

# FRENCH LITERATURE

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Paper 8670/41  
Texts

## Key messages

Teachers should:

ensure that candidates are prepared to answer questions on **three separate texts**.  
choose carefully which texts to prepare with their classes, considering the interests of their candidates.  
remember that the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1** provide a ready-made structure for answers and therefore might be better suited for some candidates than the freer option **(b)** alternatives.

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 regularly to the question.

Candidates should:

label their answers with the question 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.  
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

The passage-based questions were efficiently addressed, for the most part. The best responses dealt with the detail required by the question but also demonstrated good overall knowledge of the texts, often by means of a brief introduction to explain how the extract related to the text. However, many candidates still attempt to answer these questions by quoting over-lengthy parts of the extract text without explaining what the quotations illustrate. Candidates should always explain the significance of any quotation used.

The essay questions were generally well structured but, once again, candidates should be advised to stay focused on answering the question by referring to the title at regular intervals as they compose their response. Storytelling that is irrelevant to the question should be avoided – the Examiner has also read the text and does not need to be reminded of the plot. In the same vein, candidates should avoid wasting time at the start of their essay by describing the background to the work, the author's life and literary output. Similarly, it is not necessary to begin the response by writing out the question.

If a premise is provided in the question, candidates should not be afraid to disagree with it. Far more important is that the candidate should give an opinion and that this opinion should be validated with relevant evidence from the text.

It is encouraging to note that most candidates start their essay with a brief introduction, to show that they have understood the question and to indicate how they intend to address it, and a conclusion to summarise the key findings of the essay.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1 – Beaumarchais: *Le Barbier de Séville***

Questions on Beaumarchais were attempted by a good number of candidates, with the extract question (**Question (a)**) being twice as popular as **Question (b)**.

- (a) Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the text.
- (i) Bartholo is made to appear rather ridiculous (and unworthy of Rosine's hand) by criticising, without justification, all innovation in science and the arts. He rails against modern theatre, expressing his belief that the critics will soon condemn this new comedy, *La Précaution Inutile*. In mocking a play about which he knows nothing, Bartholo conveys the author's condemnation of the literary critics (la cabale) who had censured his own play.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to explain that Rosine had added a note to the sheet of music asking the unknown man below her balcony to identify himself in song after her teacher had left the house. The only 'problem' was that if the unknown suitor failed to retrieve the music promptly, Bartholo could discover Rosine's note.
- (iii) The sequence of events that followed the extract was summarised well: Rosine sends Bartholo into the street to retrieve the song and, while he is on his way, she tells the unknown man below to retrieve the note quickly and hide himself. Bartholo is unable to find the music and returns to the apartment, suspecting that he has been taken for a fool. As he returns, Rosine loudly declaims her unhappiness and desire to escape her 'prison'. Arriving back on the balcony, Bartholo leads Rosine back into the apartment and locks the 'jalousie' behind him.
- (b) Most of the responses to this question dealt competently with Figaro's character. Like the typical hero of the 'roman picaresque', he is the roguish member of the lower classes who lives by his wits in a corrupt society. He is loyal to his former master but is unique as a literary valet, since he is quick-witted, more intelligent than Count Almaviva and is not afraid to speak his mind to social superiors. Better responses also dealt with the variety of roles that Figaro fulfils in the play (holder of information, planner of action and the director of events) and the fact that he probably represents the author in his support for the philosophy of the Enlightenment through his independent spirit and focus on finding happiness in this life (rather than in the next).

#### **Question 2 – Gustave Flaubert: *Madame Bovary***

This text was the most popular on the paper and many candidates attempted either the extract or the essay question.

- (a) (i) There were no problems with this question and the differing attitudes towards education of Charles' mother and father were satisfactorily described.
- (ii) Most candidates identified that Charles' education was lacking, but few were able to identify every stage of his educational career: his spasmodic lessons with the village curate; the fact that he does not attend formal school until he is nearly 14; his withdrawal from classes in his third year; his inability to focus on his medical studies, leading initially to failure at his exams and eventually to a poor standard of medical qualification.
- (iii) The carefree activities preferred by Charles (chasing crows, playing in the woods, drinking in bars and playing dominoes) reflect the man that he becomes in later life. He is indolent, rather dull and too trusting of others. He has little ambition and is dominated by others – particularly by women – throughout his life.

- (b) **Question 2(b)** was slightly more popular than the extract question and most candidates dealt with it well. Many responses focused on just one, or a small number of events which were felt to indicate the impending failure of Charles' and Emma's marriage. The very best responses identified that the couple were in fact wholly incompatible before their marriage, and went on to describe a sequence of confirmatory events as the marriage turned sour, including: the boredom of life in Tostes, the ball at the mansion of the Marquis d'Andervilliers, Emma's growing hatred of Charles and the banality of petit bourgeois life in Yonville; the meeting with Léon; the affair with Rodolphe; the involvement of L'Heureux, the moneylender; Rodolphe's refusal to help Emma with her debts.

### Question 3 – André Gide: *La Porte étroite*

There were too few responses to make comment possible.

### Question 4 – Eugène Ionesco: *La Cantatrice chauve*

The question was attempted by a fair number of candidates, slightly more than half of whom attempted the passage-based question.

- (a) (i) Candidates dealt with this question efficiently. Mary is, of course a very untypical maid: she is rude to her employers and her behaviour is rather bizarre. Why does she address the audience to announce that she is the maid? Why does she laugh, cry, smile and then announce that she has bought a chamber pot? Yet she also represents a stock comic character – the pushy maid, who is not afraid to speak her mind.
- (ii) M. and Mme Smith are shallow, one-dimensional characters (like most of the other characters in Ionesco's play). They speak in clichés and non sequiturs, live empty, repetitive lives and are parodies of bland, stuffy, middle-class characteristics. The pair often fail to hear/understand (or intentionally ignore) what the other party has said, and their relationship seems to be based on little more than the pleasure they each derive from disagreeing with/bickering with the other.
- (iii) This part was a bigger challenge for candidates. The mock formality of Mary's address to the audience is incongruously funny, particularly when it is contrasted with her inexplicable announcements, her impudence and the surprising introduction of the chamber pot theme. The fact that the Smiths complain that they are hungry and were about to eat without their guests, when they have just eaten, is also humorously absurd.
- (b) The essay question required some careful planning to bring focus to the answer, but most candidates coped well and provided sundry examples of different types of 'word play' in the text: from repetition and irrelevance, to clichés and non sequiturs, to the tortuous anecdotes of the Fire Chief. Even the stage directions occasionally join in the bizarre 'jeux de mots'. The overall effect, of course, is to highlight the unreliability of language as a medium of communication.

## Section 2

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

Few candidates attempted **Question 5**, all opting for **Question 5(a)**.

- (a) Though all candidates agreed that Emmanuel was not the principal character in the novel, some encountered difficulty in explaining just what role he plays. The novel starts with his birth and is the story of the family during Emmanuel's early life. It is through his eyes and from his viewpoint that the house, *grand-mère* and the other members of the family are described. Indeed, it could be argued that Emmanuel is the third-party commentator for much of the novel. Though he plays very little part in the plot, Emmanuel represents hope for the family, surviving as he does until the arrival of spring, though this optimism may be misplaced in view of Jean Le Maigre's prediction that Emmanuel will also go to the novitiate, where he will succumb to the same disease that kills his brother.
- (b) There were no responses to **Question 5(b)**.

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

There were very few attempts at **Question 6**.

- (a) There were too few responses to **Question 6(a)** to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) Candidates struggled to construct a comprehensive reply to the question. The stars represent hope and optimism for Alexis. They twinkle over the family home in Mananava, they are nostalgic reminders of evenings that Alexis spent with his father, learning about the constellations, and they appear to be looking down benevolently on him as he sets out on the Zeta to start his quest for treasure. But the stars are also portents of change and disaster: they mock as Alexis almost dies of thirst on Rodrigues, unknown constellations shine over the horror of the trenches on the Western Front and, towards the end of the novel, shooting stars above Mananava signify that Alexis' time with Ouma will soon end.

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

Many candidates attempted **Question 7**, with numbers equally spread between **7(a)** and **7(b)**.

- (a) There were some very strong responses to this question. Maria Cross has, of course, a profound effect on the young Raymond Courrèges. Son of a loveless family, unable to express his feelings, Raymond has developed into a surly and difficult teenager. He is disliked by his masters and peers at school, he believes himself to be the butt of other people's jokes and, in his despair, he hides himself away and attempts suicide. Raymond's chance meeting with Maria saves him. He rediscovers his self-respect and starts to take more care over his appearance. However, his desire for sexual gratification is not shared by Maria and her rejection of his clumsy advances leaves him humiliated. Thereafter, he is driven by a desire for vengeance and lives a friendless, debauched existence in Paris. When the opportunity arises, far from taking his vengeance, Raymond can only apologise to Maria for his boorish behaviour 17 years earlier.
- (b) Responses to **7(b)** focused primarily on the humiliation suffered by Paul Courrèges and his son at the hands of Maria Cross. Paul's adoration of Maria is neither understood nor reciprocated by her, and he is obliged to suppress his feelings and walk away from the relationship for fear of doing irreparable damage to his marriage and professional standing. See **7(a)** for a description of Raymond's humiliation. Stronger responses also examined the humiliation experienced by Lucille Courrèges, a faithful wife who realises that her husband is drifting away from her towards a younger woman with whom she feels unable to compete, not least of all because of her inability to communicate with her husband.

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

A good number of candidates attempted **Question 8**, with **8(b)** being slightly more popular than **8(a)**.

- (a) Most candidates were impressed with the character of Arlette Corail, as indeed the author intended readers to be. Arlette is not at all typical of the other characters and is treated sympathetically by Némirovsky because she is not from the moneyed classes and she lives by her wits. We learn that while others have been suffering horribly during their flight from Paris, Arlette has been living in comparative luxury in a small village hotel where, in spite of the chaos happening around here, she has remained cool and calm under pressure, her hair and makeup at all times immaculate. Arlette always knows that her looks will guarantee that she gets what she wants from men. She is financially secure and the only hardship she suffers is upon realising that the war will mean that some of life's luxuries (like her American face powder) will in future be difficult to obtain. In a final ironic touch, Arlette knocks over and kills Charles Langelet back in Paris. Not to worry, however – she knows a man who can sort out this little inconvenience for her.
- (b) Candidates were divided over whether Philippe Péricand is an admirable or a despicable character, but most gave a good analysis of his role in the novel. As a curate in the Catholic church (a low-ranking position which his mother considers below the dignity of the family) Philippe feels strongly that it is his duty to bring God's grace to the feral young orphans who are entrusted to his care. In reality, he fears the boys and wants to be rid of them as soon as he is able. He is undeniably a rather weak character and his inability to defend himself physically, allied to the rather gruesome manner of his death, was interpreted by some candidates to represent a comment by the author on the ineffectual response to Nazi aggression by the Catholic church.

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### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1 – Beaumarchais : *Le Barbier de Séville***

Questions on the Beaumarchais text were attempted by a large number of candidates, with the passage-based question being slightly more popular than the essay.

- (a) Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the text.
- (i) Figaro has just met his former employer, Count Almaviva, who is waiting under a balcony for his bien-aimée to appear. Rosine, who does not know the man waiting below her balcony, drops a sheet of music on which she has written a note, encouraging him to identify himself (in song) when her tutor has left the house. Rosine encourages Bartholo to go down to the street to retrieve the music and, while he descends, tells her unknown suitor to retrieve the note and hide himself. Unable to find the music, Bartholo returns to the first floor, suspecting that he has been taken for a fool. As her tutor returns, Rosine loudly declaims (so that the Count can hear) her unhappiness and her desire to escape her 'prison'. Arriving back on the balcony, Bartholo leads Rosine back into the apartment and locks the 'jalousie' behind him.
- (ii) Figaro's character was well described by most candidates. He is not a typical valet in that, although loyal and respectful to his former master, he is not afraid to criticise and speak his mind to his superiors. He is prepared to mock (in this case, the fickleness of women) and he shows an intelligence that is at least the equal of that of the Count. He is quick-witted and his observations often add to the comedy of the scene.
- (ii) All candidates identified that the Count was mistaken in his belief that Rosine was already married. When he learns this is not the case, but that Rosine is to wed the following day, Almaviva determines to win her heart and foil the plans of Bartholo. Some candidates went a little too far with part (iii), describing in unnecessary detail the remaining plot of the comedy.
- (b) Bartholo's character was well described by most candidates: he is a mistrustful, jealous old man with a spiteful streak; he is perpetually grumpy and miserable; he cares more for money than his patients; he is an extreme reactionary, despising without justification all innovations of the Enlightenment. However, the stronger responses also identified that Bartholo is more than the typical, shallow 'baddie'. He does appear to have genuine affection for his young protégée; he is at pains to protect Rosine's virtue and advises her to lock herself in her room when violence appears a real possibility. Moreover, he is not a typical old man, in that age does not seem to have dimmed his wits: he constantly suspects that he is being duped by Rosine (and others); he puts in place a variety of 'précautions' to prevent her from straying; he retains Rosine's letter, realising that it could be useful to him; he realises that Don Bazile's venality make him an unreliable employee. Ultimately, however, he has to accept that he has been bested by the Count.



### Question 2 – Gustave Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*

The Flaubert work was very popular and many candidates attempted either the extract or the essay question.

- (a) Parts (i) and (ii) were well answered, but candidates had difficulty in relating Charles' experiences at school to the man that he was to become in later life.
- (i) There were no problems with part (i), and candidates accounted well for Charles' description as an awkward country bumpkin, with unfashionable haircut and ill-fitting, inappropriate clothes.
- (ii) Part (ii) was equally well addressed. Charles is incapable of fitting in with his new schoolmates: he finds it difficult to conform to their habits (which he does not understand) and is the butt of their humour. His treatment by his new form master does not help his standing with the other boys.
- (iii) The best responses to part (iii) identified that Charles' character had been formed well before school by his over-protective, smothering mother, and by his father's more spartan notions of education. School merely failed to address his character failings. In later life, he is timid, unambitious, lacking in intelligence and far too trusting of others. He remains, nevertheless, blindly loyal and trustworthy.
- (b) **Question 2(b)** was very well answered by all candidates (although it was rather surprising to see many candidates diagnose Emma's problem as 'Bovaryism!'). Emma's character has, of course, been formed by her motherless childhood and the time that she spent at convent school. Her addiction to romantic fiction has given her unrealistic notions of what life and happiness should be. Accordingly, she becomes quickly bored with Charles' dullness and the monotony of provincial life. The glamour of the ball increases her yearning for excitement, leading her firstly to a platonic relationship with Leon and then to a full-blown affair with Rodolphe. She borrows increasing amounts of money to refurbish her home and buy gifts for her lovers. She is neglectful of her young daughter and, although she has occasional episodes of guilt, such fits of conscience are short-lived. Even in her extra-marital affairs she is unable to find satisfaction: Rodolphe eventually finds her over-demanding and she gradually tires of Leon. She sees her suicide as a 'romantic means of escape' but, in reality, she has to endure the protracted horror of death through poisoning.

### Question 3 – André Gide: *La Porte étroite*

A good number of candidates attempted **Question 3**, though the essay question was a lot more popular than the passage-based question.

- (a) (i) The circumstances under which Jérôme had received Alissa's diaries were well explained. After the final meeting with Alissa, Jérôme had written to Juliette to express his concern about her sister's health. A month later, Juliette had written to say that her sister had died in a nursing home in Paris. In her will, Alissa had asked that her journals be sent to Jérôme and it is through these that, for the first time, Jérôme learns why Alissa had rejected his love.
- (ii) Not all candidates were able to identify the full significance of why Alissa's father had spoken to her about her mother, Lucile, that evening. Alissa's father is dying, and, having just re-entered the lounge and seen just how like her mother Alissa looks, he feels the need to talk to his daughter on a matter of importance. Despite his wife's unfaithfulness, he tells his daughter that his marriage had meant a great deal to him and that he is concerned that Alissa is wasting her life by refusing to commit to Jérôme.
- (iii) Alissa is amazed at her father's words because she had just been thinking about her mother. She sleeps badly that night, feeling guilt at her treatment of Jérôme, and she admits to herself that she had often been on the point of yielding to him. Nevertheless, she re-commits herself to her path of virtue and refuses to be tempted to give in to her desire for Jérôme.

- (b) The question was very well dealt with by most candidates and a variety of cogent reasons were presented: the pair are excessively mature for their age and unwilling to entertain joy and frivolity in their lives; the pair are devoted to each other and have no need to marry to prove their love; having been brought up by two 'gentle and sad' women, Jérôme has been left as a rather effeminate, indecisive individual who is incapable of boldness in love; Alissa wants to see her sister happily married before she commits herself (particularly after she learns that Juliette is keen on Jérôme); Alissa is reluctant to abandon her ailing father and fears that by giving in to Jérôme she will resemble her adulterous mother; Jérôme's extended absences (at school, in the military and in Italy) extend their time apart and serve to deepen the gulf between the pair. The reason mentioned by all candidates was Alissa's devotion to the pursuit of virtue – a life of religious asceticism and self-denial which does not admit of physical love. For Alissa, the denial of Jérôme is the 'hair shirt' by which she pursues her drive towards virtue. Candidates were rewarded for saying which reason was in their opinion the most important.

#### Question 4 – Eugène Ionesco: *La Cantatrice chauve*

Question 4 was quite popular, with the vast majority of candidates answering Question 4(a).

- (a) (i) Part (i) was efficiently addressed by most candidates. The Martins, having arrived for dinner at the Smiths and having been chastised by Mary for arriving late, seem not to know each other. In the conversation that follows they learn that they are both from Manchester and left the city 5 weeks ago, travelling on the same train in the same carriage. The amazing coincidences continue as they learn that they live in the same house in the same street and that they share the same bed. The telling factor is that they each have a blonde, two-year-old daughter called Alice, who has one red eye and one white eye. They must of course be married, but their delight at finding one another is short-lived as they immediately fall asleep.
- (ii) Part (ii) presented more of a problem for some candidates. The essence of the comedy lies in Mary's astonishing assertion that, despite the long list of coincidences that the Martins have just relived, they are in fact not who they think they are. More astonishing still is that Mary should base her claim on the small detail of whether Alice's left eye is red or white. The comedy is heightened by the way Mary reveals these details to the audience as a secret that only she and they should be party to. Absurdly, she claims to be a reliable witness, a Sherlock Holmes, whereas she is simply a maid who barely knows her employers' guests.
- (iii) The effect of posing and answering questions is to add comedy by mimicking the way in which a real detective might ponder a mystery. The questions add spurious credence to Mary's claims to be a detective and they also involve the audience by drawing them into the mystery that Mary has created. After all, these are probably the questions that the audience/reader wants to ask, having experienced the absurdity of the previous two scenes.
- (b) The essay question required some careful planning, to bring focus to the answer, and was reliant on some detailed knowledge of the text. Rather than indicating 'the opposite of actual time', the clock is simply random. Its bizarre behaviour becomes even more haywire as the play progresses. The clock develops a character of its own, becoming excited, for example, as the Martins finally recognise each other at the end of scene IV, or moulding itself to the other characters (viz. the stage direction in scene XI: 'On sent qu'il y a un certain énervement. Les coups que frappe la pendule sont plus nerveux aussi'). Yet the clock's absurd behaviour has no effect whatsoever on the characters, for whom time is meaningless.



## Section 2

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

A fair number of candidates attempted **Question 5**, all opting for **Question 5(a)**.

- (a) Candidates coped admirably with this question. *La mère* barely appears in the novel, but almost every candidate encapsulated her role and her relationship with the other characters. She is characterised by her absence, her passivity and her eternal weariness. In the opening chapter, she is shown returning, tired and bent, from her work in the fields. She suckles Emmanuel but is so weary that she appears incapable of showing him any love. She has abandoned the care and upbringing of her other offspring to *grand-mère*, who rules the roost at home. She is almost always silent: the only time she speaks is to object to her husband's sexual demands. Many candidates felt, with some justification, that her lack of involvement with her family was at least partly responsible for Héloïse's downfall, but she does care: she 'howls pitifully' the names of her dead children, showing that she loves and feels the loss of each one.
- (b) There were no responses to **Question 5(b)**.

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

This was one of the least popular texts. **Question 6(a)** was opted for twice as much as **Question 6(b)**.

- (a) The key to **Question 6(a)** lay in recognising that the 'period of life spent in Mananava in 1922' referred to the very end of the novel, when Alexis finally returns to Mauritius. Unfortunately, some candidates assumed that the question referred to the beginning of the novel and wrote about Alexis' idyllic childhood on l'Enfoncement du Boucan. After the war and having finally abandoned his search for treasure on Rodrigues, Alexis returns to Mananava where he is employed as an overseer in the cane fields. It is a time of nostalgia and loss for Alexis and the optimism of his early days on le Boucan and on Rodrigues is long gone. He finds Ouma, who has been waiting for him since he left for war, and for a short while they recommence their relationship and live an idyllic life together. But the denouement for Alexis comes quickly: Ouma is transported back to Rodrigues by the British, following riots in the cane fields; Mam dies; Laure goes to live in a convent; the remains of the old house are dug up and destroyed by Ferdinand and his workers. Alexis is left with nothing but his memories and the sound of the sea.
- (b) This question relied on detailed knowledge and a comprehensive overview of the text: the majority of candidates wrote about nature in the novel in general terms. However, sounds were the key to a competent response. The sound of the sea starts the novel. Alexis explores the coastline with Denis to the sound of waves breaking on the coral reef. His childhood is accompanied by the comforting sound of birdsong, while the roar of the approaching hurricane signifies the advent of change and impending disaster. The lack of sound in Forest side highlights the family's straitened circumstances, while the comforting sound of water slapping against the bow of the Zeta heralds Alexis' newfound optimism as he leaves to search for treasure. The sound of the wind and the cracking of rocks contracting in the heat of the sun accompany Alexis' isolation on Rodrigues. His time in the trenches is filled with the roar of guns, exploding shells and shouting voices. The sound of the hurricane that hits Rodrigues announces the end of Alexis' dreams of finding lost treasure and at the end of the novel he is left with nothing but the sound of the sea.

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

A good number of candidates attempted **Question 7**, with numbers equally spread between **7(a)** and **7(b)**.

- (a) There were some strong responses to this question. Son of a loveless family, unable to express his feelings, Raymond has developed into a surly and difficult teenager. He is disliked by his masters and peers at school, he believes himself to be the butt of other people's jokes and, in his despair, he hides himself away and attempts suicide. His chance meeting with Maria changes him profoundly, but his desire for sexual gratification is not shared by Maria and her rejection of his clumsy attempts leaves him humiliated. As a result, he returns to type, leading a friendless, debauched existence in Paris, focused on the pursuit of fleeting pleasures and dominated by the desire for vengeance. The stronger responses suggested that not everything about Raymond was dominated by his need for immediate gratification: when he first meets Maria he rediscovers his self-respect, taking more care over his appearance and thinking about how he is seen by others;

when he eventually gets the opportunity, far from taking his vengeance, Raymond can only apologise to Maria for his boorish behaviour seventeen years earlier; at the end of the novel Raymond is able to show a modicum of affection for his father for the first time, even though he realises that this partial reconciliation will be short-lived.

- (b) The responses to **7(b)** were less strong, perhaps because candidates had some difficulty in interpreting Paul Courrèges' statement. Paul is a respected physician and has a professional reputation to defend. His social standing is threatened by his relationship with Maria Cross. But is it the case that his family responsibilities save him from disgracing himself, or does his relationship with Maria fail to develop because she does not reciprocate his feelings for her? It is true that, when he is called to attend to Maria after her fall from a window, he thinks of the misery his jealous wife must be suffering. He re-devotes himself to his family and tries to forget Maria, but the suppression of his feelings causes him to fall ill. It is only at the end of the novel that Raymond 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*)**

Not many candidates attempted **Question 8**, with **8(a)** being significantly more popular than **8(b)**.

- (a) The question was quite well answered, with most candidates choosing to focus on Mme Péricand, whose arrogance and lack of true Christian charity was compared with the humility of Jeanne Michaud. Other responses focused on Charles Langelet, Hubert Péricand, Philippe Péricand, M. Corbin and Arlette Corail.
- (b) Though attempted by relatively few candidates, the question was well addressed. The Michauds represent the poor, downtrodden refugees whose admirable humility is contrasted with the lack of humanity of the wealthy, moneyed classes. The Michauds respond in a noble manner, and without complaint, to the difficulties that they face on the road, sharing the hardships of their fellow refugees, wishing only to help their fellow man. Their only concern is for the fate of their son, Jean-Marie, who has been fighting for his country and is missing in action. They are harshly treated right to the end of the novel: failing to make it to Tours they return on foot to Paris, where they are summarily dismissed by M. Corbin. They eventually get a small amount of compensation but must use up all of their savings to survive, and still they have no news of their missing son. Mme Michaud rails against the unfairness of their treatment, but her husband argues that they are merely sharing the fate of the common people, a natural phenomenon.