

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

For teachers/examiners:

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below) and, if necessary and appropriate, interrupt the Topic Presentation if it overruns significantly.
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section, but answer briefly.
- More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks and examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- In the Topic Conversation do not go back over questions already answered or material already covered in the Topic Presentation.
- In the General Conversation do not return to the topic of the Topic Presentation.
- Cover a range of topics (not a single topic) in the General Conversation, some in depth, vary questions and topics from one candidate to another, be prepared to identify and follow the interests and passions of the candidate (not your own), and keep your own contributions to a minimum.
- Create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit a one-word or purely factual answer.

For candidates:

- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation.
- Ask questions of the examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to qualify for the full range of marks. Make sure your questions are relevant to the topic under discussion.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society: *The presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken. This must be more than a passing reference*, and candidates who live in a francophone country and who speak about an aspect of their own culture must make it clear beyond doubt to which country they are referring.

General comments

A candidate's performance during the test depends to a large extent on how well they are examined. It is the Examiner's responsibility to be thoroughly familiar with the syllabus and the format of the test. In particular, Examiners should make sure they keep to the timings of each section (listed below). The test should not last more than twenty minutes. Examiners must be careful not to disadvantage candidates by:

- not observing the prescribed time-frame of the test,
- not observing the format and/or the syllabus of the test.
- not prompting candidates for (enough) questions in the conversation sections.

- speaking too much themselves (monopolising the conversation) and not giving candidates the chance to speak.
- not creating a natural a conversation, perhaps by asking a list of pre-prepared questions requiring short, factual answers.

It may be helpful to keep in mind that the test is designed as a progression from the totally prepared (topic presentation) through the less predictable (topic conversation) to the unknown (general conversation).

Personal comments and discussion of topics which are (potentially) sensitive for individual candidates must be avoided.

All speaking tests should be recorded on a CD, preferably in MP3/MP4 format.

Before the speaking exam

Examiners should choose a room which is quiet, has good acoustics and where there will be no interruptions. Examiners should check the recording equipment to make sure that it is working properly and position the microphone so that both the Examiner's voice and the candidate's can be heard clearly. (N.B. the candidate's voice is more important than the Examiner's.) Unless there is an emergency, the recording should not be stopped or paused during the test.

Introduction

It is the Examiner's responsibility to identify clearly at the beginning of each candidate's recording:

- The title and the syllabus number of the test. This will be French Language, speaking test (8682/01) or French, speaking test (9716/01).
- The Centre name and the Centre number.
- The name of the Examiner.
- The date of the test.
- The name and number of the candidate as they appear on the Cambridge International documentation.

It is essential that this information is clear, complete and correct. Candidates should not be asked to introduce themselves.

Assessment

Many Examiners mark accurately, and understand and observe the mark scheme. They usually ensure that they are marking objectively and not letting their knowledge of the candidates influence their marking. However, it happens occasionally that Examiners award marks out of 10 for those components which have a maximum mark of 5 i.e. *Providing Information* and *Seeking Opinions* and there are often errors of addition on the working mark sheet (WMS).

A significant number of Examiners each year do not halve the mark for *Content and Presentation* in the topic presentation in cases where the topic is not clearly related to a French-speaking country. This is a requirement of the mark scheme.

Many Examiners each year award marks for *Seeking Opinions* in the conversation sections, even though the candidates have not asked questions.

After the speaking exam

Please make sure to:

- Make and keep a copy of the recordings before sending them to Cambridge International.
- If you are transferring the recordings from a computer to a CD, check that the recordings have been transferred successfully.
- Check the additions on the Working Mark Sheet.
- In the case of large centres which send only a sample, please choose a cross-section of marks i.e. top, bottom and a range of marks in-between.
- Send the WMS for ALL candidates or moderation, not just the WMS of the candidates in the sample.
- Transfer the mark totals to the MS1 (Computer Mark Sheet) or Internal Assessment Mark Sheet.
- When completing the MS1, please remember to fill in the grid AND the mark column.
- Make, and keep, copies of all paperwork.
- Post all paperwork and the recordings to Cambridge International as soon as you can after the tests have been completed.
- It is important to identify the recordings clearly and completely:
 - on the CD case or envelope
 - on the CD itself. (Please use marker pen, not sticky labels, as labels tend to become unstuck with use and clog CD drives.)
 - in the file names/ tracks on the CD, so candidate numbers are visible on-screen

Comments on individual tasks

Topic presentation

- This section of test should last 3–3½ minutes.
- The Examiner should ask the candidate what topic they have prepared and invite them to present it.
- Examiners should interrupt the candidate gently but firmly, if the candidate speaks for longer. Timings often vary considerably, both too short and too long.
- The Examiner should allow the candidate to speak without interruption.
- Candidates are allowed to bring into the test materials which illustrate what they want to say (though this is not a requirement of the syllabus) and a cue card, but not a script of their topic presentation.
- Candidates must clearly relate their topics to a country where French is an official language. A passing reference to a francophone country is not enough. If the candidate is taking the test in a francophone country, they must make it clear that they are talking about that country in particular, perhaps contrasting it with another.
- If a candidate does not relate their topic to a French-speaking country, the mark awarded for Content/Presentation must be halved by the Examiner.
- Only one topic should be presented.
- Teachers and candidates should bear in mind when choosing the topic that it must allow the presentation and discussion of opinions and ideas. Topics which are largely factual and provide no opportunity for in-depth discussion cannot have access to the full range of marks.
- It is important for candidates to choose topics which really interest them. In some centres most of the candidates talk about the same topic, which is not in the spirit of the examination.
- Candidates are not required to ask questions in this section (but they are in the other two sections).
- At the end of the section, the Examiner must make it clear to the candidate that they are moving on to the second section.

Topic conversation

- This section of the test should last 7–8 minutes.
- In this section, candidates have the opportunity to expand and develop what they have outlined in the topic presentation.
- The aim is to allow the candidate to display their knowledge of the topic and their language ability.
- For this reason, Examiners should ask clear, concise questions, preferably open questions which allow candidates to give more than a one-word answer.
- The aim is to create a free-flowing conversation, not a series of unrelated questions.
- Examiners should limit what they say themselves, so that candidates are free to speak for most of the time.
- Questions should not be pre-rehearsed to the extent that they are predictable and therefore sound scripted.
- Candidates have to ask the Examiner questions during this section which relate to the topic.
- Candidates should ask at least two questions, preferably more, and should try to vary the form in which they ask them.
- It is the Examiner's responsibility to prompt candidates for questions if they do not ask any or ask only one.
- At the end of the section, the Examiner must make it clear to the candidate that they are moving on to the third section.

General conversation

- This section of the test should last 8–9 minutes (slightly longer than the topic presentation).
- In this section, candidates have the opportunity to display their ability to discuss other topics and to show how they are able to cope linguistically with unprepared topics.
- Although candidates will have practised for this section of the test, they should not know in advance what topics the Examiner will invite them to speak about.
- Examiners should not ask candidates a list of questions, pre-prepared or not, requiring one-word answers.
- Examiners should discuss at least two topics in this section. The aim is to discuss the topics in depth.
- Candidates should ask at least two questions, preferably more, and should try to vary the form in which they ask them.
- The Examiner should not return to the subject of the topic presentation and should steer candidates away from doing so.
- Examiners should vary the topics for discussion from one candidate to another. A number of Examiners have two or three topics which they discuss with all candidates in the entry.
- This section is not designed to test knowledge of facts, but to discuss ideas and air opinions. Some Examiners still make the section into a general knowledge quiz.
- Examiners who are also the candidates' teachers must remember they are Examiners in this context and avoid giving career or personal advice during the test.
- It is the Examiner's responsibility to prompt candidates for questions if they do not ask any or ask only one.
- At the end of the section, the Examiner must make it clear to the candidate that the test is at an end.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/21 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.

In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should **not** begin the answer by writing out the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.

In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **(a)** and **(b)** combined) is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.

In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

Candidates should be instructed **not** to use an additional booklet unnecessarily for a few extra words which could easily be included in the space provided in original answer booklet. In extreme cases, this involved only two or three words written in an otherwise blank 4- or 8-page additional booklet. Apart from the obvious waste of resources, this practice significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Candidates (and invigilators) should be instructed **not** to submit Inserts with the answer booklets. The front page of the Insert states that it is not assessed by the Examiner. Submitting it significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Illegibility remains a significant (and growing) problem, partly because of poor handwriting (notably the letters r and s appearing identical on the end of words) and partly because of ambiguous and messy crossings-out and minute insertions.

Overall, the texts were felt to be of an appropriate level and approachable by the overwhelming majority. The subject matter appeared to be of interest and relevance to the candidates.

The paper was largely comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled the various tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, but there were also candidates at the other end of the range whose linguistic competence and knowledge were simply over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

Candidates usually appeared familiar with the format of the paper and knew how to set about tackling the different types of question. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but some candidates still neglect the simple answer and look to over-complicate things by attempting structures which they cannot handle, producing answers so confused that they cannot be rewarded.

Too many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *Ces recommandations risquent-elles ... (3c)* ; *Clément se sent-il ... (3f)* ; *Les automobilistes klaxonnent-ils parce que... Les service d'urgence déclenchent-ils ... Les jeunes motards accélèrent-ils... (4a)*. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent series, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks at this level. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complication. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond the word limit is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent years, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects). To give just one example among very many, the candidate who pointlessly started with *Comme c'est mentionné dans les deux textes "Le silence, ça fait peur" et "La pollution sonore", les dangers de l'utilisation des écouteurs et l'exposition au bruit perpétuel sont les suivants* simply wasted 30 words by effectively writing out the question and the titles of the texts. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

Other candidates made the same point several times or went into unnecessary detail.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which sometimes made legibility a problem.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Answers from some candidates appeared to be chosen largely at random and bore no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question. Candidates would be well advised to narrow the choice down by identifying the part of speech involved.

Item (a) saw a fair number of candidates recognising the verb form *bataille* as a substitute in this context for *lutte*. *L'utilisation* was sometimes improbably selected possibly because it started with the same sound as *lutte*.

Item (b) was probably the most successfully identified.

In Item (c), A number of candidates gave *marche* as the answer, probably because it begins with the same four letters as *marchander*. *Fragmenter* at least had the merit of being an infinitive but *coupé* did not.

In Item (d), *freine* was not widely recognised, and some of those who realised that *retarde* was a verb rather than part of the phrase *en retard* which they knew, opted for *couche*, *coucher* or *fragmenter*.

In Item (e), *endormissement* was sometimes taken to be an adverb ending in *-ment* and therefore to be a possible substitute for *inutilement*. Others didn't observe the 'footprint principle' (see above) and offered either *mais en vain* or simply *vain*.

Question 2

There were some very good answers to this question from the very strongest candidates, but often the task proved demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures and some appeared to see this as an exercise in simply re-arranging the order the words of the original, with no regard for sense.

In Item 2(a), a number of candidates thought that changing *La musique colore la vie* to *La vie colore la musique* was likely to be sufficient to earn the mark. Many of those who realised that they might need to do something more than this were not successful with the transformation into the passive. Fewer still saw the need to make the past participle agree.

In Item 2(b), Many candidates handled the transformation to indirect speech successfully.

In Item 2(c), finding the correct form of *percevoir* proved problematic for a number of candidates and many resorted to rearranging the words of the original to produce something that made no sense: e.g. *on perçu comme le bruit est indispensable*.

Item 2(d) seemed to be the most challenging one, with few candidates able to produce *créée*. Others did not went wrong when trying to use *par nous* or *par on*.

Item 2(e) saw stronger candidates recognising the need for a subjunctive and a good number of them producing the correct form of *soient*. Others tried unsuccessfully to incorporate *chances* in their answer, not realising that this idea had already been covered by *probable*.

Question 3

There was a tendency among weaker candidates simply to seize on a word in the question and to write out the sentence from the text which contained it or something similar, in the hope of including the answer somewhere along the way. Questions are usually specifically designed to prevent this.

In Item 3(a), candidates often described what Clément does (walking in town or doing his homework with his earphones on) rather than the consequences of what he does, as required by the question. *Fragmenter son attention* was often enough paraphrased to earn the second mark, but the first mark was often lost either by misunderstanding *la circulation* as having something to do with the flow of blood rather than traffic, or by those who did not understand the difference between *entendre* and *écouter*. Others did not understand the difference between *dormir*, *s'endormir* and *se coucher*.

Item 3(b) asked what *les jeunes risquent de faire moins bien*, suggesting the need for verbs. *Audition* and *pertes auditives* were both regularly lifted, and attempts to avoid doing so were not always successful (e.g. *la sourdance; ils risquent de perdre ses oreilles/leur audio/audit*). As opposed to **3(a)**, it was sleep disturbance that was the issue here for the second mark. Most who saw the need for a verb found *apprendre* for the third mark.

Item 3(c), proved relatively straightforward, with candidates often able to identify the need to limit time and volume, even if it was often awkwardly expressed. The need to replace nouns by verbs was again indicated by the appearance of *faire* in the question.

In Item 3(d), stronger candidates showed that they understood the desire to test limits and young people's belief in their own invulnerability, although the occasional use of *le pansement* rather than *la pensée* here caused confusion. They then managed to avoid lifting *le manque de dégâts immédiatement évidents* by rephrasing it as *les dégâts n'apparaissent/se manifestent pas tout de suite* or similar.

In Item 3(e), again, candidates who saw the need to use verbs found good ways of doing so (e.g. *on peut s'oublier*). Others demonstrated a lack of understanding by including the *de* of the original (*on peut oublier de soi/de sa situation*): Attempts to express the idea of *exclusion* for the second mark resulted in some erroneous forms and a number of candidates did not understand that *ceux* referred to people rather than things.

Item 3(f) suffered from a large amount of lifting, and those who resisted the temptation were often unable to use (*se*) *sentir* and (*s'*)*ennuyer* correctly.

Question 4

Item 4(a) appeared to be understood quite well, although some of the responses were muddled: *Ils ne peuvent pas être impatients*. *Se frayer un chemin dans la circulation* was often lifted, sometimes emerging as *s'effrayer*. *Se faire remarquer* was often successfully rephrased by using *attirent/cherchent l'attention* or similar.

In Item 4(b), the majority did not understand *les voies ferrées*, and imagined they suggested road or air traffic. More understood the much higher consumption of medication to relieve hypertension by those living beneath the flightpaths of planes, and successfully manipulated *la prise* into a finite verb. *Les médecins* sometimes confused the issue.

In Item 4(c), a good number simply said that these machines were designed to cause noise and stress. *Les aspirateurs* were commonly thought to be some sort of breathing device.

In Item 4(d), the first mark was often lost because candidates contented themselves with mentioning *fêtes* without specifying that these took place late at night. Stronger candidates understood that *aboiments* must refer to dogs and formed a recognisable verb.

In Item 4(e), stronger candidates managed to find adjectives to express the noun *épuisement* (*épuisé, très fatigué*) as well as using phrases such as *notre efficacité au travail va être réduite/on va travailler moins efficacement* for *diminution d'efficacité au travail*. Others offered rather vague statements about impaired concentration and were similarly vague in simply saying that there was an increased risk of accidents for the third mark, where *On risque de s'endormir en conduisant* was among the better answers.

In Item 4(f), lifting *les oreilles n'ont pas de paupières* was not sufficient on its own to earn the first mark, but those who demonstrated understanding by saying *on ne peut pas fermer les oreilles* scored it. *The sense of submergés par une vague* eluded many but those who expressed the idea of drowning, being flooded/suffocated achieved the second mark.

Question 5

This Question asked candidates to summarise the dangers of earphones and exposure to constant noise, and then to suggest ways in which they as parents might protect their children against these dangers.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a reasonable number, but with only the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. Some candidates simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material. A number of others produced general essays about the topic without including the required rewardable elements.

The most commonly identified dangers included the effect on sleep, on concentration, on hearing and on learning. Also commonly found were exhaustion, increased chances of illness, inefficiency and falling asleep at the wheel.

The **Personal Response** elicited a large number which simply reiterated ideas from the texts, rather than including anything personal or any ideas of their own, which would have earned higher marks. Some suggested giving children ear defenders or devising alternative activities and opportunities to reduce the appeal of their earphones, laying down rules about when and where children could be permitted to use them etc.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a commendable control of structure. Candidates at the other end of the mark range struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a coherent form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) were problematic in a large number of scripts. Some candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make any agreements at all. E.g. *Ils se disputent* ; *les effets ne ce produits pas* ; *des médicaments sons consommez* ; *les voisin on des conflit* ; *ces impossible fairmé*.

Incorrect verb forms were numerous, with some candidates struggling to conjugate common verbs such as *mettre*, *prendre*, *devoir*, *pouvoir* in the present indicative. Even *avoir* (*ils n'ons pas*), *être* (*ils sons*) and *faire* (*faissez/faisent*) proved to be too challenging for some.

The use of the infinitive (-er) ending – or indeed anything else that sounded vaguely similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-é) in some scripts.

On/ont, *son/sont*, *ces/ses/c'est*, *sa/s'a/ça* often seemed to be selected at random. *Mal* was almost invariably used instead of *mauvais*, and *ses* was commonly found in place of *leurs*. *Pourquoi* was sometimes used when *parce que* was meant.

The approach to spelling was in some cases phonetic, even with very common words such as *pasque*: One sometimes had to resort to sounding out what was written in order to understand what was intended : *plus taux* ; *des tôts* ; *sa effreille* ; *ils nettoit les mesons* ; *a par sa* ; *mais enfants* ; *il ce sans sans vie* ; *sent le savoir* ; *entant* (for *entend*).

The influence of other languages (e.g. English or Spanish) was much in evidence in words such as: *la duration*, *limpir*, *entender*, *associétés avec*, *le reducement*, *interrupter/interrommer* ; *exclui(e)r/excluser/excluser* ; *sousvivre* ; *submerser* ; *impresser* ; *restricter* ; *emprouver* ; *relier sur*.

Time spent in studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be time well spent : *interruption/interrommer* ; *apprentissage/apprendre* ; *réduction/réduire* ; *prise/prendre* ; *diminution/diminuer* etc.



That said, the linguistic ability of the stronger candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, if not always in a very polished form.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/22 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
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- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should **not** begin the answer by writing out the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 140 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
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General comments

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Too many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *L'obésité peut-elle nuire... (3c)* ; *Les écoles ont-elles essayé de... (3e)*. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent years, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks at this level. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complication. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need reconsider.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond the recommended word limit is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent years, candidates from some centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects). To give just one example among very many, the candidate who started with *En France, des arguments ont été présenter pour et contre l'augmentation de taxes sur les sodas. Quelques argument ont été présentes par ce qui sont en faveur de l'augmentation et ce qui sont contre : Les arguments en faveur sont ...* simply wasted over a quarter of the available words, and did little to enhance the Quality of Language mark in the process. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

Other candidates made the same point several times or went into unnecessary detail.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this

context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of legibility.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Answers from some candidates appeared to be chosen at random and bore no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question. Candidates are advised to narrow the choice down by identifying the part of speech involved.

Where marks were lost, it was quite often through the violation of the 'precise footprint' principle (see **General comments** above).

- **Item (a)** produced virtually anything ending in *-ant*. The insertion of an additional *en* invalidated the correct answer *augmentant* on the 'footprint principle' (see above).
- **Item (b)** was often well handled but *jusqu'à* was common.
- In **(c)**, noting the ending of *causés* would have narrowed down the search to a masculine plural, ruling out *avalées*.
- **Item (d)**, some candidates erroneously included *près (de)* after the correct *soit*. *En effet, celles-ci* and *rappelle* were among the less probable choices here.
- **Item (e)** was the most successfully answered.

Question 2

There were some excellent answers to this question from the very strongest candidates, but as usual the task proved quite demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or who failed to observe the basic rules of agreement – an increasingly common feature.

Item 2(a) suffered from lack of agreement from many candidates. Examples such as *800 écoliers on était testé* were common. Tacking *par on/nous* on the end did not help either.

Item 2(b) was probably the most successfully handled, although the agreement was again regularly missed. There were several careless variations on the theme of *médecins (médcins/medeçins/médecines)*, and the *s* on the end of *surpoids* was occasionally thought to require *les* as the article.

In **Item 2(c)**, a good proportion of candidates recognised the need for a subjunctive, but some offered *fais(s)ent* or erroneously used *leur*.

Item 2(d) proved to be the least successfully handled, with few candidates able to spell *rappelons*. Those who could, often missed the need to transform *prévient* too.

Item 2(e) saw some unsuccessful attempts to handle *dont*, and efforts to avoid it often led to changing the meaning of the original unnecessarily.

Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, the first two elements were well done, with candidates successfully identifying the aims of the tax imposed in 2012. Many found *augmenter* for the third mark, but fewer managed to find a correct verb (not *expandre* or *expandir*) to suggest extending the tax to all products containing more than a certain level of sugar: i.e. *les produits trop sucrés* or *qui contiennent trop de sucre*.

Item 3(b) saw regular 'lifting' of *prendre du poids* and *problèmes dentaires*, both of which would have been easy enough to re-phrase. Others suggested that the drinks caused addiction to calories rather than to sugar, or stood things completely on their head by beginning their answer *Il est désirable de ...*

In **Item 3(c)**, a good number of candidates successfully identified the risks to health, finding acceptable ways of avoiding lifting *des dégâts psychologiques (problèmes/troubles/difficultés/sequelles/dommages)* or *en*

ouvrant la voie à (en augmentant les risques de/causant/nous rendant vulnérables/exposant le corps à ... etc.)

Item 3(d), the simplest way to answer the questions was to replace the nouns of the text with verbs: *lutte/lutter, utilisation/utiliser; financement/financer*. The second mark required the idea of using the money generated by the tax, not just spending money in general.

Item 3(e) needed candidates to say that it was the selling of fizzy drinks that was banned in schools, and that efforts were undermined by children drinking such drinks at home.

Item 3(f), quite a large proportion of candidates thought that *un avertissement* meant an advertisement (sometimes even adopting that spelling) or didn't suggest that the warning should be included on the packaging. *Connaissance de cause* was not well understood, with candidates resorting to widespread lifting.

Question 4

Item 4(a) suffered from attempts to answer the first part in a past tense, but a good number avoided lifting *la perspective d'un chiffre d'affaires réduit* with a simple paraphrase such as *Ils vont vendre moins de sodas/leurs ventes vont diminuer*. Conversely, the second part required a past tense (or a *depuis* construction) to indicate that costs have already risen in the recent past.

Item 4(b) required a suggestion that the arguments were not only wrong, but that they were deliberately deceptive. Successful candidates found various ways of expressing this: *cachent la vérité, trompeurs, mascarades, du bluff, aveugler, illusion, prétexte etc.* The second and third marks needed a future or conditional tense as well as the avoidance of the lifting of *comportements alimentaires* and *le coût de la vie des familles*.

Item 4(c), a good number understood *le cynisme de beaucoup de consommateurs* and were able to express the idea that it was a money-making exercise by the state, without resorting to lifting *remplir les caisses*.

Item 4(d) required future tenses. When it came to expressing the idea of *La quasi-totalité des familles, beaucoup* was not strong enough and *toutes* went too far. *Plusieurs* was regularly used in a context where *plusieurs millions* would have been more appropriate, to the extent that it is unclear what candidates think *plusieurs* means. Candidates regularly found ways of expressing *touchées (affectées/pénalisées/frappées)* but a many thought that *les familles les plus modestes* meant *la classe moyenne*.

Item 4(e), most candidates pointed to the lack of effect of the 2012 tax, although some stumbled on the negative (*n'a pas eu aucun/rien d'impact*). The comparison with the effects of having increased the tax on tobacco was also satisfactorily made, if somewhat awkwardly expressed.

Item 4(f) asked *que vaudrait-il mieux faire ?*, so simply lifting the noun *éducation* did not work. Some of those who replaced it with a verb tried *éduquer*. *Interdire* and *interdicter* were also offered unsuccessfully for the second mark. Stronger candidates found ways of expressing the idea of *résister à l'appel d'une canette* satisfactorily in their own words.

Question 5

This Question asked candidates to summarise the arguments for and against increasing the tax on *les produits sucrés* and then to suggest other measures which could be taken to combat obesity.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a reasonable number, but with only the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. Some simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified benefits were the struggles against obesity, sugar dependence, tooth decay, illness and psychological damage. The most frequently mentioned negatives were the lack of effect on what consumers buy, the increased costs for families and the cynicism surrounding the State's real motives. Some

candidates wasted words by going down avenues which were irrelevant to the question: the banning of sales in schools, labelling on packages and campaigns to educate.

The rubric of the **Personal Response** specifically asked for other means of fighting obesity – i.e. measures not mentioned in the texts. Those who respected the question produced some sensible ideas about exercise and sport at school and at home, parents setting an example, provision of sporting facilities, subsidising weight-loss programmes, avoiding fast and fatty foods, not eating between meals etc. Others simply recycled ideas from the texts.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. Candidates at the other end of the mark range struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) appeared to be random in many scripts. Some candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make any agreements at all. E.g. *les consommateurs dits que* or *Les plus pauvrement penses que*.

Incorrect verb forms were many, with some unable conjugate even very common verbs in the present indicative : *mettre, prendre, appeler, mourir, offrir, devoir, venir, pouvoir*. Even *être* and *faire* were beyond some: *Ils sons; ils faisent*.

The use of the infinitive (-er) ending – or indeed anything else that sounded vaguely similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-é) in some scripts.

The approach to spelling was in some cases phonetic, even with very common words *pasque; pars; ossi; commème (quand même); acose de; une auss (hausse); le tot (taux); argeant*. There was a general lack of concern for spelling and gender among many candidates – it was not uncommon (for example) for *le tax, la tax* and *la taxe* all to appear in a single answer, even when the correct form was given in the question.

On/ont, son/sont, ces/ses/c'est, sa/s'a/ça often seemed to be selected at random.

The influence of English was noticeable in words such as: *advertisement; épidermie; avalation*. This was particularly evident in this season's crop of new verbs such as *promoter; disturber; confuser; consumer; extender; diracter; invester; prohibiter; dépendre; prévenir; dimunier/diminuir/(diminuation); incluire/includir; réplimenter etc.*

Nombre, numéro and *niveau/taux* were regularly confused: *le numéro de fumeurs, le nombre de surpoids/obésité/mortalité*.

Time spent in studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be time well spent : *achat/acheter; reduction/réduire; prise/prendre; interdiction/interdire; inclusion/inclure etc.*

The refusal to use both parts of a negative construction caused the usual level of confusion.

That said, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote commendably idiomatic, fluent and generally accurate French.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/23 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should **not** begin the answer by writing out the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 140 words (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

Candidates should be instructed **not** to use an additional booklet unnecessarily for a few extra words which could easily be included in the space provided in original answer booklet. In extreme cases, this involved only two or three words written in an otherwise blank 4- or 8-page additional booklet. Apart from the obvious waste of resources, this practice significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Candidates (and invigilators) should be instructed **not** to submit Inserts with the answer booklets. The front page of the Insert states that it is not assessed by the Examiner. Submitting it significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Illegibility remains a significant (and growing) problem, partly because of poor handwriting (notably the letters *r* and *s* appearing identical on the end of words) and partly because of ambiguous and messy crossings-out and minute insertions.

Overall, the texts were felt to be of an appropriate level and approachable by the overwhelming majority. The subject matter appeared to be of interest and relevance to the candidates.

The paper was largely comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled the various tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, but there some at the other end of the range of those whose level of linguistic competence and knowledge was simply over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

Candidates usually appeared familiar with the format of the paper and knew how to set about tackling the different types of questions. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but some candidates still neglect the simple answer and over-complicate things by attempting structures which they cannot handle, producing answers so confused that they cannot be rewarded.

Too many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *Ces recommandations risquent-elles ... (3c)*; *Clément se sent-il ... (3f)*; *Les automobilistes klaxonnent-ils parce que... Les service d'urgence déclenchent-ils ... Les jeunes motards accélèrent-ils... (4a)*. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent years, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks at this level. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complication. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to reconsider.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond the word limit is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent years, candidates from some centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects). To give just one example among very many, the candidate who started with *Comme c'est mentionné dans les deux textes "Le silence, ça fait peur" et "La pollution sonore", les dangers de l'utilisation des écouteurs et l'exposition au bruit perpétuel sont les suivants* simply wasted 30 words by effectively writing out the question and the titles of the texts. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

Other candidates made the same point several times or went into unnecessary detail.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this

context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of presentation and legibility.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Answers from some candidates appeared to be chosen largely at random and bore no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question. Candidates would be well advised to narrow the choice down by identifying the part of speech involved.

Item (a) saw a fair number of candidates recognising the verb form *bataille* as a substitute in this context for *lutte*. *L'utilisation* was sometimes selected possibly because it started with the same sound as *lutte*.

Item (b) was probably the most successfully identified.

In Item (c), again *marche* was sometimes selected possibly because it begins with the same four letters as *marchander*. *Fragmenter* at least had the merit of being an infinitive; *coupé* did not.

In Item (d), *freine* was not widely recognised, and some of those who realised that *retarde* was a verb rather than part of the phrase *en retard* which they knew, opted for *couche*, *coucher* or *fragmenter*.

In Item (e), *endormissement* was sometimes taken to be an adverb ending in *-ment* and therefore to be a possible substitute for *inutilement*. Others didn't observe the 'footprint principle' (see above) and offered either *mais en vain* or simply *vain*.

Question 2

There were some very good answers to this question from the strong candidates, but the task proved demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures.

Some candidates appeared to see this as an exercise in simply re-arranging the order the words of the original, with no regard for sense.

In Item 2(a), quite a number of candidates thought that changing *La musique colore la vie* to *La vie colore la musique* was likely to be sufficient to earn the mark. Some of those who realised that they might need to do something more than this were unable to handle the transformation into the passive. Others didn't see the need to make the past participle agree.

In Item 2(b), some thought that Clément was female even though there was considerable textual evidence to the contrary. Fortunately for them, this was not in itself penalised, and many candidates successfully handled the transformation to indirect speech.

In Item 2(c), the correct form of *percevoir* was challenging for many candidates and some resorted to rearranging the words of the original to produce something that made no sense: e.g. *on perçu comme le bruit est indispensable*.

Item 2(d) proved the least successfully handled as a number of candidates were not able to produce *créée*.

Item 2(e) saw stronger candidates recognising the need for a subjunctive and a good number of them producing the correct form of *soient*. Others tried unsuccessfully to incorporate *chances* in their answer, not realising that this idea had already been covered by *probable*.

Question 3

There was a tendency for some candidates simply to seize on a word in the question and to write out the sentence from the text which contained it or something similar, in the hope of including the answer somewhere along the way. Questions are usually specifically designed to prevent this.



In Item 3(a), candidates often described what Clément does (walking in town or doing his homework with his earphones on) rather than the consequences of what he does, as required by the question. *Fragmenter son attention* was often enough paraphrased to earn the second mark, but the first mark was lost either by misunderstanding *la circulation* as having something to do with the flow of blood rather than traffic, or by those who did not understand the difference between *entendre* and *écouter*. Others did not understand the difference between *dormir*, *s'endormir* and *se coucher*.

Item 3(b) asked what *les jeunes risquent de faire moins bien*, suggesting the need for verbs. *Audition* and *pertes auditives* were both regularly lifted, and attempts to avoid doing so not always successful (e.g. *la sourdance*; *ils risquent de perdre ses oreilles/leur audio/audit*). As opposed to **3(a)**, it was sleep disturbance that was the issue here for the second mark. Most who saw the need for a verb found *apprendre* for the third mark.

Item 3(c), proved relatively straightforward, with candidates often able to identify the need to limit time and volume, even if it was often awkwardly expressed. The need to replace nouns by verbs was again indicated by the appearance of *faire* in the question.

In Item 3(d), stronger candidates showed that they understood the desire to test limits, and young people's belief in their own invulnerability, although the occasional use of *le pansement* rather than *la pensée* here caused confusion. Many managed to avoid lifting *le manque de dégâts immédiatement évidents* by rephrasing it as *les dégâts n'apparaissent/se manifestent pas tout de suite* or similar.

In Item 3(e), candidates who saw the need to use verbs found good ways of doing so (e.g. *on peut s'oublier*). Others demonstrated a lack of understanding by including the *de* of the original (*on peut oublier de soi/de sa situation*): Attempts to express the idea of *exclusion* for the second mark resulted in some new erroneous forms, and many candidates did not understand that *ceux* referred to people rather than things.

Item 3(f) suffered from a large amount of lifting, and those who resisted the temptation were sometimes unable to use (*se*) *sentir* and (*s'*)*ennuyer* appropriately.

Question 4

Item 4(a) occasionally produced some muddled responses: *Ils ne peuvent pas être impatients*. *Se frayer un chemin dans la circulation* was often lifted, sometimes emerging as *s'effrayer*. However, many candidates did well on this questions and *se faire remarquer* was often successfully rephrased by using *attirent/cherchent l'attention* or similar.

In Item 4(b), many did not understand *les voies ferrées*, and imagined they suggested road or air traffic. More understood the much higher consumption of medication to relieve hypertension by those living beneath the flightpaths of planes, and successfully manipulated *la prise* into a finite verb. *Les médecins* sometimes confused the issue, as did *la prise des avignons*.

In Item 4(c), a good number simply said that these machines were designed to cause noise and stress. *Les aspirateurs* were commonly thought to be some sort of breathing device or ventilator.

In Item 4(d), the first mark was so lost because candidates contented themselves with mentioning *fêtes* without specifying that these took place late at night. Stronger candidates understood that *aboiments* must refer to dogs and formed a recognisable verb.

In Item 4(e), stronger candidates usually found adjectives to express the noun *épuisement* (*épuisé, très fatigué*) as well as using phrases such as *notre efficacité au travail va être réduite/on va travailler moins efficacement* for *diminution d'efficacité au travail*. Others offered rather vague statements about impaired concentration and were similarly vague in simply saying that there was an increased risk of accidents for the third mark, where *On risque de s'endormir en conduisant* was among the better answers.

In Item 4(f), lifting *les oreilles n'ont pas de paupières* was not sufficient on its own to earn the first mark, but those who demonstrated understanding by saying *on ne peut pas fermer les oreilles* scored it. *The sense of submergés par une vague* eluded many but those who expressed the idea of drowning, being flooded/suffocated achieved the second mark.

Question 5

This Question asked candidates to summarise the dangers of earphones and exposure to constant noise, and then to suggest ways in which they as parents might protect their children against these dangers.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a reasonable number, but with only the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. Some simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material. A number of others produced general essays about the topic without including the required rewardable elements.

The most commonly identified dangers included the effect on sleep, on concentration, on hearing and on learning. Also commonly found were exhaustion, increased chances of illness, inefficiency and falling asleep at the wheel.

The **Personal Response** elicited many responses which simply reiterated ideas from the texts, rather than including anything personal or any ideas of their own, which would have earned higher marks. Some suggested giving children ear defenders or devising alternative activities and opportunities to reduce the appeal of their earphones, laying down rules about when and where children could be permitted to use them etc.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a commendable control of structure. Candidates at the other end of the mark range struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) appeared largely random in many scripts. Some candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make any agreements at all. E.g. *Ils se disputes; les effets ne ce produits pas; des médicaments sons consommez; les voisin on des confli; ces impossible fairmé* to pure carelessness.

Incorrect verb forms were numerous, with some struggling to conjugate common verbs such as *mettre, prendre, devoir, pouvoir* in the present indicative. Even *avoir (ils n'ons pas), être (ils sons)* and *faire (faisez/faisent)* presented problems for some.

The use of the infinitive (-er) ending – or indeed anything else that sounded vaguely similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-é) in some scripts.

On/ont, son/sont, ces/ses/c'est, sa/s'a/ça often seemed to be selected at random. *Mal* was often used instead of *mauvais*, and *ses* was commonly found in place of *leurs*. *Pourquoi* was sometimes used when *parce que* was meant.

The approach to spelling was in some cases phonetic, even with very common words such as *pasque*: One sometimes had to resort to sounding out what was written in order to understand what was intended: *plus taux; des tôts; sa effreille; ils nettoï les mesons; a par sa; mais enfants; il ce sans sans vie; sent le savoir; entant* (for *entend*).

The influence of English or Spanish was evident in words such as: *la duration, limpir, entendre, associétés avec, le reducement, interrupter/interrommer; excluï(e)r/excluser/excluser; sousvivre; submerser; impresser; restricter; emprouver; relïer sur*.

Time spent in studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be time well spent: *interruption/interrommer; apprentissage/apprendre; réduction/réduire; prise/prendre; diminution/diminuer etc.*

That said, the linguistic ability of many candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, if not always in a very polished form.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/31 Essay</p>

Key messages

To perform well on this paper, candidates should choose an essay title about which they can write a response that is relevant, well-illustrated and coherent. Candidates should aim to use accurate French of a suitably advanced nature, which demonstrates complexity both in terms of structures and vocabulary, as well as a sense of register appropriate to the task. Candidates should plan essays carefully, using the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and develop a logical and coherent argument, finally drawing together the strands of their argument to arrive at a balanced conclusion.

General comments

Most candidates clearly engaged with their chosen topic. At the top end, candidates produced mature pieces showing a solid understanding of the issues discussed and included a wide range of pertinent points supported by topic-specific vocabulary and sound grammar. The best scripts made good use of well-chosen examples to support their arguments. In many cases, however, candidates did not consider the precise wording of the question set, leading to generalisations and at times irrelevant answers. Candidates should consider the structure of their essay carefully and the need to present their arguments logically, using link words to provide clarity in the progression of their ideas, both between and within paragraphs. Weaker candidates often made little attempt to structure their work, with some even dispensing with the use of paragraphs altogether. The conclusion tended to state what had been included before, often in the introduction. A small number of scripts made no attempt to answer any of the questions set; candidates need to be reminded that such scripts will be awarded zero for content and language.

Quality of language

The quality of the language varied considerably, with, at the top end, some impressive performances both in terms of language and content. A good number of essays demonstrated a fair level of accuracy and variety in the choice of vocabulary and structures, thus enabling candidates to communicate their ideas effectively. There was also much inconsistency in adjectival and subject-verb agreements, and difficulties were much in evidence with the use of irregular verbs, articles and prepositions. Some candidates struggled to express themselves coherently and their essays displayed a poor command of basic linguistic structures, narrow range of vocabulary, as well as persistent errors in basic verb forms, agreements and the spelling of common words. There was at times a considerable degree of interference from the candidates' mother tongue to the extent that ideas were not communicated.

Common errors included:

Frequent incorrect use of negatives: *c'est pas*, *c'est ne pas*, *ne important pas*
Incorrect gender/spelling: *grands-parents*, *mauvaises*, *rôle*, *relation*, *patrimoine culturel*.
Frequent incorrect word order noun/adjective; verb/adverb
Use of *faire* instead of *rendre*; *comment* for *comme*
Noun used instead of a verb: *vie* for *vivre*.
Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de* ; *grâce à* for *à cause de*.
Use of the wrong preposition after common verbs.
Use of *aussi* for *non plus*.
Nouns used without articles and verbs used without a subject pronoun.
Accents, including in words mentioned in the essay titles: *rôle*, *société*.
Lack of punctuation.
Overuse of *chose/choses*, *plein de*
Inappropriate use of *personnes/gens* (e.g *certains gens*).

Inappropriate register: *tu* instead of *vous*; *t'es*; *t'as*
Confusion between: *ces/ses/c'est*; *ça/sa*; *son/sont*; *ce/ceux*.
Confusion between *par/pour*
Difficulty expressing comparisons: *aussi/autant que*; *mieux/meilleur*, *différent de*
Confusion between *trop*, *très*, *plus*
Common incorrect vocabulary: *promoter*, *provider*, *assister*, *contributer*, *expecter*.
Difficulty with possessive adjectives and confusion between *son/sa/ses* and *leur/leurs*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the most popular question and it produced some well-considered and heartfelt answers. Unfortunately, a substantial number of candidates wrote more generally about the role of grand-parents and missed the key element of the question, whether their role was as important as the parents'. Whilst weaker essays limited themselves to talking about their own family in an anecdotal and superficial way, the best scripts captured the unique relationship between children and their grand-parents and offered a mature reflection on what makes the grand-parents' role unique and different from their parents'. Top of the list came their unconditional love, endless patience and willingness to bend rules a little so that children will often choose to confide in them. Their experience of life and their ability to offer a different perspective on life's problems was often quoted, as was their role in smoothing arguments within the wider family. Many mentioned their availability, emotionally as well as in terms of the time they can devote to their grand-children, making them reliable baby-sitters and the source of many shared activities. Grand-parents have time to pass on their skills to the young ones and instil strong values and good manners. For many, it was the stories of their youth, the past or the family history that made them special. The importance of their role was often linked to the changing nature of modern families, with grand-parents providing stability for children, particularly when families go through difficult times, such as a divorce. A few candidates reflected that thanks to modern technology, Skype, mobile phones and tablets, grand-parents can still play a very special part in a young person's life, even if they live far apart. The best scripts conveyed how their role differs from and complements the parents' role, and how equally important it is for a child to have a close relationship with both generations. Many candidates had difficulty expressing comparisons, a key linguistic element in the question. *Grands-enfants* was frequently used instead of *petits-enfants*.

Question 2

This question was the second most popular choice. Most candidates paid heed to the wording of the essay title and considered both sides of the argument, although some failed to focus their answer on what is best for a young person. Candidates needed to consider what both environments have to offer and develop a convincing argument in favour of one. A good number of points were put forward, although with little exemplification at times. The countryside was usually thought to provide a more peaceful and healthier lifestyle for a young person, leading to a greater appreciation of nature, far from road traffic, pollution and industries. Many thought the countryside a safer environment for a child, with lower crime levels, less danger of young people getting involved in gangs and being victims of crime. The close-knit community that villages offer was considered a plus by many, although others thought that it is too stifling and conservative for a young person and lacks diversity. Many scripts mentioned the fewer opportunities that the countryside provides for young people in terms of education, work, hobbies and services. Some candidates reached the conclusion that the countryside was indeed the best environment to raise a child, away from the harsh reality of life in a city, although cities provide better opportunities when they are older. Candidates who chose this question tended to write well-structured essays, although the scope of the essays often tended to be quite narrow.

Question 3

Few candidates chose this question and most found it challenging, both in terms of the lexis and general knowledge required. Better scripts explained the rise of extremist movements and offered solutions to fight them: education, eradicating poverty, raising aspiration of disaffected youths or communities, providing opportunities, celebrating differences and promoting equality and diversity, as well as international collaboration to police the dark web and underground movements. Some candidates speculated on why nations, despite their efforts, have not yet succeeded in eradicating extremism and why new approaches and solutions are required.

Question 4

This proved to be the third most popular of the five questions set. Candidates who chose this essay title tended to present a narrow range of arguments, with some even stating in their introduction that travelling could only be beneficial. Candidates should consider the question carefully and discuss both sides of the argument. Overall, candidates could see more good reasons for travelling, such as visiting friends and family, learning languages, discovering a new place and culture or simply enjoying a well-earned rest in a different environment. When bad reasons to travel were considered, candidates tended to focus on one main point, with little exemplification. Terrorism, and other illegal activities such as drug and human trafficking, were often mentioned, as well as refugees fleeing war and poverty. Others quoted what they considered selfish reasons for travelling, such as getting away from family problems, work or studying. One common argument was the development of social media: people's obsession with selfies and the proliferation of self-indulgent blogs were perceived as superficial reasons for travelling, with people learning little from the countries they visit. Few mentioned sexual exploitation or how travelling without showing due respect for local cultures can offend sensibilities and damage the local fauna and flora.

Question 5

This did not prove a popular question. Although candidates did not always have the language to express the complexity of their ideas, it inspired some thoughtful and heart-felt responses. Candidates often made specific references to monuments, traditions or events that form an essential part of their culture. Most mentioned that its uniqueness is what makes our cultural heritage precious, by bringing people together and giving a strong sense of identity, anchored in a common past; it enables us to understand where we have come from. Many explained that our monuments, for example, help us to understand our history, and if lost are irreplaceable. Interestingly, candidates often thought that it is particularly important for people who have emigrated to maintain and pass on their culture to their children. Most felt a sense of duty to protect this heritage for future generations and national and religious celebrations were considered important occasions to share common values and customs. Some candidates went on to argue that in times of hardship, this common heritage can be a source of strength and inspiration, quoting national heroes and wars against slavery and colonisation as examples of times when people have overcome great difficulties, which can be overcome again. Few candidates mentioned that globalisation, for all its benefits, risks diluting cultural differences and it is now all the more essential to protect our cultural heritage to avoid losing what makes each one of us unique.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/32
Essay

Key messages

To perform well on this paper, candidates should choose an essay title about which they can write a response that is relevant, well-illustrated and coherent. Candidates should aim to use accurate French of a suitably advanced nature, which demonstrates complexity both in terms of structures and vocabulary, as well as a sense of register appropriate to the task. Candidates should plan essays carefully, using the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and develop a logical and coherent argument, finally drawing together the strands of their argument to arrive at a balanced conclusion.

General comments

This cohort of candidates performed to a similar standard as in previous years. Many essays were rather superficial in both expression and argument and some focused on the overarching topic heading rather than the question set. This leads to very general and sometimes pre-learned material being used and does the candidates no favours. It is vitally important for candidates to read the questions carefully before launching into their essays. Planning is a key element when writing a discursive essay and many candidates appear to bypass this important phase writing a cursory few words, or nothing at all. Lack of planning often leads to long, rambling essays, with poor punctuation and paragraphing and sometimes multiple crossings out or arrows to extra passages at the end of the essay. In some cases, the register used was inappropriate, with slang words being used and candidates addressing the Examiner as *tu*. The better answers started with a good plan, a clearly defined opening paragraph that set out the parameters of the answer and followed a logical and persuasive argument before finally coming to a reasoned conclusion. In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to have essay writing skills firmly in place and then to use a good range of complex grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions to express their argument.

Common errors included:

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *traditionnelle, choisissez, fanatisme, gouvernement, monde, phénomène, manque, aspect*

Overuse of *aussi* at start of sentences and paragraphs.

Use of *le taux* for *le nombre*.

Use of plural verb with a singular subject and vice versa.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de*.

Random and inappropriate use of words and phrases to link paragraphs such as *néanmoins* (usually wrongly spelled), *pourtant, toutefois*.

Overuse of the word *personnes* (for *gens*) and *cela/ça*.

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Phonetic spelling e.g. use of *tous que* instead of *tout ce que*.

Agreement of past participle in phrases such as *elles ont regardées*.

Use of *de/des* after *plusieurs*.

Confusion between/misuse of : *ces/ses, les/des, place/endroit, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, c'est que/ceux que, ceux qui/ce qui, ou/où, a/à, sa/ça), mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs, ils/eux.*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the most popular question on the paper and was attempted by candidates across the full range of ability. The traditional family was seen in many different ways depending on the experience of the candidates. Many thought of the traditional family as the nuclear family with mother, father and children, others felt it should also include the extended family with grandparents and other relatives. Candidates could see many changes in society which were putting this traditional family under stress. They spoke of more liberal attitudes which now prevail in many countries allowing new types of family to develop such as single parent families, mixed families after divorces, homosexual families and civil partnerships. Some candidates expressed moral concerns about these changes as they felt that their religion, culture and tradition were under threat. Others welcomed these changes and felt that it was appropriate that the family should evolve as society evolved. Factors mentioned were the role of women, the increased rate of divorce and the decreasing role of the church in people's lives. Other candidates felt that the crisis in the family came from within and they talked about the role of the media, the internet and technology in general which were having an impact on family relations and communication. There were many different approaches taken to this question, most of which had merit.

Question 2

This was the second most popular question answered by candidates. Some of them merely took the topic heading and wrote about life in the country and in the town with little reference to the question set. The best answers discussed the health benefits and comfort of country life compared to the frenetic and exciting but potentially dangerous life in town. Most candidates mentioned the attractions of living in town such as public transport, cinemas and restaurants as well as easy access to medical care in doctors' surgeries and hospitals. They saw the country as offering a slower pace of life with better living conditions – more space, less traffic, better air quality and fresh organic produce. These aspects meant that it would be healthier to live there. The town offered better chances for education and work as well as social life but was likely to be bad for the health because of pollution and the opportunity to eat badly. Most candidates felt that the town was for young people and the country for old people. It was clear that candidates had plenty to say on the topic and their answers were relevant, and either superficial or competent depending on their ability to express themselves.

Question 3

This was not a popular question. There were some mature and thoughtful answers to this question which was generally answered by more able candidates. There were some worthy discussions of politics, philosophy and religion in relation to the topic. It was important for candidates to give some context to the idea of extremism in the modern world; it was not sufficient merely to describe terrorist attacks. The best essays looked at how increasing tension caused by wars, disease and famine led to the growth of radical groups who were able to recruit easily through the internet. This then led to the terrorist attacks that have become so common in today's world. Some candidates were able to consider the historical context in detail and wrote very sophisticated responses.

Question 4

This was the third popular question. Weaker candidates tended to write about tourism in general without specific reference to tourists. They mentioned the influence of mass tourism and the effect and impact on host countries. Candidates generally understood what it takes to be a good tourist rather than a bad one. The majority felt that tourists are generally not well behaved and cause damage to the countries they visit. Examples were given of visitors causing damage to the environment by leaving litter and waste everywhere, disregarding local traditions and being a bad influence on local people by using drugs, drinking heavily and acting inappropriately in public. It was felt that tourism is such a big part of some countries' economies that these behaviours have to be tolerated. As a result of tourism, infrastructure improves. Candidates felt that good tourists do exist – these are people who visit other countries to learn about their cultures, languages and people or who go on working holidays to carry out charitable and environmental work and improve lives in developing countries. There was much criticism of the attitude of tourists who have a sense of entitlement.



Those candidates who engaged with the idea of tourists as opposed to tourism in general were awarded good marks for content.

Question 5

This was the least popular question and, in general, it was poorly answered. There were many different interpretations of *biens culturels* including history, tradition and national identity. Some candidates took them to be historical monuments such as churches, temples, mosques, castles. Most candidates felt that the destruction or the lack of care given to these matters was a crime but not the worst crime that could be committed. They felt that war, terrorism, invasion, ethnic cleansing were far worse crimes against a nation. They understood that it is important to have a national identity and that it often lies within physical symbols of a country's history and in the traditions that hold a nation together.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/33 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select an essay title which will give them the opportunity to write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated and coherent. The aim is to use accurate and idiomatic French which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary. Candidates should plan essays carefully using the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title and the conclusion to show their considered final judgment of the issues they have discussed.

General comments

In this paper, candidates are given a choice of five questions and are awarded up to 24 marks for quality of language and up to 16 for content. It was clear that most candidates understood the rubric for this paper and essays were generally of an appropriate length.

Planning is clearly an important first step in writing a good discursive essay. Most of the candidates did attempt a plan but it was often short, in list form and rather sketchy in content. It is clear that those candidates who defined the terms of the question carefully in their own mind and then organised the material into some kind of order before writing, generally gained higher marks for content. An essay that considers the parameters of the question in the introduction and is then logically constructed will be well rewarded in its content mark. It is particularly important that essays should not merely relate to the general overarching topic area, paying little regard to the actual question set. This often leads to very general and sometimes pre-learned material being used and does the candidates no favours.

There was a wide range of ability in this cohort with some candidates demonstrating little grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness while others were able to deploy a good range of structures and appropriate vocabulary while not over-reaching themselves. Consequently, they wrote answers that expressed their ideas in accurate, ambitious, yet succinct and persuasive language. Many candidates used spurious quotations and statistics which, in many cases, failed to elucidate any argument. There were a few cases where the candidates' lack of grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness meant that essays were rendered incomprehensible but mostly answers were just rather awkwardly expressed, with inconsistent use of agreements, accents, spelling and tenses.

Examples of good use of language include:

Appropriate use of linking words and phrases such as *en plus, or, donc, par exemple, lorsque, ainsi, puisque, cependant, pourtant, d'ailleurs, néanmoins, en revanche, d'un côté...de l'autre côté, à mon avis.*

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read a range of media on subjects as diverse as the role of grandparents and life in the country.

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive. Use of a range of verbs such as *accompagné de, reposer sur, promouvoir, justifier, cesser de*

Correct use of idioms such as *il s'agit de, il convient de, en d'autres mots, au revers de la médaille, étant donné que, tel que, de plus en plus.*

Common errors:

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *grands-parents, mieux, monde, gouvernement, problème, aspect, exemple, type, mariage*.

Overuse of *aussi* at start of sentences and paragraphs.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de* and *car* for *pour*.

Overuse of the word *chose/choses* and *cela/ça*. Use of *personnes* for *gens*.

Overuse of *plusieurs*, often followed by *de/des*.

Inconsistency of pronouns (*les personnes* followed by *ils, son/ses* etc).

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Confusion between/misuse of: *ces/ses, les/des, place/endroit, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, c'est que/ceux que, ceux qui/ce qui, ou/où, a/à, sa/ça* (overused instead of *cela*), *mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs*.

Use of *faire* for *rendre*

Use of the past participle after modal verbs, e.g. *elles doivent resté à la maison*.

Use of the wrong preposition after common verbs followed by an infinitive structure, e.g. *aider de, préférer de*

Use of anglicisms such as *dépenser sur, payer l'attention, travailler* for *marcher, actuellement, capacité*.

Phonetic spelling such as *attirait* for *attirer*, *tous que* instead of *tout ce que*.

Incorrect form of third person plural verb e.g. *ils regardes*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a popular question which gave candidates the chance to explore the role of grandparents within the family. They described the increasingly important role played by grandparents in the modern world. They felt that with the changes in the family such as the move away from the traditional family set up with the father at work and the mother at home looking after the children, there was far more need for grandparents to play an active role. With both parents working, there is a constant need for childcare and often grandparents can provide that. Candidates were keen to point out that grandparents can offer something to children that their parents cannot. They gave examples of grandparents being counsellors, friends, and advisers as well as cooking good dinners, providing little treats and giving freely of their time to play with their grandchildren. They felt that these roles could not be fulfilled by parents who were either too busy or too tired. Candidates had plenty of examples and were able to construct essays that compared the role played by both parties.

Question 2

This was a popular question that led to some interesting discussions on life in the town compared to life in the country from a young person's perspective. In general, candidates agreed that it was good to be a young child in the country as there would be the freedom to run about in plenty of space, the air would be fresh and unpolluted and the food available would be local, fresh and probably organic. They felt this would be an excellent start for a child. They felt, however, that once into the teens, a young person would need the facilities that a town can offer such as good schools, cinemas, restaurants, sports facilities and the opportunity to have a lively social life. To counter this, though, they realised that the town may be good from a social point of view but that it was not so good from a health point of view. They talked of the pollution, the traffic, the lack of green space and the possible feeling of loneliness when in a big city. Overall, candidates understood the ramifications of the question and answered it according to ability.

Question 3

Too few candidates answered this question to make comment possible.

Question 4

Too few candidates answered this question to make comment possible.

Question 5

Too few candidates answered this question to make comment possible.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/41 Texts</p>

Key messages

Teachers should:

Ensure that candidates are prepared to answer questions on three separate texts.

Consider carefully which texts to prepare with their classes: some texts present conceptual problems that might be challenging for some candidates.

Realise that some candidates might be better off addressing the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1**, which provide a ready-made structure for their answers and therefore offer better options for achieving reasonable to good marks than the freer option **(b)** alternatives, which provide no such inbuilt guidance on how to structure a response.

Teachers should train their students to:

Manage their time in the examination room, ensuring that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions. Ensure that they do not answer two questions on the same text, remembering that 'soit... soit' means 'either... or'.

Think carefully about what the question is asking of them and plan their responses before they start to write.

Stay on track as they write their responses by referring to the question regularly.

Candidates should:

Label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If passage-based questions are not properly labelled, it can look as though parts **(ii)** and **(iii)** have not been attempted.

Start each new essay on a fresh page and take care to attach any continuation sheets in order. It is not necessary to write out the text of the question on the answer paper.

Avoid referring to the author's background, his/her other works and the audience that he/she is addressing, unless this is specifically asked for by the question.

Commence responses to the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1** with an introduction, locating the extract within the text and briefly explaining what events have preceded the extract.

Ensure that answers to the option **(b)** questions in **Section 1** and all questions in **Section 2** include:

- An opening paragraph, acknowledging the question and giving a brief indication of how it is to be addressed.
- A closing paragraph, which should summarise the points made in the essay.

General comments

The passage-based questions were efficiently addressed, for the most part. Stronger responses were able to deal with the detail required by the questions, while at the same time demonstrating good overall knowledge of the texts, often by means of a brief introduction to explain how the extract related to the text as a whole.

Some candidates still attempt to answer the passage-based questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then don't explain what the quotation illustrates. Quotations should be employed selectively, and candidates must provide their own interpretations.

The essay questions were generally well structured. Candidates should not waste time by describing the background to the work and its author. Narration irrelevant to the question should be avoided – remember that the Examiner has also read the text – but candidates should aim to demonstrate their knowledge of the work while remaining focused on answering the question. Most candidates now recognise the importance of writing a brief introduction, to show that they have understood the question and to indicate how the question is to be addressed, and a conclusion to summarise the principle findings of the essay.

As always, the better responses were those which were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although these should be crossed out to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Molière: *Le Malade imaginaire*

Many candidate answered one of the questions on the Molière text, with a clear majority selecting the passage-based **Question 1(a)**.

- (a) The question was competently answered, and the context was well explained.
- (i) Most candidates correctly identified that Thomas Diafoirus was addressing Angélique, his intended wife. Some responses provided useful summaries of the events that had led up to the extract scene, including the misunderstanding that had just arisen when Thomas – who had not previously met Angélique – had initially addressed her as if she were his future mother-in-law. Thomas delivers a flowery, ornate speech, which contains classical and botanical allusions, and references to ideals of medieval courtly love, in which Angélique is compared to a beautiful, but unobtainable statue. Thomas has clearly spent a long time practising his speech, but it is so extravagant that Toinette and Cléante find it rather ridiculous.
- (ii) Toinette's aim is to ridicule Thomas to make clear to Argan the foolishness of his choice of husband for Angélique. Most candidates acknowledged the irony used by Toinette and Cléante in their praise of Thomas' speech, and most highlighted the mockery made of the inadequate training received by those entering the medical profession.
- (iii) Part (iii) was less well answered. Thomas is entirely under his father's control and one can imagine that the elder Diafoirus has been closely involved in writing his son's speeches. Diafoirus has brought his son into the medical profession and is now using him to enhance his own rank in society by marrying him into the wealth of Argan's family. He claims to be proud of his son and of his achievements, but one suspects that even he can see that Thomas is not the ideal marriage candidate.
- (b) There were some strong responses to this question, the best of which examined the familial relationships by dealing with each of the characters in turn. Most responses began with an analysis of Argan, around whose hypochondria and bad temper the whole household revolves. Béline's motives and her hypocrisy were well covered. Though not a member of the family, Toinette is a second mother to Angélique and her sister, and most candidates justifiably decided to include her in their responses. The very best responses also dealt, albeit briefly, with the roles played by Béralde and Louison.

Question 2 – Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin*

Questions on the Zola work were attempted by about one third of candidates, with **Question 2(b)** being more popular than **Question 2(a)**.

- (a) (i) This question was quite well answered, and most candidates were able to give satisfactory summaries of the events that had led up to Camille's murder. Fewer candidates, however, mentioned that Laurent had almost killed Camille a little earlier that morning, but had decided that crushing his friend's head with the heel of his boot would have left him with no alibi.
- (ii) Part (ii) was also well dealt with. Though the murder had been carried out on the spur of the moment, Laurent had quickly formed a rational plan to conceal his guilt. He hides the bite mark on his neck and overturns the boat to make the drowning seem like an accident. He then plays the hero by diving into the water, in the pretence of seeking his lost friend. He subsequently claims that the dying Camille had called for him to save Thérèse and he feigns feelings of guilt, saying that he should not have allowed Camille to overbalance the boat by moving around.
- (iii) The rowers are the unwitting corroborators of Laurent's deceit. They believe they have observed a genuine accident and they witness Laurent's tears and anguish at his failure to find Camille. Having taken Laurent and Thérèse back to the nearby restaurant, the rowers are instrumental in spreading the story of the tragedy and of Laurent's apparent heroism.
- (b) The question was efficiently dealt with. Most candidates gave a view on who they felt was the guiltier party – most felt that Laurent and Thérèse bore equal blame – and were able to back up their opinion with good knowledge of the text. The very best responses argued both for and against Laurent/Thérèse and went on to say that perhaps neither was guilty, since they were each unwitting products of their environment.

Question 3 – Jean Anouilh: *L'Alouette*

- (a) There were too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) There were too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 4 – Jean Anouilh: *La Cantatrice chauve*

The question was attempted by almost two thirds of candidates, with a clear majority in favour of the extract **Question 4 (a)**.

- (a) (i) Though some candidates dealt reasonably well with the second part of the question, most chose to ignore the first part ('Racontez le visite du pompier') and thus lost valuable marks. What was required was a simple account of the fire chief's arrival in search of a fire to extinguish, his entertainment of the Smiths and the Martins with his nonsensical anecdotes, his fleeting surprise upon meeting his long-lost love, Mary the maid, and his departure to attend to a fire that was about to start on the other side of town. Rather too many candidates tied themselves up in knots, trying to explain the fire chief's bizarre and rather torturous tale of people whose only real connection was that they all sometimes caught colds.
- (ii) Responses to part (ii) were better. Most felt that the nonsensical and rather dull responses of the Smiths to the fire chief's tale were typical. Neither has a strong opinion about anything, they communicate in clichés and non-sequiturs and they have a very weak grasp on reality. In evidence of this, several responses made useful reference to the Smiths' tale of Bobby Watson and relatives. The only occasions on which the Smiths show any individuality or backbone are when they are disagreeing with each other (viz. the doorbell scene).
- (iii) Part (iii) was also quite well answered. Mme Martin is a replica of Mme Smith (they exchange places at the end of the play) and, like her friend, she is not the 'sharpest knife in the drawer'. She has a weak grasp on reality and is even more forgetful than her husband (viz. her failure to recognise her husband when ushered into the Smiths' drawing room earlier that evening). Our astonishment is, perhaps, not that Mme Martin has failed to understand the fire chief's tale, but that she claims that the only part she has misunderstood concerns the grandmother, whom the fire chief refers to at the very end of his story.

- (b) Responses to **Question 4 (b)** were, in many cases, weakened by the inability of candidates to recall the detail of the four animal anecdotes: three related by the fire chief and one by Monsieur Smith. Nevertheless, there were some valuable commentaries on the relevance and purpose of the anecdotes, the principle effect of which was to demonstrate that language often fails to convey any real meaning.

Section 2

Question 5 – Marie-Claire Blais: *Une Saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel*

About a quarter of candidates addressed **Question 5**, with responses equally balanced between the two options. This is a rather sombre text and Examiners were impressed by the maturity with which candidates dealt with some of its more difficult themes.

- (a) Most candidates gave successful accounts of the importance of Grandma's role in the novel. She is the religious and moral director of the family, she is a contrast with the weak men in the novel, she is enduring and resigned to pain and she strongly believes in the value of education (unlike le père). Although she has a hard exterior, she has a soft heart: she genuinely cares for the children and is strongly protective of Jean Le Maigre and his writings. Perversely, she is comforted by the sorrow she experiences at the death of children, and she takes pleasure in attending to the needs of a dying neighbour. She is the voice of hope at the end of the novel ('L'hiver a été dur, mais le printemps sera meilleur'), though one is left to wonder whether her optimism is justified.
- (b) There were fewer successful answers to **Question 5(b)**, but the better responses detailed the way in which Jean Le Maigre writes and romanticizes his own life in his 'œuvre posthume'. Words are of enormous importance for him, and his poetry transforms his harsh existence into something more magical and passionate. His writings reveal that he does not believe that death is for him, though he also shows that he knows he is going to die. He reveals snatches of information about the family, such as his brother Leopold's suicide, his first love at school and Le Septième's arsonist tendencies. He also exposes the hardship of life in the 'maison de correction' and accurately foretells the fate of Pomme, Le Septième, Héloïse and Emmanuel.

Question 6 – Jean-Marie Gustave le Clézio: *Le Chercheur d'or*

- (a) There were too few responses to **Question 6(a)** to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) There were too few responses to **Question 6(b)** to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 7 – François Mauriac: *Le Désert de l'amour*

- (a) There were too few responses to **Question 7(a)** to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) There were too few responses to **Question 7(b)** to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 8 – Irène Némirovsky: *Tempête en juin (from Suite Française)*

This was a relatively popular text and 60 per cent of candidates addressed the question, with a majority opting for **Question 8(b)**.

- (a) Mme Péricand was well described. She is the backbone of the Péricand family: she organises the family's flight from Paris and does her utmost to hold the family together during the horrors that they experience as refugees (though she rather negligently leaves old Monsieur Péricand behind during her flight). She is something of a snob and is relieved when she is able to talk to people of similar class while on the road. She is charitable, because this is what the Church expects of women of her class, but her generosity is soon withdrawn when she realises that food shortages might threaten her own family. She is motivated by patriotic feeling: she is proud to believe that her son Philippe died doing his duty and she sees Hubert's departure to fight as a manly act. At the end of the novel, she returns to her life of privilege in Paris, largely unscathed by her adventures.

- (b) **Question (b)** was less successfully dealt with. Relatively few candidates were able to recall specific detail of food being mentioned in the novel, perhaps with the exception of Mme Pericand's refusal to allow her children to go on handing out sweets to the masses, and the theft of Gabriel Corte's food parcel. As a result, many candidates were reduced to making rather general comments about shortages of food supplies during armed conflicts, and the difficulties that such shortages might cause. For those candidates who knew the novel well, there was quite a lot to go for, including: the fine food on the Péricand's dining table at the start of the novel, reflecting the family's upper-class status; Gabriel Corte's pleasurable recollection of trout that he had fished from an Austrian river and his dreams of the good food that he had eaten previously in the city of Tours, as hunger starts to gnaw at him; Charles Langelet despising the vulgarity of the common masses that surround him as he stops for food in Montargis and the irony of his death in a road accident while on his way to dinner in Paris; Mme Pericand using her priority ration card to bypass the queues, while the common people wait in line for food.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/42
Texts

Key messages

Teachers should:

Ensure that candidates are prepared to answer questions on three separate texts.
Consider carefully which texts to prepare with their classes: some texts present conceptual problems that might be challenging for some candidates.
Realise that some candidates might be better off addressing the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1**, which provide a ready-made structure for their answers and therefore offer better options for achieving reasonable to good marks than the freer option **(b)** alternatives, which provide no such inbuilt guidance on how to structure a response.

Teachers should train their candidates to:

- Manage their time in the examination room, ensuring that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions.
- Ensure that they do not answer two questions on the same text, remembering that 'soit... soit' means 'either... or'.
- Think carefully about what the question is asking of them and plan their responses before they start to write.
- Stay on track as they write their responses by referring to the question regularly.

Candidates should:

- Label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If passage-based questions are not properly labelled, it can look as though parts **(ii)** and **(iii)** have not been attempted.
- Start each new essay on a fresh page and take care to attach any continuation sheets in order. It is not necessary to write out the text of the question on the answer paper.
- Avoid referring to the author's background, his/her other works and the audience that he/she is addressing, unless this is specifically asked for by the question.
- Commence responses to the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1** with an introduction, locating the extract within the text and briefly explaining what events have preceded the extract.
- Ensure that answers to the option **(b)** questions in **Section 1** and all questions in **Section 2** include:
 - An opening paragraph, acknowledging the question and giving a brief indication of how it is to be addressed.
 - A closing paragraph, which should summarise the points made in the essay.

General comments

The passage-based questions were efficiently addressed, for the most part. Stronger responses were able to deal with the detail required by the questions, while at the same time demonstrating good overall knowledge of the texts, often by means of a brief introduction to explain how the extract related to the text as a whole.

Some candidates still attempt to answer the passage-based questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then fail to explain what the quotation illustrates. Quotations should be employed selectively, and candidates must provide their own interpretations.

The essay questions were generally well structured. Candidates should not waste time by describing the background to the work and its author. Narration irrelevant to the question should be avoided – remember that the Examiner has also read the text – but candidates should aim to demonstrate their knowledge of the work while remaining focused on answering the question. Most candidates now recognise the importance of

writing a brief introduction, to show that they have understood the question and to indicate how the question is to be addressed, and a conclusion to summarise the principle findings of the essay.

As always, the better responses were those which were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although these should be crossed out to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Molière: *Le Malade imaginaire*

Once again, questions on Molière were attempted by a clear majority of candidates. On this occasion, **Question (a)** was only slightly more popular than **Question (b)**.

- (a) The question was competently answered by many, and the context was well explained.
- (i) Most candidates were quick to identify that Angélique's surprise stemmed from the unexpected visit by her lover, Cléante, who had arrived in the guise of her music teacher. Fear also lay at the root of Angélique's reaction; she had been promised to Thomas Diafoirus and her father had forbidden her to speak to another suitor. Indeed, Argan had threatened to have his daughter committed to a convent if she failed to follow his wishes. Had Cléante arrived to seek her hand in marriage and what might this lead to?
- (ii) All candidates identified the dream that Angélique had invented to disguise her surprise, though many candidates found it necessary to quote at length from the extract, rather than explaining Angélique's subterfuge in their own words. Better responses highlighted just how inventive Angélique's response was; she had hidden the truth from her father and had, at the same time, expressed her gratitude to Cléante for arriving to save her from the distressing situation that now faced her. Cléante, in turn, plays along with this clever deception, though he is not yet aware of the cause of Angélique's distress.
- (iii) Almost all responses highlighted the irony inherent in Cléante's gracious acceptance of Argan's invitation to stay and witness Angélique's first meeting with her intended. Far from being 'honoured', Cléante is shocked to learn that his beloved has been promised to another man. Better responses went on to identify Cléante's subsequent relief when he sees what a fool his rival in love really is, and that his relief is even greater when Angélique is able to tell Cléante, during their spontaneous operetta, that she truly loves him and would rather die than follow her father's wishes.
- (b) The stronger responses to this question dealt with the relationships between the female characters in a logical fashion, (i.e. Angélique/Toinette, Angélique/Béline, Béline/Toinette) and also identified that the young Louison, though perhaps not yet 'une femme', has a role to play in these female relationships. The main points to be noted were:
- Angélique is rather weak and naïve and relies totally on support from her friend and confidante, Toinette, who is a little more worldly-wise and acts as a substitute mother to Angélique and her young sister.
 - Toinette is fully in the picture regarding Angélique and Cléante and is determined to see the two lovers united, regardless of the wishes of her master and mistress.
 - Angélique has no love for her stepmother and is aware that Béline has no love for her. Indeed, she knows that Béline would happily have her and Louison placed in a convent as part of her plans to get her hands on Argan's wealth. However, as an obedient daughter, Angélique cannot stand up to her stepmother.
 - Béline believes that Toinette is a reliable and trustworthy servant, whereas Toinette does all she can to undermine her mistress and is instrumental in bringing about her downfall.
 - Louison is supportive of her sister and tries to lie to her father when he asks about the visitor in Angélique's room, although her resistance soon crumbles.

Question 2 – Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin*

Questions on the Zola work were attempted by about a third of the candidates, with **Question 2(a)** being significantly more popular.

- (a) (i) The question led to some confusion. Although most candidates identified that 'le modèle' was the woman who had posed in the studio of one of Laurent's acquaintances, with whom Laurent had subsequently started a relationship, a few candidates felt that what was being referred to was the 'model' or style of life that Laurent had adopted following the murder of Camille. Laurent had taken up with the model because she offered an easy, uncomplicated relationship, and she satisfied his needs. Most candidates felt that Laurent had not harmed Thérèse by starting up this relationship: she was unaware of the affair and, indeed, was beginning to enjoy her freedom and, for a short while, had become attracted to a young candidate. It certainly never crossed Laurent's mind that he was doing any wrong.
- (ii) There were some stronger responses to **Part (ii)**. Most candidates recognised that "cette femme qui le troublait" was Thérèse and went on to describe the start of their adulterous relationship and the events that led to Camille's murder and its immediate aftermath. Regrettably, several candidates went into far too much detail and spent too long on this question, perhaps leaving insufficient time to deal with part (iii) adequately.
- (iii) Still shocked by the horror of the murder they have committed, neither Thérèse nor Laurent is prepared to commit to a permanent relationship and marriage is far from their minds. However, Laurent is starting to think how pointless the murder had been if he was not going to go back to Thérèse. He also fears that Thérèse might betray him to the authorities if he leaves her to her own devices. The unexpected departure of the model suddenly deprives him of his creature comforts and causes him to consider rekindling his physical relationship with Thérèse.
- (b) The question was quite well answered. What was required was a simple account of the novel, starting with the commencement of Laurent's adulterous relationship with Thérèse; the murder of Camille; Laurent's successful attempts to pass off the incident as an accident and how he succeeds presenting himself as the tragic hero; the manner in which he re-ingratiates himself into the Raquin household; his marriage to Thérèse; the steady decline of the lovers' relationship and, finally, their suicide under the hate-filled gaze of Mme Raquin. Those candidates who spent so much time addressing **Question 1(a) part (ii)** might have been better advised to address themselves to this alternative question.

Question 3 – Jean Anouilh: *L'Alouette*

Relatively few candidates addressed **Question 3(a)** and only a handful attempted **3(b)**.

- (a) Many candidates stopped short of developing their answers beyond the detail required by the questions. The answers to all three parts of the question were often very short and did not demonstrate adequate knowledge of the text. As in previous years, there were rather too many examples of candidates providing often irrelevant, pre-learnt material about the author and his works.
- (i) Warwick is impatient. He cannot see why Jeanne should be allowed to tell her story and delay proceedings. As the representative of the English king, his interest is a purely political one: he wants to see Jeanne condemned and the trial concluded as quickly as possible. After all, he knows that Jeanne is going to be burned.
- (ii) Warwick knows that the best outcome for him would be to have Jeanne condemned as a heretic and a 'camp-follower', since such a judgement will be easier for his soldiers to understand. The remark is typical of him: he is a military man and a pragmatist, and he is under pressure to achieve his aims quickly. As several candidates pointed out, Warwick's comments about propaganda and how it is created are probably an allusion by the author to the use of disinformation by the Nazis during the World War that had ended shortly before the play was written.
- (iii) Unlike Warwick, Cauchon is concerned for Jeanne's soul and his approach is more humane. Throughout the play, his principal wish is to allow Jeanne to be given adequate time to tell her story in the hope that she can be persuaded to recant and thus be welcomed back into the Church. Warwick, despite his desire to see the maid burned, is impressed by Jeanne's wit and natural

intelligence, and by the way she has been able to persuade some very powerful people (Charles, Beaudricourt) to bend to her will. Not a lot of candidates grasped this point. Warwick admits that, had Jeanne been of his class, he would have happily gone foxhunting with her.

(b) **Question 3 (b)** was attempted by only a handful of candidates and very few were successful in describing why '*L'Alouette*' might (or might not) be a fitting title for the play. Examiners were looking for themes such as:

- Like the skylark that sings at the break of day, Jeanne flutters above the heads of Charles and the Angevins, offering hope and optimism for the future.
- She is innocent and carefree and has no ulterior motive beyond that of completing her divine mission.
- Like a small bird, occupying only a very minor place in the animal kingdom, Jeanne has no pretensions to glory and status. The philosophical arguments used against her by the Promoter and Inquisitor go way over her head. But, led by her voices, she has no fear of standing up to nobility, bishops and princes.
- She has no doubt that she is one of God's creatures and that God is directing her actions, but, like a small bird, she is now caught in a cage from which she cannot escape

Question 4 – Jean Anouilh: *La Cantatrice chauve*

The question was attempted by some 15% of candidates, almost all of them dealing with **4(a)**.

- (a) (i) Candidates dealt with this question quite efficiently, describing the 'theory' (that someone must be at the door when the doorbell rings) which is supported by the men, and the 'reality' (that in practice nobody is there when Mme Martin goes to the door) which the women support. All of the characters attempt in vain to use logic to describe what is happening, but, to the Absurdist, the world is unknowable and any attempt to apply logic to interpret it is doomed to failure.
- (ii) The women are strongly united against the men, who are slightly less unanimous in their views. There is far less loyalty between the married couples: there is no proper communication at all between M. and Mme Smith, who talk in clichés and non-sequiturs and seem entirely isolated. As for the Martins, they had not even been able to recognise one another, let alone act as man and wife when ushered into the Smith's living room. Although the Martins subsequently 'rediscovered' one another, their joy was superficial, and they remain as distant as they ever were.
- (iii) Part (iii) was well answered: all candidates identified that it was the Capitaine des Pompiers who was at the door. (He had been there for three quarters of an hour, so knew that no one had been there when the bell had been rung on the first two occasions. He had then rung the doorbell, but had hidden...just for a laugh!). He had come on the off-chance that there might be a fire to extinguish in the property. He stays and recounts several bizarre anecdotes to entertain the two couples, before meeting the maid, Mary, who – it transpires – is his long-lost lover. The fire chief leaves to attend to a fire which is shortly to break out on the other side of town.
- (b) There were too few answers to allow for meaningful comment.

Section 2

Question 5 – Marie-Claire Blais: *Une Saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel*

This is a rather sombre text and Examiners were impressed by the maturity with which candidates addressed some of its more difficult themes.

- (a) Most candidates gave successful accounts of Héloïse's progress from religious aesthete, to her expulsion from the convent, to her installation at the brothel. The majority felt that this progression represented an improvement for her. After all, just like at the convent, she finds peace and satisfaction, good food and comfort, but here she could give vent to her urges without fear of criticism, and she was also able to send money home to help pay for Pomme's medical fees.
- (b) There were fewer successful answers to **Question 5(b)**, but the better responses referred both to the hardship of the bitter Canadian winter and to the severity of the environment in which Emmanuel and his brothers and sisters had to live. As Jean Le Maigre comments: "C'est l'hiver partout". The author creates an oppressive picture of a family that is as hard as the winters it

endures; desperate poverty, overcrowding, dirt, disease, death; all of these form the day to day background in a household where casual violence is commonplace and where education has no place. Can anything justify Grand-mère's optimism at the end of the novel: "Oui, ce sera un beau printemps..."?

Question 6 – Jean-Marie Gustave le Clézio: *Le Chercheur d'or*

There were comparatively few attempts at **Question 6**, but responses were equally divided between **6(a)** and **6(b)**.

- (a) Most candidates were able to offer satisfactory portraits of Mam and Laure, but found it difficult to compare and contrast the two. Mam is calm and comforting. She is responsible for the education of the two children and represents safety and stability in their lives (unlike Papa, whose financial recklessness ultimately causes the family's downfall). It is Mam's soothing voice that remains with Alexis after his mother's death. Laure and Alexis have a very close, almost telepathic relationship. Alexis can feel what his sister is thinking. It is to her that he dedicates his search for treasure and it is about her (not Mam or Ouma) that he thinks when he is facing death in the trenches at the Somme. Though their characters are different, both Mam and Laure are similarly affected by the family's ruin and the death of Papa. Sharing a life of poverty in Forest Side, Mam becomes taciturn and sombre before her death. Laure becomes embittered and withdrawn.
- (b) Though most candidates recognised the importance of nature as a theme within the novel, relatively few were able to provide specific detail of the several ways in which this was conveyed by the author. The better responses covered: the importance of the sea for Alexis, both as a source of comfort, and as a beacon of hope and adventure (the novel starts and ends with the sound of the sea); the nostalgic landscape of Boucan Bay, with its rock pools and cane fields; the hurricane that brought about the family's downfall and precipitated Alexis' departure to search for treasure; the gradual decline from the rugged landscape of Rodrigues to the desolation of the trenches at the Somme and the storm that shipwrecks the Zeta, signalling the end of Alexis' dream. It was particularly disappointing that so few candidates mentioned the importance of the descriptions of the stars, constellations and shooting stars, the latter signalling not optimism, but impending tragedy for Alexis and his father.

Question 7 – François Mauriac: *Le Désert de l'amour*

Just under 30% of candidates attempted **Question 7**, with most candidates opting for **7(a)**.

- (a) There were some very strong responses to this question. Maria Cross is, of course, the central character in the novel and it is around her that the stories of Paul Courrèges and his son develop. Maria's refusal to reciprocate Paul's feelings causes Dr. Courrèges to rededicate himself to a life of hard work, though not to any meaningful reconciliation with his wife and family. By contrast, Maria's rejection and humiliation of Raymond Courrèges leads him to a life of lonely debauchery in Paris, where his overriding aim is to meet with and take his revenge on Maria. Maria is, nevertheless, instrumental in bringing about a partial reconciliation between father and son at the end of the novel.
- (b) Responses to **7(b)** were also satisfactory, though fewer in number than **7(a)**. Father and son are unable to talk to each other. Dr. Courrèges has genuine affection for his son, but is unable to communicate this to him. Indeed, he fears that his son hates him. Perhaps owing to the lack of affection at home, Raymond has become a sullen, difficult teenager, who is reviled as a bully at School. Nevertheless, it is Maria, rather than Dr. Courrèges, who has the greatest impact on Raymond's life. As he falls for the lady on the trolleybus, Raymond grows in maturity and starts to take greater care of his appearance. His humiliating rejection by Maria sends Raymond on a downward spiral. It is only towards the end of the novel, when Raymond is once again dismissed by Maria, that he comes to understand the pain of unrequited love that his father has suffered for so many years.

Question 8 – Irène Némirovsky: *Tempête en juin (from Suite Française)*

A relatively popular text, with most candidates opting for **Question 8(a)**.

- (a) Most candidates gave an opinion on whether Mme Péricand had been correct in her assessment of Hubert's 'évasion', although rather too many candidates based their opinion on a personal reaction,

rather than using the content of the text to justify their view. Was his action 'irréfléchi, indiscipliné'? In many ways it was. Hubert's decision to leave was at least in part a reaction to his mother's refusal to let him go, a desire to stand up to her and show that he could go it alone. He was, however, totally unprepared for the horrors that met him and was relieved to find his way back to his family. And yet, he had been burning with patriotic fervour and a desire to go and fight for his country long before the family fled Paris. And his action was probably also 'digne d'un homme', at very least by comparison with many of the men fleeing Paris with him (Gabriel Corte, Charles Langelet, for example), whose only thought was for personal safety and the protection of their assets.

- (b) **Question (b)** was attempted by fewer candidates. Better responses dealt with the theme of isolation by examining in turn the characters who had been forced to flee Paris. The Péricand family were never truly isolated; they travelled by car, with domestic staff, and had relatives to stay with along their route. Nevertheless, Mme Péricand's charity is severely tested on the road; Hubert is isolated as he leaves to fight the enemy; and old M. Péricand is forgotten and left to die on his own as the family flees. Philippe Péricand is isolated in several senses; he has no relation whatsoever with the troupe of savage orphans that he leads; he dies alone, isolated from family and friends; and he is also isolated from God, whose grace he is unable to bring to his young protégés. Gabriel Corte is isolated and horrified amidst the mass of teeming humanity that surrounds him. Charles Langelet isolates himself, focussing solely on his art treasures and shunning human company. M. Corbin isolates himself from his workers, believing he has special rights based on his position of power. The only characters who do not suffer from isolation are the Michauds, who are supported by their love for each other; Jean-Marie Michaud, who is supported by the farming family as he recovers in the country; and Arlette Corail, who tends always to fall on her feet.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/43 Texts</p>

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Realise that some candidates might be better off addressing the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1**, which provide a ready-made structure for their answers and therefore offer better options for achieving reasonable to good marks than the freer option **(b)** alternatives, which provide no such inbuilt guidance on how to structure a response.

Teachers should train their students to:

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Candidates should:

Label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If passage-based questions are not properly labelled, it can look as though parts **(ii)** and **(iii)** have not been attempted. Start each new essay on a fresh page and take care to attach any continuation sheets in order. It is not necessary to write out the text of the question on the answer paper.
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Commence responses to the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1** with an introduction, locating the extract within the text and briefly explaining what events have preceded the extract.
Ensure that answers to the option **(b)** questions in **Section 1** and all questions in **Section 2** include;

- An opening paragraph, acknowledging the question and giving a brief indication of how it is to be addressed.
- A closing paragraph, which should summarise the points made in the essay.

General comments

The passage-based questions were efficiently addressed, for the most part. Stronger responses were able to deal with the detail required by the questions, while at the same time demonstrating good overall knowledge of the texts, often by means of a brief introduction to explain how the extract related to the text as a whole.

Some candidates still attempt to answer the passage-based questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then fail to explain what the quotation illustrates. Quotations should be employed selectively, and candidates must provide their own interpretations.

The essay questions were generally well structured. Candidates should not waste time by describing the background to the work and its author. Narration irrelevant to the question should be avoided – remember that the Examiner has also read the text – but candidates should aim to demonstrate their knowledge of the work while remaining focused on answering the question. Most candidates now recognise the importance of writing a brief introduction, to show that they have understood the question and to indicate how the question is to be addressed, and a conclusion to summarise the principle findings of the essay.

As always, the better responses were those which were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although these should be crossed out to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Molière: *Le Malade imaginaire*

Most candidates answered one of the questions on the Molière text, with a clear majority selecting the passage-based **Question 1(a)**.

- (a) The question was competently answered, and the context was explained well.
- (i) Most candidates correctly identified that Thomas Diafoirus was addressing Angélique, his intended wife. Some responses provided useful summaries of the events that had led up to the extract scene, including the misunderstanding that had just arisen when Thomas – who had not previously met Angélique – had initially addressed her as if she were his future mother-in-law. Thomas delivers a flowery, ornate speech, which contains classical and botanical allusions, and references to ideals of medieval courtly love, in which Angélique is compared to a beautiful, but unobtainable statue. Thomas has clearly spent a long time practising his speech, but it is so extravagant that Toinette and Cléante find it rather ridiculous.
- (ii) Toinette's aim is to ridicule Thomas to make clear to Argan the foolishness of his choice of husband for Angélique. All candidates acknowledged the irony used by Toinette and Cléante in their praise of Thomas' speech, and most highlighted the mockery made of the inadequate training received by those entering the medical profession.
- (iii) Part (iii) was less well answered. Thomas is entirely under his father's control and one can imagine that the elder Diafoirus has been closely involved in writing his son's speeches. Diafoirus has brought his son into the medical profession and is now using him to enhance his own rank in society by marrying him into the wealth of Argan's family. He claims to be proud of his son and of his achievements, but one suspects that even he can see that Thomas is not the ideal marriage candidate.
- (b) There were some strong responses to this question, the best of which examined the familial relationships by dealing with each of the characters in turn. Most responses began with an analysis of Argan, around whose hypochondria and bad temper the whole household revolves. Béline's motives and her hypocrisy were well covered. Though not a member of the family, Toinette is a second mother to Angélique and her sister, and most candidates justifiably decided to include her in their responses. The very best responses also dealt, albeit briefly, with the roles played by Béralde and Louison.

Question 2 – Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin*

Questions on the Zola work were attempted by about one third of candidates, with **Question 2(b)** being more popular.

- (a) (i) This question was quite well answered, and most candidates were able to give satisfactory summaries of the events that had led up to Camille's murder. Fewer candidates, however, mentioned that Laurent had almost killed Camille a little earlier that morning, but had decided that crushing his friend's head with the heel of his boot would have left him with no alibi.
- (ii) Part (ii) was also well dealt with. Though the murder had been carried out on the spur of the moment, Laurent had quickly formed a rational plan to conceal his guilt. He hides the bite mark on his neck and overturns the boat to make the drowning seem like an accident. He then plays the hero by diving into the water, in the pretence of seeking his lost friend. He subsequently claims that the dying Camille had called for him to save Thérèse and he feigns feelings of guilt, saying that he should not have allowed Camille to overbalance the boat by moving around.
- (iii) The rowers are the unwitting corroborators of Laurent's deceit. They believe they have observed a genuine accident and they witness Laurent's tears and anguish at his failure to find Camille. Having taken Laurent and Thérèse back to the nearby restaurant, the rowers are instrumental in spreading the story of the tragedy and of Laurent's apparent heroism.
- (b) The question was efficiently dealt with. All candidates gave a view on who they felt was the guiltier party – most felt that Laurent and Thérèse bore equal blame – and were able to back up their opinion with good knowledge of the text. The very best responses argued both for and against Laurent/Thérèse and went on to say that perhaps neither was guilty, since they were each unwitting products of their environment.

Question 3 – Jean Anouilh: *L'Alouette*

- (a) There were too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) There were too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 4 – Jean Anouilh: *La Cantatrice chauve*

The question was attempted by almost two thirds of candidates, with a clear majority in favour of the extract **Question 4(a)**.

- (a) (i) Though some candidates dealt reasonably well with the second part of the question, most chose to ignore the first part ('Racontez le visite du pompier') and thus lost valuable marks. What was required was a simple account of the fire chief's arrival in search of a fire to extinguish, his entertainment of the Smiths and the Martins with his nonsensical anecdotes, his fleeting surprise upon meeting his long-lost love, Mary the maid, and his departure to attend to a fire that was about to start on the other side of town. Rather too many candidates tied themselves up in knots, trying to explain the fire chief's bizarre and rather torturous tale of people whose only real connection was that they all sometimes caught colds.
- (ii) Responses to part (ii) were better. Most felt that the nonsensical and rather dull responses of the Smiths to the fire chief's tale were typical. Neither has a strong opinion about anything, they communicate in clichés and non-sequiturs and they have a very weak grasp on reality. In evidence of this, several responses made useful reference to the Smiths' tale of Bobby Watson and relatives. The only occasions on which the Smiths show any individuality or backbone are when they are disagreeing with each other (viz. the doorbell scene).
- (iii) Part (iii) was also quite well answered. Mme Martin is a replica of Mme Smith (they exchange places at the end of the play) and, like her friend, she is not the 'sharpest knife in the drawer'. She has a weak grasp on reality and is even more forgetful than her husband (viz. her failure to recognise her husband when ushered into the Smiths' drawing room earlier that evening). Our astonishment is, perhaps, not that Mme Martin has failed to understand the fire chief's tale, but that she claims that the only part she has misunderstood concerns the grandmother, whom the fire chief refers to at the very end of his story.

- (b) Responses to **Question 4(b)** were, in many cases, weakened by the inability of candidates to recall the detail of the four animal anecdotes: three related by the fire chief and one by Monsieur Smith. Nevertheless, there were some valuable commentaries on the relevance and purpose of the anecdotes, the principle effect of which was to demonstrate that language often fails to convey any real meaning.

Section 2

Question 5 – Marie-Claire Blais: *Une Saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel*

About a quarter of candidates addressed **Question 5**, with responses equally balanced between the two options. This is a rather sombre text and Examiners were impressed by the maturity with which candidates dealt with some of its more difficult themes.

- (a) Most candidates gave successful accounts of the importance of Grandma's role in the novel. She is the religious and moral director of the family, she is a contrast with the weak men in the novel, she is enduring and resigned to pain and she strongly believes in the value of education (unlike le père). Although she has a hard exterior, she has a soft heart: she genuinely cares for the children and is strongly protective of Jean Le Maigre and his writings. Perversely, she is comforted by the sorrow she experiences at the death of children, and she takes pleasure in attending to the needs of a dying neighbour. She is the voice of hope at the end of the novel ('L'hiver a été dur, mais le printemps sera meilleur'), though one is left to wonder whether her optimism is justified.
- (b) There were fewer successful answers to **Question 5(b)**, but the better responses detailed the way in which Jean Le Maigre writes and romanticizes his own life in his 'œuvre posthume'. Words are of enormous importance for him, and his poetry transforms his harsh existence into something more magical and passionate. His writings reveal that he does not believe that death is for him, though he also shows that he knows he is going to die. He reveals snatches of information about the family, such as his brother Leopold's suicide, his first love at school and Le Septième's arsonist tendencies. He also exposes the hardship of life in the 'maison de correction' and accurately foretells the fate of Pomme, Le Septième, Héloïse and Emmanuel.

Question 6 – Jean-Marie Gustave le Clézio: *Le Chercheur d'or*

- (a) There were too few responses to **Question 6(a)** to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) There were too few responses to **Question 6(b)** to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 7 – François Mauriac: *Le Désert de l'amour*

- (a) There were too few responses to **Question 7(a)** to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) There were too few responses to **Question 7(b)** to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 8 – Irène Némirovsky: *Tempête en juin (from Suite Française)*

This was a relatively popular text and 60 per cent of candidates addressed the question, with a majority opting for **Question 8(b)**.

- (a) Mme Péricand was well described. She is the backbone of the Péricand family: she organises the family's flight from Paris and does her utmost to hold the family together during the horrors that they experience as refugees (though she rather negligently leaves old Monsieur Péricand behind during her flight). She is something of a snob and is relieved when she is able to talk to people of similar class while on the road. She is charitable, because this is what the Church expects of women of her class, but her generosity is soon withdrawn when she realises that food shortages might threaten her own family. She is motivated by patriotic feeling: she is proud to believe that her son Philippe died doing his duty and she sees Hubert's departure to fight as a manly act. At the end of the novel, she returns to her life of privilege in Paris, largely unscathed by her adventures.

- (b) **Question (b)** was less successfully dealt with. Relatively few candidates were able to recall specific detail of food being mentioned in the novel, perhaps with the exception of Mme Pericand's refusal to allow her children to go on handing out sweets to the masses, and the theft of Gabriel Corte's food parcel. As a result, many candidates were reduced to making rather general comments about shortages of food supplies during armed conflicts, and the difficulties that such shortages might cause. For those candidates who knew the novel well, there was quite a lot to go for, including: the fine food on the Péricand's dining table at the start of the novel, reflecting the family's upper-class status; Gabriel Corte's pleasurable recollection of trout that he had fished from an Austrian river and his dreams of the good food that he had eaten previously in the city of Tours, as hunger starts to gnaw at him; Charles Langelet despising the vulgarity of the common masses that surround him as he stops for food in Montargis and the irony of his death in a road accident while on his way to dinner in Paris; Mme Pericand using her priority ration card to bypass the queues, while the common people wait in line for food.