

FRENCH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8682/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

For teachers/examiners:

- Make sure that you are conversant with the syllabus and requirements of the Test.
- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below).
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of both conversation sections.
- Keep your own answers brief. A candidate cannot qualify for marks while the examiner is speaking.
- Cover a range of topics (not a single topic) in the General Conversation, some in depth, vary questions and topics from one candidate to another, be prepared to identify and follow the interests and passions of the candidate (not your own), and keep your own contributions to a minimum.
- If a candidate does not relate their Topic Presentation to a French-speaking country, examiners can rescue the situation by asking candidates in the Topic Conversation about how aspects of their Topic relate to a French-speaking country.
- If the candidate's Topic Presentation is not related to a francophone country or society, the mark for Content/Presentation must be halved.
- Create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit one-word or purely factual answers.
- Avoid topics of a highly personal or sensitive nature.
- Ask questions at an appropriate level and avoid IGCSE-type questions except as openers to fuller discussion.
- Ask questions clearly and concisely. Elaborate and/or unclear questions tend to confuse and unnerve candidates.

For candidates:

- It is not a requirement of the Test for candidates to give their profile at the beginning of the Test. It does not qualify for marks and takes up valuable time.
- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society.
- Ask questions of the examiner in both conversation sections.
- Make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to qualify for the full range of marks under *Seeking Information/Opinions*.
- Make sure your questions are relevant to the topic under discussion.
- Candidates are advised that it is better not to ask the examiner direct questions during the Topic

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 own ideas and opinions. Examiners should see their role as providing and facilitating this opportunity.

The way in which an examiner asks a question can make a huge difference to how a candidate is able to respond. Examiners need to be aware that:

1. Very long, complex questions tend to unnerve candidates and rarely facilitate discussion.
2. Closed questions usually elicit short answers, sometimes just yes or no, and should be avoided unless they are intended to open the way for a deeper discussion.

3. Open questions such as *Comment?* or *Pourquoi?* are more likely to 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 and is not in the spirit of the Test.

Please note that there is no need for either candidate or examiner to whisper during the Test. If a prompt needs to be given, it should be regarded as an integral part of the Speaking Test and given naturally and audibly to avoid suspicion of malpractice.

Administration

Recordings

- Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still examples of faulty recording equipment. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the examiner's own contribution. There were a number of centres where the examiner was completely audible and the candidate(s) distant and hard to hear.
- Please choose a room which is quiet and where candidates are not distracted by external noise. Every year there are centres where there is excessive background noise.
- Only the examiner and the candidate should be present during the Test.
- Centres should keep a copy of the recording(s) in case a second copy is required by the moderator or a broader range of marks is requested.
- Where Centres use digital recording software, each candidate's file must be saved individually, as .mp files (not as wav files), and finalised correctly, so that each candidate's examination can be accessed for moderation. Files should be identified using precise candidate details (see the paragraph below) rather than just 'number 1, 2' etc.
- Centres are reminded that the sample of recordings they submit should represent candidates throughout the range of the entry, from highest to lowest.
- Moderation samples must be submitted by the deadline.

Submit for Assessment

- The vast majority of centres had no difficulty in successfully uploading paperwork and recordings.
- Centres must make sure that sound files and Working Mark Sheets are uploaded at the same time and in the correct format.
- A sound recording is all that is required, no need for video.
- Please double check that recordings are labelled correctly – a number of centres identified the recordings with the wrong candidate's name or uploaded different total marks from the ones given on the Working Mark Sheet.

Paperwork

- Clerical errors are still common, either in the addition of marks or in transferring the total mark to Submit for Assessment. These should be checked carefully before submission. For the size of sample needed, please see the details on the School Support Hub.
- Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to submit the Working Mark Sheet and the total mark for each candidate. (Please double check that they are from the correct year!)

Application of Mark Scheme

- There were irregularities in the application of the Mark Scheme for some centres, e.g. awarding marks out of 10 for *Providing* and/or *Seeking Opinions*, when the maximum is 5; awarding marks for *Seeking Opinions*, even when the candidate had not asked any questions.
- The Mark Scheme makes no provision for awarding half marks. Half marks should not be awarded under any circumstances.
- If the candidate's topic is not demonstrably and unequivocally related to a francophone country the mark for *Presentation/Content* must be halved. A number of examiners seemed unaware of this rule.

- Where a Centre engages two examiners to examine the same syllabus, examiners must standardise marks before submitting them to Cambridge for moderation and provide evidence of standardisation having taken place. It is not expected that a centre engage two examiners for a small number of candidates, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Comments about specific parts of the examination

There are 3 distinct parts to the Speaking Test:

1. Presentation – (3–3½ minutes).
2. Topic Conversation – (7–8 minutes).
3. General Conversation – (8–9 minutes).

The Speaking Test should last no more than 20 minutes and no less than 18 minutes in total.

In order to be fair to candidates, 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 overlong, an element of fatigue creeps in and candidates sometimes struggle to maintain their concentration and level of language. Both tendencies were evident this session.

Examiners must also remember that the longer they spend on their own contributions, the less time candidates have to develop their ideas. Responses to questions asked by candidates should be kept brief. Every series there are examiners who regard the speaking exam as a platform for their own ideas and an opportunity to display their own command of the language.

Presentation (3 to 3½ minutes)

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation 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. There were a number of cases this session where candidates spoke on more than one topic.

The topic list gives candidates a very wide choice, but the variety of topics seems to have diminished over the years, with fewer topics about which candidates are genuinely passionate. The most popular topics this year, at both A and AS Levels, were *La technologie*, *L'égalité des sexes/des chances*, *Les médias/réseaux sociaux*, *Le conflit des générations*, *Le sport*, *La famille*, *La jeunesse*, *Le tourisme*, *La vie urbaine*, *L'environnement*, *La pollution*, *La mode*. More unusual topics included *Les jeunes Français et la musique*, *Edith Piaf*, *L'amour*, *Les enfants de la rue*. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues. The best topics are usually those the candidate feels most passionate about.

Most candidates did relate their topics to a francophone country. Where this is not the case, candidates will have their mark for *Content/Presentation* halved (see Speaking Test mark scheme) by the examiner. Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched quite widely, and have to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3½ minutes. Additional material which cannot 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 e.g. *La famille* and *Le sport*. The mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to qualify for the full range of marks, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and expand their chosen topic. Sport and family, though popular choices, are often the least successful for that reason.

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

A few candidates this session gave Topic Presentations which were far too short. On the other hand, if a candidate goes over time, it is the examiner's responsibility to draw the Presentation to a close after 3½ minutes. This does not always happen.

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 avoid asking questions which encourage candidates to repeat the material already offered—their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily 'right' answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed. However, differences of opinion can create lively debate (if handled sensitively and purposefully by the examiner) and can give candidates the opportunity to defend their point of view.

At both A and AS Level, questions should go beyond the sort of questions appropriate at IGCSE Level. 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 others were successful in expressing additional ideas and seeking the opinions of the examiner.

In each conversation section there are 5 marks available for questions the candidates ask of the examiner: they should ask more than one question in each conversation section and it is the examiner's responsibility to 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.

A significant number of candidates in this series asked no questions in the Topic Conversation and/or was not prompted to by the examiner but did ask questions in the General conversation and/or was prompted to by the examiner.

Examiners should note that they must indicate 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, but there seemed to be fewer varied and in-depth discussions this session. 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 display sensitivity in asking questions about topics of a personal nature i.e. religion and personal relationships and should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas. Examiners should not regard the examination as a platform for imposing their own views on the candidates.

Examiners should aim to discuss a minimum of 2 to 3 areas in **depth**, giving candidates opportunities to offer their own opinions and defend them in discussion. Although the section may begin with straightforward questions about family, interests or future plans, which can, in themselves, be developed beyond the purely factual (questions asking 'Why?' or 'How?' are useful here), candidates at both A and AS Level should be prepared for the 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.

A significant number of examiners only covered one topic in this section. Many examiners asked very basic questions which were not appropriate to this level.

Seeking Information and Opinions

This section is a summary of what has already been noted above, as this component of the Mark Scheme is often misunderstood and/or misapplied.

- Marks are awarded for this component in each conversation section of the Test.
- To qualify for marks in criterion candidates must ask the examiner questions.
- If the candidate does not ask questions or asks only one, it is the examiner's responsibility to prompt them.
- If the candidate does not ask questions, no marks can be awarded for this criterion.
- If the candidate only asks one question, the maximum mark possible is 3.
- Questions must be relevant to the topic under discussion.

Assessment

The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where Topic Presentations did not relate to a francophone country, in which case the mark for Content/Presentation must be halved.

A handful of examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness*, *Accuracy* and *Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.

In rare cases, examiners misapplied the mark scheme, most frequently by awarding marks out of 10 for those categories like *Pronunciation/Intonation* and *Seeking Opinions* which carry a maximum of 5 marks.

Examiners at centres with a large entry of able candidates should be aware that marks may be bunched and that it may be impossible to differentiate between candidates to a greater degree than the Mark Scheme allows.

Where candidates ask questions to elicit clarification or obtain information during the course of conversation, they should clearly be rewarded, but examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that they are relevant to the topic under discussion. A significant number of candidates this session had prepared questions which were not relevant.

Centres are reminded that, except in extenuating circumstances, they should engage only one examiner per syllabus, regardless of the size of the entry. In cases where the engagement of two or more examiners on the same syllabus is unavoidable, the examiners must co-ordinate with each other to establish an agreed standard and submit evidence of standardisation with the Moderation Sample.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8682/21 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words specified in the question. The inclusion of additional words or the omission of necessary 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) items 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** begin the answer by writing out the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of the specified word-count is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- 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

The level of difficulty of this paper was found to be broadly similar to that of previous years, generating a number of good scripts from able candidates who handled the various tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, but the level of linguistic competence and knowledge of a large number at the other end of the range was very stretched by what was being asked of them.

Stronger candidates usually appeared familiar with the format of the paper and knew how to set about tackling the different types of question. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they simply copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Illegibility remains a significant and growing problem, partly because of very poor or quirky handwriting and partly because of ambiguous and messy crossings-out and insertions. The habit of splitting words unnecessarily towards the end of a line further complicates marking when words need to be counted accurately.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, even though some answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but some candidates still neglect the simple answer and over-complicate things by attempting structures which they cannot handle, producing unintelligible answers that they cannot be rewarded. Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question or part question (indicated either in the body of the question or in square brackets) as an indication of the number of points to be made.

Some candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and Examiner, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. **(3d)** *La gratuité bénéficie-t-elle aux familles...*; **(4b)** *Les compagnies pourraient-elles...*; **(4e)** *Son système et son budget risquent-ils....* Answers beginning with *parce que*, *en* etc. are quite in order and generally preferable.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that simply copying items from the text has diminished somewhat in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting'

items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks at this level. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) 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.

Candidates who adopted the sensible policy of replacing nouns with verbs where appropriate, sometimes invalidated their answer by including the *de* from the text – e.g. in **3(a)** when attempting to rephrase *l'encombrement de nos rues* they write *Ils encombrement de nos rues*, which does not demonstrate full comprehension and so invalidates. There were several similar instances: **3(a)** *la pollution de l'air/polluer de l'air*; **3(c)** *la recherche d'une place/rechercher d'une place*; **4(c)** *la réduction du nombre/réduire du nombre*.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

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

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for 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 more than likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

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, a suggested 90 – 100 words for the Summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40 – 50 words for the Personal 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 some 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 some good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the overall 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 candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the subject. In some cases, this resulted in candidates simply using up a third or so of the number of words allowed, literally pointlessly, before they started: *La gratuité des transports publics est un sujet très ambitieux qui a ses points forts et ses différents, je vais présenter les deux. D'abord les points forts dans le premier texte, puis les autres dans le deuxième texte. Il y a beaucoup de points forts que tout le monde sait par exemple...* The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the 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 required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay or a vehicle for personal opinions.

Other candidates made the same point several times or went into unnecessary detail.

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?*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a reasonably straightforward first exercise, although answers bearing little or no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question were regularly offered by some candidates who, one suspected, had based their choice on matching the first letters of the prompt word. Candidates can often help themselves to narrow down the choice by identifying the part of speech involved.

- In **Item (a)**, candidates often got things off to a good start by correctly identifying *surtout* to replace *en particulier*.
- In **Item (b)**, a fair number found *plutôt*, but omitted the *que* was which needed to complete the task.
- **Item (c)** was successfully completed by most.
- In **Item (d)**, *dès* earned the mark, but the addition of 2018 lost it, as did the omission of the accent which altered the meaning.
- **Item (e)** saw the invalidation of some marks on the 'footprint' principle through the omission of *'*, which meant that the new sentence did not work.

Question 2

There were some good answers to this question, but the task proved beyond candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or who failed to observe the basic rules of agreement.

Some candidates simply re-arranged the order of the words of the original, with no regard for sense.

In **Item 2(a)**, many did not score the mark by not respecting the perfect tense of the original, or by missing the agreement of the past participle.

Item 2(b) saw a number of incorrect attempts to produce a possessive adjective. It was not correct to write *elle* before *son équipe* as it changed the stimulus from *que* to *qu'*. *Voulent* or *voulons* further invalidated the answer.

Item 2(c) saw a number of candidates identifying the need for a subjunctive following *il est possible que*, although not all of them managed to form it correctly.

Item 2(d) required the *après avoir* construction, which was not always offered. (*Après de* being more common.) Some inserted the pronoun in the wrong position or missed the agreement.

In **Item 2(e)**, many candidates did not see the need to replace the *de* with *à* or to make *difficiles* agree with *citadins*.

Question 3

There was a tendency among weaker candidates simply to seize on a word in the question and to write out the sentence from the text which contained it or something similar, in the hope of including the answer somewhere along the way. Questions are usually specifically designed to prevent this.

Item 3(a) asked what the scheme was designed to stop cars doing, so was most simply answered by using verbs such as *encombrer*, *polluer* and *détériorer*. This was successfully managed by a good number of candidates, even if some ended up with an unsuccessful double negative: *on essaie de les empêcher de ne pas polluer*.

Item 3(b) required candidates to mention the two stages in which the scheme was introduced in Dunkerque (to local residents and then to tourists). Some were too quick to find the answer in first sentence of the paragraph, not noticing that it referred to what had previously happened in towns other than Dunkerque.

In **Item 3(c)**, successful candidates saw the need to express their answers using verbs e.g. *attendre/patience dans les embouteillages*, *tolérer/supporter le bruit des klaxons*, *(re)chercher un(e) place de stationnement*.

Item 3(d) asked why less well-off families benefit the most. All families pay less, so the relevant point for the first mark is that less well-off families have to spend a larger proportion of their income on transport. Many

candidates did not read the second part of the question carefully enough and answered that *les zones périphériques commerciales ont redynamisé les centres-villes*, which is the opposite of the case.

In **Item 3(e)**, the second and third marks were most easily scored by *On n'a pas/plus besoin de (payer pour) produire et/ou de contrôler les billets*. The first mark proved more elusive, with *économies* and *coûts de personnel* being thought to have something to do with the local/national economy and personal expenses.

In **Item 3(f)**, many candidates saw the benefits of drivers being able to concentrate solely on their driving and of passengers being able to board more quickly, although some were challenged by the vocabulary required (offering *la conduction* and *l'embarcation*) and the need for reflexive pronouns (*se focaliser/se concentrer* and *s'embarquer*) was regularly not appreciated.

Question 4

In **Item 4(a)**, a suitable verb (*soulager, diminuer, atténuer, décongestionner* etc.) earned the first mark as did *avertir* for the third mark, but some found it difficult to explain *un trompe l'oeil* as something that might appear real/appealing/effective but is actually deceptive/an illusion.

In **Item 4(b)**, most managed at least the first two of the available four marks by mentioning the walk to the bus-stop and the hour's gap between buses, although some struggled to express poor punctuality for the third and others simply said that more buses were needed rather than the number of seats available in each bus for the fourth.

In **Item 4(c)**, most successfully identified the aim of reducing the number of cars (although some confused *numéro* and *nombre*), and then used *freiner/ralentir* to point out the danger of discouraging the growth of other means of transport. *Réticents* was misunderstood by some, giving rise to an answer opposite to the one intended.

In **Item 4(d)**, the idea of it being difficult to *compenser/remplacer* the loss or revenue from ticket sales proved elusive to a good number, but there was more success with the need to *entretenir plus de bus* and *embaucher plus de chauffeurs*.

In **Item 4(e)**, a good number identified both the risk of the quality of the network/system deteriorating and of the extra costs making the project unsustainable. Attempts to replace *déséquilibre* by *balance* or to express *un défi de taille* as *un grand déficit* were similarly likely to prove unworkable.

Question 5

Question 5(a) asked candidates to summarise the arguments for and against making public transport free in towns/cities, as presented in the texts.

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. Many candidates simply wasted a significant number of words at the outset. A number of others produced general essays giving their own opinions, whether or not these related to any of the points that had been made in either text.

The mark scheme specified 14 rewardable points, which stronger candidates managed to accumulate efficiently and succinctly. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified points in favour included the freeing-up of congested urban areas, reducing air- and sound-pollution, helping poorer families and allowing bus-drivers to focus on driving. Points made against often included the need to maintain more buses and recruit more drivers, leading to budget deficits for the local economy. Candidates who jumbled points in favour in the same sentence as those against sometimes destroyed the sense by linking unrelated points with words or phrases such as *à cause de* or *en conséquence*.

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

The **Personal Response (5b)** asked for possible ideas to discourage the use of individual cars in towns other than by offering free public transport. There were some suggestions about offering incentives to those

who use alternative means of transport or choose to live close to their place of work. The idea of imposing additional charges to drive into urban areas or to park cars there was also favoured by a good number, as were cycle lanes.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from good to very poor. The very strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a commendable control of structure. The weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) – the nuts and bolts of the language – appeared largely random in many of scripts. Some candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make agreements in either number or gender.

There appears to be a tendency even amongst those who do appreciate the need for agreements to sometimes confuse how to make nouns and adjectives plural with how to make verbs plural: for example, the plural of *le chauffeur* becoming *les chauffeurent*, and the plural of *il cause* becoming *ils causes*.

Incorrect verb forms were prevalent, with some unable to conjugate common verbs in the present indicative, e.g. *faire*, *tenir*, *prendre*, *pouvoir*, *vouloir*.

The use of the infinitive (–er) ending seemed interchangeable with the past participle (–é) in many scripts.

The approach to spelling was in some cases phonetic or idiosyncratic, e.g. *çasaire* (*ça sert*), *d'en l'air*, *enfête*, *en feussaint*, *le peis* (*pays*). *On/ont*, *son/sont*, *ces/ses/c'est*, *ce/se*, *l'est/les*, *mes/mais/met*, *sa/ça*, *et/est*, *qu'en/quand* often seemed to be chosen at random. Some common words were also misspelled: *otres*, *assé*, *vrément*, *becup*, *accose de*, *sour* (for *sur*), *enfête* (*en fait*), *un notre* (*un autre*), *dix* (*dit*), *deus* (*deux*), *part-se-que*.

English turns of phrase often made an appearance (*une station de gasse*, *être sur temps*) and many incorrect words were coined: *misentendre*, *expander*, *l'annoyance*, *le décesment*, *le détériorage*, *freignager*, *l'améliorement*. Verbs formed from English or Spanish were also offered by some: *contributer/contribuir*, *disrupter*, *damager* *protecter*, *reducer/reducir*, *polluter/pollouir*, *incluser/incluire*.

Personal pronouns and adjectives were among the most common sources of error all round and would repay further study, as would the constructions following some common verbs: *aider*, *demander*, *permettre*, *obliger*, *laisser*, *persuader*, *essayer* etc.

The above section inevitably focuses on linguistic weaknesses which prevented some candidates from satisfactorily expressing answers (which one suspected they may actually have understood). But stronger candidates were nevertheless usually able to transmit the required information and opinions using French which, even if sometimes flawed, communicated effectively enough to be comprehensible to a sympathetic reader and to enable their answers to be rewarded.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/22
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. The inclusion of additional words (or the omission of necessary words) invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, but not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items 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** begin the answer by writing out the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of the specified word-count is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- 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

The exam generated a broad range of achievement: there were some very good scripts from able and well-prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were others at the opposite end of the scale whose level of linguistic competence was severely challenged by what was being asked of them.

Illegibility remains a significant (and growing) problem, partly because of very poor or quirky handwriting and partly because of ambiguous and messy crossings-out and minute insertions. There are still occasional problems caused by candidates writing drafts in pencil and then writing over them in ink. This can make scripts largely unmarkable when they are scanned. Marking would be further helped if candidates could leave reasonable spaces between words rather than within words. The practice of splitting a word unnecessarily at the end of a line (often without a hyphen) and finishing it on the line below also complicates marking when Examiners have to count the exact number of words used.

Most candidates appeared familiar with the format of the paper and knew how to set about tackling the different types of question. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy, which may have contributed to time pressures which were evident in some cases. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but some candidates still neglect the simple answer and over-complicate things by attempting structures which they cannot handle, producing answers so verbose and confused that they cannot be rewarded. Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question or part question (indicated either in the body of the question or in square brackets) as an indication of the number of points to be made.

Some candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. **(3b)** *Les pesticides peuvent-ils aider...*; **(3d)** *Les produits sont-ils jetés...*; **(4c)** *Les chercheurs ont-ils décidé...*; **(4d)** *Les activistes soupçonnent-ils...* Answers beginning with *parce que*, *en* etc. are quite in order and generally preferable.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent series, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they may include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks at this level. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They 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-complication. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym 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.

Candidates who adopted the policy of replacing nouns with verbs where appropriate, sometimes invalidated their answer by retaining the *de* from the text – e.g. in **3(a)** when sensibly attempting to rephrase *le maintien de la qualité* using a verb, some wrote *maintenir de la qualité*, which does not demonstrate full comprehension and so invalidates. There were several other similar instances: **3(b)** *la protection de leurs récoltes/protéger de leurs récoltes...*; **3(c)** *la cultivation d'une surface/cultiver d'une surface...*; **3(e)** *l'évaluation de leurs effets/évaluer de leurs effets...*; **4(f)** *la publication de son étude/publier de son étude*.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

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

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 more than likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

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, a suggested 90 – 100 words for the Summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40 – 50 words for the Personal 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 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 some good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the overall 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 candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (perhaps because of different practices in other subjects). Candidates routinely waste up to a third of the available words, literally pointlessly, by defining terms at the start, re-phrasing the question or stating what they intend to do in their summary: *Après beaucoup de discussion sur les pesticides il y'avait de effets positives et négatif sur l'utilisation des pesticide et on va parler de tous les arguments contre et pour les pesticides en agriculture et dans la production du vin et donc on à dit que les pesticides ont des avantages et des dangers*. Such introductions usually do little to boost the Quality of Language mark either. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the outset, candidates need to make a relevant 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 required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay or a vehicle for personal opinions.

Other candidates make the same point several times or go into unnecessary detail.

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 show clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts are littered with crossings-out, which can cause problems with legibility.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a reasonably straightforward first exercise, even if answers from some candidates appeared to be chosen largely at random and bore no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question. It seems that some candidates base their choices on matching the first or last letter of the prompt word. Candidates would be better advised to narrow the choice down by identifying the part of speech involved.

- **Item (a)** was most often correctly identified as *nocifs*, although some candidates added *organismes* which infringed the 'footprint' principle.
- **Item (b)** was also generally well answered, although some opted for *protection* which did not work grammatically.
- **Item (c)** was the least successfully answered, largely due to confusion over whether to include *défi* and/or *de*. *Beaucoup*, *suffisantes* and *croissant* also made regular appearances.
- **Item (d)** saw a large number successfully substituting *ceux-ci* for *ces derniers*. Others offered virtually anything in the text they could find ending in *-s* (*suffisantes*, *agriculteurs*, *alors*.)
- In **Item (e)**, *un rendement* and *la garantie* attracted some, but those who realised they needed to find an adjective often correctly settled on *substantielle*.

Question 2

There were some good answers to this question, but the task proved very demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or who failed to observe the basic rules of agreement.

Item 2(a) was the best answered here, although many saw no need to adjust the verb ending when using reported speech. *Lui* was commonly offered for *elle*, and switching the order of *son mari* and *elle* did not work because of the prompt specifying *que* rather than *qu'*.

In **Item 2(b)**, the past participle was often incorrectly formed (*contennus/contenés*) or missing its agreement even when the passive was attempted.

In **Item 2(c)**, the need to replace *à* by *de* was not always recognised, and even when it was, the agreement of *facile(s)* often remained unaltered.

Item 2(d) saw the tense being incorrectly changed in the transfer to the passive, and the need to make the past participle agree was often not appreciated.

Item 2(e) caused predictable problems for candidates who were unaware of the need for a subjunctive after *avant que*, or who were unable to form it.

Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, most candidates appeared to understand the text and question but attempts to explain what pesticides enable farmers to do pushed them towards verbs (e.g. *supprimer* and *maintenir*) which were not always successfully found (*surprimer*, *maintenier*).

In **Item 3(b)**, many successful candidates found the simple solution of replacing the nouns *protection* and *garantie* by corresponding verbs for the first two marks and mentioning the increase in productivity. *L'économie de main d'oeuvre* was sometimes thought to have something to do with improving the local/national economy, rather than reducing labour costs.

In **Item 3(c)**, candidates generally earned the first two marks by using *chuter/baisser* and *augmenter/monter* to describe the impact that banning pesticides would have on production and prices, although there was

some misunderstanding of *les familles nombreuses* as *de nombreuses familles*. The need to use more land to grow the same quantity was successfully expressed by those who avoided *large* and *places*. *Importer plus* or *acheter plus de produits étrangers* offered the fourth mark, although those who attempted to form a verb from *dépendance* were often unsuccessful.

In **Item 3(d)**, candidates needed to express the importance of what the product looks like (*aspect/apparence* or *impact visuel/esthétique*), which many did. Others expressed the second point about shorter sell-by or best-by dates, sometimes displaying an impressive range of vocabulary (*péririer, pourrir, date limite, impropres à la consommation*) without resorting to simply lifting *durée de conservation*.

In **Item 3(e)**, the four actions identified by candidates included imposing strict regulations, evaluating the effects, and testing them before authorising their use. The fixing of permitted safe limits was less well understood or expressed.

Question 4

In **Item 4(a)**, most candidates knew or worked out what un *viticulteur* does, although some explanations did not quite work (*ils cultivent le vin* or *ils récoltent les vignes*). Further adrift were suggestions that *ils sont des chimistes/ils produisent les pesticides*. The second mark required the idea that they are accused of putting people at risk rather than just using pesticides, and the third required the idea of stopping excessive use of pesticides.

In **Item 4(b)**, candidates often avoided lifting by using *lancer* or *annoncer une étude* to score the first mark and *connues/célèbres/reputation* for the second. A large majority forfeited the third mark by suggesting that it was the locals themselves who would be doing the measuring rather than the researchers.

In **Item 4(c)**, candidates were very often successful in pointing to the large use/consumption of pesticides in the areas concerned, but those who simply lifted *gourmandes en pesticides* did not demonstrate sufficient understanding to earn the mark. All that was required for the second mark was that the researchers would be analysing the collected data, but candidates often jumped straight into an explanation of what the scientists want the study to establish.

In **Item 4(d)**, growers were accused of not respecting/observing the rules/limits or simply of over-using pesticides, and the government of failing to establish or enforce effective controls, although English often broke through the surface here with *inforcer, effectives* and *propre(ment)*.

In **Item 4(e)**, attempts at expressing *pollinisation* often gave rise to *polliner* or *polliniser*, with some going too far with *Il n'y aura pas/plus de pollen*. The second part of the question was as well handled as any in the Paper, with candidates readily understanding that birds were harmed by eating insects which had been poisoned by pesticides, although *consumer* made unwelcome appearances.

In **Item 4(f)**, *publiquer* and *publiser* were not rewardable, but a large number scored with *publier* although alternatives such as *partager/révéler* also worked, as did *annoncer/déclarer* for the second part. *Mieux vaut tard que jamais* produced some garbled explanations, particularly of the element of the time taken, but there were plenty of commendable efforts too.

Question 5

Question 5(a) asked candidates to summarise the pros and cons of using pesticides, as presented in the texts.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which candidates could score up to a maximum of 10. Many scored well by knowing how to select material carefully and economically in this exercise. The very weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified benefits included maintaining quality by protecting against infestations, ensuring plentiful, good-looking and longer-lasting products, reducing costs, prices, waste and imports. Some expressed the benefits acceptably by listing what could happen if pesticides were not used.

Dangers regularly identified included the risk to people's health, the suggestion of excessive use and lack of adequate controls, environmental damage and the threat posed to insects and birds.

There is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, but excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to be penalised in a reduction of the Quality of Language mark. Those who simply resort to presenting a list using nouns without introductory verbs are also unlikely to score more than a bare minimum as far as the language mark is concerned.

The **Personal Response (5b)** asked candidates to suggest ways of reducing *la faim* in the world, without mentioning pesticides. Some of the most interesting suggested a change of diet away from meat towards vegetables (and insects), a reduction of waste, GM crops, controlling the number of births, growing one's own, fairer sharing between countries, use of new technology/equipment/vertical farming etc.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. The very weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) – the nuts and bolts of the language – were the most basic and common errors in evidence. Some candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make any agreements. Others who were aware of the need then sometimes went on to make *les norment* the plural of *la norme*, and to give the plural of *il utilise* as *ils utilises*.

Incorrect verb forms were often observed, even in the case of some common verbs such as *prendre*, *faire*, *venir*, *tenir*, *pouvoir* in the present indicative,

The use of the infinitive (–er) ending seemed interchangeable with the past participle (–é) in some scripts.

The approach to spelling and grammar was in some cases phonetic, even with common words, e.g. *mes/mais/met*, *on/ont*, *son/sont*, *soi/sois/soit*, *ces/ses/c'est/sait:sai*, *sa/ça (sa ce ra)*, *ce/ceux qui*, *assé*, *tréais*, *oosi*, *pare*, *becoupe*, *la fassont*, *le cor*, *quesque*, *an car (en cas)*, *les pries (prix)*, *je pans que*.

Words heavily influenced by English often appeared: *sufficientment*; *mesurement*, *calculations*, *duration*, *consumation*, *damager*, *publisher*, *provider*, *protector*, *producter*, *évaluater*, *endanger*, *relier/dépendre sur*, *garantisser*, *sélecter*, *cultivater*, *présentater*.

Time spent studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be time well spent, whilst emphatic pronouns, and indeed pronouns in general, would certainly repay further study, as would constructions following certain common verbs: *aider*, *empêcher*; *essayer*, *permettre*, *laisser*, *demander*, *obliger* etc.

The above section inevitably focuses on linguistic weaknesses, but a good proportion of candidates demonstrated an ability to transmit the required information and opinions using French which, although sometimes flawed, was nevertheless generally comprehensible to a sympathetic reader. The cohort also included some very strong candidates who displayed an ability to write French which was both virtually free from error and commendably idiomatic and convincing.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8682/23 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words specified in the question. The inclusion of additional words or the omission of necessary 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) items 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** begin the answer by writing out the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of the specified word-count is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- 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

The level of difficulty of this paper was found to be broadly similar to that of previous years, generating a number of good scripts from able candidates who handled the various tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, but the level of linguistic competence and knowledge of a large number at the other end of the range was very stretched by what was being asked of them.

Stronger candidates usually appeared familiar with the format of the paper and knew how to set about tackling the different types of question. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they simply copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Illegibility remains a significant and growing problem, partly because of very poor or quirky handwriting and partly because of ambiguous and messy crossings-out and insertions. The habit of splitting words unnecessarily towards the end of a line further complicates marking when words need to be counted accurately.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, even though some answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but some candidates still neglect the simple answer and over-complicate things by attempting structures which they cannot handle, producing unintelligible answers that they cannot be rewarded. Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question or part question (indicated either in the body of the question or in square brackets) as an indication of the number of points to be made.

Some candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and Examiner, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. **(3d)** *La gratuité bénéficie-t-elle aux familles...*; **(4b)** *Les compagnies pourraient-elles...*; **(4e)** *Son système et son budget risquent-ils....* Answers beginning with *parce que*, *en* etc. are quite in order and generally preferable.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that simply copying items from the text has diminished somewhat in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting'

items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks at this level. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) 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.

Candidates who adopted the sensible policy of replacing nouns with verbs where appropriate, sometimes invalidated their answer by including the *de* from the text – e.g. in **3(a)** when attempting to rephrase *l'encombrement de nos rues* they write *Ils encombrent de nos rues*, which does not demonstrate full comprehension and so invalidates. There were several similar instances: **3(a)** *la pollution de l'air/polluer de l'air*; **3(c)** *la recherche d'une place/rechercher d'une place*; **4(c)** *la réduction du nombre/réduire du nombre*.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

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

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for 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 more than likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. **Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.**

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, a suggested 90 – 100 words for the Summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40 – 50 words for the Personal 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 some 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 some good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the overall 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 candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the subject. In some cases, this resulted in candidates simply using up a third or so of the number of words allowed, literally pointlessly, before they started: *La gratuité des transports publics est un sujet très ambitieux qui a ses points forts et ses différents, je vais présenter les deux. D'abord les points forts dans le premier texte, puis les autres dans le deuxième texte. Il y a beaucoup de points forts que tout le monde sait par exemple...* The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the 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 required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay or a vehicle for personal opinions.

Other candidates made the same point several times or went into unnecessary detail.

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?*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a reasonably straightforward first exercise, although answers bearing little or no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question were regularly offered by some candidates who, one suspected, had based their choice on matching the first letters of the prompt word. Candidates can often help themselves to narrow down the choice by identifying the part of speech involved.

- In **Item (a)**, candidates often got things off to a good start by correctly identifying *surtout* to replace *en particulier*.
- In **Item (b)**, a fair number found *plutôt*, but omitted the *que* was which needed to complete the task.
- **Item (c)** was successfully completed by most.
- In **Item (d)**, *dès* earned the mark, but the addition of 2018 lost it, as did the omission of the accent which altered the meaning.
- **Item (e)** saw the invalidation of some marks on the 'footprint' principle through the omission of *'*, which meant that the new sentence did not work.

Question 2

There were some good answers to this question, but the task proved beyond candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or who failed to observe the basic rules of agreement.

Some candidates simply re-arranged the order of the words of the original, with no regard for sense.

In **Item 2(a)**, many did not score the mark by not respecting the perfect tense of the original, or by missing the agreement of the past participle.

Item 2(b) saw a number of incorrect attempts to produce a possessive adjective. It was not correct to write *elle* before *son équipe* as it changed the stimulus from *que* to *qu'*. *Voulent* or *voulons* further invalidated the answer.

Item 2(c) saw a number of candidates identifying the need for a subjunctive following *il est possible que*, although not all of them managed to form it correctly.

Item 2(d) required the *après avoir* construction, which was not always offered. (*Après de* being more common.) Some inserted the pronoun in the wrong position or missed the agreement.

In **Item 2(e)**, many candidates did not see the need to replace the *de* with *à* or to make *difficiles* agree with *citadins*.

Question 3

There was a tendency among weaker candidates simply to seize on a word in the question and to write out the sentence from the text which contained it or something similar, in the hope of including the answer somewhere along the way. Questions are usually specifically designed to prevent this.

Item 3(a) asked what the scheme was designed to stop cars doing, so was most simply answered by using verbs such as *encombrer*, *polluer* and *détériorer*. This was successfully managed by a good number of candidates, even if some ended up with an unsuccessful double negative: *on essaie de les empêcher de ne pas polluer*.

Item 3(b) required candidates to mention the two stages in which the scheme was introduced in Dunkerque (to local residents and then to tourists). Some were too quick to find the answer in first sentence of the paragraph, not noticing that it referred to what had previously happened in towns other than Dunkerque.

In **Item 3(c)**, successful candidates saw the need to express their answers using verbs e.g. *attendre/patience dans les embouteillages*, *tolérer/supporter le bruit des klaxons*, *(re)chercher un(e) place de stationnement*.

Item 3(d) asked why less well-off families benefit the most. All families pay less, so the relevant point for the first mark is that less well-off families have to spend a larger proportion of their income on transport. Many

candidates did not read the second part of the question carefully enough and answered that *les zones périphériques commerciales ont redynamisé les centres-villes*, which is the opposite of the case.

In **Item 3(e)**, the second and third marks were most easily scored by *On n'a pas/plus besoin de (payer pour) produire et/ou de contrôler les billets*. The first mark proved more elusive, with *économies* and *coûts de personnel* being thought to have something to do with the local/national economy and personal expenses.

In **Item 3(f)**, many candidates saw the benefits of drivers being able to concentrate solely on their driving and of passengers being able to board more quickly, although some were challenged by the vocabulary required (offering *la conduction* and *l'embarcation*) and the need for reflexive pronouns (*se focaliser/se concentrer* and *s'embarquer*) was regularly not appreciated.

Question 4

In **Item 4(a)**, a suitable verb (*soulager, diminuer, atténuer, décongestionner* etc.) earned the first mark as did *avertir* for the third mark, but some found it difficult to explain *un trompe l'oeil* as something that might appear real/appealing/effective but is actually deceptive/an illusion.

In **Item 4(b)**, most managed at least the first two of the available four marks by mentioning the walk to the bus-stop and the hour's gap between buses, although some struggled to express poor punctuality for the third and others simply said that more buses were needed rather than the number of seats available in each bus for the fourth.

In **Item 4(c)**, most successfully identified the aim of reducing the number of cars (although some confused *numéro* and *nombre*), and then used *freiner/ralentir* to point out the danger of discouraging the growth of other means of transport. *Réticents* was misunderstood by some, giving rise to an answer opposite to the one intended.

In **Item 4(d)**, the idea of it being difficult to *compenser/remplacer* the loss or revenue from ticket sales proved elusive to a good number, but there was more success with the need to *entretenir plus de bus* and *embaucher plus de chauffeurs*.

In **Item 4(e)**, a good number identified both the risk of the quality of the network/system deteriorating and of the extra costs making the project unsustainable. Attempts to replace *déséquilibre* by *balance* or to express *un défi de taille* as *un grand déficit* were similarly likely to prove unworkable.

Question 5

Question 5(a) asked candidates to summarise the arguments for and against making public transport free in towns/cities, as presented in the texts.

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. Many candidates simply wasted a significant number of words at the outset. A number of others produced general essays giving their own opinions, whether or not these related to any of the points that had been made in either text.

The mark scheme specified 14 rewardable points, which stronger candidates managed to accumulate efficiently and succinctly. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified points in favour included the freeing-up of congested urban areas, reducing air- and sound-pollution, helping poorer families and allowing bus-drivers to focus on driving. Points made against often included the need to maintain more buses and recruit more drivers, leading to budget deficits for the local economy. Candidates who jumbled points in favour in the same sentence as those against sometimes destroyed the sense by linking unrelated points with words or phrases such as *à cause de* or *en conséquence*.

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

The **Personal Response (5b)** asked for possible ideas to discourage the use of individual cars in towns other than by offering free public transport. There were some suggestions about offering incentives to those

who use alternative means of transport or choose to live close to their place of work. The idea of imposing additional charges to drive into urban areas or to park cars there was also favoured by a good number, as were cycle lanes.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from good to very poor. The very strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a commendable control of structure. The weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) – the nuts and bolts of the language – appeared largely random in many of scripts. Some candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make agreements in either number or gender.

There appears to be a tendency even amongst those who do appreciate the need for agreements to sometimes confuse how to make nouns and adjectives plural with how to make verbs plural: for example, the plural of *le chauffeur* becoming *les chauffeurent*, and the plural of *il cause* becoming *ils causes*.

Incorrect verb forms were prevalent, with some unable to conjugate common verbs in the present indicative, e.g. *faire*, *tenir*, *prendre*, *pouvoir*, *vouloir*.

The use of the infinitive (–er) ending seemed interchangeable with the past participle (–é) in many scripts.

The approach to spelling was in some cases phonetic or idiosyncratic, e.g. *çasaire* (*ça sert*), *d'en l'air*, *enfête*, *en feussaint*, *le peis* (*pays*). *On/ont*, *son/sont*, *ces/ses/c'est*, *ce/se*, *l'est/les*, *mes/mais/met*, *sa/ça*, *et/est*, *qu'en/quand* often seemed to be chosen at random. Some common words were also misspelled: *otres*, *assé*, *vrément*, *becup*, *accose de*, *sour* (for *sur*), *enfête* (*en fait*), *un notre* (*un autre*), *dix* (*dit*), *deus* (*deux*), *part-se-que*.

English turns of phrase often made an appearance (*une station de gasse*, *être sur temps*) and many incorrect words were coined: *misentendre*, *expander*, *l'annoyance*, *le décesment*, *le détériorage*, *freignager*, *l'améliorement*. Verbs formed from English or Spanish were also offered by some: *contributer/contribuir*, *disrupter*, *damager* *protecter*, *reducer/reducir*, *polluter/pollouir*, *incluser/incluire*.

Personal pronouns and adjectives were among the most common sources of error all round and would repay further study, as would the constructions following some common verbs: *aider*, *demander*, *permettre*, *obliger*, *laisser*, *persuader*, *essayer* etc.

The above section inevitably focuses on linguistic weaknesses which prevented some candidates from satisfactorily expressing answers (which one suspected they may actually have understood). But stronger candidates were nevertheless usually able to transmit the required information and opinions using French which, even if sometimes flawed, communicated effectively enough to be comprehensible to a sympathetic reader and to enable their answers to be rewarded.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8682/31 Essay</p>
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Key messages

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A number of candidates were able to express their ideas effectively, introducing the topic in the opening paragraph, and using clear paragraphing to structure their argument. In many responses, however, arguments were limited to general statements, with little development and few examples. Many candidates did write a plan, but it was often in English and very short, in list form and thin on content. Often, plans merely consisted of a number of learned phrases to incorporate into the essay. Many essays had no introduction, at times merely starting with *oui/non* or *je suis d'accord*. Some essays ended abruptly without a conclusion and few responses considered in detail both sides of the arguments. Many scripts did not follow the format of an essay, with a clear introduction, paragraphs and a conclusion. Some learned phrases from the plan were used as a framework for the essays such as: *D'une part, beaucoup de gens affirment que... d'autre part, d'autres insistent que, il y des arguments qui suscitent beaucoup de controverse*. This level of language could often not be sustained, and the disparity pointed up the lack of grammatical awareness some candidates displayed. Several candidates wrote alternative words or spellings in brackets when they were unsure. Content marks reflected the level of discussion, structure and sophistication of the argument.

The quality of language varied considerably across the cohort, but there were few essays where the language mark was in the good or very good bands. There were many weak scripts which had frequent errors in the use of basic grammar e.g., verb endings, agreements, spellings, vocabulary, and register. There was, at times, a considerable degree of interference from English and Spanish which significantly affected the communication of ideas. A few responses demonstrated so little grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness that any argument was rendered largely incomprehensible. At the upper end, however, there were responses which expressed ideas in clear and accurate French using a range of complex structures.

Among a number of common errors, the following were seen:

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Confusion between: *comme/comment; par/pour; grâce à/à cause de/parce que/car*

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Nouns used without articles and verbs used without a subject pronoun: *Est important parce que...*

Use of accent on *à* in the perfect tense: *l'éducation à été; le monde à changé*

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Comparisons: *différent que; les mêmes ...comme*

Overuse of *chose/choses; personnes/gens; beaucoup; plusieurs*

Confusion between: *ces/ses/c'est; ça/sa; son/sont; ce/ceux; mais/mes/met; si/ci*

Use of plural verb after *cela*: *cela aident*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

« *Il y a très peu de différence entre la vie à la campagne et la vie urbaine.* » *Êtes-vous d'accord?*

This was a very popular question that gave candidates the opportunity to describe the differences between town and country life in their experience. Responses tended to be at a basic level with little nuance. The countryside was seen to be quiet, unpolluted and full of friendly people. The town was seen as noisy, dirty, full of crime and with unfriendly people with no time to talk to each other. For some candidates the differences were more marked e.g. some mentioned getting water free from the river in the countryside whereas in town there was running water that you had to pay for. A few candidates were able to recognise that improvements in technology were starting to limit the differences, increasing the access to facilities for those in the country. Candidates thought that life in the town would suit young people, while older people or those with children might prefer the country but that, for most people, there was little choice. Weaker responses were often poorly organised and structured, leading to significant repetition.

Question 2

« *Il y a une seule raison pour manger et boire: rester en vie.* » *Que pensez-vous de cette affirmation?*

Few candidates attempted this question and they often found it hard to express their ideas. Many responses described the types of food and drink needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle in order to stay alive. They listed numerous food types and insisted on water as the only safe drink. Others recognised that, of course, we need food and drink to stay alive, but that eating and drinking represent more than that, being an essential part of the human experience. They went on to describe the pleasure associated with eating, the taste of certain foods, eating and drinking in the company of one's friends and family. The limitations of language prevented many candidates from being able to fully develop their ideas. There was particular confusion over the words *alimentation/alimentaire* and *nourriture* was often used in the plural. Many candidates wrote *envie* instead of *en vie*.

Question 3

Le sport de haut niveau a souvent une mauvaise image. Pourquoi, à votre avis?

Many responses to this question spent much of the introduction giving dictionary definitions of sport when they should have been showing understanding of the ramifications of the question set. Many proceeded with a general essay on sport and its health and social benefits. Some avoided the idea of *haut niveau* and described ways in which sport might have a bad image such as the potential for getting injured, becoming too bulky or muscly or becoming dangerously addicted to it. Better responses gave examples of sportspeople who gave sport a good image and then those who did the opposite. They explained that the bad image came from bad behaviour both on and off the field of play, corruption, inequality and ridiculously high salaries. Overall, the responses to this question showed knowledge of the overall topic but were somewhat limited in the range of ideas offered specifically related to the question.

Question 4

Les musées sont des lieux de découverte mais la plupart des gens ne les visitent pas. Pourquoi, à votre avis?

This was the least popular question. Candidates understood the value of museums as places to learn about history and heritage. They thought that it was important for schoolchildren to visit and be aware of the past. In general, though, they felt that people did not visit museums because they were mostly in big towns, they were expensive and people had no strong interest in the past. Another reason, often cited, was the ability to use the internet to research anything which had led people to believe that a visit to a museum was unnecessary. Responses were generally on topic and illustrated with a range of examples.

Question 5

L'intervention des grandes puissances dans les conflits locaux ne sert qu'à les prolonger. Êtes-vous d'accord?

There were few responses to this question but those candidates attempting it understood the subject and held strong opinions. Intervention by powerful countries was seen to be mostly for their own benefit and not for the benefit of the countries or communities involved. They felt that conflicts would probably be shorter without interference from outside. The general view was that big countries only intervened in order to increase their own power base and influence and that they did not fully understand the issues involved in local conflicts. Overall, the responses to this question showed good knowledge of the subject and were able to express opinions with some clarity using appropriate examples.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/32
Essay

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read all the questions carefully, make a judicious selection and then take sufficient time to plan their essays before starting to write. They should then write logical, well-illustrated answers on the precise question set. Candidates should use the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and the conclusion to show their considered final judgement of the issues they have discussed. A clearly defined structure and the use of paragraphs with appropriate linking words or phrases are also key factors in enabling both clarity of thought and logical progression through an argument to be shown. In order to attain high marks for language, candidates should be able to demonstrate command of accurate and idiomatic French which shows complexity both in grammatical structure and vocabulary.

General comments

The overall standard of this group of candidates was good. There was a considerable range of ability shown; at the upper end, essays were stylistically sophisticated and demonstrated an impressive control of language and argument. They deployed a large range of topic-appropriate vocabulary and were able to argue persuasively on their chosen topic. Many essays, however, revealed that candidates had taken too little time in planning and had often not fully understood the question they had chosen. A limited number of points were made or there were some general statements loosely related to the title but material was not directly relevant to the question set. Many essays gave their conclusion in the introduction when it would have been better to analyse the question and come to a conclusion after considering all the points made. Words from the titles were routinely misspelled or attributed the wrong gender and there was little attempt to use synonyms to avoid repetition. Introductions sometimes took the form of a long quotation or a definition of one or two of the terms in the question e.g. *le sport* or *la guerre*, when they should really show a candidate's understanding of the question and its parameters. Only limited number of candidates managed to produce the detailed, well informed and tightly argued response that would score a very high mark for content. Answers in some cases would have benefited from a wider range of clear and targeted examples.

Across the cohort as a whole, there were significant inconsistencies in the use of basic grammar, including prepositions and agreements (singular/plural; masculine/feminine; subject/verb), use of accents, and interference from mother tongue. Spelling errors were much in evidence even in good scripts. There were also a number of scripts where candidates had made corrections or added in ideas but overlooked how these impacted on clarity. A re-reading of the essay would have eliminated some of these errors. Handwriting was often poor and that, combined with a lack of punctuation, made following the logic of an argument at times quite difficult. Most candidates, however, managed to include a range of topic-specific vocabulary and attempted some complex grammatical structures. Those who were able to deploy a significant range of linguistic structures and idioms with accuracy and succinctness scored the highest for language.

Among a number of common errors, the following were seen:

Incorrect spelling of common words: *beaucoup*, *réseaux*, *status*, *un individue*, *la plus part*, *environnement*, *gouvernement*, *le stresse*, *l'aspet*, *deuxiement*

Incorrect vocabulary: *place* for *endroit*; *stage* for *stade*

Incomplete negatives: *il y avait pas....*

Beaucoup des gens; *des bonnes relations*

Use of the past participle after – modal verbs, e.g. *On doit utilisé*

C'est instead of *il est*: *c'est clair que ...*

Difficulties with relative pronouns: *qui/que; la façon que; la raison pourquoi*

Confusion between: *ces/ses/c'est; ce/ceux*

Overuse of *plusieurs, personnes, choses, beaucoup, ça*

Wrong register and slang e.g. *le boulot, ils en ont marre, les trucs*

Misuse of pronouns: *le premier enfant pense que leur/leurs parents; les parents veulent que son/ses enfants*

Difficulty with structure: *les parents leur aident/leur encouragent*

Confusion between *par/pour; comme/comment; enfin/afin; mes/mais; technologie/technologique; privilégié/privilège; pareils/appareils*

Confusing *car/parce que/à cause de*

Use of the passive voice with intransitive verbs, e.g. *Ils sont offerts*

Use of plural verb after *cela*: *cela aident*

Incorrect use of preposition after common verbs: *encourager de; préférer de; écouter à leurs parents*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Dans le passé on parlait d'exode rural, maintenant on parle d'exode urbain. Pourquoi ce changement?

Many candidates answered this question and, apart from one or two who got the title the wrong way round, most managed to make a number of reasonable points about how times had changed and with that, people's views of both town and country. Mention was made of the effect of the Covid pandemic on people's perceptions of their lives in the city with the result that many decided to move to the country for the fresh air and the space. It was mentioned that working from home is now far more prevalent and that, therefore, it was now possible to live and work in the country. Most candidates described the benefits and disadvantages of both lifestyles and appreciated the fact that people now had a choice of where to live based on their preferences e.g. young people might prefer the town for all its activities, while older people or those with children might prefer the country as it had less pollution or crime. Responses were generally well balanced and relevant to the title, although a few merely mentioned the pros and cons of living in town or the country with no mention of *exode*.

Question 2

« L'obésité n'est ni un choix ni la conséquence d'un manque de volonté. » Discutez.

This was a very popular question that brought out some strong views. Many candidates disagreed with the statement and condemned obese people for laziness, greediness, and lack of willpower. They made it clear that people needed to make changes to their diet and exercise regime in order to avoid becoming obese. Better responses were more nuanced and considered the cost of healthy food, lack of education, ease of obtaining fast food and mental health issues as reasons why people might become obese. Others mentioned the genetic propensity to become overweight which they felt might mean it was not a choice. In general, it was concluded that many people who are obese have no intention to change even though there is plenty of help available to them including free exercise programmes and cheap healthy food recipes online. Some people were clearly happy with their body shape and therefore unwilling to change their eating habits. There were some clearly argued and thoughtful answers, well-illustrated with examples.

Question 3

Les inégalités entre les hommes et les femmes persistent dans le sport. Pourquoi, à votre avis?

This was also a very popular question. Most responses agreed that there is gender inequality in sport. Reasons for this might be men's superior strength, men's sport being more widely broadcast and watched, more sponsorship for men's sport so more money for sportsmen. Other responses suggested that tradition played a large part – men's sport had been played for a much longer period, from gladiators onwards. This meant that better facilities were available and attitudes were engrained. Cultural and religious reasons were also given for inequalities e.g. in some countries, women are expected to stay at home and are not allowed in stadia as audience or participants or allowed to wear sports clothing. On the whole, candidates felt that there was still inequality but that it was a changing situation and that certain sports were leading the way in promoting the women's version, such as football and rugby. Answers were usually quite detailed and well illustrated.

Question 4

« Le patrimoine représente le passé mais c'est plutôt le présent qui nous intéresse. » Que pensez-vous de cette affirmation?

This was the least popular question, though, in general, it was well answered. Responses made the link between past and present, explaining how we learn from the past and adapt things from our heritage to suit the world of today. They showed that the *patrimoine culturel* was often responsible for much of the tourism in the world, increasing the revenue of countries and allowing tourists to experience different foods, cultures and languages. Essays often contained long descriptions of what *patrimoine* might mean and listing examples. The best answers were able to make the link between the past and the present and to show that what is considered to be our cultural heritage is always changing and developing and that we should also appreciate modern art, new modernist buildings. Some responses were keen to make the point that we should be concentrating our attentions on the environment and societal issues rather than old books and museums. In general, there were some interesting opinions offered.

Question 5

« Le but principal de la guerre est la paix. » Que pensez-vous de cette affirmation?

There were some thoughtful and well-informed essays on this question. Responses mostly pointed out that wars are waged for many reasons and mostly not for peace. They mentioned wars for territory, power, resources such as oil and for destroying enemy groups/cultures/races. There were good illustrations of current and recent conflicts in the world. Some answers showed that the suffering caused by war could not ever be reconciled with the idea of peace. Others were able to show that at times civil wars against dictatorships could bring about peace and stability and they pointed out that World War 2 ended up with peace in Europe and the creation of the UN. It was clear that candidates had strong opinions on the subject and they provided a good range of examples to back up their ideas.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8682/33 Essay</p>
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