

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/01  
Speaking

## Key messages

For Teachers/Examiners:

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination and, if necessary and appropriate, interrupt the Topic Presentation if it overruns significantly.
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section – but answer briefly.
- Cover a range of topics in the General Conversation and be prepared to follow the interests and passions of the candidate.

For candidates:

- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions as well.
- Ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to be awarded maximum marks.
- Remember that the presentation should make clear reference to francophone culture or society: *The presentation must demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken.*

## General comments

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

The type of question asked by an Examiner can make a huge difference to how a candidate is able to make use of this opportunity – Examiners need to be aware that very long complex questions or closed questions often prompt short answers, sometimes just 'yes' or 'no', whereas open questions such as *Comment?* or *Pourquoi?* may allow a candidate the freedom to answer at much greater length and in greater depth.

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

## Administration

Recordings this year were generally clear, though a number presented problems because of the recording system chosen. Where Centres make use of digital recording software, each candidate's file must be saved individually, as an .mp3 file, and finalised correctly, so that each candidate's examination can be accessed for moderation. Files should be identified using precise candidate details rather than just "number 1, 2" etc.

There were a number of cases where recorded material was unplayable or where the recording had not been transferred correctly or where the original recording was inaudible. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner's own contribution.

Please ensure that all recording material (including CD and cassette cases) is labelled with details of the Centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a Centre has candidates at both A and AS level, they should be recorded on separate CDs or cassettes. If using cassettes, only ONE candidate should be recorded per side of a 60 minute cassette, and

a maximum of TWO candidates per side of a 90 minute cassette. It is very disruptive to be obliged to turn a cassette in the middle of an examination, and parts of the conversation are inevitably lost.

Care should also be taken with the packaging of recorded material – CDs are not unbreakable and there have been a few cases of inadequately packaged CDs so damaged in transit that it has been impossible to listen to candidates. Please also avoid sticky tape or labels coming into contact with the CDs as this makes them unplayable and runs the risk of damaging the equipment on which they are played.

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

### **Comments on individual parts of the examination**

There are 3 distinct parts to the speaking test:

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

In order to be fair to all candidates across the world, these timings should be observed – where examinations are too short, candidates are not given opportunities to show what they can do, and where conversations are over-extended, an element of fatigue creeps in and candidates sometimes struggle to maintain their level of language. Examiners must also remember that the longer their own contributions, the less time candidates have to develop their ideas. Responses to questions asked by candidates should be kept brief.

#### ***Presentation (3 to 3½ minutes)***

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation, lasting about three minutes, on a specific topic of his or her choice, taken from one of the topic areas listed in the syllabus booklet. This is the only prepared part of the examination and the only part for which candidates are able to choose what they want to talk about.

The topic list gives candidates a very wide choice – the most popular this year, at both A and AS levels, were *Sport, Loisirs, Les médias, Education, Les jeunes, Famille* and *Pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage, violence in society, discrimination, racism and immigration, some dealing with culture or politics in a French speaking country, personal interests such as art or music, as well as topical presentations on the American Presidential elections. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues.

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

Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched it quite widely, and have to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3½ minutes – additional material which cannot not be included in the actual presentation because of the time constraint may well prove very useful in the topic conversation section. In general, candidates had no problem speaking for the required time and many were able to give full and interesting presentations.

Candidates would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects – the mark scheme criteria for the content/presentation element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice, and consider whether it will be possible to develop and open out their chosen topic. Among more unusual topics this year were *Les Macarons* and *Les Espadrilles*, neither of which lends itself readily to the exploration of ideas and opinions.

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

### **Topic Conversation (7 to 8 minutes)**

In this section, candidates have the chance to expand on what they have already said and develop ideas and opinions expressed briefly during the presentation. Examiners need to beware of merely asking questions which allow a repetition of the same material already offered – their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily “right” answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed.

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

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

Examiners should note that it is helpful both to candidates and Moderators to signal the end of the Topic Conversation and the beginning of the General Conversation.

### **General Conversation (8 to 9 minutes)**

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

This section is intended to be a conversation between Examiner and candidate, so it is not appropriate for the Examiner to ask a series of unrelated questions, to which the candidate responds with a prepared answer, after which the Examiner moves on to the next question on the list!

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

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

### **Assessment**

The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where topics did not relate to a francophone country. A handful of Examiners also found it difficult to measure Accuracy appropriately.

Where candidates ask questions during the course of conversation, this should clearly be rewarded, but Examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that these are relevant to the topic under discussion.

In Centres with a number of candidates, Examiners were generally able to establish a logical rank order and appropriate marking pitch, but this is more difficult to achieve where Centres only have one or two candidates. Examiners should be congratulated on their efforts to apply the criteria of the mark scheme so conscientiously.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/22  
Reading and Writing

## Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. Including additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy / cut and paste) phrases unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

## General comments

This was felt to be a fair test, similar in level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced a wide spread of marks. There were some first-rate scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, and whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them, there were elements which were accessible to nearly all.

The topic generally appeared to be one of which candidates had some awareness and one to which they appeared able to relate.

The majority of candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of questions, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied whole sentences or phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**, or because they preferred to give their own (often lengthy) opinions of what they thought the text ought to have said, rather than what it actually did say, or because they wrote general essays in answer to the first task in **Question 5**.

Most candidates managed to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible: sometimes the answers were longer than the whole paragraph of the text to which they referred. **The practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract from the overall impression for the quality of language mark: *la productivité a-t-elle progressé parce que ... 3(c); Le commerce équitable bénéficie-t-il aux producteurs parce que ... 4(b)*.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text has diminished considerably in recent session, but remains a common feature amongst the some candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting'

sections directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. The rubric clearly states that candidates should answer **sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte**. Candidates should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

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

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

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90-100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40-50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a very marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that some candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (not doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste 20% of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points, and from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

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

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

This exercise held few fears for the majority of candidates, and full marks were regularly scored. The only frequently occurring wrong choice was *dont* instead of the correct *soit* for *c'est-à-dire* for **(b)**. The *s* was occasionally omitted on *engagements*. There was some evidence of candidates sensibly narrowing down the possible choices by looking for an infinitive or a past participle (for example), even if they did not necessarily know the exact meaning of the word to be replaced.

#### Question 2

There were some very good answers to this question, but as usual the task proved demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures.

**Item 2(a)** was well handled at the outset by those who could form a passive, but the necessary agreement on *constatée* caused problems for a number of candidates. Others didn't observe the pluperfect tense of the original.

**Item 2(b)** produced a number of alternatives to the obvious *tue (fait mourir, cause la mort de)*, and *la malnutrition tuent* was common. Not following the present tense of the original also cost some candidates marks.

In **Item 2(c)**, many candidates handled the first part of the sentence well but either omitted *si nos prévisions sont bonnes* or simply wrote *les prévisions...* *Nos provisions* was sometimes found.

**Item 2(d)** was one of the better handled items, with candidates evidently on the look-out for a subjunctive and able to form one correctly.

**Item 2(e)** often suffered from a failure to adjust the agreement: *une réduction de prix a accompagnée*.

### Question 3

**Item 3(a)** proved to be a fairly challenging question. Many candidates identified the concept of reducing the number of *sous-alimentés* but were not sufficiently precise about halving it. Some candidates struggled to understand or express the idea that the number had now returned to the level of the 1970, having seen a slight drop towards the end of the century, rather than having remained constant *depuis* 1970.

**Item 3(b)** Candidates were generally successful in identifying the difficulty of providing for the family, but some resorted simply to 'lifting' *subvenir aux besoins de la famille*. Most candidates understood *le chômage* and managed to find satisfactory alternatives to *faire face à*.

In **item 3(c)**, the points about levels of productivity were well made by many, but some lost marks by not making a sufficiently clear distinction between developed and developing countries. Others relied heavily on 'lifting' *une augmentation de la productivité* or *la situation ne s'est pas reproduite*, both of which were easily avoidable, for example with *la productivité a augmenté* or *ce n'est pas le cas*. *L'écart s'agrandit* regularly suffered the same fate.

**Item 3(d)** A misunderstanding of the phrase *faute de* caused some candidates to suggest that the machinery was often breaking down, but they were generally much more successful in expressing the idea of working by hand.

**Item 3(e)** Most candidates mentioned the idea of a fall in prices, avoiding lifting *la réduction des prix*, but not always being sufficiently precise as to the scale. The other three elements of the question were generally accessible.

### Question 4

Marks on this question were generally somewhat lower than on Question 3.

**Item 4(a)** saw many candidates expressing the idea of *freiner (ralentir, limiter, réduire)* without going too far with *stopper* or *éliminer*. Relatively few understood *l'exode rural*, some appearing to think that *rural* was an adjective associated with *la rue*.

In **Item 4(b)**, there was a good deal of lifting of *des conditions commerciales plus justes* and *combattre la pauvreté*. The third mark required some notion of pro-activity on the part of the *agriculteurs* in shaping their own destiny.

**Item 4(c)** suffered again from the very avoidable lifting of *un prix de vente plus avantageux, la stabilité des prix* and *des produits de meilleure qualité*. *Investissements* could also have been easily expressed with a verb. Here, as elsewhere on the paper, it was very often thought to be an advantage that prices should be *abordables*, whereas in fact the point was that lower prices disadvantage the *petits producteurs*, because what is being referred to is the prices paid to (not by) them.

**Item 4(d)** asked what the *petits producteurs* were enabled to do, offering similar straightforward opportunities to rephrase using verbs instead of nouns: *augmentation; creation; amelioration*. *Ils peuvent augmenter leurs revenus, créer ces emplois et améliorer les structures communautaires* earns all three marks.

In **Item 4(e)**, few candidates mentioned the possibility of a specific bonus but often scored three marks anyway by identifying the three other benefits mentioned, although the distinction was not always made between their own efforts to protect the environment and raising awareness in other people of the need to follow their example.

### Question 5

This Question asks the candidates to summarise the main issues of the two passages and then to reflect on possible ways of reducing the problem of hunger, giving their own views. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

Candidates were required to summarise *les éléments qui contribuent au problème de la faim et les bienfaits du commerce équitable* as presented in the two texts. The mark scheme identified 16 rewardable points, of which many candidates managed perhaps 6 or 7 or more, with a good number reaching 10. The most commonly identified contributory elements included the increase in population, low prices paid to the *producteurs*, unemployment and low productivity, but few included the gap between developed and developing countries and the lack of rainfall/fertile soil. The most usually mentioned benefits of fair trade were higher/more stable revenue, improved quality and yield, job creation, reduction of poverty, and the encouragement of investment.

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

The personal response gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic - *à mon noble avis ...* - which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Some candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and ventured very little, resulting in some unambitious and derivative responses, but others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or slant of their own. Contraception, legislation to limit family size, GM crops, eliminating food waste, improving distribution chains, growing your own vegetables, international aid without misappropriation by corrupt governments, and spending money on agriculture rather than arms or the space race were all relevant ideas that took the response beyond the confines of the texts.

The quality of language varied from excellent to poor. Some candidates found it difficult to express their ideas in a grammatically correct form, with verbs as usual being far the most common sources of error. Particularly concerning again was the wide-spread notion that the plural of *il travaille* is *ils travaillent*. Examples of incorrect verb forms and agreements were many, and the use of the infinitive (-er) ending seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-é). But basic agreements in general were simply routinely ignored by even some of the more fluent candidates: *les produit, le produits*. This was exacerbated by a general interchanging within the same sentence of *il* with *ils* and therefore of *son/sa/ses/leur/leurs*. Particularly in longer sentences (of which there was no shortage!), candidates appeared to forget the subject they had started with and switched apparently at random.

There were instances of phonetic approach to spelling - *saisser* (*cesser*), *des prix plus chaire* - which extended even to very basic words - *maix; qu'an; assé/asser; pas se que; eu* (for *eux*); *pa*. *Ce/se/ceux* were often treated as interchangeable, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça*, *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont*, *donc* and *dont*. *D'avantage* was almost universal, as were *revenue* and *l'emploie*. *Vent/vend/vente/ventre/vendre* were also sometimes treated as interchangeable.

Constructions with certain common verbs caused regular problems: *permettre, aider, encourage, empêcher* and even *pouvoir*. *Leur/leurs* were often wrong and attempts at using *dont* very often went awry. The difference between *qui* and *ce qui* was not appreciated by a large number. There was also frequent redundant insertion of *en*: *Il y en a des avantages; il s'en servent de machines*

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

# FRENCH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9716/23  
Reading and Writing

## Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a word (or words) that fit(s) perfectly in the place of the one from the text/question.
- **Question 2:** start the sentence with the prompt provided and be careful with the grammatical changes in the new sentence.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** candidates should formulate the answers with their own words and refrain from copying any part of the text.
- **Question 5:** respect the word limit. In part **(b)** candidates should express their own ideas (instead of copying ideas from the text).
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

## General comments

The scripts were all completed, all candidates coped well with the time given to complete the papers and response to the two texts ranged from very good to poor.

**Question 1** was the most successful part of the examination, with most candidates scoring 5 or 4 marks.

**Question 2** challenged the candidates' grammatical strength and was completed to a lesser degree of success (details below).

In **Questions 3 and 4** there was a tendency for some candidates to write unnecessarily lengthy answers, which did not always address the questions, or to rephrase the same points again and again.

Candidates respected the length requirement in **Question 5** better than in previous years, but there were still some who lost marks because **Question 5(b)** was started after the word limit was reached and thus it could not be taken into consideration.

Candidates must read the instructions given for each question carefully, paying particular attention to the words in bold (specific details and examples are listed in the next section). The number of marks allocated for each question serves as a clear indicator of how many separate ideas need to be included in the answer in order to gain full marks.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1**

The purpose of this exercise was to find a word (or words) that fit(s) perfectly in the place of the one from the text/question. On the whole this question was completed quite successfully by most candidates.

- (a) Most candidates provided the correct answer, although some supplied *promouvoir*, which changes the meaning of the sentence to the exact opposite.
- (b) This question presented no difficulty to most candidates but there were some who chose *possédée*, which is a feminine word, therefore cannot replace a masculine adjective.
- (c) This question was more challenging for some candidates, as the text also offered *enseignement*, the meaning of which could have fitted in the place of *éducation*. However, it was not the correct

answer because of the gender issue: a feminine word was requested in order to fit with its feminine adjective in the text.

- (d) This question was also less successful and a number of candidates suggested *possédée*, which is a different verb form altogether.
- (e) All candidates answered this question correctly.

### Question 2

Candidates should remember that their answers must be correctly worded and reflect the exact meaning of the original sentence. A lot of candidates found this section of the examination quite challenging.

- (a) This questions proved to be the most challenging and it required a solid grammatical knowledge from the candidates. A lot of candidates didn't notice that *de* had to be used after *il est facile*.
- (b) The challenge in this question was to manipulate *a créé* into its passive form of *a été créé*. Many candidates managed to adapt the verb and remember to add the accents, but some forgot the accent on the last e.
- (c) In order to answer this question correctly, candidates had to know the use of the subjunctive, either for *pouvoir* or *faire*. The expected answer was *fasse partie* but *puisse faire partie* was also accepted as a possible answer.
- (d) Because the question required a manipulation from active to passive mode, the candidates had to watch out for the correct agreement of *calmés*.
- (e) In this question, candidates had to make sure that they included the two parts of the original question: being wary of plants **and** not knowing them. Furthermore, because of the transfer from indirect to direct speech, candidates had to use the *nous* form of the verb instead of *ils*, and remember that *méfier* is a reflexive verb.

### Question 3

In **Questions 3 and 4**, to show clear evidence of understanding, it is expected that candidates will rephrase the text to express their answers in their own words. Overall, most candidates showed fair understanding of the text but some marks were lost when they copied the text without any changes at all.

- (a) This question has two parts: the attitude towards plants in the 50s **and** the reasons behind it. Most candidates found the answers in the text with ease, as the question started with the same phrase (*dans les années 50*). The answers had to be very specific and some candidates lost marks because their answer was too general, e.g. « *les docteurs ne connaissaient pas les plantes* ». Because the question referred to the 50s, the answer also had to include a past tense.
- (b) Candidates managed to answer this question with greater ease. The text itself provided several options to express the existence of a diploma without copying from the text, like *formation, enseignement and éducation*.
- (c) The difference between Germany and France was easily found by many candidates and they expressed it in their own words better than in other questions, making this question the most successfully answered one.
- (d) Similarly to the previous question, the success rate for **(d)** was quite high because most candidates understood that all parts of the plant could be used and that they could cure several ailments, being consumed in all sorts of ways. The majority of candidates managed to avoid the 'lifting' from the text and used their own words.
- (e) This question expected the candidates to be able to differentiate between finding plants easily because of their abundance and **collecting/harvesting** them easily. Many candidates succeeded but some repeated the same idea twice.
- (f) The text offered four possible answers for this question and many candidates found more than the necessary two answers, showing a high level of understanding of the passage. Most candidates

managed to rephrase their answers in their own words and scored maximum marks on this question.

#### Question 4

Comprehension of the second text was of similar level to the first text. When candidates managed to use their own words they usually scored high marks. The answers tended to be more lengthy and detailed than in **Question 3**, showing that Makokou's story inspired candidates.

- (a) Many candidates either found the answers easily and worded them well, but there were some who misunderstood or overlooked *une fois que*, which expected the candidates to tell what happens after Makokou had eaten the fruits.
- (b) The first part of the question was answered well, with most candidates managing to express the analysis of the fruits. However, *isoler deux molécules* proved more challenging for some candidates, even though relatively simple verbs like *découvert*, *identifié*, *trouvé* could express the idea without copying the text.
- (c) The majority of candidates easily found the ideas of 'time' and 'quantity' but only a few candidates managed to express that many specialists had to be involved in the project.
- (d) The expected answer for this question was that the general idea that animals help by providing information, which had to be specified with three answers: dose, types of plants and which part of the plant. Many candidates managed to provide all and the necessary details but some only spotted one or two.
- (e) In this question, many candidates only managed to find two answers (more animals, more plants) and struggled to express the third point (better ways of extraction) in their own words.

#### Question 5

Within the limit of 140 words, candidates were expected to sum up the advantages and dangers of using plants for medicinal purpose (a) and to express their own situation regarding plants, whether they use them or not and why (b). It is expected that candidates will use about 100 words for (a) and about 40 for (b). Some candidates wrote overlong essays, but most managed to keep their answers within the confines of the word limit.

- (a) From the 15 ideas which could be identified from the two texts in order to address this part of the question, candidates found between 9 and 3, with the majority scoring 6 or 7 points. This proves that the candidates had understood the two texts reasonably well. Some candidates wrote a rough plan in note form, which helped them sort out their ideas.
- (b) Some successful candidates quoted the name of some plant remedies they were taking and explained why they were taking them, e.g. for relaxing or to sleep better.

#### Quality of Language

The quality of language ranged from good to very basic, with some candidates finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form. At times, poor language prevented understanding of what the candidates wrote. The language is rewarded in a total of 15 marks (5 marks each for **Questions 3, 4 and 5**) so it is important that candidates include revisions of the grammar and spelling when preparing for this examination.

Examples of good use of the language included:

Extended sentences: *Les plantes peuvent m'aider à combattre les maladies quand je me sens mal.*

The most common errors were:

Anglicisms: *ils sauvent (save) de l'argent, une longue duration, l'alimentation d'eux, le potential.*

Wrong past participles: *ouvri, découvre.*

Adjective agreements: *plantes nocifs, dosage excessive, les plantes sont bons.*

Wrong gender: *la potentiel, un solution, comme un boisson.*

Negatives: *c'est ne pas possible, les plantes ont pas.*

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/32  
Essay

## Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select a title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherently structured. The use of French should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

## General Comments

As in previous years, candidates were given a choice of 5 titles, 24 of the marks available being awarded for quality of language and 16 for content. The best essays were very fluent, consistently accurate and deployed an extensive range of vocabulary and idiom. They featured a clear and relevant introduction to the title set, a coherent and logical argument supported by convincing analysis and well-chosen examples and a final paragraph which drew together the various strands of the argument to arrive at a balanced conclusion that did not simply repeat what had already been said. However, too many candidates continue to pay insufficient heed to the issue(s) specifically raised in the question title, being content rather to reproduce material prepared in advance and focusing solely on the umbrella heading printed in italics on the question paper. Again, there were lots of formulaic definition-based introductory paragraphs, in which the only reference to the title was in a sentence that was somewhat artificially appended to the definition offered. In a number of Centres, candidates produced transparently cloned openings which were simply not relevant to the question set and following which the level of accuracy plummeted. Conclusions too often completely ignored the specifics of the title. Quotations calculated to impress often had quite the opposite effect since they were either misquoted and/or attributed to the wrong person. Moreover, they were not infrequently inappropriate and therefore detracted from rather than supported the point being made.

As far as the quality of the language was concerned, better candidates made a genuine effort to rise to the demands of fluent expression, clearly had a sound grasp of the grammatical elements and demonstrated some capacity to use more complex structures accurately and appropriately. At the other end of the spectrum, a certain proportion of essays were characterised by persistent errors which suggested that there were considerable limitations to the use of basic grammar and, as a result of which, communication quite often broke down. That being said, the majority of candidates fell into the middle range, submitting work that was characterised by a fair level of accuracy though with some inconsistency in the matter of tenses, irregular verbs, adjectival and subject-verb agreements and the like. They made some use of less common vocabulary and structures but usage was not always correct or appropriate, with the result that their intended meaning was not always totally clear. Close repetition of the same words and phrases, overuse of the noun *chose* and of clauses introduced by *il y a*, a tendency to begin sentences with clauses prefaced with the word *avec*, injudicious use of *cela* and of the demonstratives *ce*, *cette* and *ces* and weak paragraph links (e.g. *D'abord*, *Aussi*, *Ensuite*, *Puis* and *Mais*) were all recurrent features that made for a certain awkwardness and compromised fluency to a certain extent. Many of the linguistic errors and infelicities that have been highlighted in recent reports were again common currency. They included:

- redundant use of the pronoun *en*, e.g. *s'en servir de ces nouvelles techniques, on peut s'en rendre compte que*
- unnecessary use of the subjunctive in a clause where the subject is the same as that of the previous clause, e.g. *ils le font pour qu'ils puissent être sûrs....*
- the use of *pour* followed by infinitive where a subjunctive clause is needed, e.g. *le travail est notre source de revenu pour pouvoir faire face (...pour que nous puissions faire face), les activités sont nécessaires pour mener une bonne vie (...pour que nous menions une bonne vie)*

- injudicious use of the word *voire*, e.g. *elles s'occupent de la future génération, voire des enfants*
- the use of *grâce à* in negative contexts, e.g. *certains meurent de faim grâce au chômage*
- confusion between 2 words which differ in spelling by just one letter but which have very different meanings, e.g. *dont* and *donc*, *trône* and *prône*, *s'écouler* and *s'écrouler*
- confusion between homonyms, the most frequent problems being encountered with the infinitive and past participle of *-er* verbs, with *ou* and *où*, with *ces* and *ses* and with *peu* and *peut*
- slips in register, e.g. *boulot, ça, plein de, bosser, bouffer, des fois* (very often following *souvent*), *truc, télé, infos*
- indiscriminate use of the pronouns *on* and *nous* often within the same sentence and, usually in weaker work, use of the second person pronouns *tu* and *vous*.
- redundant use of the negative particle *ne* in constructions with *non seulement*, e.g. *n'a non seulement*
- inconsistencies in adjectival and subject-verb agreement
- injudicious use of *entre autres* which, moreover, figured variously as *et entre autres, entre d'autres, entre autre* and *en autres*
- adjectives prefixed with *non* and *pas*, e.g. *non-réguliers, non-fixés, non satisfaisant, pas sain*
- *qui* made to do duty for *ce qui* and *que* for *dont* and *auxquels/auxquelles*, e.g. *les problèmes qu'ils font face, les choses qu'ils ont besoin*
- tautological phrases, e.g. *dans ce monde moderne où nous vivons aujourd'hui, ainsi donc, mais cependant, mais toutefois, comme par exemple, selon moi je pense que*

Lexical items which were commonly spelt wrongly included *de nos jours* (*des nos jours*), *régner*(*reigner*), *fatigant*(*fatigant*), *environnement* (*environment*) and *gouvernement* (*government*), and among anglicisms that figured in quite a lot of scripts were *balance(r)* for *équilibre(r)*, *définitivement* for *certainement* and *éventuellement* for *finale*ment.

### **Comments on Specific Questions**

#### **Question 1**

*Les gens qui se plaignent tout le temps de leur activité professionnelle ont tort car c'est le travail qui les fait vivre. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?*

This essay was by far the most popular choice. It required candidates to discuss in what ways work can be said to be a life-giving force or a force that enhances the quality of life or gives meaning to life, and then to go on to consider what reasons a person may have for complaining about the work he/she does and whether the complaints are justified. Too many candidates simply wrote a general piece on work in which there was little if any reference to either of these two key elements. A lot included long sections on the value and importance of *les loisirs* which were usually completely irrelevant.

The starting point for many of those who wrote relevantly was the material aspect. Work provides the money to live to support oneself and one's dependents, to buy food, to pay the rent and the various household bills and to pay for the little luxuries such as a car and holidays which enhance the quality of life. Work brings the comfort, security and independence that are essential ingredients of a life well lived. In order to be deemed to have made a success of his life, it is essential that a man be accorded dignity and respect in the community in which he lives, that he enjoy a certain social status. Having a job and thereby contributing to the smooth running of society confers that social status which is not accorded to someone who is unemployed and has to demean himself by depending on charity to survive. Work, moreover, gives meaning to someone's life by giving him/her a sense of purpose and the will to live that is instilled in someone who feels that he is making full and proper use of the gifts and talents with which life has endowed him. People who have no job and hence no such sense of purpose often succumb to boredom and/or depression since they feel that life has nothing to offer them. From there it is but a short step to major psychological problems,

to drug taking and even to suicide: because they have no job, the individuals concerned feel that life has passed them by. Man is also by nature a social creature and feels the need to be with and interact with other people: this essential ingredient of human life is again provided by the workplace where contact and interaction with others are a prerequisite.

However, it was generally agreed that, despite the desirability of having a job, the conditions in which many people have to work is a legitimate cause for complaint. Many workers are victims of exploitation by enterprises which show no concern for their well-being: rightly or wrongly, the fast-food industry and restaurants in general were quite often singled out in this connection. The hours they have to work and the poor wages paid figure high on the list of grievances: it is impossible to support a family on the wages received by many employees for whom the little luxuries of life are but a dream. Moreover, the time available to devote to their family and to leisure activities, many of which are, in any case, beyond their very limited means, is minimal. In certain cases, the difficult conditions in which people have to work and/or the long hours that they have to put in, take a heavy toll on both their physical and mental health. Not least, many jobs are highly tedious and monotonous, providing little job satisfaction: complaints are born of boredom and frustration and, justified though they may be, they can be of little avail. Harassment of various descriptions is an evil that rears its ugly head in a certain number of enterprises: the victims are sometimes too afraid to complain lest they lose their job but if there are no complaints, the scourge will go unchecked and countless others will suffer the same fate. Nepotism and favouritism in the workplace are another problem: people work hard to achieve promotion but their hopes of advancement are rudely dashed when they are passed over in favour of a much less worthy candidate. A less serious complaint, but one deemed to be not without some justification, is the dehumanisation of the workplace: man, the social animal, is turned into a slave of technology whose only contact is with his computer mouse and his computer screen.

An interesting line taken by a few candidates was that *le travail permet de survivre* but that it is *les loisirs*, which the money earned working make affordable, which provide the enrichment that is truly life-giving. Having said that, as already stated, much of the material about *les loisirs* that figured in many essays was irrelevant.

Common linguistic errors that featured in essays on this title were distorted versions of the adjective *rémunéré* which was often given as *rénuméré*, the use of *les travaux* for *les emplois*, clumsy variants on the phrase *gravir les échelons de la hiérarchie sociale*, e.g. *grimper l'échelle sociale*, confusion between *statut* and *statue* and the inability to conjugate the verb *se plaindre*: *se plain*, *se plainner*, *se plaindrent*, *nous nous plaindons* and *se plaigne*, taken to be the 3rd person singular indicative form, were among a number of flawed suggestions that figured.

## Question 2

*La vision du monde présentée par les médias est souvent loin de la vérité. Discutez de cette affirmation.*

This title was the third most popular choice and one that proved very fruitful in the case of those candidates who were able to support their points with a range of appropriate reference and illustration.

The point was made in a number of essays that there is no such thing as total impartiality: every journalist has views on the subjects that he is called upon to report and, try as he might to remain an impartial observer, by very virtue of choosing to portray or dwell on certain aspects rather than others, he is putting a certain slant on the topic which is the subject of his journalism. However, very often, and for a whole variety of reasons, the slant is much more deliberate and the picture painted as a result is much more one-sided. Many media sources have a strong political bias. They support the policies of a certain political party and do all in their power to persuade their readers or spectators of the wrongs of the policies pursued by their political opponents. Key details are exaggerated, others omitted, sometimes some of the evidence put forward spills over into the realm of fiction, all with the aim of winning their audience over to the party line espoused. In some countries, it was observed, the media are subject to the whims of a totalitarian regime: if a newspaper or TV channel fails to support the practices and views, however repugnant they may be, of the regime in power, either the reporter or the newspaper or TV channel in question will almost certainly be the subject of a swift crackdown or worse. As a result, what is presented represents a gross distortion of the truth. Another problem is sensationalism. Newspapers need to increase their sales and the best way of achieving this goal is by appealing to the popular imagination: the sordid is made more sordid and the glamorous more glamorous, to the extent that the true situation is completely obscured. A frequent example given in this connection was the reporting of the events surrounding the downfall of Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the ex-Director of the International Monetary Fund: so many different and contradictory versions were put forward in the press that it was impossible to distinguish fact from fiction. Despite what many candidates saw as the more or less inevitable deformation of the true picture that media sources purvey, most were of

the view that we nonetheless have cause to be grateful to them for opening the eyes of the public to the truth of scandals at home and abroad and atrocities unfolding in various parts of the world. Without the press, for example, we would remain ignorant of the terrible devastation caused by natural disasters in far-flung regions and of the war crimes perpetrated by such men as Milosevic in the former Yugoslavia and Assad in Syria. The example was also quoted of Wikileaks providing information that enabled the press to expose to the public key information that, for whatever reason, had been hidden and kept back by various governments.

Quite common in essays on this topic were the use, despite the title, of *le média* for *les médias*, the use of *le peuple* and *la population* where the candidate clearly meant *le public* and the infelicitous *à travers les médias* for *dans les médias*.

### Question 3

Comment concilier la conservation et les aspirations insatiables de la population à un niveau de vie plus élevé?

In order to score a high mark for content, candidates who opted for this title, who were very much in a minority, needed to identify the *aspirations insatiables* referred to and then to detail their impact on the environment and the measures needed to palliate that impact. Alas, a significant proportion of candidates who chose it paid little heed, if indeed any, to the specifics of the question and simply reproduced the essay that they had prepared on *la conservation*.

Good introductions often focused on the economic development throughout the world which means that more people have more and more money to spend on material comforts ranging from furniture to electronic goods to smart cars. A rapidly increasing number of people can afford foreign holidays, they want bigger and better houses, faster public transport, more hospitals and more leisure facilities. The impact on the environment is already plain for all to see and the damage inflicted will soon be irreparable if steps are not taken to ensure that the ecological cost is mitigated. Rampant consumerism and the ever-increasing need for more buildings and infrastructure to cater for man's insatiable living and recreational needs entail not only unacceptably high levels of pollution but also the depletion of stocks of natural resources such as wood, both of these resulting in the destruction of life-sustaining eco-systems and of the natural habitats of animals and plants. Candidates were of the view that it is imperative therefore that, as a matter of urgency, governments launch reforestation programmes as well as increasing public awareness of the damage being done and of the need to make greater use of synthetic rather than natural materials for the purpose of both building and furnishing. It may even become necessary to impose restrictions on the use of natural materials. As far as plant and animal life is concerned, not forgetting, of course, marine life, a whole raft of measures needs to be implemented to protect the eco-systems that sustain them: laws controlling the exploitation of natural resources must be tightened and strictly enforced as too must legislation to prevent the pollution of eco-systems by the factories that operate round the clock to satisfy the needs of the consumer society. The energy needs consequent on man's insatiable thirst for greater comfort are enormous. Here again, governments have a major role to play: more investment is needed to develop renewable energy sources and to put the results of scientific research in this area into operation. This will in turn necessitate higher taxes, including a substantial eco-levy on fossil fuels, to finance the investment needed: man must expect to have to pay the costs entailed by his constant search for ways of improving his living standards. It was further argued that the enormous increase in tourism engendered by man's new found and seemingly endless passion for foreign travel can only be sustained if governments implement programmes designed to minimize the impact on the local environment: the careful management of natural resources such as water, eco-friendly tourist infrastructures, energy efficiency and recycling are all essential components of such programmes. Not least, with a view to reconciling human needs with ecological needs, it is essential that individuals, with the guidance of government bodies, adopt a more responsible attitude towards the environment. If only more people participated in and put into action the whole panoply of eminently accessible schemes and measures designed to reduce a human being's carbon footprint – car-sharing, making better use of public transport, recycling, turning off electronic devices instead of leaving them in stand-by mode – the human race would go a long way to mitigating the devastating ecological impact of its own never-ending quest for an ever higher standard of living.

### Question 4

L'éducation est une arme essentielle dans la lutte contre l'inégalité. Jusqu'à quel point êtes-vous d'accord?

This was the second most popular question. A number of better essays began by making the point that it is thanks to both their formal education in the classroom and the informal education received at home and via

the media that young people gradually become aware of their own fundamental rights and of those of others who differ from themselves in such matters as ethnic origin, gender or sexual orientation. Education, it was affirmed, seeks to instil a certain open-mindedness and to break down barriers of prejudice. It promotes tolerance and the acceptance of differences, thereby encouraging young people to welcome into their fold people who differ from themselves, perhaps because they have a physical handicap perhaps because they have been brought up in a different faith. A school community, moreover, is a society in miniature where candidates of different ethnic origins, different creeds and often different intellectual and physical abilities are brought together under the same roof: harmony reigns and friendships are formed which take no account of such potentially divisive factors as skin colour and religious upbringing. A lot of candidates alighted on the major role played by education in the matter of the progress that women have been able to make in society. Equal educational opportunities being extended in most countries of the world to girls and boys, girls have been able to develop their talents and skills with the same facility as their male counterparts, to attain the same level of academic achievement and thereby to compete on an equal footing with boys, whether it be for university places or for jobs. Far from inciting jealousy, the success achieved by women at school and university has brought men to appreciate the contribution that they can make to society, thereby further breaking down the barriers of prejudice erected by bygone generations. Another common theme was the role played by education in breaking down the barriers between rich and poor and thereby promoting social equality and mobility. The children of poor parents who make the most of the educational opportunities afforded them and thereby do well in public examinations are able to escape from the poverty trap and aspire to a standard of living and a social status beyond their parents' wildest dreams. Countless examples can be cited of individuals from the humblest of backgrounds who, thanks to the start in life given to them by their education, have succeeded in attaining the highest offices in the public and corporate domains. However, as many pointed out, education can also be a source of inequality in that those who are not academically gifted and who do not therefore fare well at school very often find themselves marginalised by society. Even while at school, they are not afforded the same attention as gifted candidates and often find themselves in classes taught by teachers who take little interest in them and whose pedagogical competence is frequently questionable. Then, when they leave school with no qualifications and no diploma, they find it impossible to find employment and consequently fall prey to the classic social scourges of delinquency and drug-taking. A very valid observation made in some of the best essays was that education can be subverted by fanatical religions and totalitarian regimes to inculcate prejudice and spread values that are quite the opposite of egalitarian, examples cited including the Taliban and the Nazi regime in Germany. It is also true that the egalitarian values inculcated by the formal education delivered at school and university can be undermined by the informal education that young people receive at home where they are exposed to the values of parents who have been imbued by their forebears with notions of the superiority of one race or one religion over another.

Even though it had no bearing on the title or, usually, on the candidate's argument, Aristotle's celebrated aphorism about the difference between an educated and an uneducated man was oft quoted, though by no means always very accurately.

### Question 5

*Selon vous, la mondialisation a-t-elle été un phénomène positif ou négatif pour la culture de votre pays? Justifiez votre réponse.*

This title did not attract a great number of candidates. In order to score highly those who did choose it needed to marshal evidence to support both views and then make some sort of value judgement based on the points made for and against. The mark awarded depended on the range and sophistication of the issues raised and the way in which they drew together the various strands to arrive at a conclusion. A significant number of candidates stretched the meaning of *la culture* which they read as being synonymous with *la société*: this interpretation was accepted provided that there was a reasonable degree of reference to matters cultural, which there almost invariably was.

A good many essays focused on the fact that globalisation has brought in its train much closer collaboration between nations on a number of levels, not least at the economic level: poorer countries have benefited a great deal from foreign aid and investment which has in turn resulted in a very marked improvement in the standard of living enjoyed by the inhabitants. Also of great economic benefit to many countries has been the tremendous boost to tourism given by the advent of globalisation. Opportunities to study abroad, often at prestigious European and American universities, have also greatly increased in number. The large-scale influx of tourists and the access to foreign media sources has had a very positive influence on people's attitudes: they tend to be less insular, less inward looking, more open to differences and more tolerant whether it be in the matter of race, religion or sexual orientation. This change in attitude, it was claimed, has

been reflected in the much higher number of mixed marriages and marriages between people of different religious creeds.

However, almost everyone agreed that these changes for the good have been countered by a certain number of adverse effects entailed by the globalisation movement. Perhaps chief among them has been the regrettable but inevitable erosion of local traditions: traditional local crafts such as weaving and pottery no longer interest the young, traditional local dress has been abandoned in favour of jeans, tee-shirts and leather jackets, traditional local cuisine has lost a lot of ground to international dishes particularly convenience food, among young people the local creole has been largely displaced by English, and the decline of religion, also attributable in large measure to foreign influence, means that the number of traditional religious festivals is in decline. The concomitant erosion of traditional values by western values has taken a particular toll among teenagers and young adults, a number of whom have allowed themselves to be dragged down by the scourges of western society (alcohol, drug taking, sexual promiscuity etc.) which were virtually unknown fifteen years ago. Many young adults now eschew marriage in favour of cohabitation. The influence of foreign films has led to a marked increase in violence: as one candidate put it, *les faits divers mauriciens sont maintenant dignes des films hollywoodiens*. It is true that the opportunities to study abroad are much more numerous but, alas, many of those who are given the opportunity to do so, never return. Added to which, many of the best graduates from local universities and other young people who have risen swiftly within their chosen professions are lured away by foreign firms, thereby depriving the country of a great deal of talent. The defection from traditional cuisine to convenience food has affected people's health: obesity is on the increase and there has been a marked increase in the number of cases of diabetes and cardio-vascular problems. Notwithstanding the obvious economic benefit, the advent of mass tourism has also brought its share of ills, most notable among which are damage to sites of natural beauty, higher levels of pollution, a more unashamedly materialistic outlook on life among the local population and, not least, the spread of prostitution.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/33  
Essay

## Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select a title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherently structured. The use of French should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

## General comments

Candidates understood the instructions and mostly stuck closely to the rubric. Essays were generally of the right length and there were no obvious misunderstandings of the questions. Focus on the question was, however, often poor and the arguments superficial. There was generally a sense of essay structure with essays being structured in paragraphs and with an introduction and conclusion, but depth of argument and analysis were often lacking. Ideas were often presented in a confused way with no clear prioritisation or sense of balance. In terms of language and range of structures, candidates often used set, pre-learnt phrases which sometimes did not fit naturally into the flow of language. Awkward use of idiom and a significant proportion of anglicisms were common, along with frequent examples of phonetic spelling. Not many candidates appeared to have planned their essays and lack of planning often led to ill-constructed essays. Successful candidates were those who managed to create logically planned and developed arguments written in clear and succinct idiomatic language, focusing tightly on the question set and not just the overarching topic area.

## Language

Common errors included:

Inappropriate colloquial language (*ça* for *cela*, omission of *ne* with negatives).

Incorrect or misspelt basic topic vocabulary (*gouvernement*, *équilibre/balance* confusion, *le loisir* in singular, *le media* in singular, *public/publique* confusion, plural of *travail*, *connaissance* in singular, *consister de* for *se composer de*).

Much repetition of same vocabulary (commonest: *les gens*, *beaucoup de*, *les choses* and *les personnes* often followed by masculine agreements and pronouns).

*Quelques personnes* for “some people”.

*Donner les gens* – very common.

*Parce que* instead of *à cause de* and *à grâce de* instead of *grâce à*.

Inconsistency of pronouns (*les personnes* followed by *il*, *son* etc.).

Inability to distinguish between *c'est* and *s'est*, *ce* and *se*, *ci* and *si*, *devant* for *avant*, *leur* and *eux*.

Genders of common words such as *rôle*, *medias*, *niveau* and *phénomène* were not known.

Anglicisms were rife – some examples being *payer l'attention, les medias viennent dans beaucoup different form (sic), comment accèssibles sont ces loisirs (sic), la révolutionné de domaine des loisirs resultats dans les gens d'avoir moins d'exercise (sic)*.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

This was the most popular question. Candidates had a variety of opinions about the benefits and disadvantages of technology in leisure activities. The most common view was that a dependence on technology in the form of the TV, Internet, mobile phones, consoles etc. was not desirable and that people, in particular the young, were becoming less active physically and therefore prone to problems like obesity and, in the future, heart disease and diabetes. It was felt that since people spend so long in front of their screens, of either the large or small variety, they were being exposed to the dangers of advertising, violence, inappropriate sexual content which were seen to be very harmful. Another factor mentioned was the social isolation caused by excessive reliance on technology for amusement. Candidates felt that young people particularly were missing out on face to face social interaction and replacing it with a rather unhealthy addiction to virtual friends. Often essays were superficial and skated over the surface of the question with some random thoughts about the role of leisure in the modern world or the advantages of technology in the world of work and education.

#### **Question 2**

This was also a popular question. Here, it was often the case that candidates did not address the question being asked. There were some very naïve and superficial responses. Some candidates only answered by referring to advertising and its pernicious effect on the young. There was mention of eating disorders in girls such as anorexia and bulimia caused by seeing too many super thin models in magazines and aggressive behaviour in boys caused by too much violence in the media. Internet addiction was also mentioned as being a real danger for all. There was little attempt to determine how the media could be made more responsible. It was generally held that the media were not responsible for people's behaviour and that it was an individual's responsibility to choose how to behave. Most candidates did not explore the possibilities of this question using it as an opportunity to describe rather than analyse the media's role in society.

#### **Question 3**

This was another popular question. This was the best answered of the questions with candidates having much to say about the role of conservation in their countries. They held strong views about the need for action to protect the natural environment not just for their own countries but for the world as a whole. They talked of traffic problems causing pollution in big cities as the population increases in those areas. They talked of the need to recycle, to use greener fuels, to improve public transport. The priority for many was to retain the kind of environment which was pleasant and sustainable for locals and which would encourage tourists to visit. Tourism was seen as a major source of revenue and therefore a priority. If countries were to lose their reputations as being clean and green, then tourism would suffer. It was felt a move to greener forms of energy such as that created by wind, sea or the sun would be beneficial to all. It was clear that candidates had plenty of information about conservation matters and they were able to turn that information to the title set.

#### **Question 4**

This was not a popular question and was attempted by very few. Candidates largely ignored the question set and discussed the role of education generally. A lot of the answers were superficial and lacked detail and depth. There was some discussion of private versus public schools with the suggestion that public schools served the needs of society better while private ones, being smaller, served the needs of the individual. Overall, there was little evidence that candidates understood the wider meaning of the question.

#### **Question 5**

Not answered by sufficient candidates to be able to comment.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/42  
Texts

## Key Messages

To do well in the Texts paper, candidates should do two things in particular:

1. Read, study and know the texts very well, including whether they are plays, watched by *spectateurs*, novels, read by *lecteurs*, etc.
2. Practise giving detailed answers and full explanations to examination-type questions. It is not always necessary to agree with the question. Candidates should think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they launch into writing and should structure their essays well, with an introduction, points for and against, including illustration and development, and finally a conclusion. Familiarity with the principles and the standards of the Mark Scheme will help them; stronger candidates are distinguished by their ability to answer the questions fully and to draw comparisons and contrasts.

## General Comments

Candidates should give the question number and **(a)** (as well as **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** in **Section 1**) or **(b)** and need to answer the question set. Those who provide an answer for a question they had prepared for, rather than for the question on the paper, or who simply give a summary of the text, are limited to lower band marks. Attempting to memorise essays done in practice is not recommended. Of course varying vocabulary and avoiding repetition make a good impression, but using key words from the question is likely to help candidates to focus and produce a relevant response. It is perfectly legitimate to teach the social, historical and/or literary background to the work in question, but teachers of this examination should stress to candidates that **ONLY** textual knowledge and understanding are being assessed. Teachers are advised to choose texts commensurate with the ability and interests of their candidates.

'*Soit ... soit*' means 'either ... or' and should not be copied before **Questions (a) or (b)**, which should **not both** be answered. In **Section 1** passage based questions, all three parts of the question, **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**, should be answered and divided into these numbered parts to ensure clarity, and candidates should try to steer an intelligent course between answering the questions specifically and showing knowledge of the text beyond the extract, remembering that relevance to the question rather than knowledge of the plot is the aim.

Candidates need not quote from the text except briefly, to illustrate or support what they write. Too many juxtaposed quotations do not constitute appropriate illustration or relevance.

The use of rhetorical questions is certainly acceptable, but questions should not be left unanswered. It would therefore be desirable for any questions posed to be answered, before the end of the paragraph, to avoid any doubt.

Familiar and colloquial use of French is not appropriate for a French literature essay. Language errors sometimes impede communication; in particular, there is often confusion when candidates write 'il' or 'lui' instead of 'elle' and vice versa.

Centres are reminded that:

The Mark Scheme states, 'Candidates are expected to write 500-600 words for each of their answers. Candidates who write more than 600 words cannot be placed higher than the 16-17 category'. Spending too much time on the first answer can mean that the last answer is not fully dealt with. Candidates who write too much usually disadvantage themselves because the additional writing comes at the expense of clarity and organisation.

The general level of performance and overall standard was similar to that encountered in previous years, perhaps better in essay questions, but possibly slightly below in passage based questions, with more candidates using the extract to fashion an answer when they either knew little about the literary text or did not show their knowledge of the text as a whole.

The majority of candidates chose to study the texts by Anouilh, Molière and Colette. A significant number selected Lainé, closely followed by Devi. The questions on Duras, Ionesco and Camus were not so frequently answered this session.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Section 1**

##### **Question 1**

Duras: *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique*

- (a) Candidates could often identify in (i) that the words were addressed to 'Monsieur l'Agent cadastral' (on the last page of Part 2 chapter 14). They could not so often explain that 'la mère' wanted to lease an additional five hectares of land adjacent to her property, giving details about complaints and general dissatisfaction (about miserable living conditions, being refused further credit by banks, having had previous letters ignored, etc.) instead. In (ii), many candidates could recall, though not with precise reference to the text, Part 1, chapter 1, and that *la mère* had put all her savings into securing a concession so had lost everything on land regularly flooded and which had proved to be uncultivable. The threat made in (iii) was mentioned in various ways.
- (b) The quotation came from the last page of Part 2 chapter 3, although it was very unusual for candidates to show that they knew this. They could relatively easily cite the mother's harsh treatment of her children, especially Suzanne, to explain 'monstre', but found it more difficult to explain how charm could be attributed to *la mère*. These were Carmen's words, however, and she seemed to have a certain fondness for *la mère* and a sympathy for her desire to tame the coastal land. She was also sensitive to Suzanne's (to whom she had been speaking) loyalty to her mother, and this also caused her to speak gently about the lady. Some focused on her determination and ability to persuade others to do what she wanted as an explanation of 'charme'; others limited themselves to her courage and care for her children. But overall, many answers lacked focus and detail and few contrasted the mother's attitude in the early years from what she had become in her later, embittered years.

##### **Question 2**

Anouilh: *Antigone*

- (a) Some candidates seemed to interpret the word 'Expliquez' in **Question (i)** as a request to highlight *how* Antigone could be said to have reacted violently at the beginning of the extract. This led to simple and superficial assertions. Better responses sought to explain *why* Antigone reacted in this manner. Even then, many candidates focused on Ismène's refusal to bury her brother and Antigone's opposition to this. The question was looking for explanations of Antigone's rejection of Ismène's pity, in order not to weaken her defences as she anticipated going back to finish burying her brother and facing death as Créon's punishment for it. Sometimes candidates did not realise that this passage came between her two visits to her brother's remains.

**Question (ii)** guided candidates to think in terms of *the contrast between the two sisters*, but those who simply wrote a paragraph on Ismène and one on Antigone often ended up *describing the sisters* rather than *analysing the contrast between them*. Stronger candidates focused on 'issues' (such as attitudes to authority, filial duty, ideals or death) rather than on the characters, and then discussed both sisters in relation to the topic, devoting a single paragraph to each issue, leaving the reader in no doubt that contrasts were being analysed. 'Dans cet extrait' were also key words in the question, and candidates often generalised about the young women throughout the play, limiting the marks that could be awarded. Consideration of beauty was not irrelevant, but tended to be superficial. Finally in (iii), candidates could usually make some relevant comments about the 'impersonal' way in which Antigone referred to her fiancé as 'une affaire (réglée)', although some

dwelt too much on the conversation that she went on to have with Hémon or on their relationship in general rather than on what she meant by the comment at the end of the extract.

- (b) This was the less popular of the two questions and, again, there tended to be an emphasis on *what* Anouilh tells us at the beginning and on *how* he does so through the *Prologue* rather than on *why*. Candidates also seemed more willing to point out that the playwright later also divulges the story through the Chorus, than to give reasons for which he chose to recount it at all. Only a few went into the theme of 'fatalité' in tragedy or mentioned that the dramatist did not create suspense, but liberated the reader/spectator by foreknowledge, making them more 'critical' and thoughtful about the characters' responses to authority.

### Question 3

Molière: *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*

- (a) It was pleasing to see that this text was enjoyed by candidates of a wide range of ability. All three questions demanded clear explanation of a number of points in the intrigue. Again, candidates tended to write about *how* M. Jourdain's father in (i) or *le fils du Grand Turc* in (ii) were referred to, and to *what* was said about them, rather than *why*. Even when they did attempt to give a reason in (i), many 'jumped ahead' to Covielle's need to get M. Jourdain on side in order to secure Cléonte's marriage to Lucile, rather than giving time to the importance in the play of being noble by birth. If M. Jourdain's father had been a 'gentilhomme', M. Jourdain would be, too. M. Jourdain's reaction(s) were more creditably commented upon, however some thought that the protagonist aspired to be a 'Bourgeois gentilhomme' without seeming to understand the ironic contradiction in terms of this title. Others ridiculed M. Jourdain for generally falling for appearances without realising that Covielle was in disguise (or that *le fils du Grand Turc* was Cléonte in disguise, because he had already been refused as a suitor) and without realising that Covielle's claim that M. Jourdain's father was noble was not true. Occasionally the irony was highlighted of his description of a *merchant's* duties in lines 12-14, even as Covielle claimed that they were performed by a gentleman and *denied* that they were carried out by a merchant in the case of M. Jourdain's father. A significant number of candidates had problems with identifying characters and their names, wrongly assuming that 'Covielle' was a girl's name and struggling to recall Cléonte's name, or that Covielle was his valet.

Many could say that the result was a success in (iii) and some could even give details of the entertainment planned with the *maîtres* which materialised as a triple wedding feast at the end of the play, but a number of the answers were merely summaries of (i) and (ii). At the top of the range, candidates knew enough of the historical background to be able to explain why the Turkish element was introduced by Molière for comic effect. There were some excellent pieces of perceptive and thorough work. Weaker but conscientious candidates approached the question with confidence, although some thought that Covielle wanted M. Jourdain's money. Many candidates wrote briefly and did not explain the full extent of Covielle's success in the masquerade, the satisfaction of it all, the delight of M. Jourdain in being a 'Mamamouchi' and the three weddings amidst the 'comédie-ballet', but limited themselves to writing that Covielle succeeded in fooling M. Jourdain into agreeing to the marriage of his daughter. Candidates should realise that questions beginning 'Commentez' are looking for a deeper and more detailed explanation and that there is a need to discuss and evaluate in order to obtain higher marks.

- (b) It was not uncommon for candidates to confuse characters' names and to use 'noble' and 'rich' of people interchangeably in both parts of **Question 3**. Dorante was, of course, a *poor* noble. Able candidates could show a good knowledge of the seventeenth-century social background and the emergence of a prosperous merchant class able to lend money to the impoverished nobility in the hope of acquiring social status. In some cases, Dorante was confused with other characters, most often Nicole or Cléonte, but some good answers brought out thoughtful contrasts. Some essays were outstanding while others described Dorante's character but ignored his role, did not attempt to discuss his function in the action of the play, or did not provide illustration for the assertions. It was interesting to note how much enjoyment was derived from a seventeenth-century text.

#### Question 4

Devi: *Le Voile de Draupadi*

- (a) Candidates choosing to write on this text showed widely differing degrees of understanding and knowledge, but were able to explain Anjali's position in Dev's family in (i), most mentioning that she did not share their religious convictions and some explaining why. Only a few were able to support their judgements by reference to the text. In (ii) some candidates continued to focus on Dev's mother and to repeat information and very few managed to show knowledge of Anjali's attitude to her family. Anjali's conclusion at the end in (iii) was usually seen as not entirely negative because she had overcome and succeeded in completing the fire-walk unharmed (line 13), but some candidates answered differently, based on 'rien' twice in lines 15-16. Overall, though, they seemed to feel that they needed to keep a balance of positive and negative.
- (b) This question was answered less frequently than (a) but most who tackled it were able to trace Anjali's troubled destiny back through Vasanti to her grandfather. Some limited themselves to Anjali when discussing the theme and did not give an overall view of how it permeated the lives of other characters. The strongest candidates began by clarifying what they understood by the terms 'destin' and 'fatalité', and the best essays showed the hopelessness of human effort against fate with supporting illustration.

#### Section 2

#### Question 5

Ionesco: *Le Roi se meurt*

- (a) There was a wide range in the understanding and knowledge shown of the text. More successful candidates defined what they understood by the question set. Bérenger was not primarily interested in 'dying well' in that throughout much of the play he was in denial of his decline and refused to give up power. Ionesco said that the play was composed when he was ill and frightened of death, and that he told himself that one could learn to die and help other people come to terms with death. The remark in the question could thus be said to describe Ionesco's intention.
- (b) Some essays defined the types of humour very well and gave examples, but analysing the *effect* of humour in the play proved more challenging. Fewer responses to this question than to (a) were encountered.

#### Question 6

Colette: *Le Blé en herbe*

- (a) It was expected that candidates would interpret 'milieu social' in a broad sense, to include the family context, the generation gap and gender issues as well as social class in the novel. There was sometimes a tendency to focus on the latter, but overall the topic was dealt with quite perceptively. 'Milieu' in the question was sometimes misinterpreted to mean 'nature and the environment', and some candidates concentrated just on the word 'social' or misunderstood 'milieu social' to be 'social life', while others gave too much prominence to the evolution of characters. Candidates sometimes seemed to forget that the question asked them to focus on the *importance* of the 'milieu social', and they just described it without any analysis. For candidates with a good grasp of the detail of the text, though, the question presented no particular difficulty, and some reasonable points were made.

- (b) This was a popular text and a frequently answered question, and some very good points were made, illustrated with a lot of examples from the text. Many candidates showed excellent knowledge and lively appreciation. The question was accessible to all abilities, yet was interpreted in different ways. Most candidates seemed to sense an emphasis on the words 'à la fin' and sought to determine whether Phil and Vinca were happier or more anxious at this point than they had been at the beginning. Occasionally either 'plus heureux' or 'plus angoissés' was selected exclusively, and candidates decided whether it applied more at the start or at the conclusion of the novel. The principal problem for most candidates was a cavalier attitude to what constituted the start and the end of the novel. Many referred to idyllic childhood holidays by the sea when this was clearly an evocation of previous years as Phil and Vinca were already stressed by the awkwardness of adolescence at the start of the novel.

The majority of candidates seemed to assume that Vinca and Phil were *both, equally* either 'plus heureux' or 'plus angoissés' at any given part of the novel, and many oversimplified the complexity of the situation at the start, such as Phil's initial bewilderment at the changes in Vinca, or her malaise early in the text. Better answers made a clear distinction between the stages of emotional and psychological development of Phil and Vinca. The most common error was to introduce Madame Dalleray as an 'élément perturbateur' before having demonstrated the already troubled relationship and hence, Phil and Vinca's vulnerability to her, notably in the case of Phil. There was also a tendency for some candidates to comment on the end of the novel by speculating on what the characters 'should' feel rather than thinking about what is actually stated in the text. For example, many thought Phil was happy because he had achieved what he originally wanted. Very few referred to the final pages, full of ambiguities and uncertainties, and the significant detail of the mixed and contrasting emotions and reactions of the pair. Usually such essays ended with a very tidy but completely erroneous 'happy ever after' scenario. There were, however, a number of answers which 'discussed and evaluated' at each stage, thus ensuring a mark of in the higher range. There was evidence that most candidates knew the text well and could relate to it, identifying with the adolescents' difficulties.

### Question 7

Lainé: *La Dentellière*

- (a) As mentioned above and in previous reports, it is **not** necessary to agree with statements made in essay questions. In the case of this question, some candidates contradicted themselves or even concluded, as they grappled with the evidence, that Pomme and her parents 'must have been from different social classes' because of their lack of communication with each other. Some candidates bypassed these difficulties by saying that social differences might have caused problems of communication because of different levels of education, or by only discussing 'classes sociales' in isolation, or by focusing on 'manque de communication' and omitting reference to the end of the question, which was, after all, to *analyse the importance* of this theme. Ultimately, the theme of lack of communication between different social classes could be said to be very important because it contributed to the rupture in Pomme's relationship with Aimery, followed by her struggle with anorexia.
- (b) Candidates seemed to find this question more demanding than **Question (a)** and fewer candidates chose it. Candidates described why Aimery was unlikable, without explaining the role of the narrator in the novel. This resulted in narration of the plot rather than analysis. Very few candidates referred to the last chapter of the text or picked up on the author's intervention. There was little reference to the highly significant final meeting between the hospitalised Pomme and Aimery, or to the narrator's mocking ironic attitude to Aimery.

**Question 8**

Camus: *Caligula*

- (a) Most answers seen managed to appreciate the backdrop of death and talked of Caligula's 'reign of terror', but did not really consider the 'meaning' of death, just talked about all the deaths in the play. Many lost sight of the question in descriptions of Caligula's crimes, which were given little explanation. Several went as far as suggesting that everything hinged on the quotation, 'men die but are not happy', but did not attempt to explain why (i.e. no mention of lack of fulfilment, a materialistic world, robotic routine, etc.) and were unable to find a connection with his search for 'the impossible'.
- (b) This quotation from Camus first appeared on page 4 of *Le Figaro*, numéro 346, on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1945. Candidates' essays were equally divided between **Questions (a) and (b)**. Some candidates fared better when dealing with **(b)**, since they were able to choose examples to show why 'nier les dieux' could be contrasted with 'nier les hommes'. Candidates were generally able to relate elements of the events of the play, however none really came to grips with the philosophy or with expressing the idea that Caligula's freedom was not 'good' since it was bought at the cost of the lives and liberty of his people.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/43  
Texts

## Key Messages

To do well in the Texts paper, candidates should do two things in particular:

1. Read, study and know the texts very well, including whether they are plays, watched by *spectateurs*, novels, read by *lecteurs*, etc.
2. Practise giving detailed answers and full explanations to examination-type questions. It is not always necessary to agree with the question. Candidates should think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they launch into writing and should structure their essays well, with an introduction, points for and against, including illustration and development, and finally a conclusion. Familiarity with the principles and the standards of the Mark Scheme will help them; stronger candidates are distinguished by their ability to answer the questions fully and to draw comparisons and contrasts.

## General Comments

Candidates should give the question number and **(a)** (as well as **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** in **Section 1**) or **(b)** and need to answer the question set. Those who provide an answer for a question they had prepared for, rather than for the question on the paper, or who simply give a summary of the text, are limited to lower band marks. Attempting to memorise essays done in practice is not recommended. Of course varying vocabulary and avoiding repetition make a good impression, but using key words from the question is likely to help candidates to focus and produce a relevant response. It is perfectly legitimate to teach the social, historical and/or literary background to the work in question, but teachers of this examination should stress to candidates that **ONLY** textual knowledge and understanding are being assessed. Teachers are advised to choose texts commensurate with the ability and interests of their candidates.

'*Soit ... soit*' means 'either ... or' and should not be copied before **Questions (a) or (b)**, which should **not both** be answered. In **Section 1** passage based questions, all three parts of the question, **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**, should be answered and divided into these numbered parts to ensure clarity, and candidates should try to steer an intelligent course between answering the questions specifically and showing knowledge of the text beyond the extract, remembering that relevance to the question rather than knowledge of the plot is the aim.

Candidates need not quote from the text except briefly, to illustrate or support what they write. Too many juxtaposed quotations do not constitute appropriate illustration or relevance.

The use of rhetorical questions is certainly acceptable, but questions should not be left unanswered. It would therefore be desirable for any questions posed to be answered, before the end of the paragraph, to avoid any doubt.

Familiar and colloquial use of French is not appropriate for a French literature essay. Language errors sometimes impede communication; in particular, there is often confusion when candidates write 'il' or 'lui' instead of 'elle' and vice versa.

Centres and candidates are reminded of the instructions on the Mark Scheme and the front page of the Question Papers, i.e. essays should be between 500 and 600 words long. Essays are often much shorter than this, and candidates disadvantage themselves by not making the most of the opportunity they have to give full and developed answers, backed up by illustration and example from the text. Spending too much time on one answer can mean that another question is not fully dealt with.

The general level of performance and overall standard was similar to that encountered in previous years, perhaps better in essay questions, but possibly slightly below in passage based questions, with more candidates using the extract to fashion an answer when they either knew very little about the given literary work or did not show their knowledge of the text as a whole.

The majority of candidates chose to study the texts by Anouilh, Molière, Colette and Camus. A significant number selected Duras, closely followed by Ionesco. The questions on Devi and Lainé were not so frequently answered this session.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Section 1**

##### **Question 1**

Duras: *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique*

- (a) In (i), most candidates did not attempt to identify where in the novel the extract was taken from – about half way through Part 2 – but those who did tended to place it much earlier in the plot, and understandably so, given its familiar themes of preparing to go to the town, the mother's hopelessness, the *caporal's* services rendered and the desired purchase of the additional five hectares. Wherever candidates placed it, they tended to know that Joseph was keen to rejoin Lina.

A detailed description of the *caporal* was given a couple of chapters before the extract. Those who could not recall it tended to think that the man was French and emphasised a previous military career. Some, however, could give a detailed description in (ii) of the Malay who came begging one day and had worked for the family ever since. Answers to (iii) communicated Suzanne's fatigue at experiencing her mother's old age and madness yet again, only more extreme now than ever. Candidates felt as sure as the mother, and Suzanne, that Joseph would leave sooner or later and nothing could be done to prevent it, making words and reactions from Suzanne useless at this point.

- (b) There did not seem to be much consensus between candidates about whether Monsieur Jo made them laugh or cry. Each essay evolved differently and led to different conclusions accordingly.

##### **Question 2**

Anouilh: *Antigone*

- (a) In (i), candidates knew that Ismène decided in this extract to join Antigone in burying their brother, Polynice, which she had previously declined to do, and had attempted to dissuade Antigone from this action forbidden by Créon. In the second part of the question, candidates were willing to say why Ismène was proposing to do this, but generally did not look below the surface of the text. She was said to have found the courage to take this action, but other possible factors, such as (Antigone's own motivation) for her brother's honour, or to show unity with her sister, against the king's prohibition, or more immediately from the extract, that faced with Antigone's imminent death, she did not want to become the only surviving sibling, were also mentioned. The suggestions that Créon would surely not kill both girls, that this was a plot for Ismène to save Antigone, or that Ismène was proving to Antigone her commitment to fight against tyranny, were not made very convincingly.

Conversely, in (ii), responses tended to focus on tragedy and its underlying explanation for Antigone's insistence that it was her fate to die and hers alone. To some extent, candidates detected a note of selfishness, even self-righteousness, or determination to suffer alone: in Antigone's own words *c'est moi seule* (line 5). She seemed to want Ismène to live with the consequences of her decision and was not really portrayed as defending Ismène's safety or survival, or as acting on her behalf or that of the whole family, but of suffering alone like a martyr, deserted by Ismène who was closest to her, her own flesh and blood. Even if Ismène were to have made an identical final sacrifice, Antigone seemed to be arguing that it would still not match what she had given up.

Candidates acknowledged in **(iii)** that, as the king, Créon needed to assert and uphold his authority. This tended to be expressed 'factually', respecting the power he wielded, and referring back to the tragic fate outlined in **(ii)**. That he was portrayed as tired and resigned, and descending into hopelessness, was more widely recognised than for candidates to sense a renewed angry insistence here after the brief exposition of his dilemma during which he appealed to Antigone to have pity on him, and to back down to spare him the need to carry out his threat and thus bring disaster to his son and others.

- (b)** Essays were well structured, presenting evidence of Antigone's heroic attributes and illustrating aspects of her as a child incapable of growing up before coming to a conclusion. There must have been four votes for 'child...' for every nomination of 'heroine', but at least another four candidates in every ten concluded with 'both', 'neither' or some kind of 'spoiled ballot paper', perhaps not even considering one of the options given. Of those declining to hail Antigone as a heroine, some even suggested that Créon was the most heroic figure in the play.

### Question 3

Molière: *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*

- (a)** It was not uncommon for candidates to use 'noble' and 'rich' of people interchangeably. Dorante was, of course, a *poor* noble. Able candidates could show a good knowledge in **(i)** of the seventeenth-century social background and the emergence of a prosperous merchant class able to lend money to the impoverished nobility in the hope of acquiring social status. The seven times that Dorante speaks in the passage seemed to give candidates plenty of material from which to draw a response to **(ii)**. They generally had a good grasp of the Count's hypocrisy. Mme Jourdain only spoke three times in the extract, but candidates still had as much to say for **(iii)**. The first time, she spoke about herself in the third person, and the third time her comment was directed, 'bas à Nicole', but her other words were also sensed to be on a 'parallel' level in the action to M. Jourdain and Dorante's dialogue, which would be more readily appreciated when seen on stage. It was interesting to note how much enjoyment was derived from a seventeenth-century text.
- (b)** This question was marginally more frequently chosen than **(a)**. Some thought that the protagonist aspired to be a 'Bourgeois gentilhomme' without seeming to understand the ironic contradiction in terms of this title. Others distinguished more clearly aspects in which M. Jourdain could be said to be a 'victime' deserving of our pity, while illustrating from the text the happiness such as his unbridled rapture at being pronounced a noble 'Mamamouchi' at the end of the play.

### Question 4

Devi: *Le Voile de Draupadi*

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

## Section 2

### Question 5

Ionesco: *Le Roi se meurt*

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

### Question 6

Colette: *Le Blé en herbe*

- (a) This was the less frequently answered of the two questions, yet there was hardly an answer to (b) that did not mention some examples that could have been made relevant to (a), such as the appreciation of nature in this novel. Responses lacked relevant development about the relative peace that Phil and Vinca found in the 'cadre naturel', and the contrast that the outdoors provided to the young people who were struggling to adapt to adolescence and to the adult world mostly spent inside.
- (b) This was an accessible question, and candidates showed themselves able to describe the childhood friendship now evolving into a more complex love affair. Essays tended to be more descriptive than analytical, meaning that these tended not to be among the highest scoring responses in this paper.

### Question 7

Lainé: *La Dentellière*

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

### Question 8

Camus: *Caligula*

- (a) There were a range of answers, all of which reflected a good knowledge of the text. Those who quickly disagreed with the statement and spent the entirety of the essay illustrating what Caligula wanted to do instead, forewent relevance and denied themselves the higher marks. Of candidates scoring well, some admitted finding it difficult to agree or disagree, but developed thorough responses with evidence for and against.
- (b) This was a more specific question than (a), so was perhaps understandably avoided by the majority of candidates. Furthermore, there were, of course, two men by the name of Scipion in the play, and this one refers to the young one who only appears in the four consecutive scenes, Act 2 scene 12 to Act 3 scene 1, the poet whose father was murdered by Caligula. Unfortunately most attempts to answer this question mistakenly focused on the other Scipion so, even though good knowledge of the play was reflected, there was not much sense of understanding or ability to answer question.