FIRST LANGUAGE FRENCH

> **Paper 0501/01**
> **Reading and Directed Writing**

Key messages

Questions 1 and 2

Candidates must read the questions carefully and make sure they answer them correctly and clearly by picking the relevant information from the text and not just quoting the text. The number of marks allocated by the side of each question serves as a clear indicator of the number of ideas or points that need to be included in order to gain full marks. Candidates should not give more details than requested by the question as marks will be deducted for any additional incorrect information. Candidates do not have to answer in full sentences.

Question 3

Candidates should produce a structured response which covers equally the three points of the question and uses the ideas from the texts only. Candidates should also pay attention to accuracy of language which is assessed in this question and should therefore allow time at the end of the exam to proof read their work so as to avoid careless grammatical and spelling errors.

General comments

In questions 1 and 2 candidates were required to show their understanding of a literary text by answering a series of questions on that text. In **Question 1** they had to demonstrate their understanding of both explicit and implicit meanings and in **Question 2** they had to demonstrate their understanding of how the writer achieves effects and influences readers.

Candidates generally performed better in **Question 1** than in **Question 2**. Candidates who produced strong responses answered the question properly using their own words and did not just quote the text. Candidates who, for example, answered « Nous avions cours certains après-midi de la semaine et je découvrais de nouvelles matières, » did not actually answer the question. Successful candidates also ensured that additional details were correct, when providing more details than required. Overall, the best answers were those which were short and to the point. Sometimes, when candidates try to answer in full sentences the language errors impair the communication.

Many candidates thought Gaby was a girl as they did not notice that adjectives referring to Gaby were in the masculine form e.g. *J'étais bien content* at the beginning of paragraph 2.

In **Question 3** candidates had to read two articles about the job of influencer and then required to write their own article for their school magazine outlining the advantages and dangers of the job and explaining why they would or would not recommend that job to their friends, using only the information from the texts.

Most candidates stuck to the word limit. Those who performed well in this task were those who presented a well-balanced and well-structured article where they had included a wide range of valid ideas from the texts which they have developed and grouped into concise and well written paragraphs using a good range of linking words, the correct register and an accurate language. Weaker responses included a list of ideas or introduced ideas irrelevant to the task or failed to address all the points of the question or consistently contained very inaccurate language.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates generally understood the text but occasionally struggled to answer some questions purposefully.

The range of questions provided opportunities for all candidates to perform according to their ability. The most well answered questions were **(a)**, **(d)**, **(g)**, **(i)**, **(j)**, and the most challenging ones were **(e)**, **(f)**, **(h)**, Marks are awarded for each specific relevant point made by the candidate. When a question is worth one mark only one detail is required and when a question is worth two marks only two details are required; more details than necessary may sometimes invalidate a correct answer.

(a)   Was well answered by nearly all the candidates.

(b)   The question targeted the differences between the two schools and not the candidates in the two schools so answers referring to the changes in candidates' interests were not valid.

(c)   Here candidates had to convey the idea that rich candidates were spending <u>their holidays abroad</u> and that they were wearing/have returned with fashionable/designer clothes. Answers like *ils peuvent voyager/ils vont en Europe* were not precise enough.

(d)   This question was well answered apart for those who did not understand Gaby's sarcasm and answered *ils vendaient toutes les mangues du quartier*, the word *toutes* invalidated the answer. There were a few incorrect answers like: *il travaille pour le père de Gaby/ils vendent des vêtements.*

(e)   Not all candidates managed to explain clearly how Gaby and his friends felt since they have become aware of fashion. Candidates need to avoid just quoting the text : « *Nous étions tristes d'être privés de ces choses… Nous détestions en silence ceux qui les possédaient. »*. Some incorrect answers included : *Ils ne peuvent pas avoir tous les habits à la mode car ils n'ont pas d'argent/ils savent que même s'ils vendent toutes les mangues ils n'auront pas assez d'argent/un sentiment de privation.* A clear and simple answer like *ils ressentent de la tristesse et de la haine* was required.

(f)   Successful candidates managed to select the appropriate information from the text. Candidates had to explain the attitude of Donatien and Innocent towards Gaby by conveying the idea that Donatien disapproved of Gaby's attitude whereas Innocent condoned it.

Some candidates failed to differentiate between Donatien and Innocent or did not realise that Innocent was the name of a person and only explained Donatien's attitude towards Gaby. Others explained what Donatien generally thought without linking it to Gaby, so an answer like *Donatien pense que l'envie est un péché capita*l was too vague. There were also some incoherent answers like *Innocent aidait trouve à moindre prix pour Gabi* which were not valid. Answers just mentioning what type of people Donatien and Innocent were e.g. *Donatien est un homme sage/religieux/Donatien ne s'intéresse pas à la mode il préfère s'intéresser à Dieu/Inoccent est gentil*, were also invalid.

(g)   The majority of candidates gave the correct answer and said that Armand was funny/amusing/made people laugh.

(h)   Overall candidates performed well. Weaker responses contained language errors which impaired badly the comprehension. Some candidates also mixed up the names and said that Gino approved of Armand's attitude and that Gaby disapproved or that Armand approved of Gino's attitude. Answers like *Gaby est impressionné par Armand/Gaby le considère comme son meilleur ami* were not accepted. *Gino est amer* was not accepted either as it is a feeling and not an opinion but it was not penalised if it was added to the correct answer.

(i)   Most candidates understood the question and gave the correct answers. However, answers like *ils s'amusent/ils se moquent du père de Gino/ils sont confuses/ils ont peur* were not accepted.

(j)   Most candidates gave the correct answer. Incorrect answers included *une éruption volcanique/la guerre/une fissure qui lézardait le mur du garage.*

Question 2

(a) Candidates had to convey the idea that Gaby did not like school holidays/disliked having nothing to do/liked being active/preferred going to school/was finding holidays boring. Most candidates answered this question correctly. Answers like *les vacances sont ennuyants/Gaby n'a rien fait d'amusant pendant les vacances/ses vacances se sont mal passées/Gaby aime exagérer* were not accepted.

(b) Candidates had to convey the idea either that Gaby had been badly influenced by his friends or that (the obsession for) fashion was like a contagious illness. Candidates generally understood the question but their answers were often too vague e.g. *pour montrer que ça a affecté Gaby/que Gaby a été persuadé par ses amis.* There were also a few incorrect answers like *il n'aime pas les autres élèves/il est dégouté* or some incoherent answers like *la mode est déjà propager dans Gaby sa tête.*

(c) In this question candidates had to identify the type of language (not examples of it) used to describe the shopping experience in Buja and why. It was not necessary to give examples from the text. Answers in which the text was just quoted without identifying the type of language were not valid. Answers to the second part of the question like *pour décrire le shopping à Buja/car shopping à Buja n'est pas une belle expérience* were too vague or incorrect in cases like *cela nous montre que cette boutique n'est pas de bonne qualité* (Buja is a town and not a shop).

(d) Most candidates understood the question and answered correctly but not always accurately. A few thought the phrase showed the lack of education in African countries.

(e) In this question candidates were required to lift from the text the exact phrase which showed that Gaby did not pay attention to what Donatien was saying and which was '*Ses leçons de morale me passaient au-dessus la tête*'. Additional or missing words invalidated the answer.

(f) In this question candidates were required to identify two figures of speech used in the second sentence of the last paragraph; they did not have to justify their answers with an example from the text. Candidates lost marks if they just quoted the text without identifying the figure of speech, if they identified the wrong figure of speech, if they gave more than two answers and some of the additional answers were incorrect. Some failed to focus on that particular sentence and considered the figures of speech used in the whole paragraph.

(g) In this question candidates were required to identify a metaphor in the last two sentences of the text by quoting the exact words and not lifting the whole sentence where the metaphor was. Additional words invalidated the answer.

Question 3

Reading

- *Candidates were required to pick the relevant information from text B and text C to write an article about the advantages and dangers of being an influencer and explain why they would or would not recommend that job to their friends.* Most of them said they would not recommend the job and a few said it was up to the person to decide.
- A prompt was given to start the article. Successful candidates used the prompt as directed.
- A lengthy introduction explaining the purpose of the article and summing up what it would be about was not necessary especially as the word limit is 350 words. It was also unnecessary to describe at length what the job of influencer consisted of as some of the information was later repeated in the section addressing the advantages or dangers.
- Often candidate failed to develop the last point and explain why they would or would not recommend the job. It often came to something like: because of all the dangers/inconveniences I mentioned earlier I would not recommend the job. Some candidates ignored the recommendation and said instead that it was not a job for everybody, that no job was perfect and that they all had their pros and cons.
- Sometimes there was not an equal focus on each of the bullet points of the question or irrelevant information were included or entire section had been lifted from the texts. Candidates often failed to differentiate between the dangers and the difficulties of the job. The latter have often been used by good

candidates to address the last bullet point of the task and thus avoided repeating the ideas mentioned under the second bullet point.
- Some candidates misunderstood the word 'autodidacte'.
- Successful answers for the Reading contained a wide range of relevant facts, ideas and opinions covering equally each of the points of the question had been selected from both texts and developed in a convincing way.

To improve the Reading mark candidates should:

- Read the texts and question carefully.
- Identify an equal number of relevant ideas for each section of the task.
- Develop those ideas with information from the texts.
- Remain focused on the task.
- Answer all three parts of the question equally.
- Use their own words rather than lift big chunk of texts.

Writing

Good answers for the Writing showed a well-structured content, included a range of linking words, used the correct register as well as a variety of accurate vocabulary and structures.

Good candidates tended to group and link several ideas from the texts into one sentence. They also structured their content well using paragraphs and a range of linking words and the correct register.

Weaker candidates tended to lose focus and pick ideas at random without grouping them which made their answer hard to follow or they just listed the ideas without developing any and the overall effect was somewhat repetitive. Their use of linking words was often limited and the register was sometimes not appropriate e.g. informal language instead of a formal/impersonal language.

The accuracy which was assessed only in **Question 3** varied greatly from faultless to very hard to read for those who used a phonetical spelling. The language was generally appropriate but often simple and unsophisticated or just lifted as candidates were often more concerned with making valid points than with improving the quality of their language.

The most common errors were the following:

– use of the infinitive instead of the past participle or vice versa
– incorrect verb endings
– failure to agree adjectives and past participles
– wrong gender
– wrong tense
– omission of ne when using the negative form
– failure to use the subjunctive when required…
– incorrect use of pronouns and possessive adjectives
– failure to use the correct prepositions after certain verbs
– failure to put the accents or apostrophes
– failure to use a capital letter after a full stop.

Many candidates favour the phonetical rendering to the detriment of grammatical accuracy e.g. *c'est* was sometimes spelt *cet/cette/ses/ce*; *est* often spelt *et* or *ai* and vice versa; *ce* spelt *se*; *ceux* spelt *ce/se*; *ça* spelt *sa*; *on* used instead of *ont*;; *a* instead of *à* and vice versa; *eu* instead of *eux*; *sont* instead of *son* and vice versa; etc.

All these mistakes can be avoided if candidates take the time to proofread their work.

To improve the quality of language, candidates should pay particular attention to the following:

– the agreement of adjectives and participles
– the correct verb endings
– the correct use of pronouns and prepositions
– the difference between a and à; between et, est, ai and aie; between c'est, s'est, ses, ces, sait; between ce and se; between sa and ça; between été and était; between on and ont,; between son and sont

– widening their knowledge and use of linking words and vocabulary
– increasing the use of complex structures
– the importance of accents, apostrophes, comas, full stops and capital letters.

To improve the style and structure candidates should:

– organise and plan their response so that it is purposeful, clear and fully relevant.
– use a good range of linking words
– remain focused and avoid mentioning things which are not in the texts
– use the correct register
– sound convincing.

Concentrating on these areas should stand all candidates in good stead.

FIRST LANGUAGE FRENCH

| Paper 0501/02 |
| Writing |

Key messages

To be successful in this paper, candidates need to select two titles (one from each section) and write a response that is relevant, well-structured and clear. Essays should be accurate with a use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. They should be coherent with well-developed ideas.

General comments

This exam was new this year and candidates are now given a choice of 2 titles for the discussion and argumentative essay and 2 titles for the descriptive and narrative essay. Each essay is marked out of 25: a maximum of 12 marks is awarded for style and accuracy and a maximum of 13 marks is awarded for content and structure. Centres should note that **Question 1** is a discursive essay whereas **Question 2** is an argumentative essay. **Question 3** is a descriptive essay whereas **Question 4** is a narrative essay.

The majority of candidates knew how to write a descriptive essay and there were some good descriptive essays. However a few candidates wrote a descriptive essay despite choosing a narrative question and vice versa. Whilst most candidates observed the rubric regarding the number of words used (350 – 450 words per essay), some scripts were significantly shorter.

This paper generated some truly excellent work which demonstrated not only accurate and fluent linguistic production, but also a good understanding of the issues requested **in Questions 1 and 2** and contained some well selected examples to illustrate the various points being made.

Some candidates still need to be reminded of the formal structure of a discursive/argumentative essay ensuring they start their essay with an introduction rather than simply agree or disagree with the question straight away. It is also important to break the writing into paragraphs and avoid simply repeating the introduction instead of providing a proper conclusion.

For Question 3 some descriptive essays were a pleasure to read producing a vivid experience for the reader. However, there are still too many descriptive essays which only provide a simple description of objects and lack continuity. For **Question 4** successful candidates were able to develop a good story without being predictable. Taking a few minutes to plan a rough plotline as a draft is the key to achieving a higher mark.

The importance of clear handwriting cannot be overstated. Where candidates are aware of the limitations in this area, they should be advised to take extra care to ensure that they are not unduly penalised simply for the lack of clarity.

Question 1 was more popular than **Question 2** and **Question 4** was more popular than **Question 3**

As far as the quality of language was concerned, the best essays demonstrated a good level of grammatical accuracy and a wide variety of vocabulary and expression. Linguistically, the quality of the essays varied considerably where weaker candidates tended to use simple language and showed little grammatical or lexical awareness which meant that ideas were not well communicated. Candidates should also be reminded of using the appropriate register: *truc, glander, mecs, prof, l'aprem, resto, dégueulasse, bouffer, vachement*, and *bordel* should not be used when writing an essay. Using the 'tu' form is also not acceptable.

There were a number of recurrent weaknesses and errors with the following seen often:

- most frequently misspelt word: beaucoup often spelt as *beacoup*
- agreement of *tous* and *ce: tous ces années, cet opinion*

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- confusion between: on and *ont mais* and *mes, sont* and son, *ce* and *se*, *ça* and *sa*, *c'est* and *ces*
- present of irregular verbs *il peux*
- omission of accents: a and *à, ou* and *où, du and dû*, sur and *sûr*
- d*û à for grâce à*
- imperfect tense of faire: *il fesait*
- conjugation of verbs in past historic II *réponda*, on *prena, j'arriva, j'alla*
- overuse of *ça, cela, il y a*
- conjunctions at the beginning of paragraphs: *donc, alors, puis, ensuite, aussi*
- past participle agreements: *nous sommes allé j'ai mangée, j'avais decider*
- irregular past participles: *il s'est ouvrit*
- preceding direct object agreement: *Je les ai vu*
- use of *savoir* instead of *connaître*
- formation of adverbs: *profondémment, apparament, prudamment, fréquament*
- anglicisms: *résulter à, consister de. advertissements for publicités prévenir for avertir*
- dependent infinitive: *préférer de faire.*
- how to ask questions: *Peut les magasins traditionels survivre? Es vraiment le cas* ?
- hanging past participle: *j'observais mes camarades se lever en jetant*.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

'Le commerce electronique finira par tuer les magasins traditionels puisque de plus en plus de personnes préfèrent faire leurs achats en ligne'. Discutez.

This question generated a significant number of thoughtful, well-constructed and cogently argued essays. The question asked whether online shopping would kill traditional shops as more and more people do their shopping online. Stronger essays gave details of the advantages and disadvantages of both the ecommerce and traditional shops before making a judgment. Some advantages/disadvantages frequently mentioned were as follows: there is more choice online, it is more convenient as you can order from home (especially good if you have a disability or can not go out), goods are usually cheaper online but you lose the social aspect and interaction with other people. You can not try things on and you do not get help and advice. Some candidates also mentioned tourism: shops are good for tourism. They bring in tourists while others mentioned environment. There were not many off topic essays but some candidates lacked depth and were rather limited in ideas. In some cases, candidates did not present a logical argument and appeared to contradict themselves. A few essays seemed to be more about the advantages and disadvantages of technology. One essay made this essay into a dialogue where a couple of people were stating their points of view. Candidates should not use dialogues in this question.

The general feeling was that the ecommerce would not kill local shops at least not in the near future.

Question 2

'La restauration rapide est la cause principale de l'augmentation du taux d'obésité dans le monde'. Etes-vous d'accord?

In this question candidates had to argue whether fast food was the main cause of obesity. Most essays were in agreement with the statement and were not short of supporting ideas. They suggested that fast food was everywhere and easy for people to get. People or candidates after working hard do not have the energy to cook and this is why they go to places such as McDonald. Some candidates made the point that yes it causes obesity but only if you eat fast food all the time. Once every so often is ok. Stress, metabolism, thyroid problems and lack of physical activities were other causes which cause obesity. The United States was often taken as an example of a country where obesity is growing because of all the fast-food outlets. A few essays were not focused enough on the question and talked too much about how these places are bad for your health in general without referring to obesity.

Section B

Question 3

Vous êtes dans la cantine de votre établissement scolaire. Décrivez ce que vous voyez, entendez, ressentez…

This question generated some good answers. In good essays, there were some very detailed descriptions of the canteen using all five senses. These essays successfully managed to provide impressive details of the canteen as the writer entered it. Candidates needed to make sure their writing was descriptive and not narrative in order to be successful with this task. Successful candidates avoided using descriptions that were obviously learnt by heart and used their own language.

Question 4

'Tout fonctionnait comme prévu'. Incorporez cette phrase dans une courte histoire.

This given sentence would be more suited if located in the middle of the story rather than at the very beginning in order to build up suspense. Some essays were very engaging with effects successfully achieved.
The best answers contained the following features:

- accurate use of the past historic and the imperfect/pluperfect tenses
- eventful stories with a build-up of the tension and the climax; the subject matter should be considered carefully and lend itself to effective story telling
- candidates relied on their own ability to tell a story rather than using a pre-learnt story which might not necessarily fit with the sentence provided in the question
- candidates remembered to include the sentence in their story and copied it correctly and in the correct tense

When writing a narrative essay, it is important to engage the reader from the beginning, introduce a challenge and maintain the tension build up.