

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/11

Listening

Key messages

- On this new syllabus, the listening paper is marked out of 45. The format and question types of the listening test remained the same as in June 2014.
- The performance on this paper was similar to that seen in 2014 with candidates showing good levels of both specific and general understanding. As intended, the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite in pen as this can make answers very difficult to read.
- Candidates must cross out any material they do not wish the Examiner to consider. Candidates should not rub out answers and then re-write them.
- Poor handwriting was very apparent this June. Candidates need to take care when writing their answers. If the Examiner cannot decipher an answer, a mark cannot be awarded.
- Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is a danger that extra distorting details will be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers are marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.
- Some candidates need to be more aware of the number of boxes they have ticked, especially in **Question 16**. A significant number of candidates lost marks as they had ticked more than six boxes.

General comments

The demand of this year's paper was found to be generally similar to that of the 2014 paper but was found to be slightly more difficult on **Section 2** than last year. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section, with even weaker candidates managing to gain a few marks on the easier questions which are intended to keep concentration going until the end of the test. The candidature was familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were usually well understood. There was evidence that a few candidates were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. The examination topics and contexts were accessible to all candidates.

The French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the defined content.

Candidates in many Centres appreciated the need to write as **briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in responses**. Brief answers are preferable in order to reduce the risk that the candidate will include extra, distorting material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates need to remember not to answer or infer from general knowledge.

This year, Examiners reported many cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and **not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen**. All candidates should be reminded that if they wish to change their mind about an answer they should not rub out their first attempt in order to write over it. Instead they must clearly cross out any answer they do not want the Examiner to consider.

The listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is not extra reading time before the examination starts. It is important to give candidates practice on past papers so as to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. Rubrics were generally well understood by candidates. The extracts were, as usual for this exercise, straightforward and short. The items tested covered numbers, times, food, household items, bathroom items/toiletries, directions and clothes.

Nearly all candidates answered the first five questions correctly. A good number answered **Question 6** correctly but some were unfamiliar with the word *savon*. Some candidates were unaware of the difference between *à gauche* and *à droite* on **Question 7**. Although, the majority of candidates answered **Question 8** correctly, some clearly did not know the word *imperméable* and this proved to be the most difficult question in the exercise. Option A was a common incorrect answer.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured an advert for a holiday in a youth hostel in the city of *Lyon*. Candidates were mostly required to show their understanding by selecting one from three visual options. As in previous years, candidates answered the vast majority of these questions correctly and many scored full marks on this exercise.

For **Question 9** most candidates were able to give an acceptable spelling of *mai*. The commonest unacceptable spelling was *main*. **Question 10** caused problems for some candidates who did not recognise *le vieux quartier*. Option B was a common incorrect answer.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

The format of this exercise is now well understood. Although it was rare for Examiners to see too many or too few ticks there were still cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method of indicating the six correct answers, **either** six ticks **or** six crosses, and not to mix the two as this can become confusing (six of the boxes should remain blank).

Any ticks/crosses that are present on the script, whether made in pen or pencil, are counted by Examiners. Some candidates answered first in pencil and then went over their answers in ink but unfortunately did not completely remove their pencil answers. This meant that on occasion there were more than six ticks present and candidates lost marks as a result. Where candidates tick/cross in pencil on the first hearing and then in pen on the second, they must make it clear to the Examiner which six ticks/crosses are their final choice by crossing out any ticks/crosses that they do not wish the Examiner to consider.

Candidates heard four young people talking about television viewing habits. The topic area was accessible to candidates and the performance of the candidature was very similar to that of June 2014 on this exercise. The full range of marks was seen in this exercise but many candidates scored four marks or more and a significant number scored full marks.

Exercise 2 Questions 17-21

In the first part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Solène who talked about protecting the environment in Guadeloupe where she lives. Candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements by supplying the correct word(s). The requirements of the exercise were well understood. The missing words were lexically frequent items from the core vocabulary of the defined content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test.

Candidates made a fair attempt at this section but clearly found this first part of the exercise more challenging than in 2014. On **Question 17** many found it difficult to give an acceptable rendering of the word *beauté*. Acceptable answers had to start with *beau* or *baut* and end with *é/e/er/ez*. The words *beau* or *belle* were also acceptable. Spellings such as *boté* were not accepted. On **Question 18** candidates fared slightly better but many wrote *l'avenir* as *la venir(e)* or *lavenir*, neither of which were awarded the mark. Centres are reminded that where words are joined together or split inappropriately, they will not usually be rewarded. Large numbers of candidates were able to offer the word *plastique* on **Question 19**. Attempts to write the word *bouteilles* were ignored. On **Question 20** many were able to give an acceptable spelling for *poisson*. Although candidates found **Question 21** more challenging, many were able to provide an acceptable rendering of the word *paresseux*.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-25

In the second part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Frédéric who also talked about protecting the environment in Guadeloupe where he lives. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French to the questions. Candidates need to be reminded that it is quite acceptable to write dates and numbers in figures. On **Question 22**, some answers, for example *de mille douze*, could not be rewarded because of poor spelling. Some wrote one answer in figures and a different answer in words, which meant that no marks could be awarded even if one of the versions was correct. Candidates should be reminded that if Examiners are presented with a choice of answers and one of the answers is incorrect then the mark cannot be awarded. On **Question 23** many successfully provided the correct answer, *plonger*. Answers beginning with the spelling *plan...* were also accepted. Any part of the verb and any tense of the verb were accepted. **Question 24** which tested *écologie* was done well by high numbers of candidates. For **Question 25** the spelling of *poubelles* was found to be difficult. Inappropriate word splits or renderings such as *plubels/poubeilles* did not gain the mark.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

Candidates heard an interview with Nadia who talked about her holiday job looking after children. The topic area was generally accessible and usually candidates made a good attempt at this exercise. Even weaker candidates were often able to score marks on the opening two questions or the last question of this exercise. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Candidates had to listen to and process more information than in the previous section and had to be able to follow a narrative that featured different time frames and in which feelings and opinions were expressed. Candidates understood the rubrics well.

The first two questions were well done. The hardest question on the exercise was **Question 28** with weaker candidates perhaps not heeding the words *au début* in the question. A good number of candidates were successful on **Questions 29** and **30** and even more were successful on the last question. There was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers on this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-40

This was a very appropriate final exercise and, as intended, the most demanding on the paper, including questions to challenge the most able candidates. Some much easier questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and these were successfully answered by a good proportion of the candidates. The performance on this exercise was, again, very much in line with the standard of work seen last year.

Candidates heard an interview with Kamal talking about his home in Mayotte. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates chose to write everything that they had heard, rather than focussing on the essential element of the answer.

On **Question 32**, candidates needed to communicate the idea of sharing a room. The spelling of *partager* was difficult for some candidates. Candidates sometimes invalidated their answer by adding incorrect information such as Kamal sharing a room with his father. There were many good attempts, though the spelling of *chambre* sometimes proved difficult. Answers to **Question 33** needed to convey the concept of living alone. Incorrect answers often included words such as *sol* or *sole* instead of *seul*. **Question 34** was not well answered. Candidates needed to identify the verb *s'inquiéter* and only the best candidates were able to offer acceptable spellings. Any part/tense of the verb was accepted as were answers without the reflexive. Many incorrect answers referred to *la tradition*. Candidates made better attempts at the easier **Question 35** and many scored a mark for *père*. On **Question 36**, candidates needed to refer to Kamal finding wood. *Bois* was not well known. Answers such as *boit* were quite common and did not gain the mark. Spellings of *bois* such as *boie* and *boix* were accepted. Better attempts were made at *enthousiasme* on **Question 37** and good numbers of candidates were able to score the mark. **Question 38** was attempted equally well and many could give acceptable spellings of *parfait(e)*. On **Question 39**, candidates had to refer to the fact that there was not a kitchen. Some instead referred to the fact that Kamal's parents did not live far away. Some added distorting material saying there was not a kitchen at Kamal's parents' house. The final question proved to be the most difficult one of the test and required candidates to identify the comparative *mieux* as in *mieux préparé*. *Meilleur préparé/plus préparé* were also accepted. Appropriately, only the very best candidates scored the mark on this final challenging question.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/12

Listening

Key messages

- On this new syllabus, the listening paper is marked out of 45. The format and question types of the listening test remained the same as in June 2014.
- The performance on this paper was similar to that seen in 2014 with candidates showing good levels of both specific and general understanding. As intended, the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite in pen as this can make answers very difficult to read.
- Candidates must cross out any material they do not wish the Examiner to consider. Candidates should not rub out answers and then re-write them.
- Poor handwriting was very apparent this June. Candidates need to take care when writing their answers. If the Examiner cannot decipher an answer, a mark cannot be awarded.
- Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is a danger that extra distorting details will be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers are marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.
- Some candidates need to be more aware of the number of boxes they have ticked, especially in **Question 16**. A significant number of candidates lost marks as they had ticked more than six boxes.

General comments

The demand of this year's paper was found to be generally similar to that of the 2014 paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section, with even weaker candidates managing to gain a few marks on the easier questions which are intended to keep concentration going until the end of the test. The candidature was familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were usually well understood. There was evidence that a few candidates were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. The examination topics and contexts were accessible to all candidates.

The French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the defined content.

Candidates in many Centres appreciated the need to write as **briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in responses**. Brief answers are preferable in order to reduce the risk that the candidate will include extra, distorting material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates need to remember not to answer or infer from general knowledge.

This year, Examiners reported many cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and **not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen**. All candidates should be reminded that if they wish to change their mind about an answer they should not rub out their first attempt in order to write over it. Instead they must clearly cross out any answer they do not want the Examiner to consider.

The listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is not extra reading time before the examination starts. It is important to give candidates practice on past papers so as to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were, as usual for this exercise, straightforward and short. The items tested covered numbers, food, eating out, travelling around, hobbies and the weather.

The questions were accessible to the vast majority of candidates. In **Question 3**, *car* was not always well known. Some candidates did not know *saumon* for **Question 5** and a significant number found *assiettes* in **Question 6** difficult. The final question in this exercise proved to be the easiest for candidates as *livre de cuisine* was well-known.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured information for a stay in Martinique. Candidates were mostly required to show their understanding by selecting one from three visual options. As in previous years, candidates answered the vast majority of these questions correctly and many scored full marks on this exercise.

The first question, **Question 9**, required a month as an answer and was omitted by some candidates. Some answers offered were not months of the year and some candidates offered the answer 27. **Question 10** caused problems for some candidates who did not recognise *kayak de mer*. Option A was a common incorrect answer.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was good and continues to improve as many candidates are accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or only three or four boxes. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method of indicating the six correct answers, **either** six ticks **or** six crosses, and not to mix the two as this can become confusing (six of the boxes should remain blank).

Any ticks/crosses that are present on the script, whether made in pen or pencil, are counted by Examiners. Some candidates answered first in pencil and then went over their answers in ink but unfortunately did not completely remove their pencil answers. This meant that on occasion there were more than six ticks present and candidates lost marks as a result. Where candidates tick/cross in pencil on the first hearing and then in pen on the second, they must make it clear to the Examiner which six ticks/crosses are their final choice by crossing out any ticks/crosses that they do not wish the Examiner to consider.

Candidates heard four young people talking about their free time activities. The topic area was accessible to candidates and the performance of the candidature was very similar to that of June 2014 on this exercise. The full range of marks was seen in this exercise but many candidates scored four marks or more and a significant number scored full marks.

Exercise 2 Questions 17-21

In the first part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Maya who talked about life in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil. Candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements by supplying the correct word(s). The requirements of the exercise were well understood. The missing words were lexically frequent items from the core vocabulary of the defined content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test.

Candidates made a very good attempt at the first part of the exercise. In **Question 17**, candidates usually responded with the correct answer, *2008*, although a few wrote *2000* as their answer. In **Question 18**, both the answer *ici* and *malade* were accepted and in general candidates scored the mark here. Many candidates answered **Question 19** correctly, although some misheard *difficile* and wrote *facile* as their answer. **Question 20** also proved straightforward. **Question 21** was the most challenging with a significant number of candidates omitting the answer.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-25

In the second part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Thomas who also talked about life in Brasilia. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French to the questions. Although most candidates were able to provide an acceptable spelling of *cathédrale* in answer to **Question 22(a)**, many could not give an acceptable rendering of *toit* for **Question 22(b)**, with many candidates favouring the incorrect answer *extérieur*. **Question 23** also proved demanding, with only the more able candidates providing both correct elements, *join* and *mer*. The majority went on to score the mark for **Question 24**.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

Candidates heard an interview with Sandrine who talked about her voluntary work. The topic area was generally accessible and usually candidates made a good attempt at this exercise. Even weaker candidates were often able to score marks on **Questions 27** and **28**. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Candidates had to listen to and process more information than in the previous section and had to be able to follow a narrative that featured different time frames and in which feelings and opinions were expressed. Candidates understood the rubrics well.

Question 30 proved to be the most difficult. There was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers on this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-40

This was a very appropriate final exercise and, as intended, the most demanding on the paper, including questions to challenge the most able candidates. Some much easier questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and these were successfully answered by a good proportion of the candidates. The performance on this exercise was, again, very much in line with the standard of work seen last year.

Candidates heard an interview with Robin talking about his life, having left Marseille to go and live in Paris. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates chose to write everything that they had heard, rather than focussing on the essential element of the answer.

On **Question 31**, candidates were often able to provide the subject that Robin was going to study, *commerce*. In **Question 32**, many found it difficult to convey the notions of *parents/ils + faire + ménage* and some candidates left this question unanswered. For **Question 33** there were many acceptable spellings of *pleurer*, but again a significant number of candidates did not attempt a response to this question. Better attempts were made at *appartement* on **Question 34**. In **Question 35**, where candidates did not score the mark this was either because they omitted the notion of *trop* (*beaucoup* and *très* also accepted) or because of confusing attempts at the word *pâtes*. Even though accents were ignored, the most common misspelling of this word, *pattes*, has a different meaning and could not therefore be awarded. Spelling was also an issue in **Question 36**, where the most common incorrect answers were *moble*, *mobile* or *immeuble*. There were many successful attempts at **Questions 37** and **38**. The final question proved demanding and only the most able candidates could render *inquiète* correctly. Many candidates chose to answer with *facilement*, perhaps because it was a word which they recognised.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/13

Listening

Key messages

- On this new syllabus, the listening paper is marked out of 45. The format and question types of the listening test remained the same as in June 2014.
- The performance on this paper was similar to that seen in 2014. A full range of performance was seen. As intended, the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite in pen as this can make answers very difficult to read.
- Candidates must cross out any material they do not wish the Examiner to consider. Candidates should not rub out answers and then re-write them.
- Poor handwriting was very apparent this June. Candidates need to take care when writing their answers. If the Examiner cannot decipher an answer, a mark cannot be awarded.
- Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is a danger that extra distorting details will be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers are marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.
- Some candidates need to be more aware of the number of boxes they have ticked, especially in **Question 16**. A significant number of candidates lost marks as they had ticked more than six boxes.

General comments

The demand of this year's paper was found to be generally similar to that of the 2014 paper but was found to be slightly more difficult on **Section 2** than last year. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section, with even weaker candidates managing to gain a few marks on the easier questions which are intended to keep concentration going until the end of the test. The candidature was familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were usually well understood. There was evidence that a few candidates were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. The examination topics and contexts were accessible to all candidates.

The French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the defined content.

Candidates in many Centres appreciated the need to write as **briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in responses**. Brief answers are preferable in order to reduce the risk that the candidate will include extra, distorting material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates need to remember not to answer or infer from general knowledge.

This year, Examiners reported many cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and **not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen**. All candidates should be reminded that if they wish to change their mind about an answer they should not rub out their first attempt in order to write over it. Instead they must clearly cross out any answer they do not want the Examiner to consider.

The listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is not extra reading time before the examination starts. It is important to give candidates practice on past papers so as to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. Rubrics were generally well understood by candidates. The extracts were, as usual for this exercise, straightforward and short. The items tested covered numbers, food and drink, transport, times, eating out, items in a hotel.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured an advert for a leisure centre. Candidates were mostly required to show their understanding by selecting one from three visual options. As in previous years, candidates answered the vast majority of these questions correctly and many scored full marks on this exercise.

For **Question 9** most candidates were able to give an acceptable spelling of *octobre*. **Question 14** caused problems for some candidates who did not recognise *caravane*.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was good and continues to improve as many candidates are accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or only three or four boxes. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method of indicating the six correct answers, **either** six ticks **or** six crosses, and not to mix the two as this can become confusing (six of the boxes should remain blank).

Any ticks/crosses that are present on the script, whether made in pen or pencil, are counted by Examiners. Some candidates answered first in pencil and then went over their answers in ink but unfortunately did not completely remove their pencil answers. This meant that on occasion there were more than six ticks present and candidates lost marks as a result. Where candidates tick/cross in pencil on the first hearing and then in pen on the second, they must make it clear to the Examiner which six ticks/crosses are their final choice by crossing out any ticks/crosses that they do not wish the Examiner to consider.

Candidates heard four young people talking about their pets. The topic area was accessible to candidates and the performance of the candidature was very similar to that of June 2014 on this exercise. The full range of marks was seen in this exercise but many candidates scored four marks or more and a significant number scored full marks.

Exercise 2 Questions 17-21

In the first part of this exercise candidates heard the first part of an interview with Antoine who talked about football. Candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements by supplying the correct word(s). The requirements of the exercise were well understood. The missing words were lexically frequent items from the core vocabulary of the defined content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test

Candidates found the first question on this exercise the most demanding and were often unable to give an acceptable rendering of *sud*. *Sur* was a common incorrect answer. The other four questions on this first part of the exercise were usually better attempted. The correct spelling of *entraînement* was often found to be difficult but many made a close and recognisable attempt which communicated the message. **Question 19** was answered well, with many able to recognise *soir*. On **Question 20**, incorrect spellings of *gâteau* such as *gatou* were not awarded the mark. Many candidates found it easy to identify *policiers* for **Question 21**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-25

Candidates heard the continuation of the interview with Antoine. They were required to give short written responses in French to the questions. On **Question 22** many candidates made successful reference to the fact that Antoine's friend Pierre was an excellent athlete. **Questions 22** and **23** proved more difficult. For **Question 22** many answers featured *partie de foot* rather than the correct *long match*. **Question 23** was the hardest question on this exercise and *carte de bus* was not well known. The last question was well answered and many clearly understood that Antoine wanted to become a professional.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

Candidates heard an interview with Thierry who talked about coming to live in France. The topic area was generally accessible and usually candidates made a fair attempt at this exercise. Even weaker candidates were often able to score marks on **Questions 27** and **29**. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Candidates had to listen to and process more information than in the previous section and had to be able to follow a narrative that featured different time frames and in which feelings and opinions were expressed. Candidates understood the rubrics well.

On **Question 28**, option B was often chosen as an incorrect answer. On other questions there was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-40

This was a very appropriate final exercise and, as intended, the most demanding on the paper, including questions to challenge the most able candidates. Some much easier questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and these were successfully answered by a good proportion of the candidates. The performance on this exercise was very much in line with the standard of work seen last year.

Candidates heard an interview with Brigitte talking about how she had won a prize for bravery. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates chose to write everything that they had heard, rather than focussing on the essential element of the answer.

Candidates made a good start on **Question 32** and were fairly successful in conveying the concept of work. On **Question 33**, only the better candidates were able to recognise *se lever*. **Question 34** was done a little better and a good proportion of candidates were able to provide *appeler une ambulance*. Even weaker candidates made a good attempt on **Question 35** and the majority were successful here in identifying the correct answer, *tourisme*. Very few candidates knew the verb *sauter* on **Question 36**. Attempts such as *soter* did not gain the mark as communication of the message was not clear. *Pleurer* was a little better known on **Question 37**. To score the mark candidates needed to be able to write any part or tense of the verb. This was one of the least well spelt answers in the examination with a large variety of incorrect vowels appearing, which often changed the sound of the word. Answers such as *elle pleut* introduced an incorrect and misleading concept and were not accepted. On **Question 38** *cours* was often seen instead of the correct *courses*. **Question 39** was the most challenging on the paper and only the very best candidates understood *fumée*. For **Question 40** *shoc* and *shock* were accepted as 'sound-alikes' and 'look-alikes' for the concept *choc*. Any part and tense of the verb *choquer* was also rewarded.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/21

Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions and texts carefully.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to an answer clear.
- keep answers in French brief and focused, particularly in **Section 3** – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected.
- remember that answers/questions occur in order in the text.
- allow time to check the accuracy of their spelling, especially of words provided on the Question Paper.

General comments

This Reading paper followed the revised syllabus format. Candidates generally understood the instructions and dealt confidently with the variety of reading comprehension exercise types, including the new gap-filling task in **Section 2**. A full range of performance was observed and the paper offered an appropriate challenge and a gradient of difficulty. The standard of presentation and legibility was generally good. All candidates appeared to have ample time to complete the paper. Once the paper has been completed, any spare time can profitably be spent in checking work. Candidates should make sure that where they change their mind about the final answer to a question, it is clear which answer the Examiner is intended to mark – once a final decision is made, any answer not to be considered should be crossed out. It is preferable to cross out a wrong answer and write the correct answer again rather than trying to overwrite a previous answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Scores were high for this opening exercise and full marks were common. Where there were errors they were usually for **Question 4** (*saumon*) and/or **Question 5** (*maquillage*).

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Again scores for this exercise were generally high and full marks scores were common. If there were errors they were for **Question 8** (with E the incorrect choice, probably because of confusion between *météo* and *metro*) and/or **Question 10** (where *s'habiller* did not always seem to be known).

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This final exercise in **Section 1** (a multiple choice exercise based on a short text about a trip to a concert) was generally well understood. **Questions 13, 14 and 15** were found to be more difficult than **Questions 11 and 12**. Full mark scores were common.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16-20

This is a new exercise type for the Reading paper. Candidates were required to read a short text, in this case a factual description of a hotel. In order to demonstrate comprehension of the text candidates then completed statements in French, choosing words from a given list. The word chosen has to fit not only with the sense of the text, but also with the grammar of the sentence – for example a plural subject and verb will need a plural adjectival form to complete the sentence correctly. Many candidates coped confidently and successfully with this exercise. A small number of candidates disregarded the instruction to choose words from the “*grille*” and attempted to complete the sentences with their own words. Only words chosen from those provided could be rewarded.

For **Question 19** the appropriate word was *travaillent*. Some candidates chose *nagent* which though it completed the sentence grammatically contradicted the information given in the text.

Exercise 2 Questions 21-30

For this exercise candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of an email from Damien to Charles on the subject of school holidays and the looming *rentrée scolaire*. This was a straightforward text and the majority of candidates handled the task – questions in French requiring answers in French – very well. At this stage in the paper, candidates are rewarded for their ability to locate the correct information within the text. Although lifted material is therefore accepted if it communicates the required information, it should be remembered that long answers and/or complete sentences are not needed. The space on the paper allocated to the answer for each question should be sufficient. Some candidates had helped themselves to focus their answers by underlining the question words (*Où? Pourquoi? Qu'est-ce que? etc.*) on their question paper.

Answers to **Question 21** needed to include the idea of the beginning of the school holidays in order to be rewarded. Some candidates omitted *premier jour/début* and so did not score.

Candidates normally earned the mark available for **Question 22** though many included more information than the question required. **Question 29** proved to be more difficult than expected, perhaps because of a misunderstanding of *qui est-ce que*, being mistaken for *qu'est-ce que*, and/or difficulties in understanding *rencontrer*. The most common incorrect response was *on s'amuse sur la plage*.

Section 3

In **Section 3** candidates are asked to read two longer texts and need to answer questions in such a way as to demonstrate that they have understood the text/questions. In **Section 2** they are asked just to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they need to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and therefore do not score. The inclusion of unnecessary connectives often results in the invalidation of an otherwise correct answer. Candidates would do well to be guided by the length of the space allocated for an answer and should ensure that their answer fits within that space.

Exercise 1 Questions 31-35

For this exercise candidates had to read a longer text about the *Carnaval de Québec*. Candidates are instructed in the rubric to read the text and then to tick *VRAI* or *FAUX* against five statements about the text (the rubric gives the information that two of the statements are *VRAI*, and three are *FAUX*). They can score 5 of the 8 marks available for this exercise by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 3 marks are scored by providing a correct version of the three false statements – a simple negative version of the original statement does not earn a mark.

Most could identify at least some of the statements as true or false according to the sense of the text.

Question 31 was sometimes wrongly ticked as *VRAI*. Possibly *trop* is not as well understood as might be expected. Where this statement was correctly identified as false the correction was not always successful. A popular choice was to lift *ils seront tous dehors même si le froid est extrême*. This was not accepted as a correction to the statement without a clear indication of who *ils* referred to. The statement in **Question 34** could be corrected either by indicating that Jean will be a spectator or that he will encourage the participants

of the race. The idea of *rester dans le froid* was considered to be an incorrect answer and an invalidating addition to an answer as it gave the wrong emphasis as both spectators and participants would be in the cold. For **Question 35** many candidates managed to correct the statement by referring to the idea of Jean not understanding his cousins' choice (although the majority of candidates left the verb as *comprenais* the mark could still be awarded). Some managed a correct version about Jean wanting to live in Québec in the future though some used *ici* or *là-bas* without referring to Québec.

Many candidates took Jean to be female and answered with *elle*. This did not affect marks.

Exercise 2 Questions 36-42

For this last exercise, candidates are given a longer text, with questions about it to be answered in French. The text was based on the career of a beauty salon entrepreneur. As intended, this was the most demanding exercise on the paper and some candidates found it very challenging. Even though they were able to locate the correct part of the text from which to answer a question, they were often not selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response or they were unable to manipulate their answer sufficiently clearly to give an acceptable response. Candidates should bear in mind that if a single line of space is provided for the answer, the expected answer will not be three or four lines long. The majority of candidates, however, attempted answers to all questions in this final exercise, showing that they generally found the text accessible, and had understood the gist if not the detail.

Question 36 was generally accessible but answers were sometimes invalidated by the omission of *commerce*. The answer to **Question 37** was straightforward (e.g. *pour faire un stage*) but some answers were invalidated by additional reference to *étudiante en informatique*. **Question 38** was usually answered correctly though some candidates did not give enough information in their answers, while others wrote about the salons in France instead of those in Los Angeles. For **Question 39** the common error was the invalidating addition of *et a économisé assez d'argent*. Answers to **Question 40** reflected the good and bad in lifting. Many candidates produced a good response as a result of lifting *parce qu'il était au sous-sol personne n'entraîne dans son salon*. Others, however, did not score by only selecting a portion of the above: *parce qu'il était au sous-sol*. **Question 41** was often well answered. Candidates who decided to omit all reference to a verb and simply described the tee-shirt fared better than those who tried to include a finite verb or started with *habillées d'un tee-shirt*. **Question 42** often brought a successful end to the paper. The most common wrong answer was some version of *j'ai/elle a toujours voulu réussir*.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/22

Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions and texts carefully.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to an answer clear.
- keep answers in French brief and focused, particularly in **Section 3** – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected.
- remember that answers/questions occur in order in the text.
- allow time to check the accuracy of their spelling, especially of words provided on the Question Paper.

General comments

This Reading paper followed the revised syllabus format. Candidates generally understood the instructions and dealt confidently with the variety of reading comprehension exercise types, including the new gap-filling task in **Section 2**. A full range of performance was observed and the paper offered an appropriate challenge and a gradient of difficulty. The standard of presentation and legibility was generally good. All candidates appeared to have ample time to complete the paper. Once the paper has been completed, any spare time can profitably be spent in checking work. Candidates should make sure that where they change their mind about the final answer to a question, it is clear which answer the Examiner is intended to mark – once a final decision is made, any answer not to be considered should be crossed out. It is preferable to cross out a wrong answer and write the correct answer again rather than trying to overwrite a previous answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Most candidates scored the 5 marks available for the exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Again scores for this exercise were generally high and full marks scores were common. Where there were errors they were usually for **Question 7** where some candidates chose D (*train*) instead of A (*VTT*).

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This final exercise in **Section 1** (a multiple choice exercise based on a short text about birthday celebrations) was generally well understood. The vast majority of candidates earned full marks.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16-20

This is a new exercise type for the Reading paper. Candidates were required to read a short text, in this case a factual description of a hotel. In order to demonstrate comprehension of the text candidates then completed statements in French, choosing words from a given list. The word chosen has to fit not only with

the sense of the text, but also with the grammar of the sentence – for example a plural subject and verb will need a plural adjectival form to complete the sentence correctly. Many candidates coped confidently and successfully with this exercise. A small number of candidates disregarded the instruction to choose words from the “grille” and attempted to complete the sentences with their own words. Only words chosen from those provided could be rewarded.

Questions 16, 17 and 20 were usually answered correctly. Candidates often chose *réparer* instead of *garer* for **Question 18** and *payant* instead of *régulier* for **Question 19**. Although these completed the sentences grammatically they contradicted the information given in the text.

Exercise 2 Questions 21-29

For this exercise candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of an email from Arthur to Henri on the subject of a new club at school. This was a straightforward text and the majority of candidates handled the task – questions in French requiring answers in French – very well. At this stage in the paper, candidates are rewarded for their ability to locate the correct information within the text. Although lifted material is therefore accepted if it communicates the required information, it should be remembered that long answers and/or complete sentences are not needed. The space on the paper allocated to the answer for each question should be sufficient. Some candidates had helped themselves to focus their answers by underlining the question words (*Où? Pourquoi? Qu'est-ce que?* etc.) on their question paper.

For **Question 21** the expected answer was either *protéger la nature/l'environnement* or *essayer de sauver la planète*. **Question 22** was in two parts. For **(a)** candidates had to state where the club met and for **(b)** where. **Question 23** (*des affiches*), **Question 24** (*éteindre la lumière*) and **Question 25** (*des papiers*) were very well answered. **Question 26** proved difficult for some candidates who chose *je suis devenu fanatique de l'écologie, mais pas mon frère* instead of the correct *de penser au recyclage*. Candidates easily identified the answers to the next three questions and correctly answered *ils oublie de recycler* for **Question 27**, *à pied* for **Question 28** and *prendre la voiture le moins possible* for **Question 29**.

Section 3

In **Section 3** candidates are asked to read two longer texts and need to answer questions in such a way as to demonstrate that they have understood the text/questions. In **Section 2** they are asked just to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they need to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and therefore do not score. The inclusion of unnecessary connectives often results in the invalidation of an otherwise correct answer. Candidates would do well to be guided by the length of the space allocated for an answer and should ensure that their answer fits within that space.

Exercise 1 Questions 30-34

For this exercise candidates had to read a longer text about a writer. Candidates are instructed in the rubric to read the text and then to tick *VRAI* or *FAUX* against five statements about the text (the rubric gives the information that two of the statements are *VRAI*, and three are *FAUX*). They can score 5 of the 8 marks available for this exercise by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 3 marks are scored by providing a correct version of the three false statements – a simple negative version of the original statement does not earn a mark.

Most could identify at least some of the statements as true or false according to the sense of the text.

Questions 32 (*FAUX*) and **34** (*VRAI*) were the two most often incorrectly identified as true or false.

Question 31 was a false statement and as a correction candidates could select from the text that *Georgina s'est inscrite à la compétition* or that *ses amis ont poussé Georgina à s'inscrire*. For **Question 32** the expected answer was *elle a été étonnée*. The vast majority scored the mark available. Those who included *elle a pleuré de joie* did not score the mark. For **Question 33** the correct answer was *elle veut continuer à écrire*. Some candidates did not read the given statement carefully enough and answered *on allait publier son livre*.

Exercise 2 Questions 35-41

For this last exercise, candidates are given a longer text, with questions about it to be answered in French. The text was based on the experiences of a retired footballer. As intended, this was the most demanding exercise on the paper and some candidates found it very challenging. Even though they were able to locate the correct part of the text from which to answer a question, they were often not selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response or they were unable to manipulate their answer sufficiently clearly to give an acceptable response. Candidates should bear in mind that if a single line of space is provided for the answer, the expected answer will not be three or four lines long. The majority of candidates, however, attempted answers to all questions in this final exercise, showing that they generally found the text accessible, and had understood the gist if not the detail.

For **Question 35** many candidates could clearly *answer transmettre son expérience aux (plus) jeunes*. Some misunderstood the question and answered *sa carrière de footballeur est terminée* or *entraîner des enfants de familles pauvres*. *(L'/leur) enthousiasme* was sufficient to gain the mark for **Question 36**. Those who chose to provide a longer response had to make sure that their answer conveyed a clear message, e.g. *ils ont le même enthousiasme qu'il avait à leur âge*. **Question 37** could be answered succinctly with *il n'était pas assez rapide*. The addition of *il a dû travailler beaucoup en suivant les conseils de ses entraîneurs* invalidated an otherwise correct answer. **Question 38** proved challenging as many candidates could not manipulate the language used in the text or provided a very lengthy "lift". The expected answer was *les enfants qui n'ont jamais eu de discipline dans leur famille*.

Question 39 was successfully answered by many: *sa carrière (de footballeur) s'est terminée trop tôt*. Candidates were also often able to answer **Question 40** correctly with something along the lines of *très peu seront sélectionnés (pour devenir joueurs professionnels)*. For **Question 41** many candidates added *et avec passion (en plus)* to the correct response (*il recommence à étudier*) and could not be awarded the mark.



FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/23

Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions and texts carefully.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to an answer clear.
- keep answers in French brief and focused, particularly in **Section 3** – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected.
- remember that answers/questions occur in order in the text.
- allow time to check the accuracy of their spelling, especially of words provided on the Question Paper.

General comments

This Reading paper followed the revised syllabus format. Candidates generally understood the instructions and dealt confidently with the variety of reading comprehension exercise types, including the new gap-filling task in **Section 2**. A full range of performance was observed and the paper offered an appropriate challenge and a gradient of difficulty. The standard of presentation and legibility was generally good. All candidates appeared to have ample time to complete the paper. Once the paper has been completed, any spare time can profitably be spent in checking work. Candidates should make sure that where they change their mind about the final answer to a question, it is clear which answer the Examiner is intended to mark – once a final decision is made, any answer not to be considered should be crossed out. It is preferable to cross out a wrong answer and write the correct answer again rather than trying to overwrite a previous answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Scores were high for this opening exercise and full marks were common. For **Question 2** some offered D (*radiateur*) rather than A (*chaise*).

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Again scores for this exercise were generally high and full marks scores were common. A number answered **Question 8** with C rather than F, confusing *météo* and *méto*.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This final exercise in **Section 1** (a multiple choice exercise based on a short text about an awful day) was generally well understood. For some candidates *pneu* appeared to be an unfamiliar item of vocabulary and **Question 13** was sometimes answered with A rather than with B. For **Question 15** some candidates thought Paul had forgotten to do his homework, rather than forgotten to bring it with him, and offered A as their answer, rather than C.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16-20

This is a new exercise type for the Reading paper. Candidates were required to read a short text, in this case a factual description of a hotel. In order to demonstrate comprehension of the text candidates then completed statements in French, choosing words from a given list. The word chosen has to fit not only with the sense of the text, but also with the grammar of the sentence – for example a plural subject and verb will need a plural adjectival form to complete the sentence correctly. Many candidates coped confidently and successfully with this exercise. A small number of candidates disregarded the instruction to choose words from the “*grille*” and attempted to complete the sentences with their own words. Only words chosen from those provided could be rewarded.

Candidates were told that the *Hôtel Monrepos* was suitable for those looking for somewhere calm, but the text made no mention of the actual situation of the hotel, apart from its garden, and many candidates assumed that the hotel must be in a village, rather than opting for the neutral *endroit* for **Question 16**. Most candidates chose the correct word for **Question 17**, but for **Question 18** many missed the mention of *gratuit* and assumed there was no available Internet connection. For **Question 19** a number of candidates chose *cuisine* rather than *goûter*, and for the last question, a few chose *exposition* rather than *promotion*.

Exercise 2 Questions 21-30

For this exercise candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of an email from Caspar to his friend Charles on the subject of his recent trip to the island of *La Réunion*, where his grandfather was born. At this stage in the paper, candidates are rewarded for their ability to locate the correct information within the text. Although lifted material is therefore accepted if it communicates the required information, it should be remembered that long answers and/or complete sentences are not needed. The space on the paper allocated to the answer for each question should be sufficient. For example, **Question 21** could be answered simply with (*La Réunion*), and **Question 23** with *avril*. Some candidates had helped themselves to focus their answers by underlining the question words (*Où? Pourquoi? Qu'est-ce que?* etc.) on their question paper.

The first two questions showed the widest variation of answers, with some candidates mentioning for **Question 21** only that Caspar's grandfather was born 9 000 kilometres from Paris, and for **Question 22** leaving out the idea of making a journey, or visiting his grandfather's island birthplace.

The remaining questions were in general very well done, though for **Question 29** the focus was on the means of travel on the island itself, and a few returned to the idea of the journey by aeroplane. The variously spelt versions of *rencontrer* provided in answers to **Question 30** were tolerated provided that candidates avoided confusion with *raconter*.

Section 3

In **Section 3** candidates are asked to read two longer texts and need to answer questions in such a way as to demonstrate that they have understood the text/questions. In **Section 2** they are asked just to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they need to be more selective in their choice of answer, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and therefore do not score. The inclusion of unnecessary connectives often results in the invalidation of an otherwise correct answer. Candidates would do well to be guided by the length of the space allocated for an answer and should ensure that their answer fits within that space.

Exercise 1 Questions 31-35

For this exercise candidates had to read a longer text about Aline, who chose to volunteer as a doctor, along with her husband, in Malawi, and the difficulties and responsibilities of this work. Candidates are instructed in the rubric to read the text and then to tick *VRAI* or *FAUX* against five statements about the text (the rubric gives the information that two of the statements are *VRAI*, and three are *FAUX*). They can score 5 of the 8 marks available for this exercise by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 3 marks are scored by providing a correct version of the three false statements – a simple negative version of the original statement does not earn a mark.

Most candidates scored with their *VRAI/FAUX* decisions for **Questions 32, 34 and 35**, but many thought that **Questions 31 and 33** were true.

Those who correctly identified **Questions 31 and 33** as false did quite well with their new version of the statements, realising that Aline had set out with her husband, and that although the eight year old girl, Patricia, was much improved, Aline had been unable to cure the very sick baby.

The correction to **Question 34** was the most successful, with two possible answers: some candidates opted for the idea that Aline was obliged to make decisions on her own, and others chose to say that in France she could consult colleagues, though this was not the case in Malawi.

Exercise 2 Questions 36-42

For this last exercise, candidates are given a longer text, with questions about it to be answered in French. The text was based on the life of a successful entertainer who abandons his career at the height of his fame. As intended, this was the most demanding exercise on the paper and some candidates found it very challenging. Even though they were able to locate the correct part of the text from which to answer a question, they were often not selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response or they were unable to manipulate their answer sufficiently clearly to give an acceptable response. Candidates should bear in mind that if a single line of space is provided for the answer, the expected answer will not be three or four lines long. The majority of candidates, however, attempted answers to all questions in this final exercise, showing that they generally found the text accessible, and had understood the gist if not the detail.

The information needed to answer the questions occurs in order in the text, so **Question 36** could be answered simply with *pendant quelques années du vingtième siècle* from the first paragraph. Some candidates supplied information from near the end of the text, e.g. that Claude was 27 at the time when he retired from his career, when he was most famous. Verbs are not always needed for the answers to questions, but where candidates use a finite verb, they must make sure they supply an appropriate subject – for example, in **Question 37** *...s'ennuyait facilement...* cannot score without a subject pronoun. Many candidates were successful with their answer to **Question 38**, that Claude was punished several times, though there was some confusion over *fois* and *temps*.

For **Question 39** the mark could be scored by writing simply (*pour*) *sa mère*. Candidates seemed to have understood the text/question, but often lifted part/all of the first sentence of the third paragraph, rather than selecting just the detail needed. Similarly for **Question 40**, those who lifted the complete sentence *il était évident que ce jeune homme savait faire rire les gens* did not score, whereas a mark was awarded to those who carefully selected (*il savait*) *faire rire les gens*. The majority of candidates did well with their answer to **Question 41**, correctly identifying that the director offered Claude the opportunity to host a comedy show. **Question 42** required only the simplest possible answers of *le stress / la fatigue* to score a mark. Those who lifted the phrase *souffrant de stress et de fatigue* did not score, but a mark was awarded to the many candidates were able to add a correct finite verb *il souffrait de stress / de fatigue*.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/03

Speaking

Key messages

- This year, new marking tables were in use in the conversation sections of the speaking test. The format of the test however remained the same and was well understood in Centres.
- The standard of work heard was very similar to that heard in June 2014.
- Candidates had usually been well prepared for the Role play tasks. Good Examiners did not deviate from the script and set tasks and prompted candidates when necessary.
- Timings in most Centres were correct but there are still Centres where candidates were disadvantaged as the tests were too short or too long.
- Topic coverage was satisfactory in most Centres. A few Centres needed to cover a wider range of topics across their candidature and/or a wider variety of questions each time a topic was covered. It is not appropriate for all candidates in a Centre to choose the same topic for their topic presentation.
- Most Examiners are aware of the need to ensure that past and future tenses are tested in **both** conversation sections. There are still some Centres where this is not the case. In such cases the mark for language was limited. All Centres need to ensure that questions to test different tenses are included in **both** conversation tests.
- The best work was heard in Centres in which spontaneous and natural conversations developed.
- In Centres in which internal moderation had taken place, this had usually been carried out efficiently.

General comments

As in 2014, the standard of work heard was good and covered a wide range of performance. Most Examiners were well aware of the format of the test and conducted the examination efficiently. Candidates were generally aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well. Examiners were usually sympathetic to their candidates and helped them by making them work for the marks and giving them the opportunity to show what they knew and could do.

Centres are reminded that Examiners may have access to the confidential test materials (Teachers' Notes Booklet and Role Play Cards) in the four working days before the first Speaking test is conducted in order to prepare the Role plays. Centres are reminded that the contents of these materials are confidential and must not be shared with candidates. The confidential test materials must be returned to the secure storage facility after preparation has taken place and after each session of examining. Once started, the speaking tests should be completed as soon as possible within the Centre. There should not be a long interval of time between different groups taking the test within a Centre. Once the last Speaking test has been conducted, the examination materials must remain in secure storage until the end of the Speaking test period. **The sample should be checked and then sent to Cambridge as soon as possible after the tests have been completed.** The work from some Centres arrived very late this year and this can delay the moderation process.

Centres are reminded that candidates must not be allowed to do any writing during their preparation time and must not be allowed to bring any written materials with them into the preparation area. Please also ensure that candidates do not bring mobile phones into the examination area and that Examiners' phones are switched off.

Examiners need to understand the requirements of the mark scheme in order that they ask the right sort of questions which will stretch candidates and give them the opportunity to fulfil the descriptors in the higher mark bands. For example, **Examiners who included unexpected questions and went beyond straightforward 'closed' questions gave candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on Table B, Communication.** 'Safe' straightforward questions which do not give candidates the opportunity to develop their answers will not enable them to score marks in the highest bands. It is also essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in **both** conversation sections as

candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on Table C, Language.

- **Clerical checks**

In most Centres, the clerical work had been completed efficiently and Centres are thanked for this. Moderators reported fewer clerical errors than in 2014. In some Centres, however, large clerical errors were found. It is essential that all clerical work is checked with great care to ensure that all candidates receive the correct mark. On the working marking sheet, the addition of the individual marks for each candidate should be checked to ensure that the total mark is correct. Then, for each candidate, the transfer of the marks from the working mark sheet to the MS1 mark sheet (or the electronic marks file) must also be checked. On the MS1 mark sheet, the Centre must enter the total mark for each candidate in figures as well as shading the lozenges. A few Centres did not complete the mark column.

In larger Centres with several Examiners and in which internal moderation has taken place, any amendments made to the marks of individual candidates as a result of internal moderation must be applied to the whole of that Examiner's group. If internal moderation has taken place, it is important to ensure that the final Centre mark has been entered correctly on the MS1 mark sheet (or electronic marks file).

- **Cover sheet for moderation sample**

Nearly all Centres remembered to submit the Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample, duly completed. This form is intended to serve as a checklist for those in the Centre responsible for preparing the sample for external moderation and despatching it to Cambridge. Completion of this form allows Centres to check that their moderation sample is correct before they despatch it to Cambridge, and the completed form must be submitted to Cambridge with the sample. If there is more than one Examiner per Centre, the relevant section on the form must be completed.

- **Sample size**

Centres understood the requirements and nearly all Centres submitted a correct and representative sample. Centres with permission to use more than one Examiner had clearly gone to great lengths to ensure that both a good range of marks and different Examiners were represented on the sample. Many such samples were very well documented. **It is particularly helpful in such cases for the Moderators to receive a list of the recordings included in the sample for external moderation and in which examination group they can be found.**

- **Recording quality**

A high proportion of the recordings received were of a very good quality and Centres are thanked for this. Again, most Centres submitted digital recordings which were very clear and easy to access. Centres are reminded that whatever the method chosen for recording, if an external microphone is used, this should be positioned to favour the candidate. **Centres should note that the recording should not be paused between different sections of the test.**

In some cases, it was difficult or impossible to access the recorded sample provided by the Centre:

- Several Centres sent blank CDs or CDs of recordings that were barely audible: Centres must check the CD to ensure that their recorded sample is clearly audible before despatching it to Cambridge. This check should be carried out on a different machine to the one on which the recordings were made. If there is a problem, the Centre should get in touch with Cambridge immediately. Centres are reminded of the need to check all recording equipment prior to the live exams.
- Some recordings had not been saved as .mp3 files and could not be accessed by the moderator: **it is essential that files are saved as .mp3.** If new Centres are considering ways to record, it is worth obtaining a digital voice recorder (IC recorder). These are easy to use and the sound quality is excellent. Because the device is small, it helps make the experience less intimidating for candidates.
- Some CDs were damaged when they arrived at Cambridge: CDs must be carefully wrapped in some form of protective packaging before they are placed in the envelope with the moderation paperwork. The appropriate label (which includes the Centre name and a bar-code) should then be placed on the envelope. The envelope containing the recordings and paperwork should then be packaged in another parcel/envelope and one of the return labels with the Cambridge address should be attached before it is returned to Cambridge.

- In some cases, poor labelling made it difficult for the moderator to establish which recordings had been sent as part of the sample and/or to find the particular recordings required. Please note:
 - The CD must always be accompanied by a list of the featured recordings (candidate name and number).
 - **On CDs, it is essential that each recording be saved as a separate file.** The recording for each candidate must be saved individually and named as follows, Centre number_candidate number_syllabus number_component number.
 - Each CD must include a recorded introduction by the Examiner, listing the CD number, Centre number, examination number, examination name, name of Examiner and date. (For CDs, this introduction can be saved as a separate file (named 'recorded introduction'.))
 - The Examiner must introduce each candidate on the recorded sample by name and number, and also state the Role play card number. This announcement must not be made by the candidate.

In addition to the above, Centres are reminded to avoid sticking labels on CDs and to only write on the surface of the CD with a CD-friendly pen.

- **Internal moderation in Centres**

All Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner to conduct the Speaking tests for their candidates are reminded of the need to apply to Cambridge for permission well before the start of **each** Speaking test period. Permission is normally granted, on the understanding that internal standardisation/moderation takes place at the Centre before a sample is chosen for external moderation by Cambridge. In order to assist Centres that have been given permission to use more than one Examiner, Cambridge has produced guidelines for internal standardisation/moderation.

The standard of internal moderation in those Centres where more than one Examiner was used was usually high. The Coordinating Examiner in such Centres had approached the process of internal standardisation/moderation conscientiously and care had been taken to ensure the consistent application of the mark scheme across the different examining groups. Documentation of the procedures followed in Centres was usually very clear.

Where more than one Examiner is used, Cambridge needs to be able to check that all Examiners in the Centre have adopted a uniform approach to the conduct of the test and have applied the mark scheme consistently so it is important that examples of the work of each Examiner are included in the sample for external moderation.

Please note, if internal moderation procedures find only minor differences between the marking of an Examiner and the agreed Centre standard, the marks of candidates in that particular Examiner's group **should not be changed** in the Centre, but should be submitted as they are. In other words, if no adjustment to an Examiner's marks as a whole is necessary, the marks of the specific candidates sampled must not be changed in isolation. However, if after checking the sample for a particular Examiner the decision is taken to adjust that Examiner's marks, **that adjustment must then be applied to the marks of all the candidates who were examined by that Examiner**, and not just to the work of those candidates who were part of the internal check. Likewise, if an Examiner is judged to be out of line over part of the mark range, the marks of all the other candidates s/he examined with a mark in that range should be adjusted. Where a particular Examiner is judged to be out of line, it is good practice to select some more of that Examiner's candidates for a further check.

- **Duration of tests / missing elements**

Most Centres adhered to the timings stipulated in the syllabus and the Teachers' Notes Booklet, but some Centres persist in going under or over the five minutes prescribed for the Topic presentation/conversation and/or the General conversation test. Each of these sections **must** last for approximately five minutes. Where conversations are short or missing, candidates will be disadvantaged.

- **Application of the mark scheme**

Examiners were often consistent and fair in the way they applied the mark scheme and in such cases no adjustments were made to marks. In some cases, large adjustments were required to the marks awarded in Centres, often because sections of the test were very short or had been omitted. Some Centres had adjustments made to just to part of the mark range.

In the Role plays, some Examiners did not realise that a short response (in some cases, just one word), if appropriate, can earn a mark of 3. If there are two parts to a task, then Examiners are free to split the task, but should only one part of a task be completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 1. If a candidate chooses to use a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2, and not 3, is appropriate. Examiners are reminded that poor pronunciation can be queried if it prevents clear communication of a task. Apart from the task in Role play A which requires the candidate to listen to two options and then choose one, candidates cannot be awarded marks for merely repeating an 'answer' supplied by the Examiner.

Where marking in the conversation sections was generous, this was usually because marks in the higher bands had been awarded when there was no evidence that candidates could respond **in a spontaneous way to unexpected questions or that they could communicate consistently and accurately in past and future tenses**. High marks are not appropriate when the candidate does not do more than provide a series of short responses to straightforward questions. It is for this reason that Examiners must pitch the level of questioning at a different level for candidates of different abilities. Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in Centres.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Centres generally encouraged candidates to attempt all parts of each task and prompted appropriately when candidates needed encouragement. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. As last year, two-part tasks were split into (i) and (ii) on the candidate Role play cards. This helped candidates to remember to attempt both parts of the tasks and in such tasks there were very few cases of candidates (and Examiners) missing out parts of tasks. Examiners generally kept well to their script. Examiners should check the number of the candidate's card before starting the Speaking examination.

Overlong answers are not to be encouraged as marks are only awarded for the set tasks. Indeed, should candidates go on and add material extra to the set task it may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates should be reminded that it is always important to listen to the Examiner as on all the Role play A situations, there is always a task which requires them to listen and choose from the two options offered by the Examiner. If one of these options is not chosen by the candidate the appropriate mark to award is 0. Likewise, there is always one task which requires a response to an unexpected question on the B Role plays. In order to ensure that the level of difficulty in the task remains the same for all candidates, Examiners should not change the cues provided in the Teachers' Notes Booklet.

A Role Plays

The A Role plays were found to be of equal difficulty and appropriate for the candidature. They posed similar challenges to those of 2014 and were a fair test at this level. The A Role plays are designed to be easier than the B Role plays and are set using vocabulary from Topic Areas A, B and C of the Defined Content. All of the A Role play situations featured a task which required a question to be asked and one task which required candidates to choose an option from two provided by the Examiner. Candidates generally found them to be accessible and even the weakest candidates were able to score at least 1 mark on each task. Centres had trained candidates well to include a greeting and thanks where required. Centres are reminded that often a short response (perhaps one word) will be appropriate and in such cases a mark of 3 can be awarded. Examiners should query pronunciation if the meaning is not clear due to mispronunciation. Examiners should introduce the A Role play and start the conversation off. English should not be used to introduce the test. It is always helpful to read out the introduction to candidates.

Buying a birthday cake

This Role play was attempted well by candidates. Nearly all candidates were able to state what they wanted to buy. The pronunciation of *gâteau* was generally good. *Anniversaire* was not required for a mark of 3 to be scored. Most candidates listened well to the options *chocolat* and *crème* and chose one of the two. Candidates offering a different alternative did not score the mark. Most communicated well for whom they were buying the cake and were able to give an appropriate age on Task 4. Some candidates are still insecure about asking the price and used *l'addition* inappropriately on Task 5.

Buying postcards

This was an accessible set of tasks. All approached the first task well and had few problems of pronunciation. For Task 2, The pronunciation of *timbres* was disregarded as the testing point here was to give an appropriate number. On Task 3, some were not familiar with *l'étranger*. Those who did not choose between France and *l'étranger* did not score the mark. Most were able to ask the price and thank appropriately. On the last task, despite examples being given and the possibility of giving a brief answer, many chose to conjugate the verb *loger* and frequently used *je logé/je loger* which resulted in a mark of 2.

In a crêperie

The first task was well done but some found it difficult to pronounce *jardin* on Task 2. The choice of fillings in Task 3 was usually well done but a few candidates did not choose one of the options so did not score the mark. On the next task, candidates were told to say they were staying with friends. Those who just said they were on holiday did not complete the task. The last task was approached well. Most chose to ask where the toilets were and were successful in communicating their message but not always in appropriate and accurate language – *Où est les toilettes?* was often heard.

B Role Plays

The B Role plays were deliberately more demanding than the A Role plays in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, give an opinion, apologise or express pleasure. The level of challenge was balanced across the Role plays. As last year, they differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score marks on most tasks. It is important that Examiners know their own role and stick to the set tasks. Candidates should be reminded that there will always be one task in which they have to listen to the Examiner and reply to an unprepared question. They should be advised to consider likely questions in the 15 minutes preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room.

Phoning a shop about a lost wallet

Many candidates found it difficult to pronounce *portefeuille* and *caisse* correctly. *Caisse* was frequently pronounced *casse*. The prompt frequently needed to be repeated on the second task but most were able to give a brief response such as a time or *hier*. Almost all candidates could give two brief descriptive details for the wallet. Task 4 proved more challenging. Many did not express their pleasure. Furthermore, *carte d'identité* was not always well known. Some candidates did refer successfully to *un passeport*. Candidates were awarded a mark of 3 provided that they referred to an item which would enable identification such as *il y a une photo de ma famille* or *il y a une carte bancaire*. For the final task, most were able to ask about opening times of the shop. Weaker candidates often used *ouverture* in an inappropriate way or mispronounced it as *overture*. The most successful asked *À quelle heure ouvre le magasin?*

Phoning a French host(ess) to ask for a lift

Most were able to make a good start and explain that they had missed the last bus. For Task 2, weaker candidates frequently needed to have the prompt repeated but were usually able to think of a place in town. The third task required not just a reason why the candidate could not get a taxi but also an apology. Some candidates did not understand the rubric *Faites vos excuses*. It is worth emphasising this rubric as it occurs fairly frequently and is always worded in the same way. Some candidates think it requires a list of excuses rather than an apology to be made. Most candidates stated they did not have enough money. Task 4 required candidates to state two things they were doing or were going to do whilst waiting. Some gave some strange activities such as housework but most gave logical responses about finding somewhere to eat and drink. Reference to activities in a past tense here did not fulfil the task. On Task 5 a question needed to be asked about the arrival of the host(ess). Questions asking where or when were entirely acceptable. Some questions however were not related to the set task and did not score marks.

Phoning Pascal(e) to change holiday dates

Most were able to say they wanted to change dates but some candidates repeated the *votre* in the rubric which led to confusion as the wrong message was communicated. In Task 2, although candidates were usually able to say why they could no longer arrive on a certain date, some missed out the apology and did not fully understand the rubric *Faites vos excuses*. The third task was well done and most gave a correct date and duration. Some repetition of the prompt for the unexpected question was required but candidates usually successfully communicated their means of travel. On the last task candidates needed to be able to

ask **what** activities Pascal(e) had organised. The stronger candidates managed this well. Candidates asking **if** Pascal(e) had organised activities or stating that they would like to visit a certain place did not fully complete the task.

Topic presentation and conversation

A wide range of topics was presented by candidates. Generally, candidates were enthusiastic about their chosen topic and are to be commended for the way in which they had prepared their material. Centres are reminded that candidates in one teaching group should not all prepare the same topic as it makes it very difficult for the Examiner to explore the material in a spontaneous and individual way with each candidate. A good range of topics should be apparent in a Centre for this section of the examination.

The best presentations were delivered at a reasonable speed, were clear to understand and reflected the interests and/or personality of the candidate. Often, candidates used a variety of tenses and structures. It is worth impressing upon candidates that material heard in the opening presentation does contribute to their marks for both content and language for this section of the test. It is important to remind candidates not to present their prepared material too quickly as a very fast speed of delivery can hamper the transmission of relevant messages.

Most candidates chose to speak about their school, a favourite sport, their country/town of origin, life in another country, their holidays or their leisure interests. In some cases, the topics chosen were more suitable to A Level and candidates found it hard to sustain the performance they produced in the presentation once the conversation started. There were some interesting presentations about future work and family plans, voluntary work, and sporting ambitions. Some fascinating accounts were also given about local festivals and family occasions. This year, there were hardly any cases of candidates talking about *moi-même*. This is a subject to be avoided as it often pre-empts the General conversation section. Likewise, candidates should be encouraged to avoid a very general topic such as my daily routine as this can become far too general and often covers too many different topic areas rather than enabling candidates to go into depth on one particular topic. Generally, candidates were enthusiastic about their topic and are to be commended for the way in which they had prepared their material. All of the candidates heard had prepared a topic and many had put much thought and effort into this part of the examination.

Some candidates were allowed to present their material for much longer than the stipulated maximum of two minutes. A few did not present enough material and their presentation did not last for the minimum one minute. Centres should remind candidates to keep to the timings stated. Once the candidate has delivered his/her one to two minute presentation, the Examiner must spend the remainder of the five minutes allocated to this section discussing the topic of the presentation with the candidate. It is essential that this Topic conversation is not omitted and that it lasts the correct amount of time. If there is no Topic conversation, or if only one or two questions are asked, the candidate's marks for this section of the test will be affected.

In the Topic conversation section, Examiners need to focus their questions on the topic area chosen by the candidate. Although it is expected that teachers will have prepared candidates for the Topic conversation, if candidates are to score highly, this must not consist of a series of pre-learnt questions and answers, with both Examiner and candidate knowing what is coming and in which order. Questions should instead arise spontaneously as the conversation develops. It is important that Examiners remember to include 'unexpected' questions in this section of the test, in order to allow more able candidates to show that they are capable of 'thinking on their feet' and manipulating their prepared material, in terms of vocabulary and structures, according to the needs of the Examiner. The more natural the style of questioning used in this section, the more interesting it becomes for both the candidate and the Examiner. It is also important that questions do not encourage the candidate merely to repeat information which has already been given in the presentation. The best performances were ones in which the questions and answers developed into a natural conversation.

Although, Examiners were often aware of the need to elicit both past and future tenses, in a few Centres questions to test different tenses were not asked in the Topic conversation. Examiners need to remember that when questions in different tenses arise, they should be relevant to the candidate's chosen topic.

At the end of the Topic conversation the Examiner should introduce the final General conversation section of the test. This is helpful to both the candidate and the Moderator.

General conversation

Most Centres understood the need to cover just **two or three** topics from the syllabus with each candidate in the General conversation section in order to be able to cover each topic in some depth (with the proviso that in order to keep the conversation going it may sometimes be necessary to cover more topics more superficially with less able candidates). There were still some Centres in which too many topics were covered with all candidates. In such cases, a series of unrelated questions made it difficult for candidates to see a logical order in the questioning. The best examining featured an announcement as to which topic was going to be discussed and then at the end of this topic, an indication as to what was being moved onto next by the Examiner. The topics covered in the General conversation should be different from and not related to the topic chosen by the candidate for the presentation. Centres are reminded that before the examination candidates must not be aware of which General conversation topics will be examined.

Within each Centre, a good range of topics was usually covered across the candidature and Examiners usually tried to vary questions on these topics between candidates in order to make conversations as spontaneous as possible. It is important in the examination room to give the candidate the opportunity to respond to unexpected questions which arise naturally, and to follow up interesting leads presented by the candidate. This enables candidates to develop points of interest and to go beyond a series of straightforward statements which may limit them in terms of both communication and language. Many candidates communicated well on topics such as holidays, future plans, the environment, their town/country, school, leisure activities, food and drink/healthy living, daily routine and their families. As ever, this candidature remains an interesting one. Candidates have much in common but due to the diversity of location, culture and context, there are some fascinating differences.

Although Examiners were usually aware of the need to ask questions in a variety of tenses in the General conversation, in a few Centres such questions continue not to be asked. The Examiner should routinely include questions in different tenses on each of the two/three topics examined. Such questions should not be left until the final topic is covered. There were excellent examples of this technique in many Centres. Centres are reminded that if candidates only produce statements in the present tense, and do not show evidence of being able to work in past and future tenses, the language mark will be limited to a maximum of 6.

There were some excellent examples of candidates achieving at all levels of ability due to sympathetic and careful examining. As last year, good numbers showed that they could communicate well and many went beyond brief straightforward messages to longer utterances which conveyed more sophisticated messages and which included opinions, justifications and explanations. The more able were also able to go beyond working in the first person and conjugate verbs with different subjects. Candidates scoring very high marks for communication showed that they could develop their responses to 'open' questions in a natural way. Many candidates were also able to show that they could speak accurately in tenses appropriate to the questions asked. The best work in terms of linguistic content featured longer more complex utterances which made use of structures such as *si* + imperfect plus a conditional tense, perfect infinitives, *avant de* + infinitive and, occasionally, compound tenses. This remains even more impressive when such structures are heard in response to unexpected questions which arise naturally in the course of a conversation.

The examination continues to be the culmination of much hard work in IGCSE language classrooms and the candidature continues to show enjoyment of and enthusiasm for foreign languages.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/41
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates demonstrated in large measure that they were well prepared to manage the demands of this component in its new format.
- In the longer questions, candidates respected the guidelines regarding length, producing approximately 80 words for **Question 2** and, for **Question 3**, between 130-140 words.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the demands of the rubrics, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades showed solid control of sentence structure, verb tenses and more complex linguistic structures.
- Work was generally well-presented and legible.
- To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should read each question carefully before starting to write their answers. Once they have made their choice they should ensure that they respond to each task using the time frame in which it is phrased. It can be helpful to highlight or underline key words in questions and tasks.

General comments

Work from the full ability range was seen. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1 provided candidates with the opportunity to establish a solid basis for further success. Candidates should always try to give a full set of eight items even though only five correct/acceptably spelt nouns receive a mark. If candidates cannot recall the word for any of the items pictured, they are free to add the word for a different item provided that it fits the context of the question.

Candidates are reminded that they should write one item per line; candidates are also advised that they should not write their answers as labels beneath the pictures.

As had been indicated in the sample papers, there is no requirement to include a definite/indefinite article.

Question 2, which had previously featured in Paper 2: Reading and Directed Writing, was assessed by the same criteria as previously. Candidates appeared to be comfortable with this type of question; they wrote simple sentences to convey effectively the details required.

It is a requirement that there be a verb for a piece of information to gain a mark. One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. Up to ten marks are awarded across the question; there is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each of the tasks.

Candidates are reminded that the maximum of ten marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit or do not successfully convey at least one detail for each of the tasks.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options, each of which reflected the styles of writing required in past sessions: a letter, a report, a story line to be continued. Assessment of this question has changed quite significantly. There are ten marks for Communication, two marks for each of the specified tasks making up the question. Language marks are awarded in two categories: Verbs, eight marks and Other Linguistic Features, twelve marks.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within

the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question. It was very clear that some candidates were drawn to **Question 3(a)** as it invited information about television programmes. Unfortunately some, despite their obvious ability to communicate in French, did not gain high marks because they did not address the specific tasks laid out in the question. Candidates should take account of the fact that frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary, should take care to copy correctly from the rubric and also to note the gender of any significant nouns. In the very best work, the language flowed in an impressively natural way.

Communication: in order to gain the two marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the five tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of eight is awarded for eighteen verbs; there were instances where candidates produced many more than that. Candidates must remember that each different form of a verb earns a tick. Repeated correct forms of a verb do not qualify for a tick. The constant repetition of, for example, *c'est/c'était/il y a* should be avoided as each of these is only rewarded once. Candidates should be reminded that to receive a tick the verb must agree with its subject and that the use of *é* at the end of a past participle is essential for *-er* verbs used in the perfect tense. There were some instances where candidates were so focused on including sufficient verbs that they had little to show in terms of range of structures which might qualify for marks in Other Linguistic Features.

Other Linguistic Features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates will be able to demonstrate among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses such as *quand, si, parce que, car, qui, que*, object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (e.g. *ne... jamais, ne... plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions such as *depuis, pendant, pour*, and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity, common prepositions.

As mentioned earlier, the recommended word count was generally very well respected. Unfortunately, some candidates, thinking that this recommendation was mandatory, crossed out some work in order to meet the target and in so doing deprived themselves of valuable marks across all three categories of the assessment. Candidates should be advised to write the recommended amount, as excessive length often leads to error and repetition, however, they should be very careful when deleting work.

Some candidates were rightly allowed to word process their responses. Centres are requested to advise candidates who submit their work in this way to use a larger font and to use double spacing in order for Examiners to be able to have room to annotate the work in the normal way.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *Vous préparez un pique-nique*

The demands of this question were straightforward: candidates were required to give the French for eight of the items, represented in the pictures, which they might prepare to take on a picnic.

There were very few who did not gain all five marks. There was however some insecurity, even among able candidates, in the spelling of certain quite common words: *bananes, chocolat, gâteau...* It is worth remembering that candidates are free to offer any other items which fit the context and for which they know the relevant French word. Only items of food and drink were credited; the following were seen and rewarded: *œuf, lait, poulet, pizza, fraises, croissant, bœuf* and there were many others, as listed in the published mark scheme.

Question 2 *Ma saison préférée*

Candidates were required to write about their favourite season. Very many scored highly on this question. Communication marks were awarded for each piece of relevant information. Candidates could gain any number of marks for each part of the question, apart from the element stating which season was preferred. For the purposes of assessment, the first two tasks **(a)** and **(b)** were considered together as Task 1.

Candidates were expected to:

- (a) State which season they preferred
- (b) Describe the weather during that season
- (c) Say what they do during this time
- (d) Say which season they do not like and why
- (e) Say whether they would choose to live in another country and give their reasons.

There was an interesting divide in the choice of season: for the most part candidates were quite equally divided between winter and summer, there were some who favoured autumn but relatively few opted for spring. The choice of season was possibly based on the individual candidate's knowledge of the French word required. It was disappointing to see non-French words for seasons appearing with some regularity; candidates who thought laterally and referred to *la saison chaude*, *la saison des pluies* were rewarded as communication had been effectively made. Similarly, those who referred to the season as *la période entre les mois de juin et septembre* and *Noël* or *Ramadan* gained the mark.

Generally candidates were able to gain at least two marks for (b) for details of the weather: some gained more. There were many faultless passages in response to this task. For some, however, communication was effective despite some rather clumsy language. The standard patterns for expressing the weather in French were not securely known by some candidates who, from the evidence of the rest of their work, appeared to have a good working knowledge of basic language. There was clearly some confusion between the noun *la pluie* and the verb form *il pleut*, even the spelling of *froid* proved difficult, *fois* was not uncommon. How to express the notion of sunny weather which relies heavily on the noun *soleil* proved difficult for some: non-French words again were frequently seen. Perhaps some candidates think that this question is easy and as a result neither think carefully enough about what they wish to say nor check their work afterwards.

It was quite common for candidates to gain at least three marks in response to (c). Depending on the chosen season, the activities listed varied from *nager dans la mer* to *faire du ski dans les montagnes*; some gained marks for identifying the clothes they wore, others for the food and drink they consumed. The few who chose spring and autumn mentioned aspects of nature which they enjoyed. To some extent, this part of the question provided candidates with the opportunity to establish a solid block of marks. As with the weather structures, communication did not always occur because of clumsy expression: some candidates were not sure about the use of *jouer* and *faire* with sporting activities; *jouer au sport* was frequently offered and was not accepted.

In response to (d), the preferences again were heavily divided between *hiver* and *été*. In the case of the latter, it was interesting to note how many stated *je n'aime pas le temps chaud* or *il fait trop chaud*. Some candidates knew the noun *la chaleur*. Some complained that they could not engage in the activities listed for part (c), others expanded using different references, e.g. objecting to summer, some stated *il y a trop d'examens à l'école* and to winter *les jours sont trop courts*.

The responses to (e) again revealed an interesting division. Those who currently live in warmer climes hankered after a cooler country *parce qu'il fait trop chaud ici* or even *il y a seulement deux saisons dans mon pays*. Those living in northern Europe yearned for a warmer environment *car il pleut beaucoup ici*. For some the choice was based on sporting interests: *je voudrais habiter en Suisse parce que je voudrais faire du ski tous les jours*. America was a favoured place of residence, although not all candidates gained the mark here because they were not able to convey accurately enough *aux États-Unis*. Candidates could gain the marks for the reasons for their choice, even if the choice itself was compromised by error.

In terms of accuracy, very many gained full marks. The writing did not need to be error free for the award of 5 marks; candidates who use simple structures and who check their work can readily access the top bands.

Question 3(a) *La télévision et moi*

This was a very popular choice and was well answered by a high proportion of candidates. Some however would have done a little better if they had studied carefully the question before engaging in their response. There were some useful pointers in the rubric which were not picked up: *la télévision... une émission...* and errors in the use of those words occasionally meant that relatively easy marks were not gained. The word *émission* caused no problem in terms of its meaning but a few chose to use *programme* instead: although candidates gained the communication marks, they often lost out on language marks because they either did not know its gender or mis-spelt it.

Communication

The first task required a response in a past tense giving details of a recently viewed television programme. Very many succeeded here, identifying the programme by its title and type, often describing the content: *j'ai regardé Merlin, je l'aime parce qu'il s'agit de la magie. Merlin se déroule à l'époque du roi Arthur...* . Another candidate talking of a documentary explained of the people involved: *ils racontent leur vie*. There was some impressive awareness of structures associated with describing the content of television programmes, language which could equally be applied to books and films. On the other hand there were many attempts which were slightly compromised by the lack of such knowledge e.g. the use of *caractère* for *personnage*. Many lost marks because they did not respond directly to the question, writing statements such as: *j'aime les comédies...* . Others forfeited marks because they identified the programme only by its title, which was often not in French. When candidates see the instruction **Décrivez** they should always be sure to give more than one piece of information and remember that a name requires some explanation. Nonetheless many candidates did know the words for different types of programme: *comédie, documentaire, feuilleton, série, informations* or were able to describe the programme: *une émission de sport, ...de musique, ...de science-fiction*.

For the second task, candidates were required to give the reason for finding the chosen programme interesting. Some gained this mark by stating quite simply *c'était drôle, ...marrant, ...éducatif, ...amusant*. Regarding the latter, the word *amusement* was sometimes used as if it were an adjective. Another common error was the use of *informatique* for *informatif*. Clearly *intéressant* could not be rewarded as it was part of the question. Some expressed their interest by reference to the actors: *parce que mon acteur préféré prend le rôle principal*. Once again, some candidates were able to show knowledge of more sophisticated and informative language to explain in detail the content of the programme: *ils ont parlé de la grande diversité des animaux qu'on trouve dans les forêts africaines*, whilst others commented: *cela me fait rire*.

Candidates were quite easily able to identify a programme that they did not like and explain why for the following two tasks. Again, those who only provided the title lost marks. Some felt that they had outgrown some types of programme: *quand j'étais jeune, j'aimais les dessins animés mais je ne les aime plus parce qu'ils sont pour les enfants*. Many gained the marks for quite simple language: *c'est ennuyeux*, whereas others were able to articulate more serious concerns: *je trouve ça vulgaire et barbant...*, *c'est violent et sanglant...*, *j'ai aussi un peu la frousse quand je la regarde...*, *la violence, la sexualité, les drogues sont le thème principale* (sic).

The responses to the final task about the advantages/disadvantages ranged in complexity and tone. Easy marks were gained by those who stated simply *la télévision est amusante*. Many more sought to express more sophisticated ideas, stressing the dangers: *c'est mauvais pour les yeux/pour la santé...*, *ça peut devenir une obsession...*, *les gens peuvent devenir obèses s'ils regardent trop la télé...*, or focusing on the educational advantages: *la télé est comme un prof...*, *si vous regardez la télé dans une langue différente vous pouvez comprendre cette langue mieux...*, *on peut beaucoup apprendre, enrichir son vocabulaire et se détendre...* .

Verbs

There was some inconsistency in the use of *voir* and *regarder*; whereas this did not have an impact on the mark for communication, it was taken into account in the ticking of verbs. Some candidates, copying from the rubric, consistently wrote *j'ai vue* even though there was no preceding feminine direct object; others lost the mark because they did not make the agreement on *je l'ai vu/je l'ai regardé* in sentences where the object pronoun clearly referred to *émission*. Marks were also forfeited when candidates used *il* when referring to *émission* and *télévision*. Some candidates, aware of how marks are allocated in this section, used a great array of verbs, sometimes using unnecessarily complex structures. This occasionally had an impact on the marks for Other Linguistic Features; so much focus had been given to the verbs that there was a lack of range in other structures and quite often a degree of basic error in gender, word order, agreements and even of copying from the rubric.

Other Linguistic Features

There was some very sophisticated language used. Candidates whose rather basic language had brought them a good mark for Communication scored relatively poorly in this section if they had not been able to use some more complex sentence patterns. There were some frequent errors in the use of *mal* and *mauvais* and, more understandably, also of *quelques* and *certains*. Apart from being able to display knowledge of complex patterns, candidates do need to remember that the basic vocabulary which carries the essential messages of the response needs to be secure for the award of marks from the topmost bands.

Question 3(b) *Un blog sur moi-même*

The vast majority of candidates who chose this option understood that they were being invited to look back on the intervening years between leaving school and their imagined age now of twenty-five. Of these candidates, a small proportion rather wasted their efforts describing life at school before leaving at eighteen: candidates are advised to keep their preamble to a minimum and to focus on the specifics of the question; to reach the recommended length, they should elaborate on the information required. A small but significant number misunderstood the import of the question, thinking that they were to describe how they were going to spend their life up to the age of twenty-five.

Communication

For the first two sets of marks, candidates were required to mention two things that they had done since leaving school. Details ranged from the very mundane to the adventurous, with the vast majority being able to use at least one past tense verb in a way which would allow them to gain a minimum of 2 communication marks. This task was very accessible for most candidates who were able to use familiar language effectively. Travel featured greatly with many describing their *année sabbatique* and extensive world wide journeys, while some spent time working *comme bénévole* or for *une organisation bénévole* (e.g. *j'ai aidé les enfants dans un orphelinat*) and some visiting family in distant lands: it was pleasing to note that some candidates are able to distinguish between *visiter* and *rendre visite à...*. It was interesting to read of the social consciences of many candidates whose activities were to be later expanded on when they recorded their plans for the future. This contrasted with those who were keen to establish themselves in lucrative careers which began with university: *je suis allé à l'université... j'ai étudié la science... j'ai fait un stage dans une banque...*

Most candidates found the third task straightforward and were able to say whether they were happy with their current life. Generally candidates appeared to be happy with their lot; interestingly a few looked back on wasted opportunities at school which had had an impact on their time since. In some cases it seemed that marks were forfeited through carelessness: *je content de mon vie..., j'ai content de ma vie..., je suis ne content pas...*

Explaining their reasons for feeling the way they did, for the fourth task, candidates often commented quite simply: *j'ai un bon travail..., je suis bien payé..., j'ai beaucoup d'amis..., j'habite avec mes amis..., j'ai ma propre maison...*. In fact these were relatively straightforward marks to gain for the vast majority of candidates.

Career success, marriage, family, large houses, fast cars all featured in the future plans outlined in the responses to the final task. Doctors and lawyers were the favoured career paths and all of these ideas were quite easily conveyed. The major stumbling block for some was the incorrect use of the verb *marier*. There were some laudable intentions: *je voudrais faire partie d'une organisation qui protège la nature..., j'essayerais de trouver une nouvelle méthode pour produire de l'énergie qui va aider le monde et qui va sauver l'environnement..., je voudrais construire un hôpital pour les enfants malades en Afrique*, and another whose ambition was to ensure that *tout le monde est capable de se connecter sur l'Internet même les personnes pauvres...*

Verbs

Some frequently used common verbs, although sufficiently accurate for the award of Communication marks, were not accurate enough for reward in this category. Notably amongst these verbs were: *étudier, travailler, faire, aller, partir* – in the case of the latter largely because of the use of the wrong auxiliary. Careful checking as ever is important. Marks were lost for trivial errors e.g. *j'ai visté...* and candidates frequently had difficulty expressing correctly the idea of getting married using either the verb *épouser* or *se marier avec...*

Other Linguistic Features

There was plenty of opportunity to use complex sentence patterns as the candidates needed to switch between time frames. There was some frequent use of *quand* clauses, although the appropriate sequence of tense was not always securely known. *Après* was often used but the absence of *que* sometimes rendered the structure faulty. Looking to the future, candidates made frequent use of *si...*, however, once again the sequence of tense was not always followed. There was a little inconsistency in the use of adjectival agreements, which was particularly apparent in the use of *content(e)* in the third task.

Question 3(c) *L'année dernière j'ai passé une semaine dans une école de langues...*

This was a slightly less popular choice and in some respects was a little more demanding in that it placed a heavy emphasis on the consistent use of past tenses. There were some effective if quite predictable responses; there was generally a less imaginative approach to that adopted for the other two options.

Communication

The first two sets of marks were awarded for a description in the past tense of the language school: as can be seen from the mark scheme, qualifying details covered all aspects of the premises, accommodation, participants and teaching staff. These were relatively easy marks for candidates to gain, however some lost out because they used the wrong tense or they only gave one detail. The need to describe both the accommodation and the participants was clearly indicated in the rubric and candidates need to focus as always on the precise requirements of each part of the question. Commonly seen details included: *l'école était très grande...*, *les chambres étaient petites...*, *il y avait un joli jardin...*, *j'ai partagé ma chambre avec...*, *les participants venaient de beaucoup de pays différents...*, *les participants étaient gentils...*, *les professeurs étaient sympas...*

The third task invited candidates to say what they did during the week. Many picked up on *les activités culturelles et sportives* in the rubric and elaborated on that: *j'ai joué au tennis...*, *j'ai visité la ville*, *je suis allé au musée...*, *nous avons regardé un film français...*. Information about routine and language learning were also rewarded. Candidates largely adopted a very straightforward approach frequently giving a range of rewardable information.

The final two sets of marks were awarded to positive and negative comments about the language school and the experience generally. These were again relatively easily earned marks for those who used the language they knew and who were able to use verbs effectively: *j'ai beaucoup appris...*, *je me suis fait de nouveaux amis...*, *la nourriture était mauvaise...*, *je voudrais retourner l'année prochaine...*

Verbs

The need for past tenses proved demanding for a few of the candidates who chose this option: *je visité...*, *je fait...*, *je appris...*. There were some errors which could have been corrected: *ils étaient...*, *il y a avait...*. As with **3(b)**, the verb *étudier* was not always correctly spelt: *j'ai étude...* was frequently seen. There was also some insecurity/confusion over the verb *rencontrer* which variously appeared as *recontrer*, *renconter* and even *raconter...* *Jouer des sports* appeared as one of the activities as it did in **Question 2**. *Se faire des amis* was not well known.

Other Linguistic Features

Some common vocabulary was not properly used: *le école*, *la l'école*, *les copaines*; prepositions referring to the location of the language school: *à France...*, expressions of quantity: *beaucoup des amis*, *plus du temps*, *assez de l'argent* all illustrate the types of errors seen in answers to both this question and the others. In all three questions, some candidates used *à mon avis* and *selon moi* as qualifiers to *j'aime...*, *je déteste...*. They should be advised to use one or the other. Some common adverbs were frequently mis-spelt: *malheureusement*, *cependant*, *beaucoup*. Nonetheless, as in the other questions, there was an impressive range of structure attempted and often used successfully: structures using *depuis*, comparative adjectives and adverbs, subordinate clauses using *si*, *quand*, *qui*, *que*, *pendant que*, as well as a variety of patterns for expressing opinion in various tenses: *j'ai pensé que...*, *je trouvais que...*, *je crois que...*, *j'estime que...*

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/42
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates demonstrated in large measure that they were well prepared to manage the demands of this component in its new format.
- In the longer questions, candidates respected the guidelines regarding length, producing approximately 80 words for **Question 2** and, for **Question 3**, between 130-140 words.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the demands of the rubrics, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades showed solid control of sentence structure, verb tenses and more complex linguistic structures.
- Work was generally well-presented and legible.
- To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should read each question carefully before starting to write their answers. Once they have made their choice they should ensure that they respond to each task using the time frame in which it is phrased. It can be helpful to highlight or underline key words in questions and tasks.

General comments

Work from the full ability range was seen. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1 provided candidates with the opportunity to establish a solid basis for further success. Candidates should always try to give a full set of eight items even though only five correct/acceptably spelt nouns receive a mark. If candidates cannot recall the word for any of the items pictured, they are free to add the word for a different item provided that it fits the context of the question.

Candidates are reminded that they should write one item per line; candidates are also advised that they should not write their answers as labels beneath the pictures.

As had been indicated in the sample papers, there is no requirement to include a definite/indefinite article.

Question 2, which had previously featured in Paper 2: Reading and Directed Writing, was assessed by the same criteria as previously. Candidates appeared to be comfortable with this type of question; they wrote simple sentences to convey effectively the details required.

It is a requirement that there be a verb for a piece of information to gain a mark. One mark is awarded for each relevant detail. Up to ten marks are awarded across the question; there is no requirement to provide the same amount of information for each of the tasks.

Candidates are reminded that the maximum of ten marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit or do not successfully convey at least one detail for each of the tasks.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options, each of which reflected the styles of writing required in past sessions: a letter, a report, a story line to be continued. Assessment of this question has changed quite significantly. There are ten marks for Communication, two marks for each of the specified tasks making up the question. Language marks are awarded in two categories: Verbs, eight marks and Other Linguistic Features, twelve marks.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within

the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question. It was very clear that some candidates were drawn to **Question 3(a)** as it invited information about health and fitness. Unfortunately some, despite their obvious ability to communicate in French, did not gain high marks because they did not address the specific tasks laid out in the question. Candidates should take account of the fact that frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary, should take care to copy correctly from the rubric and also to note the gender of any significant nouns. In the very best work, the language flowed in an impressively natural way.

Communication: in order to gain the two marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the five tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of eight is awarded for eighteen verbs; there were instances where candidates produced many more than that. Candidates must remember that each different form of a verb earns a tick. Repeated correct forms of a verb do not qualify for a tick. The constant repetition of, for example, *c'est/c'était/il y a* should be avoided as each of these is only rewarded once. Candidates should be reminded that to receive a tick the verb must agree with its subject and that the use of *é* at the end of a past participle is essential for *-er* verbs used in the perfect tense. There were some instances where candidates were so focused on including sufficient verbs that they had little to show in terms of range of structures which might qualify for marks in Other Linguistic Features.

Other Linguistic Features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates will be able to demonstrate among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses such as *quand, si, parce que, car, qui, que*, object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (e.g. *ne... jamais, ne... plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions such as *depuis, pendant, pour*, and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity, common prepositions.

As mentioned earlier, the recommended word count was generally very well respected. Unfortunately, some candidates, thinking that this recommendation was mandatory, crossed out some work in order to meet the target and in so doing deprived themselves of valuable marks across all three categories of the assessment. Candidates should be advised to write the recommended amount, as excessive length often leads to error and repetition, however, they should be very careful when deleting work.

Some candidates were rightly allowed to word process their responses. Centres are requested to advise candidates who submit their work in this way to use a larger font and to use double spacing in order for Examiners to be able to have room to annotate the work in the normal way.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *Vous préparez votre sac pour aller à l'école*

The demands of this question were straightforward: candidates were required to give the French for eight of the items, represented in the pictures, which they might put in their school bag.

To maximise their chances of scoring the five marks available, candidates are well advised to provide a list of eight items. The eight pictures only serve as a guide and candidates are free to use different items provided that they fit the context of the question. *Stylo, livre, crayon, short* and *baskets* were well known by the vast majority. *Calculatrice* was not so widely known and many used *calculateur* which was not rewarded.

As well as the eight items shown in the pictures, clothing, toiletries, id documents, a snack and a drink were also credited.

Question 2 *Mes loisirs*

For this exercise, candidates were asked to write about their leisure activities. Communication marks were awarded for each piece of relevant information. It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates kept to the recommended word count.

Candidates were expected to:

- (a) List their favourite leisure activities
- (b) Say when and with whom they do the activities
- (c) Say whether they prefer to do the activities with their family or their friends and why
- (d) Say which new leisure activity they would like to do.

The vast majority of candidates scored the ten marks available for Communication as they found plenty to say about their leisure activities.

To ensure that they score the ten marks available for communication, candidates are advised to:

- Check that they have addressed every task and sub-task
- Produce clear and concise answers which remain focused on the task.
- Offer a variety of pieces of information. For example, candidates who only provided a couple of leisure activities often struggled to communicate sufficient relevant points
- Highlight or underline key words in each task
- Write in well-defined paragraphs.

In (a), physical activities were, by far, the candidates' favourites, followed by listening to music, watching television, shopping and playing a musical instrument. Many candidates scored a significant number of communication points by listing several activities: *J'aime/je préfère jouer au tennis, écouter de la musique, regarder la télévision* etc.

(b) was in two parts. Many candidates scored well for stating that they did some activities with their family but others with their friends. After school and during the weekend tended to be the moments at which they participated in leisure activities.

There were also two parts to (c). Candidates who stated that they preferred to do some activities with their friends but others with their family scored well. The reasons offered were that friends are more fun and/or have the same interests. Whilst it was acknowledged that parents have more money, the downside was that they are often not sporty or are too busy.

For the last task, candidates were asked to mention a **new** activity they would like to do. Those who used an activity they had already mentioned were not rewarded. Windsurfing, sailing and skiing appealed to many candidates.

The vast majority of candidates scored four or five out of the five marks available for Accuracy. They produced pieces of work which were coherent, showing that they could use relevant verbs and vocabulary with a fair degree of accuracy. There was some insecurity in the use of *faire* and *jouer*. Some candidates found it challenging to manipulate the language they had at their disposal to provide a meaningful response to the final task.

Question 3(a) *Être en forme*

Candidates were expected to address the following points:

- When they decided to change their habits
- Why they took the decision
- To describe their new routine
- To describe their friends' reactions

Each task was awarded two communication marks. Candidates could gain another two marks by providing an extra detail for one of the last three tasks.

This option was by far the most popular.

Whilst many candidates were able to manipulate the language used in the question, some did not say when they decided to change their habits or chose to use a time expression which was unclear. There was much confusion between *il y a* and *depuis* + time expression. Those who clearly stated *hier/le mois dernier, j'ai décidé de changer mes habitudes* were able easily to score the two marks available.

Poor diet and lack of exercise were the main reasons given for their decision. Some candidates were unclear as to the use of *mal/mauvais* and *gros(se)/grand(e)*. *Pour être plus en forme* could not be rewarded as a reason as it was part of the stimulus.

Candidates were able to describe in great detail what they are now doing to be healthier. This included getting up earlier, eating plenty of fruit and vegetables, avoiding fast food and sweets as well as doing a variety of sports. Many candidates gained two lots of two marks for this task. As in **Question 2** there was much confusion as to whether to use *jouer* or *faire*. *Maintenant, je joue beaucoup de sport* was quite common. The word *gymnase* does not seem to be widely known and many candidates used *à la gym* instead.

Friends were usually happy with the candidate's efforts, with many deciding to follow the same healthy routine. A statement along the lines of *mes amis sont heureux pour moi* was sufficient to gain two marks.

It was very pleasing to see that many candidates were able to score the ten communication marks available.

A small number of candidates misunderstood the task and wrote about moving to a different house/town. As a result they lost a significant amount of communication marks. Candidates must ensure that they read the question and tasks carefully and that they address these tasks in their answer. Communication marks are only available for completing the tasks as set on the question paper.

Question 3(b) Les transports

Candidates were expected to address the following points:

- To describe a journey
- To say whether they prefer the bus or the train and why
- To say whether they would buy a car in the future and why/why not.

There were four communication marks available for the description of the journey. Some candidates had not read the stimulus (*Vous avez fait un long voyage en train/bus*) carefully enough and described a future journey. Using the wrong time frame resulted in the loss of some communication marks.

The second task was very well done by the vast majority of candidates. Once again, four marks were available, two marks for stating their preference and two marks for the reason. *Je préfère le train/bus* was sufficient to score the two marks available. Varied reasons were offered as to their favourite mode of transport such as speed, cost, comfort and facilities. Key vocabulary words need to be checked carefully to avoid spelling errors. There was some confusion with the use of *vite/rapide*, *confortable*, *toilettes* and *sièges*.

Opinions were divided on whether to buy a car or not in the future. Whilst many looked forward to the independence it would bring them, others expressed concerns as to the negative impact it would have on the environment.

This essay was, on the whole, very well done and many candidates scored eight or more marks for Communication.

Question 3(c) Ma mère s'est cassé la jambe...

Question 3(c) was the least popular option. Candidates were required to continue the story line: «*La semaine dernière, maman s'est cassé la jambe. Alors moi, j'ai dû aider à la maison...*»

They were expected

- To describe what they did to help at home
- To give their reactions and their family's reactions to these events.

There were six communication marks available for the first bullet point. Where candidates did not score all the communication marks this was usually because they did not use a past tense as required by the task. The sorts of jobs the mother might have done around the house had she been fully mobile were rewarded, e.g. housework, gardening, shopping, looking after children. Many candidates could express accurately *j'ai fait les courses*, *j'ai préparé les repas*, *j'ai aidé mon petit frère*. Attempts at *j'ai fait la lessive/la vaisselle/le repassage* were less successful.

A further four communication marks were available for the second bullet point. Many candidates were able to express two straightforward reactions to the events, e.g. *j'étais fatigué(e), ma mère est/était fière de moi*.

Some candidates described how the mother's accident happened, which did not gain communication marks as it was not a part of the tasks. However, candidates were rewarded for saying how they felt after their mother's accident as this was accepted as a reaction to the events.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/43

Writing

Key messages

- Candidates demonstrated in large measure that they were well prepared to manage the demands of this component in its new format.
- In the longer questions, candidates respected the guidelines regarding length, producing approximately 80 words for **Question 2** and, for **Question 3**, between 130-140 words.
- The most successful answers focused clearly on the demands of the rubrics, were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades showed solid control of sentence structure, verb tenses and more complex linguistic structures.
- Work was generally well-presented and legible.
- To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should read each question carefully before starting to write their answers. Once they have made their choice they should ensure that they respond to each task using the time frame in which it is phrased. It can be helpful to highlight or underline key words in questions and tasks.

General comments

Work from the full ability range was seen. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

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Question 3 offered a choice of three options, each of which reflected the styles of writing required in past sessions: a letter, a report, a story line to be continued. Assessment of this question has changed quite significantly. There are ten marks for Communication, two marks for each of the specified tasks making up the question. Language marks are awarded in two categories: Verbs, eight marks and Other Linguistic Features, twelve marks.

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the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question. It was very clear that some candidates were drawn to **Question 3(a)** as it invited information about school, a familiar and popular topic. Unfortunately rather too many, despite their obvious ability to communicate in French, did not gain high marks because they did not address the specific tasks laid out in the question. Candidates should take account of the fact that frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary, should take care to copy correctly from the rubric and also to note the gender of any significant nouns. In the very best work, the language flowed in an impressively natural way.

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As mentioned earlier, the recommended word count was generally very well respected. Unfortunately, some candidates, thinking that this recommendation was mandatory, crossed out some work in order to meet the target and in so doing deprived themselves of valuable marks across all three categories of the assessment. Candidates should be advised to write the recommended amount, as excessive length often leads to error and repetition, however, they should be very careful when deleting work.

Some candidates were rightly allowed to word process their responses. Centres are requested to advise candidates who submit their work in this way to use a larger font and to use double spacing in order for Examiners to be able to have room to annotate the work in the normal way.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *Vous allez à la plage*

The demands of this question were straightforward: candidates were required to give the French for eight of the items, represented in the pictures, which they would take to the beach.

The vast majority were able to gain at least three marks. Of the items illustrated, *t-shirt, short, jean/pantalon, livre, sac* proved to be the most frequently given and the most frequently written in an acceptable form. Candidates are reminded that football is a sport and is not the appropriate French word, *balle/ballon* were required. Some candidates provided non-French words for certain items, these were often attempts at *maillot, lunettes, crème, serviette*. It is worth remembering that candidates are free to offer any other items which fit the context and for which they know the relevant French word. The following were seen and rewarded: *eau, sandales, chemise, magazine, portable, veste* and there were others, as listed in the published mark scheme.

Question 2 *La nourriture*

Candidates were required to write on the topic of food.

They were expected to:

- (a) Describe the dish they prefer to eat at home
- (b) Say who prepares this dish and when they eat it
- (c) Say what they do not like to eat and why
- (d) Say what food they would like to have for their next birthday.

Very many candidates scored the ten marks available for Communication; they seemed to be comfortable with the topic of food. There were instances where candidates did not give sufficient information: their responses were too limited to the bare essentials of each task even though, from the evidence of what they did write, they could clearly produce correct French. Candidates are therefore reminded that they should try to give two or three details for each part of the question. There was some evidence to suggest the commonly used verbs, *manger*, *boire*, *prendre*, were not known as well as they should be; non-French verbs were occasionally seen and this inevitably led to marks being lost.

In response to (a) many made reference to local dishes, all of which were awarded marks. Italian dishes appeared to be very popular; sushi too appealed to many. Candidates were also awarded marks for mentioning the ingredients of their favourite dish, how the dish is made and why they liked it.

Candidates were able to give a clear idea of who made this dish for (b); a variety of family members were mentioned, grandmothers being well regarded for their culinary skills. Some candidates said that they prepared it themselves; a few mentioned the chef at a local restaurant where they liked to eat. The food was most frequently eaten with family, sometimes with friends: notions which the majority were able to convey effectively. Marks were also given for information about where, most often at home, and when they consumed the food.

For (c), candidates needed to say what food they did not like and why. There were many who gained a mark, especially those who chose to use *je déteste...*, however, there was some insecurity in the use of the negative form which meant that a few did not earn the mark. At this level, it is important that candidates be able to produce a correctly formed negative form of the verb: *je n'aime pas...*, *je ne mange pas...*. Candidates commonly expressed their dislike for vegetables; a small number, conscious of the need for a healthy diet, claimed that they did not like sweet foods, with some rejecting fast food for the same reasons.

Responses to (d) were frequently quite detailed. Marks were awarded for details about the food to be eaten, for where they would celebrate and with whom. Candidates often mentioned their favourite dishes, but many looked forward to *glaces* and *gateau au chocolat* in particular.

A high proportion of candidates scored four or five marks out of five for Accuracy. They produced pieces of work which were coherent, showing that they could use relevant verbs and vocabulary with a fair degree of control. Some candidates, however, did find it quite challenging to construct a series of coherent sentences, each with a relevant, correct verb form.

Question 3(a) *Ma vie à l'école*

Candidates should always read very carefully the details of the question before setting down their answers.

In the case of this question, it was clear that far too many candidates had read only the overarching title, they recognised that they were required to write about aspects of school and launched into a series of general details about their early morning routine, journey to school, favourite subjects and activities. The question demanded some very specific information and some of this detail was not given, resulting in some rather low marks.

Communication

The critical word in the first task was *hier*. Candidates were invited to use past tense verbs to recount what they had done at school the previous day; the suggestions focused on lessons, break and lunch. There was plenty of opportunity here for candidates to use familiar verbs e.g. *étudier*, *parler*, *jouer*, *manger* to write about what they had studied, how they had spent time with friends and what they had eaten and where. Those who had read the question gave a range of detail, with many commenting on the fact that it was the exam season and that they had taken an exam and had prepared for the next one. There were two sets of marks awarded here and a good number of candidates gained both. This was a very accessible task for those who had read the question.

There were again two sets of marks available for the second bullet point. Candidates were asked to highlight the positive and negative aspects of their school; marks were gained for any two pieces of information, two positive, two negative or one of each. Here the tense of the verb was less important, the information could be conveyed in past or present tenses, though most candidates used the present. It was reassuring to read many positive comments: *les professeurs sont très sympa/gentils...*, *les professeurs m'aident...*, *les cours sont intéressants...*, *l'école est très belle...*, *les classes sont assez petites...*, *c'est un bon endroit pour apprendre*. There was some insecurity in the spelling of *professeur* but this did not generally impede communication. Some candidates had complaints: *il y a trop de devoirs...*, *il y a beaucoup d'examens...*, *l'uniforme n'est pas confortable...*, *la nourriture n'est pas bonne...*. Again the spelling of some basic vocabulary was not always securely known but most candidates were able to gain marks.

The final bullet point invited candidates to describe their ideal school. Not surprisingly candidates frequently focused on less homework, a shorter day, better food, the freedom to wear their own clothes rather than a uniform. A few mentioned the location: *mon école serait près de la mer...*, others mentioned the teachers: *les professeurs seraient gentils...*, and some commented: *mon école idéale serait comme cette école...*

Verbs

Candidates were largely able to use appropriate verbs and the topic encouraged the use of quite basic and well known verbs. There were a number of instances where candidates used non-French verb forms; careful checking might have allowed some candidates to gain marks.

Other Linguistic Features

Despite the fact that this was a familiar topic, there was evidence to suggest that candidates were not necessarily secure in their knowledge of gender of common nouns. This has an impact on the award of the mark here, especially as correctly placed adjectives with appropriate agreements are integral.

Question 3(b) *Ma nouvelle mobylette*

This question drew a small number of candidates who were often quite successful as they provided the exact information the question demanded.

Communication

The first bullet point required candidates to state when they bought their scooter. There were references to a birthday but largely candidates gave a date or a general reference: *...en janvier*, *...le mois dernier*, *...le week-end dernier*. As ever, the important thing is to use language which is known rather than to seek to tell the 'truth' and thereby lose marks because the relevant word is not known. Some candidates gained only one mark here for partial communication because they did not succeed with the verb *j'ai acheté...*. Many gave additional descriptive detail about their scooter

Candidates again needed a past tense for the second bullet point which invited information about their first outing on the scooter. This was often very well answered with a range of detail about where: *je suis allé en ville*, when: *samedi dernier*, *je suis allé chez mon ami*, with whom: *je suis sorti avec mon frère*.

There were some interesting comments in response to the third bullet point regarding the advantages of having a scooter: *je suis plus indépendant...*, *j'ai plus de liberté...*, *c'est moins cher qu'une voiture...*, *c'est plus facile à stationner...*, even *c'est mieux pour l'environnement*.

The responses to the fourth point about their preferred mode of transport were quite predictable, with many aspiring to own fast cars or private aeroplanes. The reasons for their choice earned the final set of marks: most appreciated the comfort and speed of their chosen transport, whilst acknowledging, in some instances, that this was not environmentally friendly.

Verbs

The candidates who chose this question did seem to know the essential verbs which were needed to convey the information: *acheter*, *prendre*, *aller*, *sortir*. Less commonly known were *garer*, *stationner* and understandably *rouler* and *circuler*. Candidates need to remember to respond using the tense in which the task is phrased. Perfect tenses were often not secure.

Other Linguistic Features

There was evidence of candidates being able to extend their sentences using conjunctions to describe their outings e.g. *quand je suis sorti...* or to explain their choices: *si j'avais beaucoup d'argent..., parce que c'est plus confortable..., car c'est plus rapide* Candidates who are able to vary their sentence patterns in addition to using basic structures correctly can move up the scale.

Question 3(c) «J'étais bien content(e) d'arriver à la maison de vacances...»

This question attracted a small number of candidates. As with **3(a)**, it was vital to understand the details required. Once again, too many who attempted this option focused only on part of the question, namely arriving at the holiday home. These candidates recorded details of a pleasant holiday visit and made no mention of any problems encountered. Consequently they did not gain many marks.

Communication

The first set of marks were awarded for a description of the holiday home or of any relevant problem associated with it. There was some very imaginative detail: *j'ai vu cinq araignées entre moi et la porte: je n'avais jamais vu les araignées très grandes.* Another complained: *il y avait beaucoup de lapins blancs...* . Marks were more widely earned for straightforward information: *ce n'était pas confortable..., le bâtiment était vieux..., la maison était sale..., la porte était cassée..., il n'y avait pas d'électricité...* . Candidates who conveyed more than one piece of information about the property gained further marks. Some candidates complained that the house did not live up to the photograph or the description on the Internet which was a fair point and worthy of reward.

Marks were awarded for the solution to the problem. This usually involved contacting the owner or agency: *j'ai téléphoné à...* with others abandoning the house and seeking a comfortable hotel. For some this was an easy set of marks to earn. Once again, there were some more imaginative solutions, with one candidate commenting that a friendly neighbour took her in.

The final sets of marks were awarded for comments about the holiday. These were the most commonly earned marks as even those candidates who had misunderstood the full import of the question were able to make positive or negative comments about what they had experienced. Apart from the mundane, straightforward responses such as: *c'était amusant/affreux* some candidates responded in a more personal manner: *j'étais furieux/fâché/triste...* . Of course some of the visits had happy outcomes and candidates were rewarded: *je me suis amusé..., j'ai aimé la culture...* .

Verbs

Control of past tenses was critical for success with this question. There was generally a measure of insecurity amongst the candidates who chose this option: *je vu..., je téléphoné...* illustrate the issue here. Candidates need to think carefully about their strengths and weaknesses before choosing which option they answer for **Question 3**.

Other Linguistic Features

The gender of common nouns was not always known and as ever with a piece involving holidays, some candidates did not remember that *vacances* is feminine and is used in the plural and that consequently adjectives referring to *vacances* required appropriate agreements. It is important again to stress that candidates should be careful to choose the question which is most within their capabilities. In the case of this option, because candidates did not always have the range of vocabulary and structure to be able to describe the problems they encountered and their resolution, they found it hard to gain marks in this category.