could not be rewarded there figured *dancing with an unknown*, *dancing with a partner from a different country* and *dancing with a partner of the other gender*.

#### Question 13

Most candidates had understood that initially the women had refused to dance with a male partner. However, a few candidates ventured explanations along the lines that Afghanistan and Syria were at war and that that was the reason why the teacher was pleased that the Afghan woman was dancing with a Syrian man.

#### Question 14

A significant number of candidates fell into the trap of transliterating the word *ignorant* – *one must not ignore/be ignorant of the history, culture and language*. However, better candidates coped well here, answering that it is essential *to know/understand/appreciate/learn* the history culture and language of the country.

### Question 15

A good number of candidates demonstrated comprehension of the essential point, notably that the recipes used for the brunches are taken from a range of cultures.

#### Texte à lire 3

Though there were some very low scores here, they were very much the exception and a pleasing number of candidates fared well and sometimes very well in translating the short extract into French. The main points that emerged were as follows:

1. Items of vocabulary that proved problematic for many were *illiterate*, *building on*, *whatever*, *as well as* and *will not be successful in*.
2. We remind candidates to be careful and methodical when copying the words and phrases, specifically those given in the second reading text.
3. We also remind candidates to pay particular attention in the matter of concordances, which gave rise to some misalignments such as: *ne sont pas analphabète*, *des cours spécialisé*, *pourraient être organisé*, and *ceux qui...refuse*.
4. Knowledge of genders is also an important area for improvement that requires careful attention: some common errors include *l'exemple parisien*, and *les valeurs culturelles*
5. Grammatical points that were commonly challenging to candidates were the 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjunctive form of the verb *comprendre* given as *comprenent* and *comprendent*, *la plupart* followed by *de* rather than *des* and sometimes by a singular verb, the omission of the article in *apprendre le français*, *refuser* followed by *à* rather than *de* and confusion between the homonyms *ceux qui* and *ce qui*.

### Part II – Listening

#### Texte à écouter 1

### Question 17

Most candidates scored the point here, the most common erroneous transcription being *au père*.

### Question 18

Most candidates demonstrated comprehension of the fact that Laure would be provided with board and lodging. Just a few attempts to transcribe *nourrie* were unsuccessful, witness *nuie* and *nouie*.

### Question 19

There were no wrong answers here.

### Question 20

Most candidates scored the point here. However, some candidates gave as their answer *ils lui ont posé des questions* rather than *elle a dû répondre à des questions*.

### Question 21

There were relatively few wrong answers here. However, there were a number of scripts where the answer given was exactly the opposite of the correct one: *ils ont tiré la conclusion qu'elle n'était pas une immigrante illegal*.

### Question 22

Answers here were mostly correct. Very few candidates showed themselves unable to transcribe at least one of the two possible answers, notably *elle était menotée* or *elle avait les mains dans le dos*.

### Question 23

This question was well done. Where candidates dropped a point, it was usually because they omitted the all-important reflexive pronoun in their transcription of the phrase *se changer intégralement* or because their transcription of the word *poumon* left doubts as to whether they had understood, e.g. *poument*.

#### Question 24

Answers to this question were again mostly right. Where an answer could not be credited, it was almost invariably because the transcription of *sans arrêt*, was mistranscribed as *sans arraié* and *sans arré*.

#### Question 25

This was the question that proved the most challenging. In some cases candidates struggled to express themselves correctly, offering such answers *on s'a remise dans un avion* or *on l'a remise dans un avion à Paris*. The essential point that needed to be conveyed was that she esteemed herself lucky that she had been freed after just 24 hours in custody.

#### Texte à écouter 2

#### Question 26

A number of candidates failed to specify that it was farmers who were protesting.

#### Question 27

Here a number of candidates had understood *l'effondrement* to mean a rise in the prices of their products.

#### Question 28

This question was well answered in the main but some candidates thought that what angered the farmers was the fact that the price of milk had risen rather than fallen, while others had not properly registered the amount by which it had dropped and either omitted *more than* or gave the figure as 50%.

#### Question 29

There were a lot of incorrect answers here. *Fumier* was quite often understood to mean fumes and the misapprehension that farmers set fire to the tyres of the tractors in which they had converged on local hypermarkets was also fairly common.

#### Question 30

Answers here were mostly correct, the most common misunderstandings being either that shops were vandalised or that the graffiti were written inside the shops. There was also some confusion in evidence between *magasins* and *magazines*.

#### Question 31

Where the mark was forfeited here, it was usually because the figures given were imprecise or inaccurate: either *per hour* was omitted or *12 euros de l'heure* was given as 2 euros an hour.

#### Question 32

Very few candidates failed to score the mark here.

#### Question 33

Good candidates coped well here and gave the correct answer, namely that Frank Sander is waiting for the minister to take action. However, some candidates misunderstood *on en a marre d'être autour de tables rondes et de discuter*, giving the interpretation of *he wants the minister to come and discuss the matter with the farmers and to take action*.

#### Question 34

Candidates who had not fully understood sometimes gave fanciful answers of the sort *they irrigated dams* and *they broke dams*. A common error was the omission of the essential *agro-alimentaires*, e.g. *lorries bringing German products*.

### Question 35

The challenging word here was *décharger* which was taken to mean to destroy or to confiscate. *Discharge* also figured in a number of scripts.

#### Texte à écouter 3

It is pleasing to report that the summary exercise was better done than in recent years. There were markedly fewer infringements of the word limit which, in the interests of fairness to all candidates, was consistently applied. There were still some candidates who wrote as many as 170 words but all of the material beyond the 100 word limit was disregarded and did not score. Good candidates covered all of the ground within the permitted number of words and scored highly, the best among them qualifying for full marks. Candidates do need to be careful that they do not distort the key details of what they hear.

Common failings were the omission of key items such as there is a lot of demand to rent apartments/buildings, museums and monuments are privatised for a concert/reception/private function, last year the hiring out of museums for private functions brought in 1,500,000 euros, the Saudi king's demand angered local councillors and Mr Li took his 6400 employees on a 4 day trip to France. Another common source of loss of marks was that figures given in the text were mangled: 1,500,000 was given as 5,000,000, 14 as 4, 700 as 7 or 7 000, 6400 as 6 000 or 5 400 and 14,000,000 frequently became 40,000,000. Other misunderstandings that recurred were that the Saudi king demanded that the swimming pool rather than the beach in front of his hotel be reserved for private use and that it was the private rental of the 3 attractions listed rather than the whole trip that cost Mr Li 14,000,000 euros.



# FRENCH (PRINCIPAL)

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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 valuable 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

The Writing and Usage paper (Paper 3) is designed to test candidates' ability by means of a number of different exercises. They have to write a discursive essay on a general topic that has been studied over the two years of the Pre-U course, know the correct verb form to use in a particular construction, manipulate language and demonstrate comprehension of the content of a current affairs article by filling in gaps with the appropriate word or phrase chosen from a selection of four options. The paper is designed to give candidates across the whole range the chance to perform according to ability. The paper consists of some grammar exercises and five essay questions which allow candidates to demonstrate familiarity with contemporary issues as well as the critical thinking skills that will enable them to form a logical and coherent argument in French.

The selection of essay topics in this summer's paper covered the systems of justice for rich and poor, the value of having children, the experience of urban and rural life, reality TV and the relevance of the arts in the school curriculum. The usage section of the paper tested knowledge of verb forms in **Exercise 1** including appropriate tenses, subjunctive usage, inversion and preceding direct object. **Exercise 2** tested the candidates' ability to manipulate language in a number of different structures. **Exercise 3** was a passage about a big seizure of drugs in the Marseilles area. Candidates were given a grid of possible words and phrases to fill in the gaps in the text. For the Discursive Essay question 24 marks were awarded for accuracy and linguistic range and 16 for development and organisation of ideas. **Exercises 1** and **2** were worth 5 marks each and **Exercise 3** was worth 10 marks.

Candidates, overall, demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of the paper and most adhered closely to the rubric. There is, however, a growing number from year to year of very long essays, up to 1500 words in length. In many cases this can be counterproductive for candidates since in essays of this length arguments can become repetitive and rambling and language errors accumulate. Often these candidates do not appear to have worked out an overall structure to their essays and they do not use paragraphing appropriately. They begin to write without thinking about structure and sometimes the whole essay can be one single paragraph. The advice on essay length is clearly stated in the rubric for the essay and candidates should be advised to think carefully about the planning and construction of their essay in order to keep within the word limit. The pitfalls of over-long essays should be pointed out.

There were some very good essays at the upper end which showed originality of thought as well as idiomatic and accurate language usage. The candidates concerned had strongly held views on the topics and were able to deploy a large range of structures and topic-appropriate vocabulary in support of their arguments which were mature and balanced.

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, however, some weaker candidates who were clearly out of their depth both in presenting a cogent argument on the topic and expressing themselves in French. They did not appear to have the range of

linguistic structures or control of grammar and vocabulary necessary to write an essay of this type. In these cases, arguments were often unclear and long explanations in poor French were given to describe situations or to make very minor points. These candidates often resorted to the use of English or Spanish words when the French word was not known. Their essays were often superficial in tone and lacked the conciseness and clarity necessary to gain good marks.

It must be said, however, that in the large majority of cases, candidates appeared well prepared for the challenges of the essay using good illustrations and examples and they 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 *risque, système, mode, paix, monde, avantage, public, manque, problème, service, effet, thème, rôle, type, programme, aspect, média*
- overuse of *le taux*, often incorrectly used for *le nombre*
- misspellings such as *néanmoins, exemple, personnellement, traditionnel, gouvernement, significant, cases* (for *cas*), *touts* (for *tous*), *cettes* (for *ces*)
- anglicisms such as *change (changement), définitivement, pessimistique, afforder, définir le terme, pour être complètement honnête, abilité, par faisant*
- incorrect use of a past participle agreement such as *ils ont menés*
- use of *mieux* for *meilleur*, *mal* for *mauvais*, *bien* for *bon*, *vite* for *rapide*
- failure to discriminate between the forms of *leur* and *leurs* such as *leur enfants, leurs donner* and use of *leur* for *eux*
- phonetic spellings such as *ce* for *c'est* or *ceux*, *ses* for *ces* and vice versa, *attirait* for *attire*
- inability to form reflexive verbs correctly particularly in *nous* form such as *nous devons s'occuper des pauvres*
- paragraphs starting with inappropriate link words such as *aussi, ensuite, alors*
- confusion of *penser à* and *de*
- overuse of the word *chose/choses* and *cela/ça*.

### **Comments on specific questions**

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

The essay question gives candidates the opportunity to discuss their chosen title in any way that they wish and there is no correct answer or viewpoint. Their argument should be convincing and with a degree of balance. If a candidate argues for one side of the argument very strongly, there should be at least some recognition that there is another view.

Planning is essential to good essay writing. Some candidates, however, merely wrote a sketchy plan in English and then translated the ideas with limited success. Others wrote very long plans or even a complete first draft of their essay and then struggled to complete copying it out. Some candidates understood planning to mean writing down as many discursive essay phrases as possible in a list and then trying to incorporate them all in their essay. These phrases, designed to provide a framework to a serious discursive essay, were often used to pad rather short and weak sentences where candidates struggled to express their own ideas.. The consequent contrast in styles is very apparent to the reader and does the candidate no favours. Some examples of this strategy which can also include forced use of the subjunctive: a) *il s'agit de qu'on veuille la possibilité de tenter d'avoir*, b) *tous les chose qui incite à l'euphorie* c) *pour couronner le tout*. There is a generally held belief that essays must be full of subjunctive structures. The result can be rather clumsy and

laboured and often a simpler and more straightforward sentence would have been more appropriate. An example of this would be *pour* with an infinitive instead of *pour que* and a subjunctive.

Candidates appeared to have understood the major implications of all the questions set and having acquired a good knowledge from their reading of French texts and articles were able to offer some genuine personal insights. In general, candidates need to consider carefully their opening paragraph as it is this which sets the tone and parameters of the argument. A definition of the terms involved in the question helps to set the essay off in the right direction. It is, however, important that candidates do not make extravagant claims about their essay in their introduction which they cannot then fulfil. Many openings were very long-winded and gave little space for the argument to develop properly the thrust of the essay.

Many candidates did adhere to the rubric about the suggested number of words but a significant number, as already stated, were unable to record their thoughts succinctly and ended up writing in excess of 1000 words.

**Question 1(a) « Il y a deux systèmes de justice, un pour les riches et un autre pour les pauvres. »  
Discutez de cette affirmation.**

This was a popular question and was, overall, well answered. Candidates were often vehement in their responses as they exposed the shortcomings of justice systems in the UK, France, the US and across the world. It was clear to candidates that although we are all equal before the law, this was often not the case in reality. They quoted many examples of leading figures in the political world, celebrities and sportspeople who appeared to have been very leniently treated for their misdemeanours. There were mentions of tax evasion, falsifying expense claims, and even murder in the case of OJ Simpson. It was obvious to candidates that money can buy top lawyers and, thus, the ability to cheat or circumvent the system. They compared the treatment of these people with the justice meted out to the poor who may steal or commit minor infringements out of severe need and who can receive custodial sentences and large fines far beyond what they can pay. Some candidates felt that there is a need for two systems of justice which would be adapted to the needs of the criminals and the crimes committed. They felt that the poor needed help from the justice system to enable them to be rehabilitated and that the rich needed to be given appropriate penalties for their crimes against society. Candidates wrote passionately about injustice and suggested that a radical overhaul of justice systems was necessary in order to allow more fairness and equality before the law for all citizens.

**Question 1(b) « Avoir un enfant est une condition essentielle à une vie pleinement réussie. » Qu'en pensez-vous ?**

There were many different approaches to this question and candidates came to different conclusions. Answers were sincere and personal and it was clear that the question evoked strong reactions. Some candidates could see the many benefits of having children such as carrying on the family name and genes, bringing joy and pride, making people less selfish. They could see that having children was a fundamental part of life and that it helped, in many cases, to cement relationships between parents and to give couples a purpose in life. Other candidates felt that life was about more than children and that one could be perfectly happy in one's life without them. They felt that to be successful and fulfilled, a person needs a good job, opportunities to travel and have new experiences and good friends and family around them. They pointed out that many famous people had not had children and were very successful in their lives. They also mentioned that there were people who were unable to have children (infertile couples, homosexuals) and that it was wrong to suggest that they could not have successful lives. They were clear that children cause many problems for their parents such as lack of freedom and sleep, dealing with tantrums, adolescent angst, money problems, drug use which can easily offset any of the joy they might bring. The question was well answered with most candidates presenting a range of mature and balanced arguments leading to a conclusion.

**Question 1(c) On dit que la vie urbaine est beaucoup plus riche que la vie rurale. Dans quelle mesure est-ce que vous partagez ce jugement?**

This question was answered by a wide range of candidates. There were some very sophisticated and well-illustrated essays and some that were more superficial and limited. Candidates took some care to define their understanding of the word *riche* in their introductions – some understood it to be economic and financial wealth others took a more global view and talked about the culture, jobs opportunities and diversity evident in city life. Most discussed the delights of the city compared to the country with the opportunities for the young to have good jobs, enjoy the nightlife and the culture and to live with and among a whole diverse spectrum of people. They were clearly writing of major metropolitan cities such as Paris and London not small backwater English towns. They felt that country life also had plenty to offer particularly for the very

young and the old. They mentioned the slower pace of life, the quiet and the sense of community in villages. They could clearly see that the city, while appearing to offer so much more, had problems with pollution, litter, noise which the country was largely free from. They also pointed out that it was easy to be lonely and poor in a big city with no real sense of belonging and nowhere affordable to live. Those who referred to economic wealth mentioned the well-paid jobs available in the city compared with the poorly paid work in the country although some were keen to point out that some farmers and landowners were very rich. Overall, there were some interesting and varied responses to this question with each candidate having valid points to make and usually an informed conclusion.

**Question 1(d) « Les émissions de télé-réalité nous montrent la vie telle qu'elle est. » Êtes-vous d'accord?**

This was the least popular question but nonetheless attracted a range of answers from able and less able candidates. Some were avid viewers of the current popular reality TV shows such as Love Island and Big Brother while others were rather dismissive of this type of programme. It was felt that these programmes are part of contemporary culture and, even if you do not watch them for enjoyment, you need to know about them. It was generally agreed that reality TV is actually a highly edited form of real life. Candidates felt that it was naïve to think that what was being presented was an accurate picture of daily life as lived by young people. They felt that the programmes served to make people jealous and upset as they realised their lives were not as exciting as those being portrayed. They felt also that a considerable amount of pressure was put on young people to have a certain image and behave in a certain way as a result of these programmes. Some candidates wrote about other fly on the wall type reality TV programmes about hospitals, hotels and schools and felt that these gave a more accurate picture of life as it is in certain places of work. These programmes were more factual and real and were not set up for a TV audience by cynical producers. There were some lively essays and it was refreshing to see that candidates had strong opinions about the impact that reality TV can have.

**Question 1(e) « À l'école, on devrait consacrer plus de temps aux activités artistiques. » Partagez-vous ce point de vue?**

This question evoked some very strong responses from candidates across the range of ability. There was a diversity of opinion about the value of artistic activities in school. Some felt that arts type subjects provided a welcome relief from the stresses of academic work at school. They felt that art, music and drama gave students a chance to express themselves creatively and to show their individuality. They were clear that school should be a place where the whole person is developed, where the focus is on variety and enjoyment and social interaction as well as academic learning. Other candidates were vehement in their view that there was no place for frivolous arts subjects since school should be a preparation for university and the world of work. To these candidates, arts subjects were a waste of time and that the school curriculum should be based entirely around those subjects which would be necessary for future success. They felt that if students wished to pursue these options they should do so outside school. Some candidates felt that there should not be more time devoted to arts subjects in school but instead more time for sport as this was essential to a healthy lifestyle. They felt that today's young people are losing interest in physical activity as they spend more and more time connected to phones, laptops and computer games. Candidates on both sides of the argument were well able to express their opinions and there were some interesting and thought provoking answers.

**Part II: Usage**

**Exercise 1**

This exercise was generally well understood by candidates with most achieving 3 or 4 out of 5 marks. Incorrect answers were distributed across all questions. The following incorrect answers were seen:

**Q3** – *achétée, achété*

**Q4** – *pleuvra*

**Q5** – *s'est coupée, se couperais*

**Exercise 2**

This exercise tested a range of grammatical points. Few candidates achieved full marks but many achieved 3 or 4 out of 5. Some of the more interesting answers were:

**Q7** – *se nous assesoir, de s'asseoir, d'asseyiez-vous, d'asseyons*

**Q8** – *duquelle*

**Q9** – *il prenait*

**Q10** – *agisse vite*

**Exercise 3**

Candidates of all abilities achieved good marks on this exercise, showing that they had understood both the content and grammatical structure of the passage. **Questions 20, 23 and 30** were some of the clearer discriminators although incorrect answers were distributed across the whole exercise.

# FRENCH

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<p><b>Paper 9779/04</b> <b>Topics and Texts</b></p>
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## **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**

Candidates should plan their essays before setting pen to paper. A well-structured essay will be sensibly paragraphed, and the discussion will lead from an introduction to a conclusion.

In responding to the question on a literary text, candidates should reflect on the whole question, not just focus on one specific word.

For the Cultural Topics section, candidates are required to refer to two sources.

For both parts of this paper, a good level of understanding and knowledge of the texts and films is required, expressed in well-argued responses with relevant illustration. The topics section invites the acquisition of a broad cultural knowledge of the topic studied through the material chosen. For answers in French, candidates should strive to achieve a high level of accuracy and determine to use a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns; a sense of idiom would be a bonus.

In both parts of the paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully
- plan their answer keeping the question in mind throughout
- define the terms of the question in the introduction
- support any assertions with close references to the text and/or film
- make sure that quotations, if used, support the argument
- make sure that all quotations are accurate
- use paraphrasing and allusion as an alternative to overlong quotations
- make sure 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 adjectival 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.

### **General comments**

The examiners continue to be impressed by the candidates' preparation for, and engagement with, the paper. The quality of answers indicates that teachers and candidates have established a good understanding of the requirements of the syllabus, and more particularly, the demands of this paper. The candidates' scripts confirm that the aims of the syllabus to raise cultural awareness and to develop critical faculties are being fulfilled, often impressively so. Both candidates and teachers are to be congratulated on the hard work and the effectiveness of preparation for the examination.

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 overwhelming 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 body of the essay. 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. The level of language was, in the main, of a satisfactory to good standard, with some scripts demonstrating a high degree of sophistication in the use of both vocabulary and syntax.

All candidates answered the questions in the correct language. The answers on cultural topics indicated at least satisfactory knowledge of the source material and there was an attempt to compare the two sources. A narrative approach was less in evidence. The quality of language was generally at least satisfactory, and often good, indicating that candidates had built up the requisite vocabulary and were comfortable in writing extensively in the target language. Some common problems of vocabulary included the French equivalents of: 'isolation', 'veil', 'way of life', 'oppressed' and 'sensible'. It was reassuring, though, that most candidates attributed the right gender to key words, such as: *problème*, *manque*, *divorce*.

This session saw a significant proportion of candidates attempting a commentary question for **Part II**. For the most part, this was a sensible choice, and it was heartening to see that many candidates had been well trained in commentary technique. They showed an ability to analyse themes, characters and stylistic considerations with close reference to the extract. A number of the answers to commentary questions used the extract as a platform for a general discussion of the text, often making little reference to the extract. Such answers cannot gain high marks. Where specific training for the exercise has not been taught, candidates should be given clear instructions by their teachers about attempting a commentary question.

Many candidates were able to use precise reference to the text to support their argument. A few answers, though, gave 'quotations' in English, which is unnecessary, as the original language of the texts is French and the examiners do not require a translation.

### **Comments on specific questions**

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

##### **Question 1(a)**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

##### **Question 1(b)**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 2(a)

This was a popular topic and answers displayed at least satisfactory knowledge of the sources and an appreciation of the social and economic questions which are raised. The best answers took a thematic approach and tailored their argument to the question. There was a tendency to take a narrative approach if 'inquiétante' was not defined clearly; what was required is consideration of the reasons why society in both works was worrying and alarming. Better answers referred to a number of worrying aspects: inequality, racism, material deprivation, lack of integration with mainstream French society and the attitude of the *Français de souche*. Candidates who managed to take a step back to synthesise and see similarities and differences in a separate part produced more exciting pieces of writing. Those answers which tended to the narrative could have pointed out that Ali's radicalisation was the exception, rather than symptomatic of a mass social problem; or that Béni's desperate attempts to become integrated into society could be contrasted with Ali's increasing frustration at not finding a post. Answers on 'La Haine' tended to focus on the violent conflict with the police as justification of behaviour and outlook. Greater insight was afforded by reference to the telling episode in the art gallery where the lack of communication between the representatives of two social strata, or Saïd's misunderstanding of social norms, underlines both the violent assertiveness of the three central characters and their desire to see things in their own terms. Nevertheless, all candidates showed engagement with the question and had clearly enjoyed studying the topic.

### Question 2(b)

Again, this popular question was generally handled at least satisfactorily. The overall impression was that candidates had been prepared well for this topic and were able to express themselves clearly. The factor which tended to distinguish effectiveness of answers was to examine the term 'exclusion'. In some essays there was a temptation to give illustrations of exclusion without identifying who was being excluded and which factors or people were responsible for this. Some candidates spent too much time on giving evidence of exclusion and did not always devote enough space to constructing an argument to show the inevitability or otherwise of exclusion. It was not uncommon for purely negative aspects of a given society (France in this case) to be considered as forging a character's identity, when positive aspects are also part and parcel of the composition of identity. Better answers contained a real analysis of the types of exclusion at stake (*fracture sociale, géographique, économique* etc.) and were able to discuss context and presentation to judge the inevitability of exclusion. Frequently, there were limited and common references to the sources in essays, (e.g. the TV crew in 'La Haine', the number of job applications which Ali had sent, the racism of Béni's teacher), but better answers were able to provide more extensive illustration which evidenced a deeper understanding of the sources and often strengthened and refined the argument. Thus, 'La Désintégration' provided a perceptive qualifying statement on the possibility and feasibility of integrating in society through Rachid, Ali's brother.

### Question 3(a)

This was a popular question. It was encouraging to see that the standard of answers was high; the best work combined sophisticated argumentation, directly addressing the question with detailed knowledge of the films. Candidates choosing this topic analysed it extremely well, showing the potentially subversive nature of love and distinguishing love from other emotions – fear, hatred – in 'Delicatessen'. Love (expressed not just as an emotional response between individuals, but also through poetry and music) was contrasted with loveless lust and with complete contempt for fellow citizens. Both films were seen to have a cautiously optimistic faith in humanity.

### Question 3(b)

The candidates choosing this question compared the two films. The responses were strong and well argued. They agreed with the assertion that society might accept despotic rule, but that some individuals would retain and nurture the ability to resist authority. The acquiescence of the tenants in 'Delicatessen' to cannibalism, murder and a not so benign dictatorship was effectively contrasted with the mind control, repression and sedation by the authorities in 'Alphaville'. Resistance to Alpha 60's regime in the shape of Lemmy Caution, poetry and emotion had a parallel in the Troglodistes, the (literal and metaphorical underground vegetarian non-conformists) and in the stubborn continuation of culture in a threatening world through music making.



#### Question 4(a)

Candidates often showed that they had been producing sophisticated work on themes such as identity and the meaning of journeys, and the responses on this topic displayed a higher incidence of conceptualisation.

Answers showed good knowledge of the sources and, on the whole, were thoughtful and perceptive in their analysis. It was a question which allowed candidates a certain amount of freedom with which to frame their answer and many took the opportunity to demonstrate a very good understanding of the issues at stake, whereas less impressive answers submitted to a temptation to list elements without much unity. The film gave rise to some impressive analysis, though weaker answers were less focused on the question and appeared to reproduce parts of previous essays. The novel by van Cauwelaert was often thoughtfully analysed. Themes of identity, class, ethnicity, crime and the satire of bureaucracy were commonly mentioned, with examples of Aziz' childhood and adolescence commented upon; Schneider's relationship with girls, parents and colleagues, as well as his representation of French administration was frequently alluded to; better answers also referred to the economic situation in Lorraine. There was good engagement with the Semprun novel, focussing more on individual details of the novel to comment on depictions of France and the French, though stronger answers also considered the role of history and the overall picture of France which emerges from the novel as a whole.

#### Question 4(b)

Candidates who elected to answer this question showed very good knowledge of the sources and were able to produce thoughtful answers which looked in turn at themes and elements of the question. All candidates were able to illustrate instances of respect and contempt, and more thoughtful answers looked more analytically at the different facets of these characteristics. Examples of contempt vary from the most extreme meaning (industrial scale execution), through the very personal, (spitting and racial abuse on the metro), to the contempt of governments (e.g. deportation and resettlement of Aziz, who had no genuine documentation). The novel by van Cauwelaert was, in some cases, less convincingly discussed, particularly when just two or three events were touched upon. Candidates were generally successful in framing a discussion, rather than simply listing examples. There were some very good responses which included considerations of the balance of values and attitudes in the film and novels, the actors, the origins, the causes, etc. Quotations and specific references to the novels or film were appropriately used in support of the points made.

#### Question 5(b)

Candidates chose to compare Sagan's novel and the film. Answers typically centred on Marjane and Cécile and concluded that Marjane, despite a harder life, had, in the end, achieved a degree of happiness, whereas Cécile's life of 'tristesse' was just about to begin. Some candidates took Cécile's 'return to normal' at the end as a positive sign. The first-person viewpoint encouraged candidates to focus on the main characters, perhaps because they read 'les personnages principaux' for 'les femmes'. It would have been relevant to include Anne and Elsa (who might be taken to represent the two opposites in Cécile's binary view of life and who have contrasting ideas about happiness), and Marjane's mother (who is definitely not happy). Equally worthy of analysis is Marjane's grandmother, who is at ease with her life; she serves as a *leitmotif* of good sense and encouragement through Marjane's passage to adulthood.

#### Question 5(b)

This question attracted a range of responses. Candidates who started by espousing a rather bald, binary comparison, stating that Marjane lacked freedom, whereas Cécile had too much, then had difficulty refining their viewpoint. Stronger answers showed that candidates had given enough thought to the idea of freedom from various controlling factors, political, social and personal, and freedom to achieve certain goals in life. The period of exile in Austria was, in the main, not given much attention, whereas the significant social and intellectual freedom during her time in Vienna is key to understanding Marjane's development; it also serves as a contrast to her behaviour in Tehran. Only a few answers pointed out the contrast between public and private life in Tehran: considerable freedom was possible - free discussion, non-conformist dress, consumption of alcohol, music and dancing took place behind closed doors. Some candidates wrote lengthy descriptions of French society and social attitudes in the fifties and gave background information about pre- and post-revolutionary Iran. Whilst this is useful background knowledge, candidates are advised not to devote excessive space to this in timed essays (in extreme cases, about half the essay comprised background information). Nevertheless, the question allowed all candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of the works.

## Part II: Texts

### Question 6(a)

The commentary on this extract was generally done very well. It was evident that candidates had been trained in commentary technique and were able to demonstrate a close reading of the extract. Whilst most candidates concentrated on Hippolyte's internal dilemma and were able to explain why Aricie was a political problem, rather fewer brought out his characteristic hesitation out of a sense of duty. Thérèse's speech was decently analysed, though not many answers mentioned his general line of argument to convince Hippolyte to give in to love, including the series of rhetorical questions. The best answers were able to analyse vocabulary, structure and tone.

### Question 6(b)

This question was handled in different ways. The best responses accepted that the original title had been modified for good reason and were able to advance ideas about the relative roles and impact of Phèdre and Hippolyte within the context of the form of tragedy. Most answers identified the parallels between these two characters, the lure of forbidden love, the tension between passion and duty, though not all suggested that Phèdre's inner turmoil is brought out more with greater intensity than Hippolyte's. Other candidates took the question to mean that Hippolyte's very role in the play was at risk of being excised and argued vehemently for his continued presence in the play. Few candidates paused to think that if Racine had changed the title, there might have been a good reason for this.

### Question 6(c)

There were a number of outstandingly good answers from candidates who could analyse the subtle and changing relationship between reason and passion. Detailed knowledge of the text scene by scene was necessary to show the crucial moments in the triumph of passion and the power of reason to analyse but not guide action. Various interpretations were given of the nature of the relationship between Aricie and Hippolyte and between Oenone and Phèdre. Some answers focused almost exclusively on the force of passion, rather than analysing the struggle between reason and passion in the play.

### Question 7(a)

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 7(b)

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 7(c)

Candidates had clearly enjoyed engaging with these two contes by Voltaire and there were some very good answers which showed real engagement with the question. They articulated the idea of different types of journey, geographical, physical, and then more metaphysical, with appropriate illustration, and balanced their analysis from both stories. Generally speaking, essays analysed *Micromégas* more effectively than *Zadig*, perhaps because they felt able to analyse *Micromégas* more closely as it is shorter. A number of responses favoured the narrative approach and went on to list the trials and tribulations of the virtuous hero. What is crucial is to sift through the material and adapt it to the question, rather than writing everything known about the texts.

### Question 8(a)

Candidate demonstrated a good knowledge of the text, though many answers did not follow the instruction to focus on the passage. The commentary exercise requires sustained close reading, and whilst there were some relevant comments about the scar, in general the focus of responses left the material of the passage and made too many references to the novel as a whole. Insufficient attention was paid to the choice of vocabulary and the structure of the passage. Comment on vocabulary may have been hindered by lack of knowledge of certain words, such as 's'entamer'. There were, by contrast, a few very good answers which analysed the passage systematically and brought out the physical and psychological implications of the scar and its origin.

### Question 8(b)

Responses here indicated a good knowledge of the novel. This question tended to be approached in a descriptive way; narrative dominated analysis. Candidates should analyse the important moments in the development of Thérèse and provide appropriate examples from the text. There was some interesting work on her Algerian roots and how this determined her passionate temperament, her subsequent feeling of imprisonment and claustrophobia, and all essays commented on the comparison with François the cat. Stronger answers were able to point out Thérèse's changing character and give examples of her reactions and behaviour responding to her needs and aims at different points. Some answers went into some detail about the tenets of Naturalism, though did not necessarily go on to demonstrate how these precepts fit in with the presentation of Thérèse in the novel.

### Question 8(c)

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 9(a)

In general the commentary was reasonable, especially the response to the first part of the question, although at times candidates resorted more to skilful paraphrase than analysis of the passage. All answers showed familiarity with the circumstances of the relationship of Mme Walter and Duroy. Many went on to analyse how effusive Mme Walter is in her passion for Bel-Ami, (the frequency of letters etc.). More incisive answers were able to demonstrate Duroy's detached attitude in response to this passionate onslaught, though few answers noted the last word of the passage which would have helped them gauge the tone. Few candidates appreciated how negative Mme Walter's portrayal is here: the 'vierge de coeur' was not really understood, nor the metaphors of the seasons, 'automne pâle' and 'été froid' which were seen as an oxymoron by some, but their sense was not grasped, any more than the effect of the childish terms of endearment which are listed in the second paragraph. Not enough was made of the stiflingly possessive attitude of Mme Walter and the repulsion felt by Duroy.

### Question 9(b)

Candidates had a lot to say about the depiction of society in the novel, though not all answers demonstrated an understanding of satire, with the result that answers often fell short of addressing the question fully. A few answers, for example, viewed satire simply as 'humour' and went on to list occurrences which candidates judged to be amusing. It was important for candidates to adequately define the terms of their discussion with regard to 'satire'. The idea of criticism was prevalent in many scripts, but it did not always go hand in hand with comedy, mockery and irony. Stronger answers showed an ability to consider the various scenes and characters that are the butt of the author's satire and select them to build a convincing demonstration.

### Question 9(c)

This was a popular choice and answers displayed a good knowledge of the text and proper awareness of the various characters, the morality of their actions and their position in society. This question invited responses mainly about Georges Duroy, but it was perfectly acceptable to include M. Walter. Other characters, such as Madeleine, did not obviously fit that category; all the other characters' position in society being rather static. Quite a few answers took a censorious tone in criticising Duroy. Good answers pointed not just to the fact that Duroy used women, but gave details of his scheming and manipulative behaviour, for example in engineering the discovery by police of his wife Madeleine's adultery with Laroche-Mathieu. Strong answers were able to analyse the notion of moral values, the importance of money, the difference between moral and monetary value, and the confusion of the two within Duroy.

### Question 10(a)

The commentary exercise revealed a good understanding of the novel in general and of the stifling nature of provincial life amongst the pine forests. Answers made mention of society and location in line 1, some details of the architecture in the first paragraph, the appearance of the inevitability of marriage between the two families, and Bernard's hunting habits. However, a good number of answers did not analyse the passage systematically, and many details were skated over or ignored. Stronger performances pointed out not just the relevance of the description of the buildings in the first paragraph, but also considered the importance of M. Larroque's actions and feelings, Aunt Clara's liking of solitude and lack of gossip and, of course, the reader's introduction to Bernard.

**Question 10(b)**

There were many thoughtful and well-argued responses to this question which examined Bernard's character, actions and family background thoroughly, as well as the way in which he is portrayed by Thérèse. A few candidates chose to concentrate more, or occasionally exclusively, on the subject of the reader's sympathy for Thérèse, suggesting the rewriting of a previous essay. It was acceptable to scrutinise the extent to which Bernard is also a product of his milieu and a victim, but it was also important to consider the question of narrative point of view, overlooked by some. There was proper consideration of the reasons for Bernard marrying Thérèse (property and wealth). It was an unloving marriage, fuelled by her jealousy at Anne's relationship. However, Bernard and the family did not want the marriage to be seen to fail, so it was not simply 'voué à l'échec', as some suggested.

**Question 10(c)**

There were some thoughtful and well-informed answers to this question. Whilst many answers maintained a judicious balance in their analysis of the different characters, some candidates omitted to mention Tante Clara and M. Larroque, focusing instead on Anne de la Trave and Jean Azévédo. If Bernard was included in the list of secondary characters, it was important not to give him too much prominence in the discussion, as there were plenty of other characters to study. What was important was to find a link between them, or a link between them and Thérèse, to avoid producing a list effect. Stronger answers explained the importance of Anne's role in making Thérèse aware that love does exist, and in her becoming jealous when she realised that her relationship with Bernard was only a pale reflection of that of Anne with Jean. They also saw Jean's role as a catalyst for Thérèse's attempt at poisoning Bernard and seeking freedom in Paris. A few discerning candidates also made mention of Julie Bellade to illustrate further the overriding interests of the family and the similar fate awaiting Thérèse.

**Question 11(a)**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 11(b)**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 11(c)**

All candidates agreed with this statement and most provided good evidence to support their views. There were many similar points made about the de-sacralisation of ancient Greek drama, the role of the Choeur, the primacy of principles, the Second World War parable, but it was crucial to tackle the question head on. The point was that both characters/protagonists were justified in their respective (and antagonistic) positions. Créon understood Antigone's motives perfectly, but he is a prisoner of his function. Good answers included the dichotomy between principles and compromise. Stronger responses recognised Antigone's conviction that personal liberty must be upheld whatever the cost, where the contrast was submission to duty; they mentioned the difference between Créon's acceptance of compromise and Antigone's refusal to do so. Some candidates relied too heavily on what they knew about the original play and how Anouilh adapted it in his version, rather than on the text itself.

**Question 12(a)**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 12(b)**

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

**Question 12(c)**

Candidates focused on the advertising agency as a source of images, and on Laurence's insistence that her daughter should not become a 'belle image'. The relevance of the title to other characters and to the novel as a whole was generally less well done. Better answers demonstrated a degree of abstraction about image and images. Candidates needed to have thought about the relationship of idealised images to reality and about the way in which images precede and govern the reality they might be thought to reflect.