

FRENCH

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

Key messages

For Teachers/examiners:

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below).
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section, but keep your own answers brief. A candidate cannot qualify for marks while the Examiner is speaking.
- More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks for *Seeking Information* and Examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- Candidates' questions should relate to the topic under discussion. Please see the Mark Scheme.
- 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 one-word or purely factual answers.
- Avoid topics of a highly personal or sensitive nature.
- Ask questions at an appropriate level and avoid IGCSE-type questions except as openers to fuller discussion.
- It is the Examiner's responsibility to introduce the candidate at the beginning of the examination, not the candidate's.
- It is not helpful to use 'Maintenant, présente-toi...' as an opener for the General Conversation, as this tends to restrict discussion to a very narrow range of subjects.

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.
- Candidates are advised that it is better not to ask the Examiner direct questions during the Topic Presentation, as they disrupt the flow of the Presentation and do not count towards *Seeking Information* in the conversation sections.
- A number of candidates asked rhetorical questions in the Topic Presentation. Rhetorical questions are not a requirement of the Test, but they may constitute, if desired, an appropriate part of the Presentation. However, candidates should be aware that they do not count towards *Seeking Information* in the conversation sections.
- It is not in the spirit of the Test that candidates ask their Examiner for key (or indeed *any*) vocabulary.

General comments

It is important for Examiners to remember that this examination is an opportunity for candidates to show what they have learnt and a chance for them to express and develop their own ideas and opinions. Examiners should see their role as providing and facilitating this opportunity.

The way in which an Examiner asks questions can make a significant difference to how a candidate is able to respond. Examiners need to be aware that:

- Very long, complex questions tend to unnerve candidates and rarely facilitate discussion.
- Closed questions usually elicit short answers, sometimes just yes or no, and should be avoided unless they are intended to open the way for a deeper discussion.
- Open questions such as *Comment?* or *Pourquoi?* are more likely to allow a candidate the freedom to answer at much greater length and in greater depth.

The examination should be a conversation, which can only be achieved by engaging with and responding to what the candidate says, not by asking a series of entirely unrelated questions with no follow-up. Going through a list of pre-prepared questions rarely results in a natural conversation.

Administration

Recordings

- Recordings were mainly clear, though there are still examples of faulty recording equipment. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner's own contribution.
- Please choose a room which is quiet and where candidates are not distracted by external noise.
- Only the Examiner and the candidate should be present during the Test.
- Centres should keep a copy of the recording(s) in case a second copy is required by the Moderator or a broader range of marks is requested.
- Please make sure that the recordings have successfully transferred to the CD or memory stick submitted for moderation. We receive blank or distorted disks every year.
- Where centres use digital recording software, each candidate's file must be saved individually, as .mp files, and finalised correctly, so that each candidate's examination can be accessed for moderation. Files should be identified using precise candidate details (see the paragraph below) rather than just 'number 1, 2' etc.
- Please ensure that all recording material (including CD cases) is labelled with details of the centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their full names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a centre has candidates at both A & AS level, they should be recorded on separate CDs.
- Centres are reminded that the sample of recordings they send should represent candidates throughout the range of the entry, from highest to lowest.
- Please avoid sticky tape or labels coming into contact with the recording side of CDs, as this makes them unplayable and runs the risk of damaging the equipment on which they are played.

Paperwork

- There are always a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transferring them to the MS1. These should be checked carefully before submission and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings. For the size of sample needed, please see the details on the Cambridge International website.
- Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to send the Working Mark Sheet, a copy of the MS1 (computer mark sheet or equivalent), and any other relevant paperwork.

Application of Mark Scheme

- There were irregularities in the application of the Mark Scheme. Several centres awarded marks out of 10 for *Providing* and/or *Seeking Opinions*, when the maximum is 5; others awarded marks for *Seeking Information*, even when the candidate had not asked any questions.
- Many Examiners do not halve the mark for *Presentation/Content* if the candidate's topic is not demonstrably and unequivocally related to a francophone country.

- Where a centre engages two Examiners to examine the same syllabus, Examiners must make sure they apply the standard in the same way (i.e. they go through Internal coordination) before they submit their marks to Cambridge International.

Format of the examination

There are 3 distinct parts to the Speaking Test:

1. Presentation (3–3.5 minutes)
2. Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes)
3. General Conversation (8–9 minutes)

The Speaking Test should last no more than 20 minutes in total.

In order to be fair to all candidates across the world, these timings should be observed. Where examinations are too short, candidates are not given opportunities to show what they can do, and where conversations are over-extended, an element of fatigue creeps in and candidates sometimes struggle to maintain their concentration and level of language.

Examiners must also remember that the longer their own contributions, the less time candidates have to develop their ideas. Responses to questions asked by candidates should be kept brief.

Presentation (3–3.5 minutes)

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation on a specific topic of his or her choice, taken from one of the topic areas listed in the syllabus booklet. This is the only prepared part of the examination and the only part for which candidates are able to choose what they want to talk about. There were a number of cases this session where candidates spoke on more than one topic.

The topic list gives candidates a very wide choice – the most popular this year, at both A and AS Levels, were *La Pandémie, La Technologie, L'égalité des sexes, Les Médias Sociaux, Le Conflit des Générations, Le Sport, La Famille, Le Tourisme, La Cuisine Française, L'environnement* and *La Pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage and discrimination, a few dealing with culture or politics in a French-speaking country, as well as personal interests such as art or music. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues. It was noticeable that the link to a francophone country was often borderline.

For the most part, candidates were clearly aware of the need, stated in the syllabus, that the presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken. Where this is not the case, candidates will have their mark for *Content/Presentation* halved (see Speaking Test mark scheme) by the Examiner.

Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched quite widely, and have to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3.5 minutes – additional material which cannot be included in the actual presentation because of the time constraint may well prove very useful in the topic conversation section. In general, candidates had no problem speaking for the required time and many were able to give full and interesting presentations.

Candidates would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects e.g. *La Famille* and *Le Sport*. The mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and expand their chosen topic. Sport and family, though popular choices, are often the least successful for that reason.

Increasingly, candidates spend time giving dictionary definitions of very familiar topics at the expense of expressing their own ideas and opinions.

Candidates should only present ONE topic and the Topic Conversation which follows will seek to develop that same topic.

Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes)

In this section, candidates have the chance to expand on what they have already said and develop ideas and opinions expressed briefly during the presentation. Examiners need to beware of merely asking questions which allow a repetition of the same material already offered – their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily ‘right’ answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed. However, differences of opinion can create lively debate (if handled sensitively and purposefully by the Examiner) and can give candidates the opportunity to defend their point of view.

At both A and AS Level, questions should go beyond the sort of questions appropriate at IGCSE Level. Candidates need to be able to show that they are capable of taking part in a mature conversation. In some cases, candidates were not able to offer much development or sustain the level of language used in their presentation, but others were successful in expressing additional ideas and seeking the opinions of the Examiner.

In each conversation section there are 5 marks available for questions the candidates ask of the Examiner: they should ask more than one question in each conversation section and Examiners must prompt them to do so. Examiners should make sure that they do not spend too long on their own answers to candidates’ questions, thereby depriving candidates of valuable time.

Examiners should indicate the end of the Topic Conversation and the beginning of the General Conversation.

General Conversation (8–9 minutes)

The General Conversation is the most spontaneous section of the examination. Candidates will have prepared their own choice of topic for the Topic Presentation (to be continued in the Topic Conversation), but here they do not know what the Examiner will choose to discuss (and it is the Examiner who chooses, not the candidate). Clearly the areas of discussion will be those studied during the course, but there seemed to be fewer varied and in-depth discussions this session. In a centre with a number of candidates, candidates should not all be asked to talk about the same list of subjects – themes should be varied from candidate to candidate and should on no account return to the original subject of the presentation.

This section is intended to be a conversation between Examiner and candidate, so it is not appropriate for the Examiner to ask a series of unrelated questions, to which the candidate responds with a prepared answer, after which the Examiner moves on to the next question on the list! Examiners should display sensitivity in asking questions about topics of a personal nature i.e. religion and personal relationships and should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas. Examiners should not regard the examination as a platform for imposing their own views on the candidates.

Examiners should aim to discuss a minimum of 2 to 3 areas in depth, giving candidates opportunities to offer their own opinions and defend them in discussion. Although the section may begin with straightforward questions about family, interests or future plans, which can, in themselves, be developed beyond the purely factual (questions asking ‘Why?’ or ‘How?’ are useful here), candidates at both A and AS Level should be prepared for the conversation to move on to current affairs and more abstract topics appropriate to this level of examination.

Candidates should be prompted to ask questions of the Examiner in order to give them the opportunity to score marks for this criterion, though Examiners should once again be wary of answering at too great a length.

Assessment

- The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where Topic Presentations did not relate to a francophone country, in which case the mark for Content/Presentation must be halved.
- A handful of Examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness, Accuracy and Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.

- In rare cases, Examiners misapplied the mark scheme, most frequently by awarding marks out of 10 for those categories like *Pronunciation/Intonation* and *Seeking Opinions* which carry a maximum of 5 marks.
- Examiners at centres with a large entry of able candidates should be aware that marks may be bunched and that it may be impossible to differentiate between candidates to a greater degree than the Mark Scheme allows.
- Where candidates ask questions to elicit clarification or obtain information during the course of conversation, they should clearly be rewarded, but Examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that they are relevant to the topic under discussion. A significant number of candidates this session had prepared questions which were not relevant.
- Centres are reminded that they should engage only one Examiner per syllabus if at all possible / if the size of the entry permits. In cases where the engagement of two or more Examiners on the same syllabus is unavoidable, the Examiners must co-ordinate with each other to establish an agreed standard.



FRENCH

Paper 9716/21
Reading and Writing

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

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. Candidates need to find a satisfactory replacement both semantically and grammatically.
- 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 re-working the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material over the word limit 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

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, broadly similar in level of difficulty to previous years and on a topic which was generally approachable. There was the usual very wide range of performance, with some very good scripts from able and well-prepared candidates who demonstrated a high level of understanding of the texts and handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst at the other end of the range, there were some whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

Some didn't read the questions carefully enough or didn't take note of the indication in square brackets of the number of points to be made in each question, but where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**, or because they allowed their personal opinions to dictate their responses, rather than focusing on what the text actually said.

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, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. Some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and over-complicate their answers. Sometimes, the words of the text can be replaced by much simpler terms e.g. *le temps* or *la météo* for *les conditions météorologiques* (**3c**); or *le bruit* for *les émissions sonores* (**3e**). The most successful answers are often the most concisely and simply expressed. Some quite acceptably set out their answers by separating the points as **(i)**..., **(ii)**..., **(iii)**... etc.

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 significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language marks – e.g. *La limitation pénaliserait-elle ceux qui...* (**4b**). Answers beginning with *Parce que* or *En* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished significantly in recent sessions, 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. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide a rewardable answer. They should try to

express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. 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.

In **Question 1**, most candidates appear to be aware of the 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. The inclusion of unnecessary additional words (or the exclusion of necessary ones) invalidates the answer.

Candidates can sometimes help themselves considerably by narrowing down the options to words which are at least same parts of speech, or by matching (for example) singulars with singulars or feminine adjectives with feminine adjectives.

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. **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 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 sessions, some candidates 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 unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (maybe because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply waste a significant proportion of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very 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.

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 in correct French 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.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a relatively straightforward first exercise which enabled a good proportion of candidates a positive start:

In **Item (a)** *opposés* was generally identified for *hostiles*, helped perhaps by the plural endings, although *la mise* and *l'unanimité* made occasional unexplained appearances.

In **(b)**, *l'unanimité* appeared again, but it was the omission of *en* before *colère* which was the main cause of mark loss here – see the 'footprint' principle in **General comments Question 1** above.

Item (c) frequently produced *lancement*, which might perhaps have been possible in some contexts, but sadly not in this one.

In **(d)**, candidates were generally successful in finding *nets* for *clairs*.

In **(e)**, the same went for *sensible/délicat*, which made this the most successfully handled item of all.

Question 2

There were some excellent answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but, as usual, the task proved very demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or those who didn't observe the basic rules of agreement.

Item 2(a) The transfer into the passive proved problematic for some, occasionally because of an unnecessary change of tense or the insertion of *par nous*, but far more often because of the missed agreement on *vues* – or occasionally *ont été vu*.

In **Item 2(b)**, many seemed to realise the need for a subjunctive but not all could form one for the regular *-ir* verb *applaudir*. *Il faudrait que nous soyons en mesure d'applaudir* added a new and unrewardable twist.

Item 2(c) the transfer to direct speech required more than one change. By far the most common error here in was the omission of the *e* in *encourageons* or its inclusion in *encourageions*, but problems were also caused by the appearance of *notre membres* and *les soutenir*.

Item 2(d) A small number of candidates appeared to see this exercise as one which largely involved simply re-arranging the order of the words given: *Une distance de freinage réduite par une baisse permet*. The need for an agreement on *permise* was often missed.

In **Item 2(e)** A combination of a missing agreement on *forcés* and a failure to follow it with *de* rather than *à* accounted for the mark being lost by many.

Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, a good number of candidates successfully identified the lowering of the speed limit for the first mark. Some went on to say *Ils se sont fâchés/ont manifesté leur colère* which did not say how they showed their opposition, whilst others simply lifted the noun *lancement* which was easily avoided by others using *en lançant/publiant/ils ont créé* etc.

In **Item 3(b)**, the wording of the question directed candidates towards replacing the nouns with verbs – *Qu'est-ce que les gouvernements ... ont fait?* – which many did with some ease. Most pointed successfully to the introduction of pedestrian precincts and speed traps.

In **Item 3(c)**, the need to remain *vigilant/attentif* was identified by most. *Regarder les pneus* was too vague to score but most found *vérifier/contrôler/entretenir* or similar. Fewer found simple phrases such as *adapter sa conduite s'il fait mauvais temps* for the third mark.

In **Item 3(d)** quite a number did not read through to the end of the question, which asked what the association was seeking to do by asking its members to respect the limit and drive more slowly, and simply

answered *respecter la limitation* or *rouler moins vite*. Candidates needed to point firstly to the aim of reducing the number of people injured/injuries and then the seriousness of the injuries. *Fatalités/morts* went too far. Some found neat ways of combining both in a single sentence: *réduire le nombre et la gravité des blessures*.

Item 3(e) saw some confusion over *économie* which some thought referred to the benefit for the country's economy or reducing the price of petrol, but most realised that it referred to using/buying less petrol, which in turn reduces air pollution. Relatively few managed to avoid lifting *émissions sonores*, easily achieved by *bruit*.

Section 2

Question 4

Item 4(a) Misreading *état* as *étant* distorted some responses. The remaining three causes were generally well handled.

In **Item 4(b)**, there was sometimes a lack of clarity over whether the journeys would increase in distance rather than in the length of time taken, but a healthy number earned both marks neatly and simply with *Les trajets et les livraisons prendraient plus de temps*.

Item 4(c) was well answered by those who saw the need for verbs to avoid lifting, although neither *faire mieux* nor *faire clair* worked here.

In **Item 4(d)**, some thought reducing the speed had a very positive effect on air quality, which was probably what they imagined rather than what the text actually said, which was the contrary. Others went too far in the opposite direction by asserting that *il n'y aurait aucun/pas d'effet/zero*.

In **Item 4(e)**, *réévaluer/réexaminer le projet* etc. earned most candidates the first mark, but *faire marche arrière* gave rise to some confusion.

Question 5(a) Summary

This Question is effectively a **précis** in which 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**. *La décision prise par le gouvernement français en 2018 de réduire la vitesse maximale de 90 km/h à 80 km/h sur les routes secondaires divise le peuple français. En effet cette décision aura des conséquences positifs et négatifs. Les associations de prévention routière sont d'accords avec cette décision* wasted approximately one third of the word allowance without scoring any marks. Significantly fewer words could have been used to score all 7 of the marks available in favour of lowering the speed limit: *En réduisant la vitesse, on diminue le nombre d'accidents routiers (A) et leur gravité. (B). On peut s'arrêter plus vite (C) et réduire les chocs (D). Les voitures consomment moins d'essence (E) et produisent moins d'émissions polluantes (F) et de bruit (G).*

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a respectable number. The very weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

Of the arguments against the lowering of the speed limit, the most commonly made included

- It is just a way to generate income for the State.
- There are many other factors which cause accidents.
- Journey and delivery times increase.
- The money spent on replacing speed signs would be better spent on other projects.
- The impact on air pollution is minimal.

The **Personal Response (5b)** elicited a large number of proposals for limiting the number of cars on the roads, many of which centred on improving cheap and reliable public transport. The question did not ask why we should reduce the number of cars on the road, but how?

Other ideas included:

- Limiting car ownership to one per household.

- Car sharing – *co-voiturage*.
- Fixing the minimum driving age at 25 and the maximum at 70.
- Increasing the price of cars and/or fuel and/or road tax.
- Building more cycle paths to promote bicycles/scooters.
- Introducing congestion charges and closing car parks in cities.
- Using drones for deliveries.
- Alternating days for car use.
- Planning towns so that the major facilities can be reached on foot.

Quality of Language

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

A phonetic approach to spelling sometimes made compréhension difficult: *un nôtre/anotre (un autre); les décets (décès); plus d'amandes*. But it extended to grammar too (*ils on-t-été vues; quand l'ont roule*) or to the choice between *ce, se, and ceux; sa and ça; ces, ses, c'est and s'est; ci and si; donc and dont; ou and où*, many of which appeared largely interchangeable. The use of the infinitive *-er* ending – or indeed anything else that sounded similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (*-é*) in some scripts.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) were again largely ignored in a worryingly large number of scripts. As with the frequency with which words given in the text and/or question were wrongly copied or changed their spelling and gender from one sentence to the next, it is tempting to put this down to carelessness and lack of checking but one suspects that the problem may in some cases lie much deeper than this.

When attempts were made to make verbs agree as plurals, it was often simply by putting an *s* on the end of the singular: *ils utilises*.

Many incorrect verb forms were in evidence, even for common irregular verbs such as *pouvoir, faire, devoir, prendre, (per)mettre, (entre/main)tenir*.

Constructions with certain verbs seemed problematic: *encourager, persuader, aider, permettre, interdire, obliger*. Attempts at forming passives also seemed challenging, sometimes because candidates confused *ils ont* with *ils sont*, or else did not understand the implications for the agreement of the past participle.

English verbs with French endings were much in evidence – *vérifier, émettre, consumer, livraiser, entretenir/entretir, éclairager, expecter, exprimer, introducer/introduiser, diminuer/dimunier/diminuire, réduire*.

Studying vocabulary in lexical groups would be useful preparation for this examination.

Other words with an obvious English influence were: *les régulations, les polluants, duration, diminution, bénéficitive, en ordre pour, payer attention, ils sont sur le telephone*.

Stronger candidates showed commendable awareness of the need to avoid 'lifting' from the text, for example by replacing a noun with a verb, but they still need to be sure to follow things through: for example, the laudable attempt to replace *la réduction de la vitesse* by *il a réduit de la vitesse* does not work and shows that the candidate has not fully understood the text or what (s)he is writing. The same is true of attempts to replace *le lancement de pétitions* by *ils ont lancé de pétitions*; or *le port de la ceinture* by *porter de la ceinture etc.*

Although much of the above inevitably focuses on weaknesses and areas for improvement, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the strongest candidates wrote very impressive, idiomatic, fluent and commendably accurate French which was very much to their credit.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/23
Reading and Writing

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/31
Essay

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/32
Essay

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully and take sufficient time to plan their essays before starting to write. They then need to create logical, well-illustrated answers on the actual question set. Candidates should use the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and the conclusion to show their considered final judgement of the issues they have discussed. Paragraphing is also important to show both clarity of thought and logical progression through an argument. In order to attain high marks for language, candidates should use accurate and idiomatic French which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary.

General comments

There was a wide range of ability demonstrated, from the very weak to the very good. Content marks reflected the level of discussion which was often quite superficial or unfocused. There were, however, very few wholly irrelevant answers. Some relevant essays lacked clear development or exemplification of points. They were, therefore, unconvincing and unable to access the higher mark ranges.

The candidates' work was generally well presented although there were some examples of poor handwriting. Some candidates, due to insufficient planning, made excessive numbers of untidy revisions in the text of the essay, often hindering the Examiner's ability to follow an argument.

Most candidates organised their ideas into paragraphs and were able to communicate their ideas. Many showed ambition in their use of language and tried to include a varied range of vocabulary and structures. The quality of language was, however, often inconsistent, with frequent errors in the use of basic grammar e.g. singular/plural, adjectival and subject-verb agreements, articles, the use of the infinitive in two-verb structures and prepositions.

It is vitally important that candidates read the questions carefully before beginning to write 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 in lieu of a plan, or nothing at all. It is advisable to write the plan in French as this gives the opportunity to test out vocabulary and structures. A lack of planning often leads to long rambling essays with poor punctuation and paragraphing. In some cases, candidates adopted an inappropriate register with slang words being used and candidates addressing the Examiner as *tu*.

Candidates who planned their essays carefully, defined the terms of the question and wrote a logical and persuasive argument, before arriving at a balanced conclusion, were most successful. They used a range of structures and idioms and convinced the reader with the coherence and relevance of their arguments.

Common errors included:

Des nos jours.

Étudier for enseigner

Anglicisms such as *distracter*; *improver*; *resolver*; *la balance*

Beaucoup des gens

C'est instead of *il est*: *c'est difficile de*; *c'est clair que*

Inappropriate use of *personnes/gens (certains gens)*

Confusion between: *ce/ces/ses/c'est, on/ont, et/est/ait/es, son/sont*

Gender errors: *la problème, la programme*

Misspellings of *conflict, l'internet, l'Instagram, le facebook*

Phonetic spelling e.g. *comme ont le voi de n'aux jours, l'internet à c'est bon côté*

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

La communication est le meilleur moyen d'affronter le conflit des générations. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez ?

Most candidates considered the reasons for the generation gap, stating the use of technology by young people, differences of opinions, parents not keeping up with changes in attitude and values, and young people rebelling against parental authority. They tended to agree that communication is one of the best ways to bridge the gap, and that both sides need to listen to each other. Weaker answers, after stating that communication was far better than confrontation, had little more to say and ended up describing long personal anecdotes. These responses tended, therefore, to lack both subtlety and fresh insights. The best essays looked at other ways of bringing the generations together such as spending time together and sharing activities that both younger and older generations enjoy. They suggested that communication does not have to be verbal but can be through actions, and sometimes even, silence. Some candidates were keen to point out that parents' old-fashioned methods of imposing their authority were the cause of conflict and were definitely unacceptable in the modern world. The best answers were those that were able to demonstrate with clarity and style the need for compromise and understanding between the generations, using a range of examples.

Question 2

Manger n'est plus un plaisir parce qu'on doit toujours penser aux conséquences. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

Few candidates attempted this question. Several of them merely gave a list of food that is considered bad to eat, followed by a list of illnesses that could ensue such as diabetes and heart disease. They then suggested activities that could be done to offset over-indulgence and predisposition to illness. Other, more sophisticated responses discussed the increase in eating disorders and the impact of social media with its focus on celebrities, on perceptions of physical appearance, particularly amongst adolescent girls and young women. They also mentioned the high levels of obesity in many countries as well as the impact of genetically modified foods and processed food on people's health. Most agreed that with a balanced diet and regular exercise, people can enjoy what they eat without worrying about the consequences, and still enjoy occasional consumption of food considered to be unhealthy.

Question 3

Il faut que les filles et les garçons suivent le même programme scolaire. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

Only a handful of candidates attempted this question. For several of them, the question was about girls having the opportunity to attend school in the same way as boys, thus allowing them to access the job market and become independent of their families. It was clear to candidates that boys and girls have the same aptitudes and should, therefore, have the right to study the same subjects in school so they can have successful careers afterwards. Weaker answers merely defined education and described their own schools, while better answers discussed in detail the importance of equality and the need for schools to promote this in societies which might still be anchored in traditional roles for boys and girls. Some candidates made the point that schools might sometimes reasonably differentiate between boys and girls because of differing levels of maturity but that this differentiation should not relate to access to the same range of subjects.

Question 4

Il faut absolument limiter l'usage d'internet par les enfants. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

This was the most popular question and all candidates across the range of ability were able to make some relevant points about the impact of the internet on young people. Some candidates focused entirely on the advantages and disadvantages of the internet without making reference to limiting the usage except for a passing mention in the introduction or conclusion. It was clear that, during this year, when much of schooling has been conducted online, a limit on usage could be counterproductive. Candidates understood, though, that despite its obvious advantages as a research tool, a place to communicate with friends and family and to enjoy playing games, there are clear downsides to spending all one's time in the virtual world of the internet. They described the impact on physical health on being sedentary and the risk to the eyes of focusing on a screen all day. They also mentioned the dangers of cyberbullying, the theft of personal data and having access to inappropriate material on websites. It was felt that parental controls were important and that limits should be applied to daily use but that, overall, there should not be a complete ban on children using the internet as the benefits outweighed the risks.

Question 5

C'est notre dépendance au plastique qui mène à la destruction de la biodiversité marine. Que pensez-vous de cette affirmation ?

Not many candidates attempted this question. The most common approach was to list many of the ecological threats to the planet and man's share of the blame. These answers tended to miss the detail on marine biodiversity and our overuse of plastic. The best essays gave examples of how plastic can cause damage to the marine environment. They described the impact on the ocean bed and, specifically, on coral reefs, and the risks to sea creatures who inadvertently ingest plastic believing it to be food. Excess packaging and the careless disposal of plastics were seen to be the major causes of this marine disaster. Candidates often went on to describe other factors leading to destruction of the marine environment such as overfishing, oil spills and pollution. Their answers were illustrated with a good range of examples and displayed a considerable knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/33
Essay

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/41
Texts

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

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 are challenging for some candidates.
- encourage candidates to consider which kind of question suit them better in Section 1: the passage-based **(a)** questions provide a ready-made structure for answers while the freer option **(b)** essay questions leave more room for creativity.

Teachers should encourage their candidates to:

- Manage their time carefully in the examination room, ensuring that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions.
- 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 regularly to the question.

Candidates should:

- Label their answers with the question number, ensuring that the passage-based questions are correctly labelled 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.
- Commence responses to the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1** with a **brief** 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

Le Barbier de Séville is clearly a popular text and the passage-based question was capably dealt with by most candidates. Fewer attempted the extract questions on the Flaubert, Gide and Guène texts, but those who did, acquitted themselves satisfactorily for the most part. As usual, the better responses addressed the detail required by the question, whilst at the same time demonstrating comprehensive knowledge of the text. It is pleasing to note that fewer candidates attempted to answer questions by quoting lengthy extracts from the text this year. When used, quotations were, for the most part, kept brief and their relevance was made clear.

The essay questions were generally well structured, starting with a clear introduction and ending with a summarising conclusion. However, there continue to be a few instances of extraneous storytelling and answers that wandered off the point. Essay planning helped the better candidates to remain focused and avoid irrelevance. It remains the case that candidates should not waste time at the start of their essay by describing the background to the work, the author's life and literary output, nor do they need to begin their response by writing out the question.

If a premise is provided in the question, candidates **must not be afraid to disagree with it**. It is far more important that candidate should give his/her opinion and that this opinion should be supported by relevant evidence from the text.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Beaumarchais: *Le Barbier de Séville*

This was by far the most popular text, with a small majority opting for **Question 1(a)**.

- (a) The question was well answered by most candidates.
- (i) Rosine has been locked behind the 'jalousie' by her jealous guardian, Dr. Bartholo, who has declared his intention of marrying his young ward. Obtaining the key to the 'jalousie' is critical to the plan formulated by Figaro which, if successful, will give the Count access to his sweetheart. Indeed, loss of the key leads to Bartholo's undoing since Figaro succeeds in arranging the marriage of Rosine and Almaviva while Bartholo is away. In explaining the relevance of the key, most candidates successfully alluded to the background to Rosine's incarceration, her relationship with her guardian and her developing liaison with the Count.
- (ii) Some candidates felt that Bartholo was not suspicious of the Count because of the success of Almaviva's disguise. This is not wholly true: Bartholo does have his suspicions. However, the Count allays Bartholo's doubts by producing Rosine's letter and it is this that gains Bartholo's confidence. Figaro, on the other hand, has already demonstrated his lack of dependability in his service of Bartholo. After all, he has just incapacitated Bartholo's serving staff and Bartholo suspects that Figaro also has designs on the young Rosine.
- (iii) Bartholo's claim that Figaro 'would not catch him again' is of course unfounded. Figaro succeeds in stealing the key to the 'jalousie' and he shields the young lovers from Bartholo's view while he shaves him, enabling Rosine and the Count to talk undisturbed, he bests Bartholo by arranging for Rosine and Almaviva to marry in advance of the time set by Bartholo for his own marriage. He and the Count gain access to the residence while Bartholo is out and, in a final irony, Figaro even succeeds in persuading Don Bazile to act as witness to the marriage of Rosine and Almaviva.
- (b) Responses to the essay question had slightly less success. Most candidates correctly identified the critical role that Figaro has in the play: he drives the action; he enjoys an elevated social status and is quite prepared to speak his mind and indeed to mock the Count and Bartholo; he is cleverer and wittier than his social betters and has a verbal dexterity that they cannot match; he is always in possession of the facts, to the extent that Bartholo in particular appears pedestrian by contrast. However, only a handful of candidates felt it appropriate to question the extent to which Figaro was a genuine representation of a valet. Figaro is far from being a servant and does little to represent the interests of that class. Indeed, Figaro is much more a reflection of Beaumarchais himself and voices the author's discontent with theatre critics and certain members of the nobility.

Question 2 – Gustave Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*

Questions on the Flaubert work were attempted by few candidates, with **Question 2(b)** being twice as popular as **Question 2(a)**.

- (a) (i) Emma's distress is caused by the sight of her lover, Rodolphe, leaving the village. Most responses gave the background to this adulterous relationship and identified that Emma had believed herself to be on the point of eloping with Rodolphe, only to be devastated by his letter, which ended the relationship and announced his intention of departing. The sight of Rodolphe's carriage drives home the reality of her loss.
- (ii) **Part (ii)** was well dealt with, though only the better responses identified the ambivalence of Emma's feelings towards her daughter. Whilst she can be a loving and devoted mother, for the most part Emma is indifferent to the child, whom she regards as an encumbrance.

- (iii) Most responses summarised, though some not so succinctly, the primary consequences of this incident, including Emma's lengthy illness after Rodolphe's departure, her subsequent affair with Léon, her growing financial problems, her rejection by both lovers and her final suicide.
- (b) The question called for 'comparison and contrast' between Léon and Rodolphe. The contrast between the two is relatively straightforward and was well dealt with by most candidates. Finding points of similarity between the two lovers required a little more work: each man represents a romantic ideal for Emma; each pursues a physical relationship with her but tires of that relationship in due course; Léon and Rodolphe play an equal part in Emma's downfall by abandoning her and refusing to assist with her financial problems.

Question 3 – André Gide: *La Porte étroite*

Question 3 was a fairly popular one, with **3(b)** being chosen three times more than **3(a)**, the extract question.

- (a) (i) **Part i** was relatively straightforward and was addressed competently in most responses. This is the first meeting between Jérôme and Alissa for over a year: Jérôme had been away at school in Paris, then on vacation in Italy and, upon his return, had been called up for National Service. During his absence, Jérôme had continued to receive letters from Alissa in which she professed her love for him but nonetheless begged him to stay away from Fongueusemare.
- (ii) **Part ii** required an appreciation of the current state of the relationship between Alissa and Jérôme, which many candidates had difficulty in describing. The two are embarrassed in each other's presence and are reluctant to be left alone, not least of all because they know that aunt Plantier believes they want to be left to their own devices so that they can discuss their engagement plans: they have not seen each other for a long time; Jérôme does not understand why he has been asked to stay away and is reluctant to be rejected yet again by Alissa; she loves Jérôme but is unwilling to commit and she is afraid that, if left alone with him, her resolve might weaken.
- (iii) Candidates who answered **part ii** well were also able to address **part iii** with confidence. The relationship depicted in this extract is, of course, very typical of what transpires throughout the novel. Jérôme does not understand Alissa's attitude towards him, which leaves him angered and confused. Alissa is torn between her love for Jérôme and the higher calling to God, which she feels requires her to reject earthly love in favour of a life of religious asceticism. Caught in this dilemma, the pair are frustrated and can never enjoy a loving relationship.
- (b) **Question 3 (b)** was well answered by most candidates, although some interpreted Alissa's 'sacrifice' in rather narrow terms as being her readiness to allow her sister to marry Jérôme. There were some conflicting views expressed on whether her sacrifice was admirable. Many candidates felt that hers was a futile gesture, an overreaction. She had abandoned any prospect of a happy relationship with a man whom she loved, thereby causing Jérôme considerable grief, and had chosen to follow a vague religious calling, which had led ultimately to an untimely and morally unjustifiable death. The same candidates saw her sacrifice as an act of self-indulgence, suggesting that Alissa enjoyed wallowing in the pain that she had inflicted upon herself. Conversely, other candidates felt that Alissa's sacrifice was genuinely motivated by her Christian upbringing and her desire to care for her father; that her feelings were both deeply felt and a natural reaction to the humiliation she had experienced at her mother's infidelity. As usual, the best responses saw both sides of the argument.

Question 4 – Faïza Guène: *Kiffe kiffe demain*

The Faïza Guène text is clearly a popular one and both questions were well dealt with.

- (a) (i) Doria's mother's situation was comprehensively described by most candidates. She is an immigrant, single mother, abandoned by a husband who has returned to Morocco to start another family with a younger woman. Yasmina is uneducated and illiterate and works nights in a *Formule 1* hotel where she is bullied by a racist boss.
- (ii) There were several examples of humour in the extract that were typical of the rest of the novel: Doria's cynicism, her feigned indifference and/or her rejection of figures of authority, all typical

teenage traits; her willingness to criticise those of immigrant origin, like herself; the use of slang, the malformation of negatives and the unusual use of simile.

- (iii) **Part (iii)** was very well answered. As Doria's mother's command of French improves, her life changes. She finds a new job and begins to socialise with her new work colleagues. She takes up knitting and reading for pleasure. She and Doria spend more time together. In short, she becomes more open, outgoing and happy.
- (b) Many responses successfully captured the importance of the relationship between Doria and Hamoudi. He is the older brother, the father figure that Doria never had. She admires and looks up to him, despite his criminal background, and is keen to show him off to her school friends. She is jealous when Hamoudi hooks up with 'la blondasse' Karine and is initially disappointed when he settles down with Lila, though ultimately pleased that Hamoudi has found his 'sortie de secours' through marriage. For his part, Hamoudi protects Doria like a little sister and tries to hide his shady dealings from her. He even offers to go and complain on Doria's behalf when she is prevented from repeating her final year at school.

Section 2

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

- (a) Candidates found this a fairly challenging question, though a number managed to address its key themes. Winter is the season into which Emmanuel is born and it provides the harsh background against which the novel takes place. Snow, ice and darkness feature throughout the novel, accentuating the poverty of Emmanuel's family, the lack of physical and human warmth in the household and the absence of hope for the family members. Winter is accompanied by the overwhelming presence of disease and death and is an appropriate backdrop for the themes of corruption and sexual depravity.
- (b) There were too few responses to **Question 5(b)** to allow for meaningful comment.

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

Question 6 was attempted by a good number of candidates. **6(a)** was twice as popular as **6(b)**.

- (a) It was acknowledged in most responses that le Clézio's characters were indeed lightly sketched and, accordingly, rather enigmatic. However, only a few candidates were able to offer an explanation as to why the author had chosen to draw them in such a way. Those candidates who offered an explanation rightly focused on the novel as a personal account of Alexis's development, suggesting that the author had intentionally drawn his subsidiary characters only in such detail as was necessary to contribute to that journey of discovery.
- (b) Answers to **Question (b)** gave valid examples of the frequent use of repetition by the author. Once again, however, only relatively few candidates ventured to suggest why the author had written in such a way. The constant repetition, along with the use of analepsis, add to the dreamlike, mythical feel of the novel, highlighting both Alexis's lack of clear objective in leaving for Rodrigues and the fact that his journey was ultimately fruitless, since he was unaware at the time of his departure that he was already in possession of what he was seeking.

Question 7 – *Candide*: Voltaire

Question 7 was the second most popular question overall, with a slight majority opting for **7(a)**. In both cases, the questions were competently dealt with.

- (a) All candidates concluded that Candide does indeed surpass his master, Pangloss, at least in terms of his personal development. While Pangloss remains convinced, almost until the end, that 'all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds', Candide's optimism wavers with experience and his personal philosophy ultimately matures and develops.

- (b) Though there was some disagreement as to whether the rich suffered more than the poor in Voltaire's conte, most candidates succeeded in exemplifying their answers, showing good knowledge of the text.

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

Question 8 was attempted by a fair number of candidates, more than half opting to address **8(b)**.

- (a) **8(a)** presented something of a challenge, insofar as Jean-Marie Michaud plays only a very minor part in the novel. A few candidates strayed into *Dolce*, the story told in the second book of Némirovsky's intended trilogy, but most recognised that Jean-Marie's experiences are hugely different from those of the other characters. Although, like Hubert Péricand, he encounters the horror of war, his subsequent recuperation from injury is a pleasant experience as he enjoys country life and the tender ministrations of the farmer's daughter and foster daughter. He is spared the chaos of the exodus from Paris and he returns to the capital voluntarily on his own, not as part of the mass of returning refugees.
- (b) **8(b)** was competently dealt with by most candidates, although there were differences in approach. Some candidates chose to focus solely on the experiences of Gabriel Corte during the flight from Paris. Other candidates applied the quotation to the novel as a whole, describing the difficulties encountered by a range of characters. Both approaches were acceptable, providing the candidate gave adequate examples.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/43
Texts

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.