

# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/01  
Speaking

## Key messages

For Teacher/examiners

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below) and, if necessary and appropriate, interrupt the Topic Presentation if it overruns significantly.
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section – but answer briefly.
- Cover a range of topics 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) keeping your own contributions to a minimum.
- create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit a one-word or purely factual answer.

For candidates

- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation.
- Ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic(s) under discussion in order to be awarded maximum marks.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society. This should be more than a passing reference and candidates who live in a francophone country and who speak about an aspect of their own culture must make it clear beyond doubt to which country they are referring.

## General comments

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

The way in which an Examiner asks a question can make a huge difference to how a candidate is able to respond. Examiners need to be aware that very long, complex questions or closed questions often prompt short answers, sometimes just yes or no, whereas open questions such as *Comment ?* or *Pourquoi ?* 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 this year were mainly clear, though there are still a few cases of faulty recording equipment and of the microphone favouring the Examiner rather than the candidate. There were a small number of cases where recorded material was unplayable or where the recording had not been transferred correctly or where the original recording was inaudible. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner's own contribution.

Please ensure that all recording material (including CD and cassette cases) is labelled with details of the Centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a Centre has candidates at both A and AS level, they should be recorded on separate CDs or

cassettes. If using cassettes, only ONE candidate should be recorded per side of a 60 minute cassette and a maximum of TWO candidates per side of a 90 minute cassette. It is very disruptive to candidates for the Examiner to have to turn over a cassette in the middle of an examination - with the inevitable result that parts of the conversation are lost.

Centres are reminded that the sample of recordings they send should represent candidates throughout the range of the entry, from highest to lowest. There were one or two cases this session where there were significant gaps in the range, which impaired the moderation process.

There were a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transcribing them to the MS1/electronic mark sheet. This should be checked carefully before submission, and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings. For the size of sample needed, please see the details in the syllabus.

Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to send the Working Mark Sheet, the MS1/copy of electronic mark sheet, the Attendance Sheet and any other relevant paperwork.

### **Format of the examination**

There are 3 distinct parts to the speaking test:

- Presentation – to last 3 to 3½ minutes;
- Topic Conversation – to last 7 to 8 minutes;
- General Conversation – to last 8 to 9 minutes.

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 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 to 3½ minutes)***

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation, lasting about three minutes, on a specific topic of his or her choice, taken from one of the topic areas listed in the syllabus. 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.

The topic list gives candidates a very wide choice – the most popular this year, at both A and AS Levels, were *Le sport*, *La famille (française)*, *La cuisine française*, *L'immigration*, *Le tourisme*, *Les médias (sociaux)* and *La pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage, leisure, racism and immigration, some dealing with culture or politics in a French-speaking country, personal interests such as film or music. There were very few topical presentations this session. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues.

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).

Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched quite widely, and have had to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3½ minutes – additional material which cannot not 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. Where candidates speak for longer than the prescribed time, it is the responsibility of the Examiner to move the candidate on to the Topic Conversation.

Candidates would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects – 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.

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

### **Topic Conversation (7 to 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 as 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 many 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 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 note that it is helpful both to candidates and Moderators to signal the end of the Topic Conversation and the beginning of the General Conversation.

### **General Conversation (8 to 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 and there were many varied and interesting discussions heard. 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 Topic 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 must display sensitivity in asking questions about topics of a personal nature e.g. religion and personal relationships, and should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas.

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?”), candidates at both A and AS Level should be prepared for 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 topics did not relate to a francophone country. Some 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*.

Where candidates ask questions during the course of conversation, this 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.

Centres are reminded that, except in extenuating circumstances, they should engage only one Examiner per syllabus, regardless of the size of the entry. 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. **All** Centres are asked to advise CIE, using form NOE, about the Examiners they intend to employ (by 1<sup>st</sup> April for the June session and 1<sup>st</sup> October for the November session).

In rare cases, Examiners misapplied the mark scheme, e.g. by awarding marks out of 10 for *Pronunciation/Intonation* and *Seeking Opinions* which carry a maximum of 5 marks.

In Centres with a number of candidates, Examiners were generally able to establish a logical rank order and appropriate marking pitch, but, CIE recognises that this is more difficult to achieve where Centres only have one or two candidates.



# FRENCH

Paper 9716/21  
Reading and Writing

## 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. Including additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (cut/copy and paste) 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 copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **(a)** and **(b)**) combined is ignored.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to offer some brief relevant ideas of their own, without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

## General comments

There were some first-rate scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, and, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them, there were elements which were accessible to nearly all.

The topic generally appeared to be one to which candidates could relate.

The majority of candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Quite a lot of answers were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible: sometimes the answers were longer than the whole paragraph of the text to which they referred. **The practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. There were also significant numbers of other candidates who tried to incorporate the words of the question as an introduction to every answer, often losing credit for Quality of Language in the process: e.g. *Qu'est-ce qui pousse certaines mères à retourner au travail est que ... 3(b)* or *Comment les enfants dont la mère travaille sont-ils désavantagés est parce que ... 4(a)*. Answers beginning with *Parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

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

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text has diminished very considerably in recent sessions, but remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' answers unaltered 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 the correct answer. Candidates should therefore try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs, or infinitives into finite verbs) 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.

**Question 2** is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement.

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

In **Question 5**, candidates should realize the importance of the word limit clearly set out in the rubric of a total of 140 words for both sections. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary will not be able to receive any of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a very marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

If, on the other hand, the responses to **Question 5** are significantly below the word limit, the overall quality of language mark is reduced accordingly.

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 penalized for not introducing the topic (not doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste a significant proportion of the available words on this for no reward: for example: *Dans les deux textes, le sujet principal est les mères et le travail. Il y a deux points de vue: qu'il est meilleur pour une mère de travailler et le contraire.* This uses up over 20% of the already quite tight word limit without reward. From the very outset, candidates need to make the first 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 requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay which is quite likely to score 0/10.

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

In general, candidates who keep their answers reasonably short and straightforward and concentrate on doing the simple things efficiently tend to score better than those who demonstrate a desire to impress with over-elaborate phrasing and overambitious vocabulary.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

This proved a relatively straightforward first exercise which enabled most candidates to get off to a good start. *Quasiment* was correctly identified by the vast majority for **(a)**, as was *souhaité* for **(e)**. *Mises* was commonly offered on its own for *présentées* in **(b)**, but was rendered meaningless without the inclusion of *en avant*. Occasionally, candidates focused on the search for a feminine plural past participle rather than on meaning and offered *interrogées* here. *Renoncer* was often offered for *dévouer* in **(c)**, again presumably as much as anything on the basis that it was an infinitive, whilst the inclusion of *se* before *consacrer* would have resulted in *se se consacrer*. *Sans réserve* was quite often thought to have a financial sense, giving rise to *manque de revenus* in **(d)**, where *pleinement* and *totalement* were both equally acceptable as correct answers.

#### **Question 2**

There were some very good 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.

**Item 2(a):** many candidates did not remove the *s* on *difficiles*, writing *il est difficiles*. Others lost the mark by altering *ces* to *ses*.

**Item 2(b):** the very straightforward transformation into indirect speech was managed by most, but sometimes the gender of Marlène's children changed. There was no need to change the tense.

**Item 2(c):** the success rate here tended to vary greatly from Centre to Centre. In some, the need for the subjunctive was widely appreciated and correctly handled. In others, it did not seem to be known. Candidates should be discouraged from making unnecessary changes in this exercise – e.g. *soit capable* to *puisse* or *le cerveau* to *son cerveau*.

**Item 2(d):** the transformation to the passive defeated quite a number, whilst others who successfully manipulated the verb spoiled things by omitting *les* before *trois quarts*.

**Item 2(e):** this proved the most challenging of the manipulations, with few other than the strongest managing *lui a permis* (*l'a* or *s'a permis(e)* being the most frequent incorrect versions). *Permit* was also common as the past participle.

### Question 3

**Item 3(a):** The need here was to state that more mothers returned to work soon after the birth of their child and that fewer stayed at home. Most managed the first mark, although some went too far by stating that all/most mothers now returned to work. Fewer scored the second mark by not offering an alternative to *au foyer*.

**Item 3(b):** There were four points to be made here: the attraction of an additional salary; the desire not to waste their training; the wish for financial independence; the lack of other income in case of a separation/divorce. Nearly all candidates scored at least one, with the fourth being the easiest. Better candidates saw the simplest way of avoiding 'lifting' was by reworking the nouns *attrait*, *volonté* and *désir* as verbs.

**Item 3(c):** Perhaps confused by the complex syntax of the verbs in both clauses of the question, a good number of candidates suggested that a lot of mothers who give up work would have preferred to stay at home to look after their baby and that giving up work would have allowed them to do so. Or that they wanted to keep the baby with them at work. Others thought that the tense of the question referred to what would happen in the future when the child reached the age of three. It was not difficult to avoid the common 'lift' of the phrase *reprendre le travail*.

**Item 3(d)** saw a good number of candidates identifying the need to manage the family at the same time as contributing to its finances.

**Item 3(e)** proved a good discriminator, rewarding those who found other ways of expressing *travailler en mode multitâche* (e.g. *faire plusieurs tâches à la fois / en même temps / simultanément*) and *autonomie* (*indépendance / être autonome / se débrouiller toute seule*). Many candidates focused on the women's feelings of inadequacy rather than on Wonder Woman's capability.

**Item 3(f):** Most candidates found the adjective *coupable*, but fewer were able to express *peine* in their own words. The notion of founding her own business/becoming her own boss was very successfully identified.

### Question 4

Marks here were often somewhat higher than on **Question 3**.

**Item 4(a)** offered three straightforward marks to those who avoided 'lifting' by transforming the nouns *participation*, *alimentation* and *réussite* into verbs, even if some went too far by suggesting malnutrition/starvation.

**Item 4(b):** Candidates were for the most part successful in stating that a mother's return to work had little if any impact on the happiness, behaviour or health of the child, although *Les enfants qui ont décidé de repartir travailler quelques mois après leur naissance sont en pleine forme* was taking things too far.

**Item 4(c)** saw stronger candidates finding alternatives to *jongler* (*concilier/combiner/alterner* etc. but not *balancer*). Most managed to manipulate *dans un contexte professionnel* (*au travail, professionnalisme* etc.).

In **Item 4(d)**, a fair number of candidates managed to express the idea of working from home and at times when the children were at school.

**Item 4(e)** *Les pères devraient aider leurs femmes à faire des crises de nerfs and être plus compréhensibles à la suppression de la mère* were improbable as answers. The suggestion that husbands should try to reduce *l'écart entre les sexes* produced some interpretations which were no doubt not exactly what the author of the text had anticipated. The distinction between being *compréhensible* and *compréhensif* was not understood by some.

### Question 5

This question asked the candidates to summarise the pros and cons of mothers of young children returning to work, and then to express a personal view of the role that fathers should play. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. The mark scheme for the **Summary** identified 15 rewardable points of which a good number of candidates managed perhaps 7, 8 or 9, with some reaching 10 or more.

The pros most frequently mentioned concerned a second salary, the desire to take advantage of qualifications, and financial independence, particularly after a divorce. The most commonly identified cons were the difficulty of balancing home and work (resulting in pressure and feelings of guilt), and the children's lack of participation in sports, healthy eating and academic success. Even so, the idea of earning one's own salary was quite commonly suggested as a means of avoiding divorce. Some candidates got side-tracked into irrelevant statements about what employers or fathers could do to help.

There is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, but excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to result in a lower quality of language mark.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts.

The **Personal Response** gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Weaker candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and offered very little else, resulting in some rather derivative responses: *Les pères doivent consacrer du temps aux enfants et aux tâches ménagères et soutenir leur femme*. More ambitious candidates were often rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or slant of their own: *Dieu créa le père pour être le pilier de la famille. Il doit trouver de la nourriture et assurer un logement, prêter une oreille attentive à son enfant et lui enseigner les bonnes valeurs morales. En même temps, il doit remplir son rôle d'époux et faire en sorte que sa vie conjugale soit en rose*.

### Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to poor. The very weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form. Some routinely ignored even the need to indicate plurals by adding an s (*les mère, les père and les enfant*), and mistakes in adjectival agreement and subject-verb concord were surprisingly common across the ability range: *les mère a diminués ; les pères doit ; le père doivent ; le manque d'argent les encouragent ; la capacité les aident*. Verbs (even entirely regular ones) were as usual by far the most common sources of error: the plural of *la mère travaille* was frequently thought to be *les mères travailles* or *les mères travaillent*.

New words were coined, often with English lurking not far beneath the surface: *s'indépendancer ; divider ; dédiquer ; involvurer ; convéniente ; maintandre ; l'heursité ; le gagnance ; attraiter ; solver*. There was some creative spelling – *bébéciteur (babysitter) ; touletemp ; tujurs ; faire fasse(nt) à ; acose de ; malhalaise*. Other words were commonly distorted or mis-spelled: *dimunition ; une basse ; effect ; aspet ; revenues ; horraire ; avantage*.

Constructions with certain common verbs caused problems: *permettre, aider, encourager, empêcher, laisser, souhaiter* and *préférer*. Incorrect prepositions appeared after *dépendre* and *participer* in particular.

The choice of the verb *travaille* or the noun *travail* (often *travails*) was almost as often wrong as right, as was the distinction between *leur* and *leurs*, or *son / sa / ses*. There sometimes appeared no difference between *eux(-mêmes)* and *elles(-mêmes)*, which caused confusion.

There was further confusion between *sa* and *ça*, *c'est / ces / ses*, *ce / se / ceux / ceux-là* (*sa c'est évolué*) and *cela* which very commonly appeared with a plural verb, no doubt influenced by *ceux-là*.

The omission of *ne* as the first part of a negative reversed the sense of a number of sentences: *les pères devraient plus s'absenter ; il est plus à la mode que seul le père travaille*.

*Regarder (après)* for 'to look after' and *occuper* for *s'occuper de* caused problems, as did the construction with *dont* (*les enfants dont (often donc) leurs mères travaillent*). Very few managed two acute accents on *elle a créé*, and only stronger candidates seemed at ease with the use of the conditional of the modal verbs in **Questions 4(d), 4(e) and 5(b)**: (*elles/ils pourraient* and *ils devraient*).

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and accurate French which was a pleasure to read.



# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/22  
Reading and Writing

## 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. Including additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (cut/copy and paste) 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 copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **(a)** and **(b)** combined) is ignored.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to offer some brief relevant ideas of their own, without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

## General comments

There were some first-rate scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, and, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them, there were elements which were accessible to nearly all.

The topic generally appeared to be one to which candidates could relate.

The majority of candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Quite a lot of answers were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible: sometimes the answers were longer than the whole paragraph of the text to which they referred. **The practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. There were also significant numbers of other candidates who tried to incorporate the words of the question as an introduction to every answer, often losing credit for Quality of Language in the process: e.g. *Qu'est-ce qui pousse certaines mères à retourner au travail est que ... 3(b)* or *Comment les enfants dont la mère travaille sont-ils désavantagés est parce que ... 4(a)*. Answers beginning with *Parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

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

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text has diminished very considerably in recent sessions, but remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' answers unaltered 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 the correct answer. Candidates should therefore try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs, or infinitives into finite verbs) 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.

**Question 2** is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement.

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

In **Question 5**, candidates should realize the importance of the word limit clearly set out in the rubric of a total of 140 words for both sections. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary will not be able to receive any of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a very marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

If, on the other hand, the responses to **Question 5** are significantly below the word limit, the overall quality of language mark is reduced accordingly.

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 penalized for not introducing the topic (not doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste a significant proportion of the available words on this for no reward: for example: *Dans les deux textes, le sujet principal est les mères et le travail. Il y a deux points de vue: qu'il est meilleur pour une mère de travailler et le contraire.* This uses up over 20% of the already quite tight word limit without reward. From the very outset, candidates need to make the first 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 requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay which is quite likely to score 0/10.

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

In general, candidates who keep their answers reasonably short and straightforward and concentrate on doing the simple things efficiently tend to score better than those who demonstrate a desire to impress with over-elaborate phrasing and overambitious vocabulary.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

This proved a relatively straightforward first exercise which enabled most candidates to get off to a good start. *Quasiment* was correctly identified by the vast majority for **(a)**, as was *souhaité* for **(e)**. *Mises* was commonly offered on its own for *présentées* in **(b)**, but was rendered meaningless without the inclusion of *en avant*. Occasionally, candidates focused on the search for a feminine plural past participle rather than on meaning and offered *interrogées* here. *Renoncer* was often offered for *dévouer* in **(c)**, again presumably as much as anything on the basis that it was an infinitive, whilst the inclusion of *se* before *consacrer* would have resulted in *se se consacrer*. *Sans réserve* was quite often thought to have a financial sense, giving rise to *manque de revenus* in **(d)**, where *pleinement* and *totalement* were both equally acceptable as correct answers.

#### **Question 2**

There were some very good 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.

**Item 2(a):** many candidates did not remove the *s* on *difficiles*, writing *il est difficiles*. Others lost the mark by altering *ces* to *ses*.

**Item 2(b):** the very straightforward transformation into indirect speech was managed by most, but sometimes the gender of Marlène's children changed. There was no need to change the tense.

**Item 2(c):** the success rate here tended to vary greatly from Centre to Centre. In some, the need for the subjunctive was widely appreciated and correctly handled. In others, it did not seem to be known. Candidates should be discouraged from making unnecessary changes in this exercise – e.g. *soit capable* to *puisse* or *le cerveau* to *son cerveau*.

**Item 2(d):** the transformation to the passive defeated quite a number, whilst others who successfully manipulated the verb spoiled things by omitting *les* before *trois quarts*.

**Item 2(e):** this proved the most challenging of the manipulations, with few other than the strongest managing *lui a permis* (*l'a* or *s'a permis(e)* being the most frequent incorrect versions). *Permit* was also common as the past participle.

### Question 3

**Item 3(a):** The need here was to state that more mothers returned to work soon after the birth of their child and that fewer stayed at home. Most managed the first mark, although some went too far by stating that all/most mothers now returned to work. Fewer scored the second mark by not offering an alternative to *au foyer*.

**Item 3(b):** There were four points to be made here: the attraction of an additional salary; the desire not to waste their training; the wish for financial independence; the lack of other income in case of a separation/divorce. Nearly all candidates scored at least one, with the fourth being the easiest. Better candidates saw the simplest way of avoiding 'lifting' was by reworking the nouns *attrait*, *volonté* and *désir* as verbs.

**Item 3(c):** Perhaps confused by the complex syntax of the verbs in both clauses of the question, a good number of candidates suggested that a lot of mothers who give up work would have preferred to stay at home to look after their baby and that giving up work would have allowed them to do so. Or that they wanted to keep the baby with them at work. Others thought that the tense of the question referred to what would happen in the future when the child reached the age of three. It was not difficult to avoid the common 'lift' of the phrase *reprendre le travail*.

**Item 3(d)** saw a good number of candidates identifying the need to manage the family at the same time as contributing to its finances.

**Item 3(e)** proved a good discriminator, rewarding those who found other ways of expressing *travailler en mode multitâche* (e.g. *faire plusieurs tâches à la fois / en même temps / simultanément*) and *autonomie* (*indépendance / être autonome / se débrouiller toute seule*). Many candidates focused on the women's feelings of inadequacy rather than on Wonder Woman's capability.

**Item 3(f):** Most candidates found the adjective *coupable*, but fewer were able to express *peine* in their own words. The notion of founding her own business/becoming her own boss was very successfully identified.

### Question 4

Marks here were often somewhat higher than on **Question 3**.

**Item 4(a)** offered three straightforward marks to those who avoided 'lifting' by transforming the nouns *participation*, *alimentation* and *réussite* into verbs, even if some went too far by suggesting malnutrition/starvation.

**Item 4(b):** Candidates were for the most part successful in stating that a mother's return to work had little if any impact on the happiness, behaviour or health of the child, although *Les enfants qui ont décidé de repartir travailler quelques mois après leur naissance sont en pleine forme* was taking things too far.

**Item 4(c)** saw stronger candidates finding alternatives to *jongler* (*concilier/combiner/alterner* etc. but not *balancer*). Most managed to manipulate *dans un contexte professionnel* (*au travail, professionnalisme* etc.).

In **Item 4(d)**, a fair number of candidates managed to express the idea of working from home and at times when the children were at school.

**Item 4(e)** *Les pères devraient aider leurs femmes à faire des crises de nerfs and être plus compréhensibles à la suppression de la mère* were improbable as answers. The suggestion that husbands should try to reduce *l'écart entre les sexes* produced some interpretations which were no doubt not exactly what the author of the text had anticipated. The distinction between being *compréhensible* and *compréhensif* was not understood by some.

### Question 5

This question asked the candidates to summarise the pros and cons of mothers of young children returning to work, and then to express a personal view of the role that fathers should play. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. The mark scheme for the **Summary** identified 15 rewardable points of which a good number of candidates managed perhaps 7, 8 or 9, with some reaching 10 or more.

The pros most frequently mentioned concerned a second salary, the desire to take advantage of qualifications, and financial independence, particularly after a divorce. The most commonly identified cons were the difficulty of balancing home and work (resulting in pressure and feelings of guilt), and the children's lack of participation in sports, healthy eating and academic success. Even so, the idea of earning one's own salary was quite commonly suggested as a means of avoiding divorce. Some candidates got side-tracked into irrelevant statements about what employers or fathers could do to help.

There is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, but excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to result in a lower quality of language mark.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts.

The **Personal Response** gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Weaker candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and offered very little else, resulting in some rather derivative responses: *Les pères doivent consacrer du temps aux enfants et aux tâches ménagères et soutenir leur femme*. More ambitious candidates were often rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or slant of their own: *Dieu créa le père pour être le pilier de la famille. Il doit trouver de la nourriture et assurer un logement, prêter une oreille attentive à son enfant et lui enseigner les bonnes valeurs morales. En même temps, il doit remplir son rôle d'époux et faire en sorte que sa vie conjugale soit en rose*.

### Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to poor. The very weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form. Some routinely ignored even the need to indicate plurals by adding an s (*les mère, les père and les enfant*), and mistakes in adjectival agreement and subject-verb concord were surprisingly common across the ability range: *les mère a diminués ; les pères doit ; le père doivent ; le manque d'argent les encouragent ; la capacité les aident*. Verbs (even entirely regular ones) were as usual by far the most common sources of error: the plural of *la mère travaille* was frequently thought to be *les mères travailles* or *les mères travaillent*.

New words were coined, often with English lurking not far beneath the surface: *s'indépendancer ; divider ; dédiquer ; involvurer ; convéniente ; maintandre ; l'heursité ; le gagnance ; attraiter ; solver*. There was some creative spelling – *bébéciteur* (*babysitter*); *touletemp ; tujurs ; faire fasse(nt) à ; acose de ; malhalaise*. Other words were commonly distorted or mis-spelled: *dimunition ; une basse ; effect ; aspet ; revenues ; horraire ; avantage*.

Constructions with certain common verbs caused problems: *permettre, aider, encourager, empêcher, laisser, souhaiter* and *préférer*. Incorrect prepositions appeared after *dépendre* and *participer* in particular.

The choice of the verb *travaille* or the noun *travail* (often *travails*) was almost as often wrong as right, as was the distinction between *leur* and *leurs*, or *son / sa / ses*. There sometimes appeared no difference between *eux(-mêmes)* and *elles(-mêmes)*, which caused confusion.

There was further confusion between *sa* and *ça*, *c'est / ces / ses*, *ce / se / ceux / ceux-là* (*sa c'est évolué*) and *cela* which very commonly appeared with a plural verb, no doubt influenced by *ceux-là*.

The omission of *ne* as the first part of a negative reversed the sense of a number of sentences: *les pères devraient plus s'absenter ; il est plus à la mode que seul le père travaille*.

*Regarder (après)* for 'to look after' and *occuper* for *s'occuper de* caused problems, as did the construction with *dont* (*les enfants dont (often donc) leurs mères travaillent*). Very few managed two acute accents on *elle a créé*, and only stronger candidates seemed at ease with the use of the conditional of the modal verbs in **Questions 4(d), 4(e) and 5(b)**: (*elles/ils pourraient* and *ils devraient*).

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and accurate French which was a pleasure to read.



# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/23  
Reading and Writing

## 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. Including additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (cut/copy and paste) 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 copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **(a)** and **(b)**) combined) is ignored.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to offer some brief relevant ideas of their own, without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

## General comments

There were some first-rate scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, and, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them, there were elements which were accessible to nearly all.

The topic generally appeared to be one to which candidates could relate.

The majority of candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Quite a lot of answers were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible: sometimes the answers were longer than the whole paragraph of the text to which they referred. **The practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. There were also significant numbers of other candidates who tried to incorporate the words of the question as an introduction to every answer, often losing credit for Quality of Language in the process: *Pourquoi les parents trouvent-ils cette période difficile est parce que ... 4(a)* or *Qu'est-ce qui provoque le sentiment d'impuissance chez les parents est que ... 4(d)*. Answers beginning with *Parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

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

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text has diminished very considerably in recent sessions, but remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' answers unaltered 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 the correct answer. Candidates should therefore try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs, or infinitives into finite verbs) 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.

**Question 2** is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement.

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

In **Question 5**, candidates should realize the importance of the word limit clearly set out in the rubric of a total of 140 words for both sections. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary will not be able to receive any of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a very marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

If, on the other hand, the responses to **Question 5** are significantly below the word limit, the overall quality of language mark is reduced accordingly.

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 penalized for not introducing the topic (not doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste a significant proportion of the available words on this for no reward. From the very outset, candidates need to make the first 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 requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay which is quite likely to score 0/10.

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

In general, candidates who keep their answers reasonably short and straightforward and concentrate on doing the simple things efficiently tend to score better than those who demonstrate a desire to impress with over-elaborate phrasing and overambitious vocabulary.

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

This proved a relatively straightforward first exercise which enabled most candidates to get off to a good start. *Développer* was correctly identified by the vast majority as part of the correct answer for **(a)**, but some did not include the necessary *se*. *Poser* was usually correctly offered for **(b)**, but some were tempted by *établit* which, although similar in meaning as an infinitive, did not work grammatically here. Most recognized *d'aujourd'hui* as a substitute for *de nos jours* in **(c)**, but some again omitted the necessary *de*. *Bien sûr* was well found for *évidemment* in **(d)**. A good number found *comprend* for *apprécie* in **(e)**, whilst others offered *transmettre* or *présenter* – if all else failed, looking for a third person singular verb would at least have narrowed the search.

#### Question 2

There were some very good 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.

**Item 2(a)**: The transformation to the active was successfully achieved by a good number but some were let down by an incorrect choice of pronoun e.g. *leurs enfants leur/s'aiment*.

**Item 2(b)**: The reverse transformation to the passive and the consequent agreement were generally similarly well handled by the stronger candidates, even if the tense was occasionally altered unnecessarily and *établit(e)* and *établise* were not uncommon.

**Item 2(c):** A similar fate befell *transmis* (*transmit* ; *transmetté*) here.

**Item 2(d):** This was the least well-handled manipulation (into indirect speech), with only a few candidates managing the correct pronouns: *se regarder* was commonly offered (occasionally *lui regarder* and *se parle*).

**Item 2(e):** Quite a pleasing number of the stronger candidates recognized the need for a subjunctive here, even if fewer were able to produce the correct form *aient*. Some candidates omitted to alter de *barrières claires* to des *barrières claires* once *besoin* had gone.

### Question 3

**Item 3(a):** This question was well answered by candidates who found acceptable synonyms for *conflicts* – e.g. *disputes*, *affrontements*, *désaccords*, *tensions*. *Création* was commonly re-worked using the verb *créer* (as suggested by the question), as was *perte* rather less commonly with *perdre*. A few candidates thought that it is the lack of barriers that creates conflicts.

**Item 3(b):** Stronger candidates correctly identified three of the mistakes said to be commonly made by parents (not carrying out threatened punishments; not sending out the same messages; allowing themselves to be manipulated.) Weaker candidates suggested that it was parents who did not respect the rules, or 'lifted' *laisser faire* and *transmettre le même message* / *présenter un front uni* from the text.

**Item 3(c):** By asking *Qu'est-ce que tous le jeunes doivent faire ...?* the question pushed candidates down the path of using verbs rather than the nouns of the text, a path which many were happy to follow with *éviter*, *bien travailler à l'école*, *participer* and (slightly less commonly) *respecter*. Some were fortunate to get away with *respecter des autres* and *éviter du risque* from the text.

**Item 3(d):** *Des bras de fer* was sometimes interpreted as beating children with iron bars or even less probably *battre avec le bra d'une personne*. *Éviter de crier* was, on occasion, rendered as *ne pleurez pas*. A very easy second mark was scored by finding an alternative to *dialoguer*.

**Item 3(e):** Most candidates indicated the need for parents to listen to their children more often. Many then went on to indicate that *ils se concentrent sur leurs propres préoccupations* or similar. Some did not fully grasp the idea of *une abondance de biens matériels*, suggesting that this meant *beaucoup de matériels* or *des biens choses*.

### Question 4

**Item 4(a):** The first two marks here were most easily scored by using the verbs *confronter* and *remettre en question*. Some of the other answers were too vague here: *ils se comportent mal* ; *ils ne comprennent plus leur enfant* ; *ils ont de mauvaises habitudes*.

**Item 4(b):** Almost all candidates scored the straightforward mark for *éditeurs*, but many did not manage to avoid lifting *il ne se passe rien* or *n'aurait pas manqué une phase*.

**Item 4(c):** Misreading *intérêt* as *Internet* was not uncommon. The question again suggested the verbs *s'intéresser*, *analyser*, *intervenir* and *s'inquiéter* as the most obvious ways of avoiding lifting and thereby earning the mark.

**Item 4(d):** Some of the many rewardable answers here involved the simple transformation of *leur influence diminue* into *la diminution de leur influence*. *Diminution* quite often appeared as *dimunition* or *diminuation*. Many candidates also successfully indicated that most adolescents did in fact feel they needed their parents, even if their parents didn't believe it.

**Item 4(e):** Candidates often found the easiest way of scoring a mark here by changing the present participle in *doutant d'eux-mêmes* to the infinitive in line with the question. Others made sensible use of verbs such as *paniquer*, *s'effrayer*, *douter de leurs capacités*, and found suitable alternatives to *renoncer*, e.g. *abandonner*, *désert*.

### Question 5

This question asked candidates to summarise the advice to parents as far as their relationship with their adolescent children is concerned, and then to express a personal view of the ways in which adolescents can contribute to family harmony. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. The mark scheme for the **Summary** identified 15 rewardable points of which a good number of candidates managed perhaps 7, 8 or 9, with some reaching 10 or more.

The most commonly identified points were the need for parents to set barriers; to apply threatened punishments; to keep a united front; to establish a dialogue; to establish visual contact; to keep calm; to have confidence in their children.

There is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, but excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to result in a lower quality of language mark.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts.

The **Personal Response** gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Some concentrated simply on children pulling their weight in household chores and being willing to spend time talking to their parents. Others stressed the need for children to understand the pressures on parents. More ambitious candidates were often rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or slant of their own, or an arresting turn of phrase: *la cacophonie familiale peut se transformer en harmonie*.

### Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to poor. The very weakest sometimes found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form. Agreements were routinely ignored by some and errors in subject-verb concord were common. Verbs were as usual by far the most common sources of error, the plural of *le parent menace* being sometimes *les parents menaces*.

New verbs were coined, often with English lurking not far beneath the surface: *obtenir* ; *participer* ; *involver* ; *attempter* ; *hesiter* ; *prevenir* ; *resolver* ; *providre* ; *expecter* ; *disrupter* ; *enforcer*. Nouns and adjectives sometimes fared no better: *léniants* ; *criticale* ; *la strictesse* ; *les requirements* ; *le relationship* ; *la certainté* ; *consistent* (in the English sense). *Aider environ la maison* (to help around the house); *c'est tout environ communication* (it's all about communication); *dans ordre participer* (in order to participate) did little to enhance the overall impression.

Constructions with certain common verbs caused their usual problems: *permettre*, *aider*, *encourager*, *empêcher*, *laisser*, and *préférer*. Pronouns (particularly the distinction between *les* and *leur(s)*, *le/la* and *lui* and *se*) were common sources of error.

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

# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/31

Essay

## Key Messages

- Choose the title with which you feel most comfortable and on which you can write a relevant, well-illustrated essay.
- Plan your response carefully, using an introduction to show understanding of the elements of the title chosen and a conclusion to show a considered final judgement of the issues discussed.
- Aim to use accurate and idiomatic French, which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary.

## General Comments

Good and very good scripts this year were not as numerous as in previous years and there was a noticeable increase in the number of weak scripts. Essays mainly fell into the “average” category, with some quality at the better end but a good deal of poor grammar and very basic and often irrelevant content lower down.

With regard to content, many candidates did not address the specific title of the essays, writing essays on the umbrella topic instead. What is required is some analysis of all the elements given in the title and then to address them and their relationship to each other. Often candidates made a few relevant points surrounded by irrelevance.

The structure of essays continues to be problematic for many candidates. Although it is apparent from rough work that quite a few candidates work on a plan before embarking on their essays, even they can sometimes lapse into a stream of consciousness outpouring of circular argument, repetition and self-contradiction. Some offer a pre-prepared introduction onto which is tacked a repetition of the words of the topic set; at the end of this they ask a question that does not refer to the question on the paper. Others, who follow the path of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, often omit to produce a considered, balanced conclusion rather using the concluding paragraph to introduce a new point or to ask a new question. The very best and most relevant offerings are those which support their arguments with apt illustration and exemplification.

As far as quality of language is concerned, there were some impressive essays where grammatical accuracy and an impressive range of structures and lexis made for a high level of fluency. However, in much of the work submitted, grammatical accuracy was poor. This affected mainly noun-adjective and subject-verb agreements. Many of these errors could be avoided by thorough checking. Sentences lacking a main verb were quite common, usually consisting of an initial subject followed by a relative clause leading to a full stop. Inappropriate register was also fairly common (*ça, boulot, mec, truc, bosser, chiant* and *emmerder*). There was also a large number of errors incurred by miscopying of words given in the titles, e.g. *réseaux, menace, sonore, l'oisir, les jeunes perdre / perdrent leurs idéaux*. More positively, pre-learned essay phrases were used sparingly and by and large appropriately, and some candidates did have grammar on their minds, one candidate opening “*Sur un plan purement subjonctif.....*”.

## **Question 1**

*En ce qui concerne les rapports humains, les réseaux sociaux comme Facebook ou Twitter font plus de mal que de bien. Etes-vous d'accord ?*

This was the most popular question. Unfortunately, however, many candidates missed the key phrase *en ce qui concerne les rapports humains*. The principal theme of the bulk of the essays submitted was the positive and negative aspects of social networking sites and, very often, of the Internet in general. Long sections included accounts of Internet shopping, the educational value of the Internet and, not least, social ills, such as paedophilia, identity theft and other forms of fraud, attributable in large part to cyber activity.

Opening paragraphs that were succinct and to the point stated the huge potential afforded by social networking sites, not least in terms of the benefits in the sphere of personal relationships, but also the pitfalls. Thereafter, a whole range of points were made.

First and foremost, it is now possible to make many new friends online among people whom otherwise we would never have encountered. There exist millions of married couples whose first meeting with their spouse was on a social networking site. Introverted people and those lacking in social confidence who are not comfortable with face to face interactions can thrive in an online environment. Such sites are a lifeline too for disabled people who are confined to their homes and whose possibilities for interacting with others would otherwise be extremely limited. Moreover, the opportunity people are afforded for sharing ideas, experiences, photographs, with people from different backgrounds, different religions or different cultures, is calculated to promote tolerance and social harmony. Relationships with family members and real-life friends also benefit from social networking sites. Work and study commitments mean that people lead very busy lives and are not free to meet or talk at the same time as those close or dear to them, so that posts and photos on Facebook or a similar site are the most convenient way of keeping in touch. In days gone by, keeping in touch with friends and family living abroad, either permanently or temporarily, would have been either very expensive in the case of the telephone or very slow and not altogether reliable in the case of the postal service, but today free of charge instantaneous contact is possible and, on some sites such as Skype, the interlocutors can even see one another. If contact has been lost with old school friends or former colleagues, several specialist sites are on hand to help users to trace them so that contact can be renewed. Other sorts of human contact are also facilitated. Politicians use Twitter and Facebook to bring them closer to their electors. Many idols of the stage and screen and of the sporting world, formerly only seen in magazines and on television, now make a point of having direct contact with their fans through social networking sites. It is increasingly common for companies and professional people such as teachers, doctors and lawyers to have an account on such a site in order to promote relations with their clients, candidates and patients.

However many contacts one has who are designated as “friends” on various sites, it has to be said that true friendship is more than the sum of updates and posts, whether verbal or in the form of photographs, and that such relationships pale into insignificance when compared with real life friendships. In other words, there are limitations to the benefits of social networking sites in the sphere of human relationships. More seriously, such sites often impact very negatively on their users’ relations with others. Compulsive social networkers have little time left for real-life personal interaction and this can have disastrous consequences for their relational skills: loss of confidence in their social abilities, narcissistic tendencies, introversion along with difficulty in opening up to others are all well-documented psychological problems resulting from excessive exposure to social networking sites. Young people are particularly at risk: an addiction to such sites as Facebook can result in minimal offline communication with their parents, skipping meals and neglecting schoolwork. It also works both ways: some children have been seriously neglected because of a parent’s compulsive social networking habits. Another well-documented phenomenon is the immense hurt caused to doting grandparents when suddenly their regular meetings with one and then another of their grandchildren, which have been one of their principal sources of happiness, come to an end because of the latter’s new found infatuation with Internet friends. The ease with which it is possible to ‘hook up’ with others on such sites and arrange meetings has been a factor in the break-up of relationships and marriages. The online environment can encourage pranksters, individuals seeking revenge for a wrong done to them, and, worst of all, trolls. An allied problem is cyber-bullying: an ever increasing number of media reports detail the cruel online intimidation and victimisation of often highly vulnerable individuals. Social networking sites can be a place for argument and conflict. Finally, such sites also breed suspicion and distrust in dealing with others for the simple reason that the networker can never be sure of the true identity of the so-called friend met on line, he or she has no way of knowing what sort of people might be lurking among those with whom they have regular online contact.

## Question 2

*La ville est l’endroit où les jeunes perdent leurs idéaux. Discutez de cette affirmation.*

Not a popular choice, this question was also the least well done. The principal problem seemed to be the interpretation of the word *idéaux*. Most candidates clearly realised that the title referred to the city as a place where something is lost, hence a negative, and many proceeded to sing the praises of the country or the village as a place where one’s *idéaux* are preserved. This led either to a “beauty/purity of the country versus the evils of the city” debate or to rather abstract writing on the decline of religious and family values in modern life.

Those candidates who did interpret the question correctly often began by painting a picture of childhood and early adolescence when the harsh realities of society have not yet intruded on the sheltered world of the more or less comfortable homes in which young people have lived since birth. At that period of their lives, many have an almost utopian view of the world, a world that is safe and secure, a world where people help one another, where the good things of life are available on demand and plentiful and where serenity reigns. Two elements in particular are calculated to shatter that idealised world in which they live, notably exposure to media sources, in particular television, and, secondly, what they learn about the environment in which they live as they begin to discover the true nature of the place where they have been brought up. If that place is a town or city, they will soon discover harsh realities that will cause their idealised world to come tumbling down.

Towns and cities are usually the places where the crime rate is the highest. Police forces wage a constant battle against violent crime – armed robberies, muggings, kidnappings, murder, rape, arson – and crimes which, though they do not involve violence, are still of a serious nature – burglaries, car theft, fraud. Justice follows its course and those criminals who are convicted go to jail for an appropriate number of years. However, in jail, such is the environment that reigns, many become even more hardened criminals and as soon as they are released, they return to the towns and cities where their life of crime began and they reoffend. Young people quickly learn that they can never feel safe in urban areas.

Social problems are particularly rife in urban areas. In many cities of the world, there is a high level of unemployment and of homelessness. The victims have no option but to live on often benefits, on charity hand outs and on the proceeds of begging. Homeless people are forced to live on the streets or in hostels provided by the government or charitable organisations. Many take to alcohol in order to drown their sorrows; others resort to drugs, many of them becoming addicts who leave their used syringes in back streets. Drug addiction and prostitution often go hand in hand, young women resorting to selling sexual services in order to fuel their need for narcotics.

Environmental problems are especially accentuated in many towns and cities. Air pollution was almost always top of the list of threats to public health because of fumes from heavy traffic and industrial emissions. However, noise pollution is also a major issue: engine noise, noisy exhausts, road works, bars with loud music, ambulance and police sirens, trains and sometimes overhead aircraft, all contribute to insomnia, auditory problems and nervous disorders. There is also visual pollution. Giant neon signs and advertising hoardings, graffiti, ugly skyscrapers that keep out the light, and little by way of green spaces: all make for a panorama that is far from pleasing to the eye. People are soon forced to take on board that their “beautiful world” is not quite as beautiful as they had thought.

Problems of infrastructure are a great source of frustration in many urban areas. Many people are attracted to towns and cities in the hope that they will find employment but when they get there, they find that not only are jobs very hard to come by, but also that affordable housing is lacking. Hospitals cannot cope with the large influx of new arrivals, public transport systems are also stretched to the limits, schools are overcrowded, and possibilities for leisure activities are also somewhat limited, especially on a low income. This brings disillusionment.

### Question 3

*Les loisirs sont pour les riches. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?*

This was a very popular question, which generated a significant number of thoughtful, well-constructed and cogently argued essays. On the other hand, there were many scripts which consisted of pre-prepared answers on the role and importance of leisure activities.

Good candidates went straight to the centre of the topic, stating that though in an ideal world, everybody would have a totally free choice in the matter of how to spend their leisure time, in reality, people's leisure activities are constrained by a number of factors, mainly financial and time pressures.

There are a number of leisure activities which either because of the very high initial outlay involved or because of the ongoing expenses incurred in pursuing them are the preserve of wealthier members of society. Quite apart from private jets, luxury yachts, collecting Old Masters or Fabergé eggs which belong to the fairy-tale world of the fabulously rich, there are other leisure pursuits which are less exclusive but which still necessitate an outlay which is beyond the means of most ordinary working people: golf, skiing, equestrian sports were among those most frequently quoted.

The point was made in many essays, however, that in recent times, we have witnessed the democratisation of leisure activities. Governments have overseen programmes for building municipal sports centres, youth centres, and centres for the elderly which offer a whole range of leisure possibilities to people of all ages. Municipal libraries mean that even the least well-off members of society have free access to books, CDs, DVDs and computers. Entry to museums and art galleries is now free in many countries of the world in order to ensure that access to the national heritage is not restricted. Television is also been a major factor in the democratisation process: sports fans can now watch major sporting events in the comfort of their own homes, often free of charge – Formula One races, World Cup football matches, Grand Slam tennis tournaments, major golf tournaments and athletics meetings are all covered by various channels eager to attract the highest possible number of viewers. The great range of interests catered for on television gives it universal appeal as a source of entertainment. More recently, the availability of computers has revolutionized the way we spend our leisure time. Foreign travel, once the preserve of the more wealthy members of society has likewise been revolutionized by the advent of low-cost airlines and package holidays. Changes in the working environment have also been an important factor: many enterprises have fully taken on board the link between stress and productivity, so that part of the package offered to employees is free recreational activities e.g. gymnasiums, personal trainers and company outings.

Time constraints still play an important part in shaping a person's leisure pursuits but in that area too there have been great changes. In the past, it was generally true to say that the richer you were, the more free time you could allow yourself to indulge your passions. However, those days are long since gone, for, today, the dynamics of the workplace have completely changed. To command the high salaries that they do, CEOs, City high-flyers, senior bankers etc. usually have to put in extremely long hours, while conditions for the lower paid workers, including the amount of time to be allowed for rest, are strictly controlled by law. As a result, in many areas, the workers enjoy more leisure time than their highly-paid bosses. Moreover, constantly reminded by the media that the link between health and stress is a very close one, people are fiercely protective of their leisure time: they are determined to take full advantage of the possibilities that our society has to offer. Some good essays concluded with the observation that we may still be a long way from the leisure society envisaged by Keynes back in the 1930s but, equally, we have moved away from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of leisure as an elitist preserve.

#### Question 4

*Comment expliquez-vous le nombre toujours grandissant de conflits armés dans le monde?*

Relatively few candidates opted for this title. However, it produced some of the best essays, the most impressive combining considered reflections on the nature of war and peace, with specific illustrations based on impressively detailed and accurate knowledge of both present and past conflicts. A number of candidates, however, were guilty of confusing war and social conflicts and more seriously, weak essays were marred by a dearth of exemplification and/or by flawed examples, e.g. attributing the Twin Towers attack to Gaddafi.

A starting point for some was the end of the Cold War in the mid-80s which brought optimism regarding prospects of world peace. However, sadly, that optimism was short-lived as subsequently there have been a number of major conflicts in many areas of the world. A prominent cause of war, identified by many essays, has been the desire of populations and/or foreign governments to overthrow tyrannical regimes, e.g. Libya, Iraq, Syria.

Territorial conflict and the preservation of national identity were identified as another major cause of bloodshed. Often cited was the Bosnian war in the 1990s or the conflict between Gaza and Israel, Power struggles within countries between rival ethnic groups have been another major source of bloodshed, e.g. the former Belgian Congo in Africa during the 1990s.

Many essays made the point that religion and war have gone hand in hand since time immemorial and, in recent times, the problem for western powers has been the combat against religious fanaticism which has been another important factor in the increasing amount of armed conflict in the world, e.g. the September 11 attacks in New York, ISIS.

A wide range of examples of other ongoing conflicts were variously cited, including the Islamist insurgency in Nigeria, the Somali Civil War, the conflict in the Central African Republic, the war in the Donbass region in Ukraine and ethnic violence in South Sudan. Some good essays concluded by stressing that the efforts of such agencies as the United Nations to ensure peace in the world are doomed to failure in a world where arms seem to be easily obtainable and where greed, the thirst for power and fanaticism are so prevalent.

## Question 5

*La pollution sonore et visuelle constitue une menace tout aussi importante que la pollution atmosphérique. A votre avis, dans quelle mesure est-ce vrai?*

It was evident from many essays on this topic that candidates had made an in-depth study of the causes and effects of pollution: they drew a clear differentiation between the different types of pollution mentioned in the title, consolidated them with specific examples and drew an informed conclusion. Too many, however, used pre-prepared material in which types of pollution other than those referred to in the title figured prominently, in particular water pollution, and paid little or no heed to the specifics of the question. Moreover, there was a significant number of candidates whose understanding of visual pollution was limited, equating it with such things as girls dressed in clothes calculated to shock more conservative members of the community, or simply litter. Noise pollution was better understood though in some cases this was limited to the noise emanating from discotheques. Many candidates, although including examples, needed to address the issue of comparative impact which was key to the question.

Brief definitions of the phenomena referred to in the title were helpful. Noise pollution is the disturbing or excessive noise that may harm the activity or balance of human or animal life. The sources of outdoor noise pollution most commonly cited were machines used for road works and construction, along with transportation systems in the form of motor vehicles (noisy engines and exhausts, car horns and car radios), aircraft and trains. Other sources sometimes mentioned included amplified music coming from bars, the sirens used by the police and the emergency services, wind turbines and military sonar. Poor urban planning, some pointed out, may give rise to noise pollution since adjacent industrial and residential buildings can give rise to such pollution in residential areas.

Noise pollution has serious effects on both physical and psychological health. Chronic exposure to loud noise may cause hearing loss and it also responsible for high stress levels, hypertension, tinnitus and sleep disturbances. Noise can also have a detrimental effect on wild animals, e.g. increasing the risk of death by changing the delicate balance in predator or prey detection. A number of scripts referred to the theory that noise pollution was a major contributory factor in the death of certain species of whales that beached themselves after being exposed to the loud sound of military sonar. In the case of endangered species, the reduction of usable habitat by the impact of noise has the potential to be a significant factor in the path to extinction.

Visual pollution is an aesthetic issue: it disturbs the visual area of people by creating negative changes in the natural or man-made environment. Billboards, telephone towers, electricity pylons and wires, ugly or badly maintained buildings and litter are all forms of visual pollution. A major cause of visual pollution is the insensitivity of local authorities who fail to exercise adequate control over what is built or put up in public places, allowing, for example, a fast-food restaurant sign to be put up adjacent to a medieval cathedral. Visual pollution impairs one's ability to enjoy a vista or view inducing negative mental and physical effects. Research has shown that, fully taking into account the relative numbers of vehicles using them, the incidence of accidents on urban roads littered with signs, billboards, graffiti and the like is much higher than on scenic country roads and that the stress levels experienced by drivers on rural roads are much lower than those experienced by those driving through built-up areas.

Serious though the effects of sound and visual pollution may be, most essays which addressed the issue took the line that they pale into relative insignificance when compared with the effects of atmospheric pollution which are truly alarming. Long-term health effects can include chronic respiratory disease, lung cancer, heart disease and even damage to the brain, nerves, liver or kidneys. Continual exposure to air pollution affects the lungs of growing children and may aggravate or complicate medical conditions in the elderly. In China alone, air pollution is estimated to kill 500,000 people each year and across the EU, it is estimated to reduce life expectancy by at almost 9 months. According to the World Health Organisation, in 2012 alone, it caused the deaths of around 7 million people worldwide. Another direct effect is the immediate alterations that the world is witnessing due to global warming. With increased temperatures worldwide, increase in sea levels because of melting ice from colder regions and icebergs, displacement and loss of habitat have already signalled an impending disaster if actions for preservation and normalisation are not undertaken soon. Harmful gases like nitrogen oxides and sulphur oxides are released into the atmosphere during the burning of fossil fuels. When it rains, the water droplets combine with these air pollutants, become acidic and then fall in the form of acid rain which can cause great damage to humans, animals, plant life including crops and even to cars and buildings. Acid rain strips leaves of nutrients and breaks down trees' ability to resist cold and tree diseases, and historic buildings bear the signs of acidic corrosion and deterioration. Eutrophication is another effect of air pollution: high amounts of nitrogen present in some pollutants are developed on the surface of the sea and of lakes and ponds and form themselves into algae,

resulting in the depletion of oxygen in the water and adversely affecting fish, marine animals and plants and also representing a danger for both humans and land animals. Not least, the depletion of the ozone layer, which protects humans from harmful ultraviolet rays, due to the presence of fluorocarbons in the atmosphere, is already resulting in a significant increase in cancers and eye problems.

# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/32  
Essay

## Key Messages

- Choose the title with which you feel most comfortable and on which you can write a relevant, well-illustrated essay.
- Plan your response carefully, using an introduction to show understanding of the elements of the title chosen and a conclusion to show a considered final judgement of the issues discussed.
- Aim to use accurate and idiomatic French, which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary.

## General Comments

Good and very good scripts this year were not as numerous as in previous years and there was a noticeable increase in the number of weak scripts. Essays mainly fell into the “average” category, with some quality at the better end but a good deal of poor grammar and very basic and often irrelevant content lower down.

With regard to content, many candidates did not address the specific title of the essays, writing essays on the umbrella topic instead. What is required is some analysis of all the elements given in the title and then to address them and their relationship to each other. Often candidates made a few relevant points surrounded by irrelevance.

The structure of essays continues to be problematic for many candidates. Although it is apparent from rough work that quite a few candidates work on a plan before embarking on their essays, even they can sometimes lapse into a stream of consciousness outpouring of circular argument, repetition and self-contradiction. Some offer a pre-prepared introduction onto which is tacked a repetition of the words of the topic set; at the end of this they ask a question that does not refer to the question on the paper. Others, who follow the path of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, often omit to produce a considered, balanced conclusion rather using the concluding paragraph to introduce a new point or to ask a new question. The very best and most relevant offerings are those which support their arguments with apt illustration and exemplification.

As far as quality of language is concerned, there were some impressive essays where grammatical accuracy and an impressive range of structures and lexis made for a high level of fluency. However, in much of the work submitted, grammatical accuracy was poor. This affected mainly noun-adjective and subject-verb agreements. Many of these errors could be avoided by thorough checking. Sentences lacking a main verb were quite common, usually consisting of an initial subject followed by a relative clause leading to a full stop. Inappropriate register was also fairly common (*ça, boulot, mec, truc, bosser, chiant* and *emmerder*). There was also a large number of errors incurred by miscopying of words given in the titles, e.g. *réseaux, menace, sonore, l'oisir, les jeunes perdre / perdrent leurs idéaux*. More positively, pre-learned essay phrases were used sparingly and by and large appropriately, and some candidates did have grammar on their minds, one candidate opening “*Sur un plan purement subjonctif.....*”.

## **Question 1**

*En ce qui concerne les rapports humains, les réseaux sociaux comme Facebook ou Twitter font plus de mal que de bien. Etes-vous d'accord ?*

This was the most popular question. Unfortunately, however, many candidates missed the key phrase *en ce qui concerne les rapports humains*. The principal theme of the bulk of the essays submitted was the positive and negative aspects of social networking sites and, very often, of the Internet in general. Long sections included accounts of Internet shopping, the educational value of the Internet and, not least, social ills, such as paedophilia, identity theft and other forms of fraud, attributable in large part to cyber activity.

Opening paragraphs that were succinct and to the point stated the huge potential afforded by social networking sites, not least in terms of the benefits in the sphere of personal relationships, but also the pitfalls. Thereafter, a whole range of points were made.

First and foremost, it is now possible to make many new friends online among people whom otherwise we would never have encountered. There exist millions of married couples whose first meeting with their spouse was on a social networking site. Introverted people and those lacking in social confidence who are not comfortable with face to face interactions can thrive in an online environment. Such sites are a lifeline too for disabled people who are confined to their homes and whose possibilities for interacting with others would otherwise be extremely limited. Moreover, the opportunity people are afforded for sharing ideas, experiences, photographs, with people from different backgrounds, different religions or different cultures, is calculated to promote tolerance and social harmony. Relationships with family members and real-life friends also benefit from social networking sites. Work and study commitments mean that people lead very busy lives and are not free to meet or talk at the same time as those close or dear to them, so that posts and photos on Facebook or a similar site are the most convenient way of keeping in touch. In days gone by, keeping in touch with friends and family living abroad, either permanently or temporarily, would have been either very expensive in the case of the telephone or very slow and not altogether reliable in the case of the postal service, but today free of charge instantaneous contact is possible and, on some sites such as Skype, the interlocutors can even see one another. If contact has been lost with old school friends or former colleagues, several specialist sites are on hand to help users to trace them so that contact can be renewed. Other sorts of human contact are also facilitated. Politicians use Twitter and Facebook to bring them closer to their electors. Many idols of the stage and screen and of the sporting world, formerly only seen in magazines and on television, now make a point of having direct contact with their fans through social networking sites. It is increasingly common for companies and professional people such as teachers, doctors and lawyers to have an account on such a site in order to promote relations with their clients, candidates and patients.

However many contacts one has who are designated as “friends” on various sites, it has to be said that true friendship is more than the sum of updates and posts, whether verbal or in the form of photographs, and that such relationships pale into insignificance when compared with real life friendships. In other words, there are limitations to the benefits of social networking sites in the sphere of human relationships. More seriously, such sites often impact very negatively on their users’ relations with others. Compulsive social networkers have little time left for real-life personal interaction and this can have disastrous consequences for their relational skills: loss of confidence in their social abilities, narcissistic tendencies, introversion along with difficulty in opening up to others are all well-documented psychological problems resulting from excessive exposure to social networking sites. Young people are particularly at risk: an addiction to such sites as Facebook can result in minimal offline communication with their parents, skipping meals and neglecting schoolwork. It also works both ways: some children have been seriously neglected because of a parent’s compulsive social networking habits. Another well-documented phenomenon is the immense hurt caused to doting grandparents when suddenly their regular meetings with one and then another of their grandchildren, which have been one of their principal sources of happiness, come to an end because of the latter’s new found infatuation with Internet friends. The ease with which it is possible to ‘hook up’ with others on such sites and arrange meetings has been a factor in the break-up of relationships and marriages. The online environment can encourage pranksters, individuals seeking revenge for a wrong done to them, and, worst of all, trolls. An allied problem is cyber-bullying: an ever increasing number of media reports detail the cruel online intimidation and victimisation of often highly vulnerable individuals. Social networking sites can be a place for argument and conflict. Finally, such sites also breed suspicion and distrust in dealing with others for the simple reason that the networker can never be sure of the true identity of the so-called friend met on line, he or she has no way of knowing what sort of people might be lurking among those with whom they have regular online contact.

## Question 2

*La ville est l’endroit où les jeunes perdent leurs idéaux. Discutez de cette affirmation.*

Not a popular choice, this question was also the least well done. The principal problem seemed to be the interpretation of the word *idéaux*. Most candidates clearly realised that the title referred to the city as a place where something is lost, hence a negative, and many proceeded to sing the praises of the country or the village as a place where one’s *idéaux* are preserved. This led either to a “beauty/purity of the country versus the evils of the city” debate or to rather abstract writing on the decline of religious and family values in modern life.

Those candidates who did interpret the question correctly often began by painting a picture of childhood and early adolescence when the harsh realities of society have not yet intruded on the sheltered world of the more or less comfortable homes in which young people have lived since birth. At that period of their lives, many have an almost utopian view of the world, a world that is safe and secure, a world where people help one another, where the good things of life are available on demand and plentiful and where serenity reigns. Two elements in particular are calculated to shatter that idealised world in which they live, notably exposure to media sources, in particular television, and, secondly, what they learn about the environment in which they live as they begin to discover the true nature of the place where they have been brought up. If that place is a town or city, they will soon discover harsh realities that will cause their idealised world to come tumbling down.

Towns and cities are usually the places where the crime rate is the highest. Police forces wage a constant battle against violent crime – armed robberies, muggings, kidnappings, murder, rape, arson – and crimes which, though they do not involve violence, are still of a serious nature – burglaries, car theft, fraud. Justice follows its course and those criminals who are convicted go to jail for an appropriate number of years. However, in jail, such is the environment that reigns, many become even more hardened criminals and as soon as they are released, they return to the towns and cities where their life of crime began and they reoffend. Young people quickly learn that they can never feel safe in urban areas.

Social problems are particularly rife in urban areas. In many cities of the world, there is a high level of unemployment and of homelessness. The victims have no option but to live on often benefits, on charity hand outs and on the proceeds of begging. Homeless people are forced to live on the streets or in hostels provided by the government or charitable organisations. Many take to alcohol in order to drown their sorrows; others resort to drugs, many of them becoming addicts who leave their used syringes in back streets. Drug addiction and prostitution often go hand in hand, young women resorting to selling sexual services in order to fuel their need for narcotics.

Environmental problems are especially accentuated in many towns and cities. Air pollution was almost always top of the list of threats to public health because of fumes from heavy traffic and industrial emissions. However, noise pollution is also a major issue: engine noise, noisy exhausts, road works, bars with loud music, ambulance and police sirens, trains and sometimes overhead aircraft, all contribute to insomnia, auditory problems and nervous disorders. There is also visual pollution. Giant neon signs and advertising hoardings, graffiti, ugly skyscrapers that keep out the light, and little by way of green spaces: all make for a panorama that is far from pleasing to the eye. People are soon forced to take on board that their “beautiful world” is not quite as beautiful as they had thought.

Problems of infrastructure are a great source of frustration in many urban areas. Many people are attracted to towns and cities in the hope that they will find employment but when they get there, they find that not only are jobs very hard to come by, but also that affordable housing is lacking. Hospitals cannot cope with the large influx of new arrivals, public transport systems are also stretched to the limits, schools are overcrowded, and possibilities for leisure activities are also somewhat limited, especially on a low income. This brings disillusionment.

### Question 3

*Les loisirs sont pour les riches. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?*

This was a very popular question, which generated a significant number of thoughtful, well-constructed and cogently argued essays. On the other hand, there were many scripts which consisted of pre-prepared answers on the role and importance of leisure activities.

Good candidates went straight to the centre of the topic, stating that though in an ideal world, everybody would have a totally free choice in the matter of how to spend their leisure time, in reality, people's leisure activities are constrained by a number of factors, mainly financial and time pressures.

There are a number of leisure activities which either because of the very high initial outlay involved or because of the ongoing expenses incurred in pursuing them are the preserve of wealthier members of society. Quite apart from private jets, luxury yachts, collecting Old Masters or Fabergé eggs which belong to the fairy-tale world of the fabulously rich, there are other leisure pursuits which are less exclusive but which still necessitate an outlay which is beyond the means of most ordinary working people: golf, skiing, equestrian sports were among those most frequently quoted.

The point was made in many essays, however, that in recent times, we have witnessed the democratisation of leisure activities. Governments have overseen programmes for building municipal sports centres, youth centres, and centres for the elderly which offer a whole range of leisure possibilities to people of all ages. Municipal libraries mean that even the least well-off members of society have free access to books, CDs, DVDs and computers. Entry to museums and art galleries is now free in many countries of the world in order to ensure that access to the national heritage is not restricted. Television is also been a major factor in the democratisation process: sports fans can now watch major sporting events in the comfort of their own homes, often free of charge – Formula One races, World Cup football matches, Grand Slam tennis tournaments, major golf tournaments and athletics meetings are all covered by various channels eager to attract the highest possible number of viewers. The great range of interests catered for on television gives it universal appeal as a source of entertainment. More recently, the availability of computers has revolutionized the way we spend our leisure time. Foreign travel, once the preserve of the more wealthy members of society has likewise been revolutionized by the advent of low-cost airlines and package holidays. Changes in the working environment have also been an important factor: many enterprises have fully taken on board the link between stress and productivity, so that part of the package offered to employees is free recreational activities e.g. gymnasiums, personal trainers and company outings.

Time constraints still play an important part in shaping a person's leisure pursuits but in that area too there have been great changes. In the past, it was generally true to say that the richer you were, the more free time you could allow yourself to indulge your passions. However, those days are long since gone, for, today, the dynamics of the workplace have completely changed. To command the high salaries that they do, CEOs, City high-flyers, senior bankers etc. usually have to put in extremely long hours, while conditions for the lower paid workers, including the amount of time to be allowed for rest, are strictly controlled by law. As a result, in many areas, the workers enjoy more leisure time than their highly-paid bosses. Moreover, constantly reminded by the media that the link between health and stress is a very close one, people are fiercely protective of their leisure time: they are determined to take full advantage of the possibilities that our society has to offer. Some good essays concluded with the observation that we may still be a long way from the leisure society envisaged by Keynes back in the 1930s but, equally, we have moved away from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of leisure as an elitist preserve.

#### Question 4

*Comment expliquez-vous le nombre toujours grandissant de conflits armés dans le monde?*

Relatively few candidates opted for this title. However, it produced some of the best essays, the most impressive combining considered reflections on the nature of war and peace, with specific illustrations based on impressively detailed and accurate knowledge of both present and past conflicts. A number of candidates, however, were guilty of confusing war and social conflicts and more seriously, weak essays were marred by a dearth of exemplification and/or by flawed examples, e.g. attributing the Twin Towers attack to Gaddafi.

A starting point for some was the end of the Cold War in the mid-80s which brought optimism regarding prospects of world peace. However, sadly, that optimism was short-lived as subsequently there have been a number of major conflicts in many areas of the world. A prominent cause of war, identified by many essays, has been the desire of populations and/or foreign governments to overthrow tyrannical regimes, e.g. Libya, Iraq, Syria.

Territorial conflict and the preservation of national identity were identified as another major cause of bloodshed. Often cited was the Bosnian war in the 1990s or the conflict between Gaza and Israel, Power struggles within countries between rival ethnic groups have been another major source of bloodshed, e.g. the former Belgian Congo in Africa during the 1990s.

Many essays made the point that religion and war have gone hand in hand since time immemorial and, in recent times, the problem for western powers has been the combat against religious fanaticism which has been another important factor in the increasing amount of armed conflict in the world, e.g. the September 11 attacks in New York, ISIS.

A wide range of examples of other ongoing conflicts were variously cited, including the Islamist insurgency in Nigeria, the Somali Civil War, the conflict in the Central African Republic, the war in the Donbass region in Ukraine and ethnic violence in South Sudan. Some good essays concluded by stressing that the efforts of such agencies as the United Nations to ensure peace in the world are doomed to failure in a world where arms seem to be easily obtainable and where greed, the thirst for power and fanaticism are so prevalent.

## Question 5

*La pollution sonore et visuelle constitue une menace tout aussi importante que la pollution atmosphérique. A votre avis, dans quelle mesure est-ce vrai?*

It was evident from many essays on this topic that candidates had made an in-depth study of the causes and effects of pollution: they drew a clear differentiation between the different types of pollution mentioned in the title, consolidated them with specific examples and drew an informed conclusion. Too many, however, used pre-prepared material in which types of pollution other than those referred to in the title figured prominently, in particular water pollution, and paid little or no heed to the specifics of the question. Moreover, there was a significant number of candidates whose understanding of visual pollution was limited, equating it with such things as girls dressed in clothes calculated to shock more conservative members of the community, or simply litter. Noise pollution was better understood though in some cases this was limited to the noise emanating from discotheques. Many candidates, although including examples, needed to address the issue of comparative impact which was key to the question.

Brief definitions of the phenomena referred to in the title were helpful. Noise pollution is the disturbing or excessive noise that may harm the activity or balance of human or animal life. The sources of outdoor noise pollution most commonly cited were machines used for road works and construction, along with transportation systems in the form of motor vehicles (noisy engines and exhausts, car horns and car radios), aircraft and trains. Other sources sometimes mentioned included amplified music coming from bars, the sirens used by the police and the emergency services, wind turbines and military sonar. Poor urban planning, some pointed out, may give rise to noise pollution since adjacent industrial and residential buildings can give rise to such pollution in residential areas.

Noise pollution has serious effects on both physical and psychological health. Chronic exposure to loud noise may cause hearing loss and it also responsible for high stress levels, hypertension, tinnitus and sleep disturbances. Noise can also have a detrimental effect on wild animals, e.g. increasing the risk of death by changing the delicate balance in predator or prey detection. A number of scripts referred to the theory that noise pollution was a major contributory factor in the death of certain species of whales that beached themselves after being exposed to the loud sound of military sonar. In the case of endangered species, the reduction of usable habitat by the impact of noise has the potential to be a significant factor in the path to extinction.

Visual pollution is an aesthetic issue: it disturbs the visual area of people by creating negative changes in the natural or man-made environment. Billboards, telephone towers, electricity pylons and wires, ugly or badly maintained buildings and litter are all forms of visual pollution. A major cause of visual pollution is the insensitivity of local authorities who fail to exercise adequate control over what is built or put up in public places, allowing, for example, a fast-food restaurant sign to be put up adjacent to a medieval cathedral. Visual pollution impairs one's ability to enjoy a vista or view inducing negative mental and physical effects. Research has shown that, fully taking into account the relative numbers of vehicles using them, the incidence of accidents on urban roads littered with signs, billboards, graffiti and the like is much higher than on scenic country roads and that the stress levels experienced by drivers on rural roads are much lower than those experienced by those driving through built-up areas.

Serious though the effects of sound and visual pollution may be, most essays which addressed the issue took the line that they pale into relative insignificance when compared with the effects of atmospheric pollution which are truly alarming. Long-term health effects can include chronic respiratory disease, lung cancer, heart disease and even damage to the brain, nerves, liver or kidneys. Continual exposure to air pollution affects the lungs of growing children and may aggravate or complicate medical conditions in the elderly. In China alone, air pollution is estimated to kill 500,000 people each year and across the EU, it is estimated to reduce life expectancy by at almost 9 months. According to the World Health Organisation, in 2012 alone, it caused the deaths of around 7 million people worldwide. Another direct effect is the immediate alterations that the world is witnessing due to global warming. With increased temperatures worldwide, increase in sea levels because of melting ice from colder regions and icebergs, displacement and loss of habitat have already signalled an impending disaster if actions for preservation and normalisation are not undertaken soon. Harmful gases like nitrogen oxides and sulphur oxides are released into the atmosphere during the burning of fossil fuels. When it rains, the water droplets combine with these air pollutants, become acidic and then fall in the form of acid rain which can cause great damage to humans, animals, plant life including crops and even to cars and buildings. Acid rain strips leaves of nutrients and breaks down trees' ability to resist cold and tree diseases, and historic buildings bear the signs of acidic corrosion and deterioration. Eutrophication is another effect of air pollution: high amounts of nitrogen present in some pollutants are developed on the surface of the sea and of lakes and ponds and form themselves into algae,

resulting in the depletion of oxygen in the water and adversely affecting fish, marine animals and plants and also representing a danger for both humans and land animals. Not least, the depletion of the ozone layer, which protects humans from harmful ultraviolet rays, due to the presence of fluorocarbons in the atmosphere, is already resulting in a significant increase in cancers and eye problems.

# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/33

Essay

## Key Messages

- Choose the title with which you feel most comfortable and on which you can write a relevant, well-illustrated essay.
- Plan your response carefully, using an introduction to show understanding of the elements of the title chosen and a conclusion to show a considered final judgement of the issues discussed.
- Aim to use accurate and idiomatic French, which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary.

## General Comments:

Planning is clearly an important first step in writing a good discursive essay. Most candidates showed some evidence of planning, but it was often short and sketchy, written in English and quite superficial in nature. Candidates who define the terms of the question in their own mind, considering all elements of the question set, and put their material into a logical order before writing will be highly rewarded for content. It is particularly important that essays should target the precise terms of the question and not merely relate to the general topic area. Some candidates used the first paragraph to define the terms of the generic topic without reference to the question. Others launched straight into the meat of their argument without any introductory statements.

In terms of language, clumsy use of idiom and a significant proportion of anglicisms were common, along with frequent examples of phonetic spelling. Pre-learned phrases were frequent and often served only to highlight the deficiencies in the candidates' own writing. Successful candidates used a range of structures and appropriate vocabulary, did not over-reach themselves and managed to express their ideas in accurate, ambitious and succinct language. In other cases, however, candidates demonstrated very little grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness.

## **Examples of good use of language include:**

Appropriate use of linking words/phrases such as *lorsque, ainsi, puisque, cependant, pourtant, d'abord, d'ailleurs, en outre, ensuite, néanmoins, d'autre part, en revanche, de prime abord.*

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

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read widely during their course.

Correct use of idioms, e.g. *la première constatation qui s'impose, il convient de, en d'autres mots, venons-en à, au revers de la médaille, il est généralement admis que, force est de constater*

**Common errors:**

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes when the word is in the title): *manque, travail, divorce, menace, pays, environnement, développement, gouvernement, monde, planète, rôle, exemple, avis, phénomène, deuxièmement, problème, aspect*

Frequent use of *beaucoup des* with a plural noun.

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

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

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

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Inaccurate use of accents e.g., *phénomène, déchets, écologique*.

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

Use of *faire* for *rendre*

Use of the past participle after modal verbs, e.g. *elles doivent resté à la maison, on peut allé au gymnase*

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

Use of *avoir besoin de* instead of *devoir*.

Overuse of *il y a, il faut que* and the conditional tense of *devoir*.

Use of anglicisms such as *ils veulent leurs parents de supporter les, c'est évident pour tout de voir*, and use of *travailler* for *marcher*.

**Comments on specific questions**

**Question 1**

*De nos jours, le divorce n'a rien d'une catastrophe. Êtes-vous d'accord ?*

This question was attempted by a small number of candidates. Most candidates understood the question explained why divorce today was no longer considered taboo. They talked about a change in society which is now much more accepting of the rights of the individual and the right to be happy. This has led to a change in how marriage and divorce is viewed. Candidates were, however, keen to point out that although divorce can be seen to benefit the partners in a difficult relationship, the effects on children can still be devastating. Several candidates spoke of their own experiences of going through a divorce in their own families and it was clear that this had a significant effect on them as people. Some candidates talked about the financial implications of divorce and the difficulties of dividing up resources. Overall, the essay stimulated some good discussion with a range of views about divorce today.

**Question 2**

*Dans nos grandes villes, il y a tant de monde et pourtant tellement de gens souffrent de solitude. Comment expliquez-vous ce phénomène ?*

This was the second most popular question and gave candidates the chance to talk generally about city life. Unfortunately many of them did not cover the loneliness aspect of the question, preferring instead to discuss the ranges of options open to people living in the city such as shopping, free access to the internet, leisure facilities and education. Those who discussed loneliness made reference to city dwellers being independent and individual, not part of a community, and therefore suffering from lack of human warmth and contact. These candidates pointed out that despite the large numbers of people, it is very easy to feel alone in a big city.

### Question 3

*Ne pas savoir bien profiter de son temps de loisirs est à la base de beaucoup de maux.  
Discutez de cette affirmation.*

This was the least popular question. There was some difficulty with the concept of *maux*. Candidates talked about leisure as a time away from work for travelling, sports activities or relaxing. Some recognised that people waste a lot of their leisure time on activities related to the internet, such as accessing social media, playing games and living in a virtual world. There was a general feeling that sitting at a computer indoors might not be the best thing for developing healthy human relationships or good physical health and wellbeing. Some candidates recognised that with the growth in the amount of leisure time available to people, it is important that they use it properly so that it provides the necessary break from high powered work or study.

### Question 4

*A votre avis, existe-t-il de bonnes raisons pour faire la guerre ou sont-elles toutes mauvaises ?*

This was the most popular question. Successful candidates were able to express their ideas in logical, well-argued and exemplified essays with reasoned conclusions. Weaker candidates were still able to access the question and showed that they had understood the parameters but tended not to use appropriate examples to back up their assertions and made sweeping generalisations. It was clear that candidates had strong feelings about war both now and in the past. Reference was made to wars being waged for reasons as varied as religion, power, territory and resources. Candidates talked about a number of different wars, weighing up whether they were just wars or not. Some candidates felt very strongly that some wars were necessary to prevent suffering or takeover by dictators, others expressed the view that there is no such thing as a good or just war as all wars cause suffering to innocent people.

### Question 5

*Les déchets de toutes sortes représentent une grande menace écologique. Comment assurer une meilleure gestion de ces déchets ?*

This was the third most popular question. Candidates read the first part of the question and made a reasonable effort to describe the types of *déchets* that threaten the existence of our planet. They were less good at tackling the second part of the question about the management of these *déchets*. Successful candidates wrote about the threats to the environment of all kinds of waste products including factory outflows, exhaust fumes, food waste and they were well able to discuss the processes by which these waste products could damage the delicate ecology of the planet. They then went on to suggest how strategies could be put in place to improve the management of these products, including imposing taxes on industries causing pollution, taxes or curfews on car owners, more effective waste disposal facilities, more effective recycling by individuals and governments. Weaker candidates seemed uncertain what *gestion* might mean in this context and tended to ignore it.

# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/41

Texts

## Key Messages

Teachers should:

- think carefully about which texts to prepare as some present conceptual problems that are challenging for average and below average candidates.

Teachers should train their students to:

- manage their time in the examination room well and answer three questions;
- check carefully that they do not answer two questions on the same text;
- think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write;
- refer to the question **during** the answer, not just at the start and the finish.

Candidates should:

- label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If questions have not been labelled, it can look as though **(ii)** and **(iii)** were not attempted at all, when all three of **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** should be answered in the passage-based questions;
- remember that 'soit ... soit' means 'either ... or' and should not be copied before question numbers;
- choose carefully either **(a)** or **(b)** and invest in providing as complete and relevant an answer to that one question as possible;
- answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read. Sometimes candidates wanted to write about Molière's 'Tartuffe', but 'L'Avare' was set this session;
- note key words in the questions, such as 'essentiel' (**Question 4 (b)**) and 'pour vous' (**Question 5 (a)**);
- answer the question precisely, stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions (see **Question 5 (a)**);
- explore both elements of questions asking, for example, 'Pourquoi (pas) ?', or **Question 1 (a) (iii)** 'pénible ou comique', rather than opting too hastily and exclusively for one or the other;
- finish with a concluding paragraph;
- start each new essay on a fresh page;
- be careful to attach continuation sheets in order.

## General Comments

This year, two authors in particular enjoyed much popularity: Molière and Joffo.

Candidates need to find a 'happy balance' between 'assuming that the examiner knows nothing' and 'remembering that the examiner has also read the text'. Although narration irrelevant to the question is not required, candidates should begin to answer the question at the beginning, but should not hold back from showing knowledge of the texts, not just retelling the story, but also making a point (see **Question 1 (b)**).

Candidates should **not** write an opening paragraph which addresses in rather general terms the author, his or her works or the audience that he or she was addressing. Candidates should just answer the question.

It was evident that Centres had used past questions when training their candidates, and detailed knowledge was shown in those areas. Candidates should select the question they choose to answer carefully, though, and ensure that their material is relevant. Sometimes the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to this session's questions, but at other times, there were resounding echoes of previous years' questions, such as in **Question 8 (b)**.

The language used was on the whole appropriate but some essays contained colloquialisms. The best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although it is helpful if these are crossed through to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

### Comments on Specific Questions

#### Question 1

Molière: *L'Avare*

- (a) This was a very popular question, and conscientious candidates with a good knowledge of the text could answer all three points successfully. Overall it was good to see more evidence of knowledge of the text beyond the extract this year.

In (i) Harpagon's character was justly assessed using such terms as, *avare / avarice, tyran(nique), dictateur, obstiné, têtu, autoritaire, abominable, incompréhensif, irresponsable, grossier, cruel* and *égoïste*. Some candidates were more perceptive and pointed out that the master of the house needed support to confirm his authority and accuracy of judgement, which led nicely to (ii).

Many candidates handled (ii) pertinently, showing fine knowledge of the context from which the extract was taken, although quality varied a great deal here. Harpagon's question - which should have introduced the response - was often ignored, consequently the *pourquoi ?* was often not directly answered, casting some doubt on whether or not the candidate had understood what was happening in the extract. It was quite rare to find a candidate who could identify Valère's initial instinctive response, then his attempts to backtrack upon learning what Harpagon was talking about, however, there were some good, and clearly carefully planned, responses. Some could detect the dramatic irony in which Molière placed his characters. Valère's tactics did not seem always to have been understood by candidates, nor Élise's reactions to what he said. In the text, Valère both agreed and disagreed with Harpagon. Many responses missed this point or expressed it in a simple way that made it unclear whether the candidates really understood what was going on. A good answer required fairly careful expression.

In (iii), some candidates commented on the dramatic irony (e.g. *Valère est l'amant d'Élise et c'est lui qu'Harpagon choisit pour être juge, qui provoque le rire chez les spectateurs*), as well as the comedy of repetition, exaggeration and contradiction in the extract. A fair number of scripts stated that the situation presented both comic and painful elements. There was plenty of illustration for the painful side, with candidates often recounting the same sympathy for Élise that they showed in (i). Fewer candidates identified the comic elements and fewer still were able to analyse the source of the comedy or say much about Molière's aims in writing the play. References to comedy were sometimes limited to 'comédie de mots' and 'comédie de situation' without illustration or example, although overall there seemed to be better understanding of the humour in this case than is often seen in candidates' work. Questions on 'comedy' frequently appear in this paper when Molière's plays are set texts, and teachers should bear this in mind when preparing their candidates. Most candidates knew that Molière criticised human faults through comedy, but while many candidates referred to seventeenth-century manners and customs and a desire to amuse the king and his court, very few addressed the universality of Molière. Stronger candidates referred to Valère's ambiguous position and embarrassment, having to support both contestants. A small proportion of candidates perceived the situation as more *comique* than *pénible* with good analysis of the situation and reference to Molière's intentions.

- (b) This question took for granted that Harpagon's conduct towards Cléante was not very good and suggested that Cléante's towards Harpagon was hardly any better. Harpagon was described as a miserly father, an unscrupulous money-lender and a rival to his son whose conduct deteriorated as the play progressed. Candidates mentioned his disapproval of Cléante's attitudes and spending on fashionable items of clothing, wigs, etc., imposing a marriage to an older widow, the conflict of love interest in Mariane, and usury, but needed not just to retell the episode but also to make a point, such as that Harpagon would not give or lend as a father, but only at excessive interest.

Most candidates were able to describe Harpagon's poor behaviour towards his son, but fewer had much to say about Cléante's unacceptable behaviour towards his father. More able candidates separately detailed ways in which Cléante's conduct was hardly better than Harpagon's, such as taking advantage of the opportunity to give Mariane Harpagon's diamond. A surprising number omitted to mention Cléante's blackmail of his father over the theft of the *cassette*.

In some cases, candidates focussed their essays on describing Cléante's and Harpagon's personalities and behaviours, but not in relation to each other. The most successful attempts, however produced good essays which emphasised the relationships between the two characters, concluding with a judgement weighing up what both men did.

## Question 2

Maupassant: *Bel-Ami*

- (a) This text was not widely chosen but seemed to have been appreciated and well understood, despite its complexities, by candidates choosing it.

**Question (a)** was usually selected and was quite well handled. The majority of candidates understood how cautious M. Walter felt he ought to be when dealing with Du Roy and understood the reasons why.

The vast majority were able to identify Madeleine Forestier in **(ii)**, and most had a general understanding that Du Roy was in no position to be hypocritical and self-righteous. A number of candidates thought that Madeleine had deserved to be badly treated and that Du Roy was quite right to abuse her verbally. Better responses went into the background of the text and stressed Du Roy's ingratitude and 'vulgarity' in using abusive language towards a woman let alone a wife and one who had put him in the way of success.

A range of answers was provided in response to **(iii)**. Some thought that the minister worked for 'La Vie Française'; others paraphrased the text or repeated material from earlier in the answer. The best scripts showed Du Roy's vindictive nature and his jealousy. He had not been privy to the shares offer and had only heard about it indirectly through Mme Walter. He now took malignant delight in planning M. Laroche-Mathieu's downfall.

- (b) This question attracted fewer responses than **Question (a)**. *Vulgarité* was linked to amorality, ruthlessness, success, and love for women. One or two candidates approved of Du Roy's behaviour and thought that Bel-Ami was a great chap who made a success of his life. Rarely was it noted that Du Roy's behaviour was totally ungentlemanly, his methods crude, and his behaviour almost always verging on bad manners, despite a physical charm. Du Roy's rise from very obscure origins to the highest echelons of society was a vulgar course which involved ruthless exploitation of women and utter selfishness. There was plenty of available and relevant material as evidence of Du Roy's *vulgarité*, but few candidates came to grips with the adjective *inquiétante*.

## Question 3

Sartre: *Les Mouches*

- (a) Most candidates provided satisfactory responses on Électre's attitude towards Oreste in the extract, but it was more challenging to explain 'immense présent' and 'précieux fardeau'. Some candidates, however, were able to identify that Électre represented *la mauvaise foi* and that Oreste was the embodiment of Sartre's existentialist principles, choosing to take the 'précieux fardeau' on his shoulders.
- (b) Jupiter depicted humans as weak and cowardly in Act 1, sc. 1 when he exposed their lack of action in defence of Agamemnon, and in Act 3, sc. 2 he confronted Électre with allegations of weakness and cowardice. By contrast, Oreste could be said not to manifest 'la faiblesse et la lâcheté de la race humaine'.

## Question 4

Alain-Fournier: *Le Grand Meaulnes*

- (a) Candidates with sound knowledge of the text acquitted themselves well in answer to this fairly popular question and seemed to find **Question (a)** a very satisfying option. The majority knew that the aunt had been referring to the night on which she and her husband had crossed paths with Valentine Blondeau, disguised and in distress, not a ghost as aunt Moinel had suggested (hence, 'ce n'était pas une histoire de revenants', line 7), on their way back from what would have been the

young woman's wedding to Frantz de Galais – the 'fête étrange' at the 'domaine mystérieux' that Augustin Meaulnes had stumbled across and where he had met Yvonne. A little retelling of this much of the story was welcome and appropriate, although if candidates had not recognised the context, then the history of Meaulnes and Yvonne tended to figure too largely throughout the response. Some paraphrased the passage instead of explaining what the aunt had just said before it.

The expression 'une entreprise mille fois impossible' referred to the thought of finding Frantz de Galais (line 14) in order to reunite him with Valentine, whose whereabouts Seurel had just learned from his great-aunt (line 13). Meaulnes had promised Frantz (recalled in lines 9-10) that he would help him find Valentine, but there had been no 'leads', as far as Seurel had known, until now. Reuniting Meaulnes with Yvonne de Galais had seemed *une entreprise impossible*, yet against the odds, Seurel was about to *porter ... la joie ... à Meaulnes* (line 11). By comparison, the Frantz/Valentine affair was *mille fois* as complicated. Candidates generally found it difficult to comment on this expression and sometimes combined **(ii)** and **(iii)**, repeating material as a result.

**(iii)** was an opportunity to assess Seurel's sentiments in the final sentence of the extract against the backdrop of 'strokes of good luck' and 'bad omens' felt throughout the novel, but particularly at this point as his planned meeting with Meaulnes was approaching. The feeling was used for dramatic effect by the author. Seurel was soon to tell Meaulnes that he had found Yvonne and that she was not already married, a rumour which had originated with the aunt (lines 4-5). The consequences of this false information were to be very far-reaching. Although Meaulnes would be reunited with Yvonne, and Frantz with Valentine, it would not be straightforward. Some candidates went too far in **(iii)**, giving Seurel the benefit of knowing things he could have not known at that stage of the story.

- (b)** **Question (b)** was a little more popular than **(a)**, but may possibly have been chosen by candidates as a supposed easy option. To most candidates, 'la perte de la jeunesse' meant, for example, sadness, depression and falling in love. They recognised that François Seurel had spent a lot of his time helping Meaulnes but sometimes omitted to acknowledge 2e Partie, Ch. 11 and the early part of 3e Partie – the interim time during which François qualified as a teacher, made friends again with Delouche and others, enjoying easy times. Yvonne featured amongst those who wasted their youth and rightly so, especially later on. However, a few candidates argued that the whole book was a glorification of youth: love at first sight, deep friendship, fidelity, and that only a truly young person could abandon recently acquired happiness for the sake of a school boy promise to a friend.

Good answers were seen from candidates who recognised immediately that 'youth is a time of insouciance, freedom, experimentation, following dreams, making errors of judgement – but learning from experiences and finally reaching maturity'. Such candidates fitted all five main characters into this framework. 'Attempts to analyse and compare' were seen in responses which distinguished between Frantz who could be said to have repeated childish behaviour, never grown up and not lost his youth, and those characters who lost their youth prematurely (Seurel, Valentine, Yvonne). Exactly which group Meaulnes belonged to varied in candidates' opinions.

At the other extreme, some discussed 'jeunesse' with no reference to 'perdue', or else considered only Meaulnes in detail, with the others mentioned merely 'en passant', or not at all. There was also a surprising general omission of the period in 1e Partie where childhood games with Meaulnes were described in warm terms, or later, the adventures with the bohemian. While deciding that other themes (usually love or friendship) were more important could provide a good counterbalance, the theme in the title also needed to be explored.

## Section 2

### Question 5

Mauriac: *Thérèse Desqueyroux*

- (a)** Many candidates argued that Thérèse's problems were caused by the lack of a mother and an indifferent father, meaning that she was bound to misbehave. There was much storytelling with this type of response. Quite a few omitted to mention her desire to explain herself to Bernard, that came to nothing since it was too late and he would not listen. Some argued that her crime could be forgiven. Most dealt with understanding and forgiveness from Bernard, the family, Anne and

Thérèse's father – but not from the reader. The reader arrives at a point of some sympathy for Thérèse, but there were not many responses that looked at the question in that way.

The best candidates made a clear distinction between Bernard and Thérèse's relationship before the poisoning attempt and after the trial. A few looked at Thérèse's life and character but could not get past her being a 'monstre'. Sometimes candidates dealt with the question purely 'philosophically' with little if any illustration from the text, or just retold the story. There was a fine line between storytelling to recount events in the novel without reference to the question, and storytelling which showed that Thérèse could be understood and forgiven by the candidate. The more that candidates stated in the introduction what they were going to say and came to interim and final conclusions, the more successful their essays certainly were.

- (b) (b) was the more popular question on this text. Essays on hypocrisy were handled more effectively as long as the candidate knew what hypocrisy was and could distinguish it from selfishness, jealousy, nastiness and cynicism. Some relevantly confirmed the hypocrisy of certain characters, but failed to elucidate the ways in which their behaviour and attitudes were hypocritical. Too many associated hypocrisy with lack of communication, indifference and lack of understanding. Oddly enough, religious hypocrisy was not underlined as often as it might have been. There were some good and quite comprehensive responses, although occasionally essays focussed only on Thérèse and Bernard. A careful study was required of Bernard, who appeared to forgive his wife only to save appearances in society, and of M. Larroque who saved his daughter from the law only to protect his name and standing. Jean Azévédo seemed to get away quite lightly with candidates, although admittedly he did not break any promises. Some candidates vehemently denounced Thérèse – to read their scripts, one would have thought that she was the clearest instance of hypocrisy in the novel, but the *être / paraître* issue in provincial social attitudes was generally well picked up and analysed overall.

### Question 6

Giraudoux: *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*

- (a) **Question 6 (a)** could lead to storytelling and repetition. *Le destin* was generally blamed for 'l'inutilité de toute action', an indomitable force impossible to oppose. Better essays gave some relevant information illustrating heroes like Hector who accepted the humiliation of a slap to avoid war, and lovers like Pâris who agreed to be considered as below par in order to placate the Greeks. The final irony did not escape the better candidates who underlined that the killing of Demokos by Hector was the ultimate cause for war.
- (b) The majority of responses to **Question (b)** showed fair relevance and knowledge. Appropriate references were made to the strong dialogue between Hector and Ulysse. Comparisons were established between the initial demand from the Greeks, that Héléne be returned untouched, and the final agreement between the two men, after concessions had been made and some casuistry agreed, so to speak.

### Question 7

Bazin: *Au nom du fils*

- (a) The question invited candidates to investigate the extent to which Daniel Astin succeeded in making himself understood, in light of the fact that he narrated his story in the first person, and most grasped this as the essential thread in their essays, considering some of his musings as well as issues arising from interaction with different members of his family, and his responses to various events.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 8

Joffo: *Un sac de billes*

This was a very popular text, and the majority showed great enthusiasm for it.

- (a) **Question (a)** was chosen by relatively few candidates. The opportunity was offered to focus on the simple, universal values such as courage, endurance, love, kindness, unity and empathy, but many candidates dealt extensively with the obvious and timeless anti-racist, pro-tolerance message and the power of good Samaritans to make a difference.
- (b) This was possibly the most popular question of the paper. Candidates were often familiar with the quotation in the question, taken from the last page of Ch. 10, shortly after the boys' father had been arrested again. Up to this point, the boys had largely kept up morale despite violence and fear, but this was a more negative reflection on the result of their experiences. Echoes of last year's question (on differences between Maurice and Joseph) were seen in responses, but candidates wrote knowledgeably and well in many instances, and there were some very good pieces of work, although 'tué' was a 'strong' word, and 'Ils' were perpetrators, so answers along the lines of 'circumstances forced the boys to grow up quickly' did not seem to go far enough. Good answers were characterised by balance, organisation and an awareness that Joffo was somewhat hardened by the end of the novel, despite his young age.

Candidates seemed to find it difficult to convey how Joseph's innocence was destroyed. Justification for telling lies was mentioned frequently as well as hardships and the necessity to work in order to survive. Having to face injustice and evil and thus losing one's childhood illusions were not so often suggested. Most commented on how Joseph and Maurice had lost their childhood but not so many brought in the element of trauma and violence or identified and explained the full horror of, 'Ils ont tué en moi l'enfant que je pouvais être' – what was specifically lost, irrevocably changed or rendered impossible. Perhaps this was unsurprising given that Joffo himself tended to underplay the genuine fear that he and his brother must have faced.

By contrast, some candidates recounted the atrocities of the Nazis towards the Jews without relating their observations back to the novel. The best illustrations were probably the bullying incident early in the novel and the underlying horror and real threat at the Hôtel Excelsior later.

# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/42  
Texts

## Key Messages

Teachers should:

- think carefully about which texts to prepare as some present conceptual problems that are challenging for average and below average candidates.

Teachers should train their students to:

- manage their time in the examination room well and answer three questions;
- check carefully that they do not answer two questions on the same text;
- think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write;
- refer to the question **during** the answer, not just at the start and the finish.

Candidates should:

- label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If questions have not been labelled, it can look as though **(ii)** and **(iii)** were not attempted at all, when all three of **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** should be answered in the passage-based questions;
- remember that 'soit ... soit' means 'either ... or' and should not be copied before question numbers;
- choose carefully either **(a)** or **(b)** and invest in providing as complete and relevant an answer to that one question as possible;
- answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read. Sometimes candidates wanted to write about Molière's 'Tartuffe', but 'L'Avare' was set this session;
- note key words in the questions, such as 'essentiel' (**Question 4 (b)**) and 'pour vous' (**Question 5 (a)**);
- answer the question precisely, stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions (see **Question 5 (a)**);
- explore both elements of questions asking, for example, 'Pourquoi (pas) ?', or **Question 1 (a) (iii)** 'pénible ou comique', rather than opting too hastily and exclusively for one or the other;
- finish with a concluding paragraph;
- start each new essay on a fresh page;
- be careful to attach continuation sheets in order.

## General Comments

This year, two authors in particular enjoyed much popularity: Molière and Joffo.

Candidates need to find a 'happy balance' between 'assuming that the examiner knows nothing' and 'remembering that the examiner has also read the text'. Although narration irrelevant to the question is not required, candidates should begin to answer the question at the beginning, but should not hold back from showing knowledge of the texts, not just retelling the story, but also making a point (see **Question 1 (b)**).

Candidates should **not** write an opening paragraph which addresses in rather general terms the author, his or her works or the audience that he or she was addressing. Candidates should just answer the question.

It was evident that Centres had used past questions when training their candidates, and detailed knowledge was shown in those areas. Candidates should select the question they choose to answer carefully, though, and ensure that their material is relevant. Sometimes the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to this session's questions, but at other times, there were resounding echoes of previous years' questions, such as in **Question 8 (b)**.

The language used was on the whole appropriate but some essays contained colloquialisms. The best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although it is helpful if these are crossed through to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

### Comments on Specific Questions

#### Question 1

Molière: *L'Avare*

- (a) This was a very popular question, and conscientious candidates with a good knowledge of the text could answer all three points successfully. Overall it was good to see more evidence of knowledge of the text beyond the extract this year.

In (i) Harpagon's character was justly assessed using such terms as, *avare / avarice, tyran(nique), dictateur, obstiné, têtu, autoritaire, abominable, incompréhensif, irresponsable, grossier, cruel* and *égoïste*. Some candidates were more perceptive and pointed out that the master of the house needed support to confirm his authority and accuracy of judgement, which led nicely to (ii).

Many candidates handled (ii) pertinently, showing fine knowledge of the context from which the extract was taken, although quality varied a great deal here. Harpagon's question - which should have introduced the response - was often ignored, consequently the *pourquoi ?* was often not directly answered, casting some doubt on whether or not the candidate had understood what was happening in the extract. It was quite rare to find a candidate who could identify Valère's initial instinctive response, then his attempts to backtrack upon learning what Harpagon was talking about, however, there were some good, and clearly carefully planned, responses. Some could detect the dramatic irony in which Molière placed his characters. Valère's tactics did not seem always to have been understood by candidates, nor Élise's reactions to what he said. In the text, Valère both agreed and disagreed with Harpagon. Many responses missed this point or expressed it in a simple way that made it unclear whether the candidates really understood what was going on. A good answer required fairly careful expression.

In (iii), some candidates commented on the dramatic irony (e.g. *Valère est l'amant d'Élise et c'est lui qu'Harpagon choisit pour être juge, qui provoque le rire chez les spectateurs*), as well as the comedy of repetition, exaggeration and contradiction in the extract. A fair number of scripts stated that the situation presented both comic and painful elements. There was plenty of illustration for the painful side, with candidates often recounting the same sympathy for Élise that they showed in (i). Fewer candidates identified the comic elements and fewer still were able to analyse the source of the comedy or say much about Molière's aims in writing the play. References to comedy were sometimes limited to 'comédie de mots' and 'comédie de situation' without illustration or example, although overall there seemed to be better understanding of the humour in this case than is often seen in candidates' work. Questions on 'comedy' frequently appear in this paper when Molière's plays are set texts, and teachers should bear this in mind when preparing their candidates. Most candidates knew that Molière criticised human faults through comedy, but while many candidates referred to seventeenth-century manners and customs and a desire to amuse the king and his court, very few addressed the universality of Molière. Stronger candidates referred to Valère's ambiguous position and embarrassment, having to support both contestants. A small proportion of candidates perceived the situation as more *comique* than *pénible* with good analysis of the situation and reference to Molière's intentions.

- (b) This question took for granted that Harpagon's conduct towards Cléante was not very good and suggested that Cléante's towards Harpagon was hardly any better. Harpagon was described as a miserly father, an unscrupulous money-lender and a rival to his son whose conduct deteriorated as the play progressed. Candidates mentioned his disapproval of Cléante's attitudes and spending on fashionable items of clothing, wigs, etc., imposing a marriage to an older widow, the conflict of love interest in Mariane, and usury, but needed not just to retell the episode but also to make a point, such as that Harpagon would not give or lend as a father, but only at excessive interest.

Most candidates were able to describe Harpagon's poor behaviour towards his son, but fewer had much to say about Cléante's unacceptable behaviour towards his father. More able candidates separately detailed ways in which Cléante's conduct was hardly better than Harpagon's, such as taking advantage of the opportunity to give Mariane Harpagon's diamond. A surprising number omitted to mention Cléante's blackmail of his father over the theft of the *cassette*.

In some cases, candidates focussed their essays on describing Cléante's and Harpagon's personalities and behaviours, but not in relation to each other. The most successful attempts, however produced good essays which emphasised the relationships between the two characters, concluding with a judgement weighing up what both men did.

## Question 2

Maupassant: *Bel-Ami*

- (a) This text was not widely chosen but seemed to have been appreciated and well understood, despite its complexities, by candidates choosing it.

**Question (a)** was usually selected and was quite well handled. The majority of candidates understood how cautious M. Walter felt he ought to be when dealing with Du Roy and understood the reasons why.

The vast majority were able to identify Madeleine Forestier in **(ii)**, and most had a general understanding that Du Roy was in no position to be hypocritical and self-righteous. A number of candidates thought that Madeleine had deserved to be badly treated and that Du Roy was quite right to abuse her verbally. Better responses went into the background of the text and stressed Du Roy's ingratitude and 'vulgarity' in using abusive language towards a woman let alone a wife and one who had put him in the way of success.

A range of answers was provided in response to **(iii)**. Some thought that the minister worked for 'La Vie Française'; others paraphrased the text or repeated material from earlier in the answer. The best scripts showed Du Roy's vindictive nature and his jealousy. He had not been privy to the shares offer and had only heard about it indirectly through Mme Walter. He now took malignant delight in planning M. Laroche-Mathieu's downfall.

- (b) This question attracted fewer responses than **Question (a)**. *Vulgarité* was linked to amorality, ruthlessness, success, and love for women. One or two candidates approved of Du Roy's behaviour and thought that Bel-Ami was a great chap who made a success of his life. Rarely was it noted that Du Roy's behaviour was totally ungentlemanly, his methods crude, and his behaviour almost always verging on bad manners, despite a physical charm. Du Roy's rise from very obscure origins to the highest echelons of society was a vulgar course which involved ruthless exploitation of women and utter selfishness. There was plenty of available and relevant material as evidence of Du Roy's *vulgarité*, but few candidates came to grips with the adjective *inquiétante*.

## Question 3

Sartre: *Les Mouches*

- (a) Most candidates provided satisfactory responses on Électre's attitude towards Oreste in the extract, but it was more challenging to explain 'immense présent' and 'précieux fardeau'. Some candidates, however, were able to identify that Électre represented *la mauvaise foi* and that Oreste was the embodiment of Sartre's existentialist principles, choosing to take the 'précieux fardeau' on his shoulders.
- (b) Jupiter depicted humans as weak and cowardly in Act 1, sc. 1 when he exposed their lack of action in defence of Agamemnon, and in Act 3, sc. 2 he confronted Électre with allegations of weakness and cowardice. By contrast, Oreste could be said not to manifest 'la faiblesse et la lâcheté de la race humaine'.

## Question 4

Alain-Fournier: *Le Grand Meaulnes*

- (a) Candidates with sound knowledge of the text acquitted themselves well in answer to this fairly popular question and seemed to find **Question (a)** a very satisfying option. The majority knew that the aunt had been referring to the night on which she and her husband had crossed paths with Valentine Blondeau, disguised and in distress, not a ghost as aunt Moinel had suggested (hence, 'ce n'était pas une histoire de revenants', line 7), on their way back from what would have been the

young woman's wedding to Frantz de Galais – the 'fête étrange' at the 'domaine mystérieux' that Augustin Meaulnes had stumbled across and where he had met Yvonne. A little retelling of this much of the story was welcome and appropriate, although if candidates had not recognised the context, then the history of Meaulnes and Yvonne tended to figure too largely throughout the response. Some paraphrased the passage instead of explaining what the aunt had just said before it.

The expression 'une entreprise mille fois impossible' referred to the thought of finding Frantz de Galais (line 14) in order to reunite him with Valentine, whose whereabouts Seurel had just learned from his great-aunt (line 13). Meaulnes had promised Frantz (recalled in lines 9-10) that he would help him find Valentine, but there had been no 'leads', as far as Seurel had known, until now. Reuniting Meaulnes with Yvonne de Galais had seemed *une entreprise impossible*, yet against the odds, Seurel was about to *porter ... la joie ... à Meaulnes* (line 11). By comparison, the Frantz/Valentine affair was *mille fois* as complicated. Candidates generally found it difficult to comment on this expression and sometimes combined (ii) and (iii), repeating material as a result.

(iii) was an opportunity to assess Seurel's sentiments in the final sentence of the extract against the backdrop of 'strokes of good luck' and 'bad omens' felt throughout the novel, but particularly at this point as his planned meeting with Meaulnes was approaching. The feeling was used for dramatic effect by the author. Seurel was soon to tell Meaulnes that he had found Yvonne and that she was not already married, a rumour which had originated with the aunt (lines 4-5). The consequences of this false information were to be very far-reaching. Although Meaulnes would be reunited with Yvonne, and Frantz with Valentine, it would not be straightforward. Some candidates went too far in (iii), giving Seurel the benefit of knowing things he could have not known at that stage of the story.

- (b) **Question (b)** was a little more popular than (a), but may possibly have been chosen by candidates as a supposed easy option. To most candidates, 'la perte de la jeunesse' meant, for example, sadness, depression and falling in love. They recognised that François Seurel had spent a lot of his time helping Meaulnes but sometimes omitted to acknowledge 2e Partie, Ch. 11 and the early part of 3e Partie – the interim time during which François qualified as a teacher, made friends again with Delouche and others, enjoying easy times. Yvonne featured amongst those who wasted their youth and rightly so, especially later on. However, a few candidates argued that the whole book was a glorification of youth: love at first sight, deep friendship, fidelity, and that only a truly young person could abandon recently acquired happiness for the sake of a school boy promise to a friend.

Good answers were seen from candidates who recognised immediately that 'youth is a time of insouciance, freedom, experimentation, following dreams, making errors of judgement – but learning from experiences and finally reaching maturity'. Such candidates fitted all five main characters into this framework. 'Attempts to analyse and compare' were seen in responses which distinguished between Frantz who could be said to have repeated childish behaviour, never grown up and not lost his youth, and those characters who lost their youth prematurely (Seurel, Valentine, Yvonne). Exactly which group Meaulnes belonged to varied in candidates' opinions.

At the other extreme, some discussed 'jeunesse' with no reference to 'perdue', or else considered only Meaulnes in detail, with the others mentioned merely 'en passant', or not at all. There was also a surprising general omission of the period in 1e Partie where childhood games with Meaulnes were described in warm terms, or later, the adventures with the bohemian. While deciding that other themes (usually love or friendship) were more important could provide a good counterbalance, the theme in the title also needed to be explored.

## Section 2

### Question 5

Mauriac: *Thérèse Desqueyroux*

- (a) Many candidates argued that Thérèse's problems were caused by the lack of a mother and an indifferent father, meaning that she was bound to misbehave. There was much storytelling with this type of response. Quite a few omitted to mention her desire to explain herself to Bernard, that came to nothing since it was too late and he would not listen. Some argued that her crime could be forgiven. Most dealt with understanding and forgiveness from Bernard, the family, Anne and

Thérèse's father – but not from the reader. The reader arrives at a point of some sympathy for Thérèse, but there were not many responses that looked at the question in that way.

The best candidates made a clear distinction between Bernard and Thérèse's relationship before the poisoning attempt and after the trial. A few looked at Thérèse's life and character but could not get past her being a 'monstre'. Sometimes candidates dealt with the question purely 'philosophically' with little if any illustration from the text, or just retold the story. There was a fine line between storytelling to recount events in the novel without reference to the question, and storytelling which showed that Thérèse could be understood and forgiven by the candidate. The more that candidates stated in the introduction what they were going to say and came to interim and final conclusions, the more successful their essays certainly were.

- (b) (b) was the more popular question on this text. Essays on hypocrisy were handled more effectively as long as the candidate knew what hypocrisy was and could distinguish it from selfishness, jealousy, nastiness and cynicism. Some relevantly confirmed the hypocrisy of certain characters, but failed to elucidate the ways in which their behaviour and attitudes were hypocritical. Too many associated hypocrisy with lack of communication, indifference and lack of understanding. Oddly enough, religious hypocrisy was not underlined as often as it might have been. There were some good and quite comprehensive responses, although occasionally essays focussed only on Thérèse and Bernard. A careful study was required of Bernard, who appeared to forgive his wife only to save appearances in society, and of M. Larroque who saved his daughter from the law only to protect his name and standing. Jean Azévédo seemed to get away quite lightly with candidates, although admittedly he did not break any promises. Some candidates vehemently denounced Thérèse – to read their scripts, one would have thought that she was the clearest instance of hypocrisy in the novel, but the *être / paraître* issue in provincial social attitudes was generally well picked up and analysed overall.

### Question 6

Giraudoux: *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*

- (a) **Question 6 (a)** could lead to storytelling and repetition. *Le destin* was generally blamed for 'l'inutilité de toute action', an indomitable force impossible to oppose. Better essays gave some relevant information illustrating heroes like Hector who accepted the humiliation of a slap to avoid war, and lovers like Pâris who agreed to be considered as below par in order to placate the Greeks. The final irony did not escape the better candidates who underlined that the killing of Demokos by Hector was the ultimate cause for war.
- (b) The majority of responses to **Question (b)** showed fair relevance and knowledge. Appropriate references were made to the strong dialogue between Hector and Ulysse. Comparisons were established between the initial demand from the Greeks, that Héléne be returned untouched, and the final agreement between the two men, after concessions had been made and some casuistry agreed, so to speak.

### Question 7

Bazin: *Au nom du fils*

- (a) The question invited candidates to investigate the extent to which Daniel Astin succeeded in making himself understood, in light of the fact that he narrated his story in the first person, and most grasped this as the essential thread in their essays, considering some of his musings as well as issues arising from interaction with different members of his family, and his responses to various events.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 8

Joffo: *Un sac de billes*

This was a very popular text, and the majority showed great enthusiasm for it.

- (a) **Question (a)** was chosen by relatively few candidates. The opportunity was offered to focus on the simple, universal values such as courage, endurance, love, kindness, unity and empathy, but many candidates dealt extensively with the obvious and timeless anti-racist, pro-tolerance message and the power of good Samaritans to make a difference.
- (b) This was possibly the most popular question of the paper. Candidates were often familiar with the quotation in the question, taken from the last page of Ch. 10, shortly after the boys' father had been arrested again. Up to this point, the boys had largely kept up morale despite violence and fear, but this was a more negative reflection on the result of their experiences. Echoes of last year's question (on differences between Maurice and Joseph) were seen in responses, but candidates wrote knowledgeably and well in many instances, and there were some very good pieces of work, although 'tué' was a 'strong' word, and 'Ils' were perpetrators, so answers along the lines of 'circumstances forced the boys to grow up quickly' did not seem to go far enough. Good answers were characterised by balance, organisation and an awareness that Joffo was somewhat hardened by the end of the novel, despite his young age.

Candidates seemed to find it difficult to convey how Joseph's innocence was destroyed. Justification for telling lies was mentioned frequently as well as hardships and the necessity to work in order to survive. Having to face injustice and evil and thus losing one's childhood illusions were not so often suggested. Most commented on how Joseph and Maurice had lost their childhood but not so many brought in the element of trauma and violence or identified and explained the full horror of, 'Ils ont tué en moi l'enfant que je pouvais être' – what was specifically lost, irrevocably changed or rendered impossible. Perhaps this was unsurprising given that Joffo himself tended to underplay the genuine fear that he and his brother must have faced.

By contrast, some candidates recounted the atrocities of the Nazis towards the Jews without relating their observations back to the novel. The best illustrations were probably the bullying incident early in the novel and the underlying horror and real threat at the Hôtel Excelsior later.

# FRENCH

---

Paper 9716/43

Texts

## Key Messages

Teachers should:

- think carefully about which texts to prepare as some present conceptual problems that are challenging for average and below average candidates.

Teachers should train their students to:

- manage their time in the examination room well and answer three questions;
- check carefully that they do not answer two questions on the same text;
- think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write;
- refer to the question **during** the answer, not just at the start and the finish.

Candidates should:

- label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If questions have not been labelled, it can look as though **(ii)** and **(iii)** were not attempted at all, when all three of **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** should be answered in the passage-based questions;
- remember that 'soit ... soit' means 'either ... or' and should not be copied before question numbers;
- choose carefully either **(a)** or **(b)** and invest in providing as complete and relevant an answer to that one question as possible;
- answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read. Sometimes candidates wanted to write about Molière's 'Tartuffe', but 'L'Avare' was set this session;
- note key words in the questions;
- answer the question precisely, stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions;
- explore both elements of questions asking, for example, 'Pourquoi (pas) ?', rather than opting too hastily and exclusively for one or the other;
- finish with a concluding paragraph;
- start each new essay on a fresh page.
- be careful to attach continuation sheets in order.

## General Comments

This year, two authors in particular enjoyed much popularity: Molière and Joffo.

Candidates need to find a 'happy balance' between 'assuming that the examiner knows nothing' and 'remembering that the examiner has also read the text'. Although narration irrelevant to the question is not required, candidates should begin to answer the question at the beginning, but should not hold back from showing knowledge of the texts, not just retelling the story, but also making a point.

Candidates should **not** write an opening paragraph which addresses in rather general terms the author, his or her works or the audience that he or she was addressing. Candidates should just answer the question.

It was evident that Centres had used past questions when training their candidates, and detailed knowledge was shown in those areas. Candidates should select the question they choose to answer carefully, though, and ensure that their material is relevant. Sometimes the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to this session's questions, but at other times, there were resounding echoes of previous years' questions.

The language used was on the whole appropriate but some essays contained colloquialisms. The best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although it is helpful if these are crossed through to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

### Comments on Specific Questions

#### Question 1

Molière: *L'Avare*

- (a) (i) It was anticipated that candidates might make three points in answer to (i), and most made two of the three. Firstly, Maître Jacques was Harpagon's coachman (and cook), so it was not surprising that he would talk about horses. Secondly, in Act 2 scene 5, Harpagon had talked with Frosine about arrangements for Mariane's visit to the house and outing to the fair with his daughter, Élise, by Harpagon's horses and carriage, later that day. Shortly before the extract, Harpagon had said, 'Maintenant, maître Jacques, il faut nettoyer mon carrosse ... et tenir mes chevaux tous prêts pour conduire à la foire.' Finally, the state of the horses' health and their supposed inability to pull the carriage reflected Harpagon's avarice. As Maître Jacques had told him, 'vous leur faites observer des jeûnes si austères, que ce ne sont plus rien que des fantômes ... je m'ôte tous les jours pour eux les choses de la bouche'.
- (ii) was particularly well answered by candidates, who took advantage of opportunities to compare Maître Jacques' attitudes to Harpagon and Valère, as well as to contrast his and others' attitudes to Harpagon. (iii) was answered in varying degrees of detail, but candidates made clear reference to Harpagon's reaction as he beat Maître Jacques, 'Vous êtes un sot, un maraud, un coquin, et un impudent.'
- (b) Fewer candidates chose **Question (b)**, and overall, responses were less convincing, with some forgetting to address the second part, about whether Frosine was 'aussi douée qu'elle le prétend'. Nevertheless, some good points were made, and it was pleasing to see essays structured well.

#### Question 2

Maupassant: *Bel-Ami*

- (a) This was not one of the most frequently studied texts, however, candidates appeared to have coped well with this long novel, although some confusion between Du Roy's different girlfriends was occasionally seen. Responses to (i) sometimes implied that Du Roy was still in a relationship with Mme Walter. More finely honed answers were careful to discuss different stages in this woman's interaction with the protagonist to explain the strength of feeling evident in her reaction at the beginning of the extract.

Most candidates could explain in (ii) that the bishop's words did not ring true of what the reader knows of Du Roy, but that the man's self-image created as the novel progresses, has successfully achieved the desired effect.

When commenting on the circumstances which had made possible Du Roy's gifts to his parents, a surprising number did not appear to have been reminded by lines 20-21 that, 'Il leur avait envoyé cinq mille francs en héritant du comte de Vaudrec' in that significant event in his marriage to Madeleine.

Candidates easily fell back on reciting general comments about how Du Roy had started out poor, but 'got rich', with varying amounts of narrative offered, but lacking detail about the large sums of money that Du Roy had cleverly appropriated to himself.

- (b) This question was not frequently undertaken, but candidates tackled it well and expressed some good ideas about 'une société sur le déclin'.

Stronger cases were made by contrasting the ascent of Du Roy the social climber and some of the leisure activities and newly discovered aspects of an easy life that he began to enjoy, as well as discussing the increased financial comfort of other characters, with a decline in values in a social setting where people like Du Roy are moving from positions in stable native rural communities to

more individualised industrialised locations as the rise of industrialism gave a financial break to some. Claims were made about moral decline, but candidates found it more difficult to put these into a relevant social context.

### Question 3

Sartre: *Les Mouches*

- (a) (i) This question was not chosen as often as (b), but it was usually handled competently, particularly parts (i) and (iii). In (i), candidates could explain how Clytemnestre had treated Électre's father, and what Électre had been subjected to at the hands of Égisthe, and how this had fuelled the hatred seen in the passage. (iii) invited candidates to look at the impression that Clytemnestre gave of Égisthe in the extract, but some fell back on general comments about him throughout the play. Better answers began with the powerful, destructive image depicted in lines 13-15 and chose examples from elsewhere in the text to examine the extent to which that impression corresponded with reality.
- (ii) was found more difficult, partly as candidates tried to juggle their knowledge of the 'stranger's' true identity, particularly as it related to Clytemnestre (even though she said, 'Je ne sais qui tu es' in line 6). A key detail was, 'ta présence est néfaste' (line 7). Stronger answers pointed out that the stranger, Philèbe/Oreste, was not limited by remorse and fear like all the others and would go on to murder Clytemnestre.
- (b) Many candidates showed knowledge of the fact that the Flies of the play's title were Erinyes, which in Greek mythology were goddesses of vengeance. It was rare to see any mention of vengeance in essays, though, even if answers recognised the significance of the event fifteen years before, when the king was murdered and the people had done nothing about it. The candidates who came closest wrote of the Flies punishing the people.

That is not to say that the result of the punishment and vengeance was neglected. Most responses focused on guilt, remorse, tyranny, oppression, moral judgement, misery, and even order and 'peace', but for candidates to fly to those more obvious themes in the play, bypassing vengeance and punishment, left an impression of a 'missing link'.

### Question 4

Alain-Fournier: *Le Grand Meaulnes*

- (a) Candidates could recall many details of the day on which Meaulnes set out to meet Seurel's grandparents at Vierzon station, even though Mouchebœuf had been selected for the task and recounted how he became lost and injured in varying degrees of detail in (i). They could also, almost without exception, identify the 'domaine mystérieux' in (ii) expanding on their answers in different ways with regard to the 'fête étrange' which took place there, the children who were guests and especially Yvonne de Galais, Meaulnes' first love. It was (iii) which differentiated responses the most. At one extreme, candidates appeared to misread the question and not to notice its future tense, simply discussing how the final sentence exemplified optimism. At the other end, stronger candidates drew together a sophisticated analysis of optimism and foreboding in the remainder of the novel.
- (b) Candidates were anxious not to forget that it was not only the narrator's, but also the author's personality which imposed itself 'souvent sur l'atmosphère de son récit'. More nuanced essays also pointed out that Seurel had merely second-hand knowledge of Meaulnes' adventures, which he narrated, making him even more susceptible than he might have been to Meaulnes' personality and cheerful or gloomy feelings about things. Overall, it was pleasing to see that candidates avoided the pitfalls of agreeing too readily with the question.

## Section 2

### Question 5

Mauriac: *Thérèse Desqueyroux*

- (a) The question was not often chosen, and those who did write on it did not always focus on the suggestion that, 'Thérèse présente une image de folie', falling back, instead, on other ideas of what 'Thérèse présente'. It would have been nice to see evidence from the text in favour of the judgement, arguments against and a conclusion to bring the discussion together, but this was rarely seen.
- (b) This was a much more popular question than (a). On the whole, candidates found it much easier to discuss 'le rôle de la femme' than 'celui de l'homme', but some were successfully able to contrast Thérèse and Anne, with some mentioning other women, too. More minor characters were sometimes covered, but not always very effectively, such as 'le fils Deguilhem', who was loosely combined with the other men in the novel, without investigating how similar his role was to Anne's as their respective families discussed their proposed marriage. It was good to read occasional references to Thérèse's aspiration to freedom and departure for Paris in the end, however it was surprising to see little about Jean Azévêdo, whose role might have been contrasted with other men's.

### Question 6

Giraudoux: *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 7

Bazin: *Au nom du fils*

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

### Question 8

Joffo: *Un sac de billes*

This text was very popular among centres.

- (a) It was clear that some candidates had swiftly begun to write about the two Joffo brothers, Joseph and Maurice, whereas others remembered Henri and Albert, who do not feature as frequently in the story, but who were already based in the 'zone libre' when the two younger brothers set out to join them, so who were still important in the novel, assuming some of the care of their younger brothers in the absence of their parents. This question was quite open-ended, and candidates dealt with it in different ways, often successfully discussing the brothers' relationship characterised by co-operation for survival, and sensitively pointing out their similarities and differences. There was a slight tendency to deal with the brothers separately, emphasising their characters and roles, rather than acknowledging the key word in the question: 'relations'. Nevertheless, overall, some good responses were seen to this question.
- (b) Significantly fewer candidates opted for this question, fewer than one for every three choosing to answer (a). On the whole, the responses were equally pleasing, however, and in some cases more impressive.

The frequent examples of hatred in the novel included the young Joffos' persecution at school, although there was a tendency to think that hatred had not triumphed in that situation because Zérati his marbles for Joseph's 'étoile jaune', without mentioning that that day marked M. Joffo's decision to take his sons away from the school, beat them to teach them to lie about their heritage

and send them, young though they were, across the country to escape the danger. Similarly, the example was cited of the priest's kindness in the train to tell the soldiers that the boys were with him. Yet together they watched others being taken away to likely death, but this was not considered as the claim that hate did not triumph was repeated. Of course, happily, there was not an ultimate triumph of hatred, but it was good to see more thoughtful candidates referring to Jo's stolen childhood, or more strongly, his comment 'ils ont tué en moi l'enfant que je pouvais être' (Ch. 10), reflecting permanent loss even though there was relief in the final outcome.