

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

For Teachers/examiners:

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below).
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section but keep your own answers brief. A candidate cannot qualify for marks while the Examiner is speaking.
- More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks under *Seeking Information/Opinions* and Examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- Candidates' questions should relate to the topic under discussion. Please see the Mark Scheme.
- Cover a range of topics (not just 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.
- 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. Complicated and/or unclear questions tend to confuse and unnerve candidates.
- It is the Examiner's responsibility to introduce the candidate at the beginning of the examination, not the candidate's.
- It is not helpful to use 'Maintenant, présente-toi...' as an opener for the General Conversation, as this tends to restrict discussion to a very narrow range of subjects.
- It is not a requirement of the Test for candidates to give their profile at the beginning of the Test and does not qualify for marks.
- If the candidate's Topic Presentation is not related to a francophone country or society, the mark for Content/Presentation must be halved. Many Examiners seemed unaware of this. (See Mark Scheme in the Syllabus.)

For candidates:

- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation.
- Make sure that the Topic Presentation lasts the prescribed 3 – 3½ minutes.
- Ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to qualify for the full range of marks under *Seeking Information/Opinions*. Make sure your questions are relevant to the topic under discussion.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society: *The presentation must demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken.* This must be more than a passing reference, and candidates who live in a francophone country and who speak about an aspect of their own culture must make it clear beyond doubt to which country they are referring. Many topics were borderline in this respect. If the Topic Presentation is not related to a francophone country or society, the mark for Content/Presentation will be halved.
- Candidates are advised that it is better not to ask the Examiner direct questions during the Topic Presentation, as they disrupt the flow of the Presentation and do not count towards *Seeking Information/Opinions* in the conversation sections.

- A number of candidates asked rhetorical questions in the Topic Presentation. Rhetorical questions are not a requirement of the Test, but they may constitute, if desired, an appropriate part of the Presentation. However, candidates should be aware that they do not count towards *Seeking Information/Opinions* in the conversation sections.
- It is not in the spirit of the examination that candidates ask their teacher/examiner for key (or indeed *any*) vocabulary.

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:

- Very long, complex questions tend to unnerve candidates and rarely facilitate discussion.
- 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.
- 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.

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 distant and hard to hear. This issue was not necessarily related to social distancing in the examination room or conducting the Test remotely.

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. If a third person is required to be present, for example a carer, permission must be obtained in advance from Cambridge Assessment.

Centres should keep a copy of the recording(s) in case a second copy is required by Cambridge 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, 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.

There are always centres which submit their moderation samples long after the deadline has passed and a considerable time after the tests were carried out. A number of centres conducted the tests in October, but did not submit them until December in spite of several reminders.

Paperwork

There are always a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transferring the total mark to *Submit for Assessment* (the new online coursework submission platform). These should be checked carefully before submission. For the size of sample needed, please see the details on the Cambridge International website (in the *Samples Database*).

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.

Application of the Mark Scheme

There were a number of irregularities in the application of the Mark Scheme. Several centres awarded marks out of 10 for *Providing* and/or *Seeking Opinions*, when the maximum is 5; others awarded 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.

Many Examiners do not halve the mark for *Presentation/Content* if the candidate's topic is not demonstrably and unequivocally related to a francophone country.

Where a centre engages two Examiners to examine the same syllabus, Examiners must standardise marks (aka 'internal moderation') before submitting them to Cambridge for moderation and provide evidence of standardisation having taken place. Please see *Internal Moderation* on the Cambridge International website.

Format 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 all candidates across the world, these timings should be observed – where examinations are too short, candidates are not given opportunities to show what they can do, and where conversations are over-extended, an element of fatigue creeps in and candidates sometimes struggle to maintain their concentration and level of language.

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.

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 – the most popular 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, Le tourisme, L'environnement*. More unusual topics included *Faire la bise, Les stéréotypes, La maternité de substitution, L'évolution de la langue française, Les jeunes et l'agriculture*. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues.

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.

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.

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.

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*.

Question 3

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.

Question 4

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.

Question 5

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.

Question 6

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

<p>Paper 9716/22 Reading and Writing</p>
--

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. Candidates need to find a satisfactory replacement both semantically and grammatically.
- 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 re-working the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of the word limit is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own and not confine themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

Candidates need to be aware that their scripts are scanned and marked on screen and that if they write a pencil version of their answers which they then write over (more or less accurately) in ink, scanning does not clearly distinguish the pencil version from the ink one. This can make the script very difficult to mark on screen, especially in a paper where a single letter (or even a defining accent) may make all the difference between scoring the mark or not.

Legibility in general was sometimes a significant problem, with answers littered with crossings-out and squeezed-in insertions, not to mention poor or quirky handwriting.

There were plenty of very good scripts from able and well-prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy. At the other end of the range, there were some whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

Some didn't read the questions carefully enough, but where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. Some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and over-complicate their reply. The most successful answers are often the most concisely and simply expressed.

Many 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 either destroy the answer or at best detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *Sophie se sentait-elle... (3(c)); Elle faisait stationner ...*

(3(c)); *Loïc et sa femme voudraient-ils...* **(3(d))**. Answers beginning with *Parce que* or *En* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made. Some successfully set out their answers by separating the points as i)..., ii)..., iii)..., etc.

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished significantly, 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. 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-complications (see previous paragraph). 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 often sensibly substituted verbs for nouns when the question suggested it, although occasionally leaving the job unfinished with *cultiver de légumes* (from *la cultivation de légumes* **(3(d))**) ; *élever de poules* (from *l'élevage de poules*) **(3(d))** ; *protéger du statut* (from *la protection du statut*). This betrayed a lack of understanding sufficient to invalidate the answer.

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 appear more aware of the need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing. The inclusion of unnecessary additional words (or the exclusion of necessary ones) invalidates the answer.

Candidates can sometimes help themselves considerably by narrowing down the options to words which are at least the same parts of speech, or by matching (for example) singulars with singulars or feminine adjectives with feminine adjectives.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. **Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible.** They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. 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, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

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

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

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which often made legibility a problem.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This proved to be a straightforward first exercise which enabled a large proportion of candidates to get off to a positive start. Most candidates scored **(a)** and **(e)**, the latter possibly helped by looking for a feminine plural past participle to replace another, even if a candidate was unsure of the precise sense. Misunderstanding of the meaning of *définitivement* sometimes caused it to be offered for *à tout prix* **(d)**, whilst the addition of *la* before *peur* invalidated **(c)** on the 'footprint' principle, as did *d'un* before *cadre* **(b)** (see above).

Question 2

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

In **Item 2(a)**, the passive was successfully handled by many, although some changed the tense unnecessarily or struggled with the past participle of *offrir*. Others forgot to make the agreement.

In **Item 2(b)**, *avant de déménager* and *avant d'avoir déménagé* were both accepted, but not mixtures of the two. Some of the more ambitious used *avant que* with a subjunctive. Some decided to make *déménager* reflexive.

In **Item 2(c)**, a healthy number appeared to recognise the need for a subjunctive, but only the very strongest found *prévoit*.

In **Item 2(d)**, candidates generally saw the need for reported speech, but some didn't make *leur* plural or thought this was done by using *ses*. A number of candidates offered *ils pourraient*.

Item 2(e) was by some margin the best handled, although some saw no reason to use a past tense or offered *chez ils*.

Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, most found efficient ways to say that families decided to give up their dream (*abandonner/laisser tomber/ne pas poursuivre*) or simply *rester en ville*, although a few thought the opposite. Most understood the idea of packing their possessions, although some confused things by suggesting that they handed the boxes (rather than the keys) to the owners of the flat, both of which needed to feature in the answer.

In **Item 3(b)**, instead of saying that Sylvie had to pay the monthly rent, some suggested that Sylvie had to leave her flat once a month to escape stress and suffocation. The second mark needed to focus on people not making eye-contact as they pass each other, rather than on not speaking.

In **Item 3(c)**, a large number of candidates found straightforward ways to express how Sylvie felt in the street – *menacée, vulnérable, mal à l'aise*. Most realised that parking was involved for the second mark but were rather too vague in stating that it was simply a matter of her parking in the street.

In **Item 3(d)**, most candidates saw that using readily conjugated -er verbs (*cultiver, élever* and *surveiller*) was the easiest way to earn all three marks here. Some were not precise enough in specifying that children could be left unsupervised to play outdoors.

In **Item 3(e)**, candidates needed to find a way of expressing retirement prior to moving to the country, which many did successfully for the first mark. Some then omitted the reflexive in *s'intégrer*, whilst others ignored *conversation* as an easy alternative to *discussion*.

In **Item 3(f)**, successful candidates usually used *s'ennuyer* to express Gilbert's fear of not having enough to do. His frustration in the baker's needed to include mention of having to wait in a queue to be served or having to listen to the lady telling her life-story. It was sometimes unclear who was telling what to whom, and further confusion was caused by *la boulangère* sometimes becoming *le boulangère* or *la boulanger* in the process. Some made good use of the subjunctive after *attendre que*.

Question 4

Item 4(a) needed present tenses asked for by the question if finite verbs were used. Some understood *déception* in its English sense and offered *trompés* or the like, but stronger candidates encouragingly scored the first mark with *déçus*. *Seule* earned a straightforward second mark for the sizeable number who re-phrased *solitude* with an adjective. Some then went a bit too far in suggesting that a firm decision to return to Paris had already been made by Delphine, rather than it being thought about/envisaged.

Item 4(b) again required present tenses but was well handled by a large number who simply stated that she drove there in her car, although there were inevitable occasional suggestions that she flew (*au volant*). The need to keep a freezer well stocked with food in case she was cut off was well understood, although some were wide of the mark with *réfrigérateur/frigo*.

In **Item 4(c)**, the first mark required mention of travelling to school by bus, some candidates omitting one or the other. Verbs (*se distraire/amuser, divertir* etc.) were successfully used to avoid 'lifting' *distractions* for the second mark. Fewer managed to avoid 'lifting' either *coupure* or *perte* or both, even though different vocabulary to express ideas which had probably generally been understood was not difficult to find.

Item 4(d) proved probably the most challenging. Some candidates found it difficult to explain the error that people moving to the countryside sometimes make in basing their choice of area on the hours of sunshine it enjoys. There was further difficulty in explaining the mistake some people make of not visiting an area during different seasons/times of the year, with some suggesting that people only made one visit in total before making their minds up, or even not visiting at all.

In **Item 4(e)**, successful candidates mentioned that cockerels crow *tôt/de bonne heure le matin/au lever du soleil/au point du jour*, and that cows *sentent mauvais/puent/sont malodorants*. Some suggested that both do both. Others rather over-simplified the idea that the 2020 legislation was designed to *protéger les animaux* rather than enshrining their natural activities as part of rural life, and that newcomers were attempting to *imposer leur loi* or *style de vie*.

Question 5(a)

Question 5(a) asked candidates to summarise the advantages and disadvantages of living in the countryside rather than in town, as contained in the texts.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, which many candidates handled very well and scored highly. Many set about things very efficiently with well-structured answers in which the advantages and disadvantages were clearly presented.

The most commonly identified advantages included:

- a pleasant/relaxing environment
- friendly people / easy to integrate
- space to grow vegetables / keep chickens
- safer / children can play outdoors unsupervised
- uncrowded villages
- the suggestion that life is less expensive needed to relate specifically to the cost of accommodation.

The most commonly identified disadvantages included:

- distance to shops/schools
- lack of entertainment
- loneliness / isolation / being cut off
- lack of employment
- unreliable electricity and internet

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

Question 5(b)

The **Personal Response** asked candidates how they would make new friends or stay in touch with existing ones if they moved to a new town or village. A number of responses were cut short by exceeding the word limit, but most could fit within it. Ideas for staying in touch generally revolved around social media and occasional visits. Ways of making new friends sometimes involved taking part in group activities in school or in the community in general – sports, drama, music, volunteering, charitable events. There were several suggestions of a recipe for making oneself popular by cooking cakes or biscuits for all the class and offering them at break-time.

Quality of Language

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

The approach to spelling in some scripts was at best phonetic: *né en moins, mal a lhaisse/lèze, assé, nozé a bonde, dôtre (d'autres), nerporte (n'importe), tôt/taux, lanner (l'année), l'audora (l'odorat), mes content (mécontent)*, even when words were given in the text, e.g. *odeur/ordure/ordre*.

The choice between *ce, se, and ceux* ; *sa and ça* ; *ces, ses, c'est and s'est* ; *ci and si* ; *on and ont* ; *ou and où* ; *par and part* often appeared random.

This phonetic approach frequently extended to grammar too. There were plenty of sentences which would have sounded more or less fine if read aloud, but which were incorrect on paper – *il c'est intégrer, ils voudré planté*. The use of the infinitive *-er* ending – or indeed anything else that sounded similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (*-é*) in some scripts.

Possibly the most common source of error concerned the agreement (or lack of it) of verbs with their subjects or of adjectives with their nouns (and even the process of making nouns plural), which appeared quite arbitrary in quite a large number of weaker scripts. Some of the weakest candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make any agreements whatsoever.

Not uncommonly, when attempts were made to make verbs agree with a plural subject, it was simply by putting an *-s* on the end of the singular, so the plural of *il part* is *ils parts* or *ils partents*. On the other hand, when nouns required to be made plural it was not uncommon for *la vache* to emerge as *les vachent*, or *la personne* as *les personnent*.

Incorrect verb forms were common amongst weaker candidates who were sometimes unable to conjugate common irregular verbs such as *pouvoir, vouloir, devoir, prendre, venir, (per)mettre*. Constructions with certain common verbs were also often incorrect, e.g. *aider, penser, demander, permettre, interdire*.

Incorrect / made-up verbs based on nouns in the text were much in evidence – *cultivater, éleverter, déceptionner, s'intégrater, discuter, distracter, protecter*. Time studying vocabulary in lexical groups (e.g. nouns and their corresponding verbs) might be well spent.

Reflexives caused particular difficulties, with frequent errors over *ennuyer* and *s'ennuyer*, *sentir* and *se sentir*, *couper* and *se couper*, *retourner* and *se retourner*, *distraire* and *se distraire*.

All of which said, the linguistic ability of the large majority of candidates was certainly up to the task of transmitting the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the strongest candidates wrote very impressive, idiomatic, fluent and commendably accurate French.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/23 Reading and Writing</p>
--

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. Additional or missing words invalidate 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 word limit is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own and not to confine themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

Legibility was sometimes a significant issue, with extremely poor handwriting making marking problematic. The practice of writing draft answers in pencil and then writing over them in ink can make scripts really difficult to read.

There were some very good scripts from candidates whose command of the language equipped them fully to handle the various tasks, but there were a good number of others at the opposite end of the range of those whose level of linguistic competence and knowledge was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of 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 offer over-complicated ones.

Many 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 either destroy the answer or detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *La reconnaissance faciale nous permet déjà de faire réduire... (3(b))*; *Les associations cherchent à faire défendre... (3(d))*; *Un système imparfait pourrait-il nuire... (3(f))*; *La CNIL a-t-elle réagi... (4(d))*. Answers beginning with *parce que* and *en* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

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

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished, with more candidates understanding how to ‘work’ the text to avoid ‘lifting’ (copying) items from the text, 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 often sensibly substituted verbs for nouns when the question suggested it, although occasionally they got it wrong: *défendre de la vie privée* (from *la défense de la vie privée*) (3d) ; *surveiller de leurs opposants* (from *surveillance de leurs opposants*) ;(3(e)) ; *envoyer d’un signal* (from *envoi d’un signal*) (4(b)). This betrayed a lack of understanding sufficient to invalidate the answer.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts.

In **Question 1**, candidates 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 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, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. Often candidates start to score marks only three or four lines into their answer, having wasted valuable words of an allowance which is already tight to make ten points on a wordy and unnecessary introduction. From the outset, candidates need to make their points as succinctly as possible and move on to the next one. It is a summary/*résumé/précis* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore, *il y a* is three words, as is *qu’est-ce que c’est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which often made legibility a problem.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates can narrow down the choice by identifying the part of speech involved, or at least by making sure that a plural is replaced by a plural for example, but they should realise that this in itself may not provide the right answer if meaning is ignored in the process.

In **Item (a)**, *traits* was generally correctly identified to replace *caractéristiques*.

In **Item (b)**, *à son insu* proved to be one of the most successfully handled substitutions.

In **Item (c)**, the fact that *stockées* and *données* end in the same three letters was thought by some to be sufficient to make them interchangeable, even though one is a noun.

In **Item (d)** the many ignored the straightforward *utiliser*, preferring *s'imposer (comme)*, presumably because it shared *se* with *se servir de*.

In **Item (e)**, most candidates appeared to understand the meaning of *quotidienne* but some omitted the necessary *de* from *de tous les jours* in their answer.

Question 2

The strongest candidates displayed the ability to rework the sentences accurately, but the task proved demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or who failed to observe the basic rules of agreement.

In **Item 2 (a)**, many set about the transformation from passive to active in the right way but were unaware of the need to adjust the agreement of *critiqué* as part of the process.

In **Item 2 (b)**, many candidates again set off in the right direction, but failed to adjust the agreement of *sûr* when the noun changed from feminine to masculine.

In **Item 2 (c)**, the conditional tense of the original was often changed unnecessarily, and the passive *être mise* proved problematic for many.

Item 2 (d) was probably the most successfully handled, although a number of candidates saw no need to make *comptées* agree with the feminine plural nouns.

In **Item 2 (e)**, many appeared to recognise the need for a subjunctive, but struggled to form it correctly. A number of others took things too far with *Il a fallu que nous devions...*

Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, the majority got off to a good start by using *étudier* and *comparer*, although not all made it sufficiently clear that the system focuses on facial features.

In **Item 3(b)**, most candidates understood the benefits but a good number struggled to find acceptable vocabulary, offering *déverrouillager*, *dispenser d'argent*, or the very frequent *retraiter* or *retraire*. Rather than trying to form new verbs such as *déverrouiller*, candidates might be better advised to find simple synonyms such as *ouvrir*.

In **Item 3(c)**, some did not see the need for a past tense, whilst others who understood the initial negative reaction expressed it inadequately by stating that people were *mécontents* or *avaient des soucis* (from *suscité?*) or *ils étaient colères*.

In **Item 3(d)**, there was some misunderstanding shown by those who offered *défendre contre la vie privée* or *circuler l'information/les opinions* or thought that *la libre circulation* had something to do with traffic flow. Those who understood the concept of *l'anonymat* often found good ways of expressing it (*rester anonyme/incognito/cacher son identité*).

In **Item 3(e)**, the need for some element of secrecy (*clandestinement/en cachette*) for the first mark was appreciated by stronger candidates here, whilst some others misunderstood the text and suggested that the reliability had been under-estimated.

In **Item 3(f)**, successful candidates managed to avoid 'lifting' *arrestation* by using *arrêtés/interpellés* etc, going on to say that the police would have deal with more suspects, although there was the occasional suggestion that innocent people could be *déclenchés*.

Question 4

In **Item 4(a)**, answers needed to differentiate between 2019, when facial recognition cameras were installed at the entrances to two schools, and 2017 when many more surveillance cameras had been funded for all schools in the area. Marks were lost by candidates who attempted to use verbs to replace the nouns *fourniture* and *financement* but included the *de* from the text.

In **Item 4(b)**, candidates often understood the procedure to be followed at the school entrance, but some struggled to find the correct form of the future tenses of *envoyer* and *intervenir*, or had problems with the negative.

In **Item 4(c)**, those candidates who avoided *supprimer* usually managed to express the anticipated benefits of the new arrangements. Attempts to conjugate *prévenir* in the future generally fared somewhat better than *intervenir*.

In **Item 4(d)**, the CNIL's view of the project was sometimes understated, whilst the Conseil's reaction to suspend it was sometimes overstated. The likely damage done to relationships within the school was not widely understood for the third mark.

In **Item 4(e)**, stronger candidates were usually successful in understanding and expressing the demands of the other associations mentioned, as well as the likely effects (or lack of them) if the project went ahead.

Question 5(a) (Summary)

See **General comments** earlier for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 13 rewardable points leading to a maximum score of 10. Some of the very weakest candidates simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material. But for a sizeable proportion of candidates, this was the exercise on which they scored most highly.

The most commonly identified benefits included:

- Improving public safety
- Helping to combat terrorism and crime in general
- Preventing intruders in schools
- Use in proving identity
- Saving time by reducing queues

The most commonly identified threats included:

- Misuse by states to spy on opponents
- Undermining freedoms and human rights
- Unreliability
- Ineffective as a deterrent
- Breeding mistrust

Question 5(b)

The Personal Response asked candidates which aspects of new technology had most improved their lives. There were some rather vague answers here, but successful candidates frequently focused on the benefits of their smartphones, not least in enabling contact with friends and family during the pandemic, taking and storing photos, GPS, having instant access to the internet etc. Others pointed to the benefits of on-line shopping and on-line lessons/videoconferencing, and the pleasure of not having to carry heavy text-books in their school bags.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good in some cases to very poor. The weakest struggled with the basic nuts and bolts of the language, which inevitably limited their ability to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively.

This was particularly in evidence in the agreement (or lack of it) of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural), which appeared random in many scripts. Some of the weakest candidates seemed to be unaware of the need to make any agreements whatsoever.

Some others who did see the need to make agreements, did so erroneously: e.g., the plural of *il envoie* appeared as *ils envoies/ils envoients*, or the plural of *fiable* as *fiablent*.

There were difficulties in conjugating some common irregular verbs: *faire*, *mettre*, *venir* (and its compounds), *pouvoir*, *devoir*, whilst constructions following other common verbs also caused problems: *aider*, *permettre*, *demander*, *interdire*.

The approach to spelling was in some cases phonetic (e.g. *sa/ça/s'a*; *son/sont/s'ont/sonts* ; *ces/c'est/ses* ; *ceci/ceux-ci/si*) which demonstrated (and caused) confusion.

Negatives caused some problems: *il n'y aura pas aucun impact/zéro/rien impact*; *ils ne devront pas faire rien*.

The influence of English was evident in many words: *opponents*, *intrudeurs*, *abandonnement*, *bénéfits*. This was particularly true of verbs: *prevenir*, *intervenir*, *reducer/réductionner*, *suspenser*, *défenser*, *reconniser*, *arrester/arrestater*, *multiplier*, *vérifier*, *dismunier*. Time spent in studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be time well spent.

All of which said, stronger candidates were usually able to express what they wanted to say in a comprehensible fashion, whilst the very best wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary and idiom and a commendable control of structure.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/32
Essay

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to take the time to read the questions carefully, to highlight the key terms and to write a plan. They then need to develop a logical and well-illustrated answer that focuses precisely on the question set. Candidates should use the introduction to their essay to clearly show their understanding of the title and what their approach will be. Paragraphing, with use of appropriate linking words or phrases, is an important element in this type of essay in order to show both clarity of thought and logical progression through the argument. The conclusion should then display a considered final judgement of the issues discussed. In order to attain high marks for language, candidates should write accurately and idiomatically in language which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary.

General comments

This cohort of candidates produced a pleasing level of work, with few very weak scripts and a considerable number of very accomplished responses. Most candidates managed to communicate their ideas on their chosen question and tried to construct a logical argument, using examples to back up the points being made. Some candidates did not address the precise wording of the question, particularly in **Question 4** where they talked generally about the use of free time without heeding the word *trop* in the question. There were few largely irrelevant answers though. Candidates' essays were mostly well structured, with an introduction, paragraphs providing different points of view linked directly to the question, and a conclusion. There were clear attempts to link paragraphs and to create a logical argument but conclusions were often disappointing, merely restating what had gone before instead of presenting a considered opinion. Some very good essays limited themselves to one side of the argument which affected the mark for content, particularly in **Question 1** and **Question 5**. Some candidates at the top managed to produce detailed, well informed and tightly argued response that scored a very high mark for content. Many answers would have benefited from a wider range of clear and targeted examples

Across the cohort as a whole, there was significant variability in the use of basic grammar. There were issues with adjectival and subject-verb agreements, incomplete negatives, the use of articles, infinitives and prepositions. There was also interference at times from mother tongue. Spelling errors and missing accents were much in evidence, even in good scripts. There were also a number of scripts where candidates had made, perhaps, last minute changes, but overlooked how these impacted on the rest of the sentence, in particular on adjectival and subject-verb agreements. Careful checking of work at the end could help with accuracy. Most candidates managed to include a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

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

Incorrect spelling of common words: *probleme, développement, government, environnement, avoir tord, le stresse, le filme, l'impacte, enforcir, concluire, à fin, activitée, réseaux sociaux, le travaille, emploie, néanmoins*.

Incomplete negatives: *les adolescents pensent qu'à*

Incorrect use of *beaucoup*: *beaucoup des gens ; beaucoup de l'argent*

C'est instead of *il est*: *c'est difficile de*

Use of *grâce à* instead of *à cause de*

Inappropriate use of *personnes/gens* (e.g. *certains gens*) ; *plusieurs des personnes* ; *nombreux des personnes*

Confusion between: *ce/ces/ses/c'est; ça/sa; son/sont; ce/ceux ; voir/voire ; on/ont ; a/à ; et/est*

Misuse of pronouns : *il y en a des jeunes qui ; il y existe au travail*

Média used in the singular, *le média*.

Confusion *le moyen/la moyenne; donc/dont*

Overuse of *plusieurs, choses, beaucoup*

Incorrect use of direct/indirect pronouns: *ils les donnent; ils leur/leurs encouragent*

Anglicised structures: *ils ne sont pas donné*

Incorrect use of plural verb after *cela*: *cela aident*

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

Incorrect use of linking words such as *néanmoins, cependant, toutefois*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Les jeunes sont souvent perçus comme paresseux et égoïstes. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

This was a very popular question and candidates of all abilities were able to make some pertinent points about young people and how they are viewed. Too much time was spent in many introductions giving a definition of *la jeunesse* and providing quotations from a range of sources, often incorrectly quoted and spurious. Candidates provided many reasons why young people would be seen as lazy and selfish. They made reference to social media and new technologies which took up too much time and prevented young people from taking part in meaningful activities and helping their parents with chores around the home. Some mentioned the pandemic as having a significant impact on young people, making them more prone to spend time alone in their rooms surfing the internet, playing video games and using social media. This led to them being introverted and lazy. Many candidates mentioned the fact that young people had a sedentary lifestyle and that this was very unhealthy. Some thought that young people retreat into a virtual world as a way of coping with the pressures of modern life. The best scripts provided examples of young people who were fighting for the future of the planet and taking a lead in society. Many mentioned Greta Thunberg for her work on environmental issues and Malala Yousafzai for her work in the field of education for women. Other relevant points were made about the role of parents who contribute to the laziness of their children by doing everything for them, and how young people should not be judged by old-fashioned standards as life since the internet has changed for everyone.

Question 2

On peut rarement faire confiance aux médias. Discutez de cette affirmation.

This was a popular question. Most candidates addressed the question directly but there was a tendency to move into a well-rehearsed essay on the pros and cons of the media. The best responses did differentiate between the various types of media and the degree of trust that they merited. Some felt that social media was to be trusted because it was the unmoderated views of ordinary people while others felt the opposite that social media was full of fake news reports, distortions of reality and dangerous content. Many candidates mentioned the role of governments in controlling and manipulating the media, quoting as an example the reporting by Russian media of the war with Ukraine. It was felt that a small number of rich and powerful people control the media and that trust in any form of media was perhaps misplaced. Candidates felt that the BBC was a trustworthy source of unbiased information. They strongly expressed the view that it was important to choose carefully when looking for information and that parents and schools needed to educate children on how to use the media wisely.

Question 3

L'égalité des chances n'est ni possible, ni désirable. Discutez.

Fewer candidates attempted this question but those that did, provided some thoughtful responses. They gave examples of inequalities that still exist e.g., differences in salary that remain between men and women, the under-representation of women in top jobs, lack of education for millions of young girls worldwide and the discrimination faced at work and in everyday life by minority ethnic groups and disabled people. They gave examples of situations where change is not wanted by those in power e.g., in countries such as Afghanistan where girls are prevented from going to school or in cases where equality of opportunity would threaten the privileges enjoyed by those in control. Candidates did point out that some important changes had taken place and that in most countries there are laws pertaining to equality as well as recognition that positive discrimination may be useful in some cases such as access to university for candidates from deprived backgrounds or access to top jobs. Some weaker responses did not deal with the ideas of *possible* and *désirable* separately but instead linked the two together as if they were one idea. Overall, candidates seemed optimistic that changes would continue to happen and that equality of opportunity could be both possible and desirable for coming generations.

Question 4

De nos jours, les gens ont trop de temps libre. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

This was a very popular question but many candidates failed to address the word *trop* in the title. The essay was often, therefore, a discussion of the positive and negative aspects of leisure. Most often, it was felt that people do not have enough free time because the cost of living means that they have to work long hours and sometimes have to have two jobs to make ends meet. The pursuit of money was thought to be responsible for the lack of free time for adults while it was the pressures of school and exams for young people. There was some acknowledgement that young children, old people and the unemployed may have too much free time on their hands and it was, therefore, their use of it that mattered. Candidates argued that wasting free time was as bad as not having enough of it. People who have fulfilling hobbies never complain of having too much free time. Social media use and surfing the internet were seen by many candidates as evidence that people do, in fact, have too much free time and that they suffer ill health as a consequence. Some candidates did make the point that everyone had more free time these days because of the new technologies at our disposal such as household gadgets, effective transport and communication and they pondered on how the extra time available nowadays was being spent. The best responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the issues in the title and used a good range of examples to illustrate their arguments.

Question 5

Seule la science peut faire progresser l'humanité. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

A small number of candidates chose this question. In general, they provided a good range of examples of how science has helped humanity to progress and how it can also be harmful to humans and the environment. They displayed a clear knowledge of medical and technological advances that had benefited the human race. Recent developments such as medicines, vaccines and advanced medical procedures were mentioned as well as technological advances such as the internet, AI and devices for communication. Life had become easier as a result of these advances and life expectancy had increased. There was recognition in some essays that science does not always bring progress and the dangers of nuclear weapons and uncontrolled genetic modification were given as examples. To answer the question fully, it was important for candidates to consider the idea that science alone cannot solve all the world's problems. The best scripts argued that there were still no solutions to poverty, racism, social inequities or war. They also argued that empathy, close personal relationships and laws were needed to ensure society progressed. They also mentioned the important contributions of art, literature, music and education. There were some very mature and thoughtful responses to this question and candidates displayed good specialist vocabulary and detailed knowledge.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/33
Essay

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to take the time to read the questions carefully, to highlight the key terms and to write a plan. They then need to develop a logical and well-illustrated answer that focuses precisely on the question set. Candidates should use the introduction to their essay to show clearly their understanding of the title and what their approach will be. Paragraphing, with use of appropriate linking words or phrases, is an important element in this type of essay in order to show both clarity of thought and logical progression through the argument. The conclusion should then show a considered final judgement of the issues discussed. In order to attain high marks for language, candidates should write accurately and idiomatically in language which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary.

General comments

It was clear that most candidates had understood the rubric for the paper and essays were generally of the correct length, although a small number were very short. At times, handwriting presented a serious challenge and multiple alterations within the essay made it hard to follow an argument. Many candidates did attempt a plan, but this was generally very short or consisted of a list of words or phrases to include. Some candidates seemed to have learnt a model introduction and conclusion which they adapted to their topic with varying levels of success. In weaker scripts, contradictions were common as candidates moved from one side of the argument to another without sufficient links. It is particularly important that candidates tackle the precise terms of the question set and not merely write about the overarching topic. This inevitably leads to generic and sometimes pre-learned material being deployed, making it very difficult for candidates to access the higher mark bands.

There were some good answers, both in terms of language and content, but also a few very weak scripts where candidates had great difficulty expressing their ideas. Most candidates were able to build an argument, including a fair number of points. At the upper end, there were some responses which demonstrated a good knowledge of the topic area, focused on the terms of the question and expressed ideas in clear and accurate French, using a range of structures. Weaker scripts showed frequent inconsistencies in the use of basic grammar, in particular the use of adjectival and subject-verb agreements. Inaccuracies at times impeded communication, and language could be quite repetitive. Many scripts revealed difficulties with prepositions, possessive adjectives and pronouns. Punctuation was sometimes used oddly, with full stops breaking sentences. Successful responses were those that demonstrated clearly the ideas of the candidate, using a range of complex structures and idioms with attention to detail of grammar and spelling. In these answers, introductions were clear and set out the parameters of the argument, paragraphing was good and conclusions were well judged.

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

Frequent use of *beaucoup des* with plural noun and *cela* with plural verb.

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

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions.

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

Examples of candidates using one type of accent for all occurrences. Accents used randomly where not appropriate.

Difficulties with *bon/mauvais; bien/mal ; meilleur/pire*

Anglicisms : *la balance, balancer ; éventuellement ; actuellement ; restreindre; payment; neglecter; réfléchir/reflection; effect*

C'est instead of *il est*: *c'est difficile ; c'est facile*

Use of *son/sa/ses* and *leur/leurs* : *les parents ne comprennent pas ses enfants ; l'adolescent et leurs parents*

Gender errors: *la domaine, la problème*

Use of *parce que* or *grâce à* instead of *à cause de*

Misuse of pronouns : *il y en a des jeunes qui ; il y existe au travail*

Incorrect use of linking words such as *néanmoins, cependant, toutefois*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Les élèves extravertis réussissent mieux à l'école que les élèves introvertis. Êtes-vous d'accord?

This was a popular question that triggered some interesting responses. Candidates felt that extroverts were more likely to be forthcoming in class, asking questions and giving their opinions. They would therefore benefit more from lessons. It was also argued that they have the ability to make friends easily and are well liked so they get more help from teachers and classmates. Some candidates pointed out that being outgoing and constantly courting friends could possibly be an obstacle to learning and that introverted candidates might do better as they are less easily distracted and can focus on their studies. Essays were generally relevant and clearly expressed but often quite narrow in scope.

Question 2

Les médias ne reflètent pas le monde réel. Discutez.

This was a popular question. Some candidates spent too long in their introduction describing the various types of media rather than setting out how they intended to respond to the question. Candidates generally agreed that much of the material available in the media presents a distorted view of the world. They mentioned fake news, the manipulation of images and videos and the control exerted by big companies and governments. They were clear that the images on social media portrayed a false picture of the lives of celebrities and influencers and were quick to say that people should be careful in what they believe from the media. They pointed out the dangers of unmoderated content and described the effects of some social media content on young people, particularly young women. They argued that there were some media sources that could be trusted to show the real world such as the BBC News and local radio programmes. Essays were mostly relevant with a range of examples.

Question 3

L'égalité des chances à l'école est un objectif jamais réalisé. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?

Few candidates attempted this question. They mostly agreed with the statement, feeling that schools do not have a good record with equality of opportunity. They argued that despite the fact that most candidates across the world now have free access to education, it is those candidates with wealthy families who have the best opportunities. They can go to better schools, enjoy school trips and perhaps even study abroad. They may also have private lessons and better facilities at home which will enable them in future to access the best universities and high paid jobs. Within school, candidates felt that teachers were often unfair in their dealings with candidates, favouring those who were brighter or more outgoing and overlooking the quieter or more demanding candidates. There was some discussion of the subjects available to boys and girls in

school with boys still being more likely to be offered science and maths subjects and girls, arts and humanities. This was considered to be unfair and to lead to future inequality and lack of opportunity for girls.

Question 4

Le temps libre devrait être un temps pour réfléchir ou ne rien faire. Discutez de cette affirmation.

This was the most popular question and was attempted by candidates across the range. They agreed that having some time to reflect and do nothing was beneficial for a person's mental health as there is so much stress in everyday life. They mentioned the stresses caused by school and exams, competition at work and the physical demands of some types of jobs. Some felt that yoga and meditation would be useful ways of spending this reflective time, others felt that watching TV or just relaxing with a good book might serve. There was a feeling though that too much time spent thinking could be detrimental to mental health and that it might be better to spend free time on more physical or cultural activities that would broaden horizons and provide opportunities to meet interesting people. In general, the answers were relevant and thoughtful and the candidates concluded that it was best to spend one's free time in a mixture of activities, some reflective, others active.

Question 5

En général, les avancées scientifiques et médicales ne profitent qu'aux riches. Qu'en pensez-vous?

The few candidates who attempted this question described a number of scientific and medical advances that had happened over the past decades. They showed that many advances were available to all in the world, rich and poor. The recent Covid-19 vaccine was given as an example. However, it was clear that many medicines, medical procedures and technological advances were still only available to rich countries. Some candidates also felt that many large companies involved in scientific and medical research were only interested in making money for themselves and not for benefiting humanity as a whole. Others felt that technological advances such as the internet and mobile phones which are almost universally accessible have clearly benefited us all. Reference was made to some recent advances which were only available to the very rich such as travel in space, IVF treatment, cosmetic surgery or cryonics. Most candidates were able to provide a good range of examples and to provide relevant and balanced arguments.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/42 Texts</p>

Key messages

Teachers should:

- Ensure that candidates are prepared to answer questions on **three separate texts**, including one text from **each section** of the examination paper.
- Encourage candidates to manage their time carefully in the examination room, so that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions.

Candidates should:

- Think carefully about what the question is asking of them and **plan** their responses before they start to write.
- Commence responses to the passage-based (**a**) questions in **Section 1** with a **brief** introduction, explaining what events have preceded the extract.
- Start essay questions with a **short** introductory paragraph which acknowledges and defines the question, and end with a conclusion which summarises the points made in the essay.

General comments

Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the texts and very good understanding of the tasks. There were relatively few rubric errors. The quality of the language was pleasing, communication was effective, and it was gratifying to note that many candidates drafted essay plans before starting their answers. Time management remains an issue, however, and there were many instances of the candidate's performance falling away in a rushed response to the final question.

The commentary questions were quite well dealt with, particularly so the Faïza Guène text, which is clearly popular. Perhaps inevitably in view of the complexity of the plot, a few candidates overlooked critical elements in their replies to the question on the Beaumarchais text. It is worth repeating that, whilst the commentary questions in **Section 1** form a framework for candidates to show their knowledge of the text, they should not be used as an opportunity to retell the plot in its entirety: candidates should use their analytical skills, and their responses must be focused on the specific requirements of each question.

The essay questions were generally well structured. Most candidates recognise the importance of writing an introductory paragraph to demonstrate their understanding of the question. In this introduction, any terms in the question should be defined: it is not adequate merely to repeat the question itself. It is not always remembered that a concluding paragraph, briefly summarising the main points made, will also be rewarded. Regrettably, there were quite a number of responses which began with lengthy, pre-learned introductions which bore little relation to the question, but described the background to the work, the author's life or his/her literary output. Such extraneous commentaries do not attract marks.

It was once again pleasing to see candidates arguing against the premise contained in the question. Such an approach is to be highly encouraged, providing the candidate's opinion is supported by relevant evidence from the text.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Le Mariage de Figaro, Beaumarchais

The Beaumarchais questions were popular, with the commentary question being almost three times as popular as the essay.

- (a) (i) In general, the question was well answered. There was a variety of approaches to the question, with many candidates reproducing at length the sequence of events leading up to the emergence of Suzanne from the dressing room. There was occasionally some confusion as to which of Chérubin's appearances had preceded the scene. More successful answers were able to point out a variety of reasons for the confusion of the Count and Countess, the main one being that both were convinced that Chérubin was in the *cabinet*.
- (ii) This section was well handled, most candidates identifying the clear progression of the Countess's emotional states, from initial fear and shock to relief, recovery and finally to her anger with the Count's attitude.
- (iii) This was the least well-answered section in that many candidates seemed to ignore the subtlety of asking why Suzanne had made the comment. Some candidates wrote that Suzanne was in fact getting dressed, so was simply telling the truth as the Count should not be allowed to see her in a state of undress, thereby demonstrating that they had not really understood the sarcasm of Suzanne's remark. Other candidates digressed into a discussion of the *droit de cuissage*.
- (b) There were some pertinent responses to this question, but only some were able to discuss Chérubin's role in the development of the plot, beyond his contribution to the slapstick comedy of certain scenes. Most essays were of a descriptive nature, based on the character of Chérubin and his amorous pursuits. Many candidates didn't recognise the importance of Chérubin's age and status. He is a character in between boyhood and manhood. Though he is attracted to all women, he is equally frightened of them – he is pushed around by Suzanne and afraid of the Countess.

Question 2

Les jeux sont faits, Jean-Paul Sartre

Questions on the Sartre work were attempted by a small percentage of candidates. The commentary question was twice as popular as the essay.

- (a) Candidates demonstrated fair knowledge of the text.
- (i) Answers to **part (i)** were sometimes a little vague and didn't mention the obvious facts that Pierre and Ève are dead, and live as ghosts, able to observe the living, but unable to communicate with them. The pair have met and danced in the park, where they have fallen in love. They are now called back to *l'impasse Laguénézie* to be given the chance to return as a couple to the land of the living.
- (ii) Article 140 sets the critical conditionality to Ève and Pierre's future relationship and is the key to the remainder of this work. They can return to the living, but if, within 24 hours, they are unable to demonstrate their complete love for each other, they will return to their existence as ghosts. It is this condition which will present a major challenge to the couple.
- (iii) Most candidates recognised that Ève and Pierre fail to succeed because they both remain involved in the unresolved problems of their former existences and thus prove incapable of counteracting destiny. Fewer candidates referred to the social barriers which also hinder the couple – Pierre in particular – as they attempt to make a success of their relationship.

- (b) The essay question was less successfully answered, primarily because many candidates addressed only the issue of whether the novel was a pessimistic work, but ignored the secondary, though equally important theme of the impact of social and moral constraints on the two lovers. There were some attempts, not all of them entirely successful, to link replies to the theme of existentialism, but many responses descended into simple storytelling. Ève and Pierre are responsible for their failure to meet the conditions of Article 140, since they both return to focus on previous personal issues, but the fractured society in which they live contributes greatly to their downfall. Although Ève is apparently a little more relaxed at accepting the lower status that life with Pierre will give her, Pierre feels uncomfortable when he learns that the woman he loves is not only a member of the upper classes, but also the wife of a senior official of the Regency which he has vowed to destroy. He is more sensitive to public censure than Ève and is highly embarrassed at having to drag her down to his level. It is in the couple's inability to overcome these barriers that the essential pessimism of the tale lies.

Question 3

La Mare au Diable, George Sand

Not many candidates addressed **Question 3(a)**, with even fewer attempting the less popular **3(b)**.

- (a) There were some very successful and detailed responses to the commentary question.
- (i) Most candidates were able to identify the subject of conversation as the widow Catherine and could explain the reasons why Germain was travelling to Fourches to see her and why he had asked Marie to accompany him to her house.
- (ii) Candidates who had read the question carefully answered **part (ii)** very well. Marie clearly cares for Germain: she encourages him and hopes that he will not embarrass himself in front of Catherine. But she is also timid and somewhat vulnerable: she does not want to upset Germain's family and fears adding to her own problems by heaping more misery on her mother.
- (iii) Most candidates showed good understanding of the novel, explaining Petit-Pierre's importance as the catalyst who brings Germain and Marie together. Many also recognised that he allows Marie to demonstrate her maternal skills during the journey, further impressing Germain and leading to his proposal of marriage.
- (b) There were very few answers to the essay question, some of which resorted to giving a historical account of peasant life in 19th century France, with little or no reference to the text. The key to the response was to observe that George Sand breaks with literary tradition in addressing the role of women. Though her female characters carry out the traditional feminine roles of managing the home, caring for children and/or contributing to home finances, Marie, *la veuve* Catherine and *la mère* Maurice are tough, independent characters in their own right, and far stronger than the men of the novel.

Question 4

Kiffe kiffe demain, Faïza Guène

The Faïza Guène text remains very popular, with roughly equal numbers selecting the commentary and the essay question.

- (a) The commentary question was handled well, though there were, perhaps, some unnecessary generalisations about the patriarchy and the oppression of women.
- (i) Samra was identified and her troubles were well explained, though some candidates didn't mention that, having fled her home, she had been rumoured to have been seen, pregnant, in Paris with her white boyfriend.
- (ii) Good detail was given in **part (ii)**, though some candidates seemed reluctant to state that Doria despises Samra's father, as she does most of the men in the novel. Indeed, a few showed some sympathy with the father, considering him to be portrayed as an honourable man bent on protecting his daughter against evil and preserving Muslim traditions. This was certainly not the author's intention, and such responses ignored the mocking tone used by Guène.

- (iii) Most candidates rightly concluded that there were more similarities than differences between the two fathers, the key difference being that Doria's father had abandoned his family, whereas Samra's father had not.
- (b) The best responses to the essay questions dealt first with 'la misère et les souffrances de Doria' – abandonment by her father; poverty; her mother's unhappiness and her mistreatment at work; Doria's unsatisfactory academic performance; her depression; the dilapidated, crime-ridden *cité* in which they live – but then went on to conclude that this is undeniably an optimistic novel. As evidence for this conclusion, they cited the beneficial effects of Doria's sessions with her psychologist; her mother learning to read and finding a new job; her happiness for Hamoudi and his new family; her developing relationship with Nabil. Many candidates mentioned the development from *kif-kif* to *kiffe*, though few seemed to notice that the humorous tone of the novel was in itself an indicator of its essential optimism.

Section 2

Question 5

Tanguy, Michel del Castillo

- (a) There were too few responses to **Question 5(a)** to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) A small number of candidates addressed **Question 5 (b)**, with mixed success. The best replies contrasted Tanguy's utter devotion to his mother as a young child, with the gradual change in his feelings during his years in captivity. His love for his mother turns eventually to resentment of the fact that she had abandoned him, just like his father had done. His bitterness is sharpened by the maternal care and protection he receives from Gunther, Père Pardo and Sebastiana. When he eventually meets his mother again after the war, he finds that he is indifferent to her and realises that she cannot have loved him as much as he had loved her.

Question 6

La Rue Cases-Nègres, Joseph Zobel

- (a) A fairly small percent of candidates attempted the question. To be answered well, the question required that several themes be investigated: the extent to which M'man Tine's sufferings were unjust, her fearsome character and whether she might be considered pitiful. Though there were some good attempts to address the question in its entirety, many candidates focused exclusively on the hard existence that M'man Tine led and her struggles to give young José a decent start in life. Others concentrated on the injustices suffered by black (plantation) workers, often with minimal reference to the text. Only a handful of candidates recognised that M'man Tine's strict principles and high aspirations made her 'effrayante' to the child, and that her pride in no way left her deserving of pity.
- (b) The question was addressed by many more candidates than **Question (a)**. There were some good introductions and conclusions, and a fair proportion of respondents competently tracked the evolution of José's awareness of social injustice, giving relevant examples from the text. The best responses highlighted that it is not until José enters secondary school that he starts to become socially aware: as a child in la rue Cases-Nègres he has little concept of social injustice and is more interested in playing with his friends and avoiding the wrath of M'man Tine. Regrettably, some candidates lost focus, describing the general injustices faced by the black population, rather than the progression in José's perception.

Question 7

Candide, Voltaire

- (a) The question was reasonably popular. A lot of good knowledge was shown, and some aptly chosen examples were given of the events that led to Candide's ultimate abandonment of the Panglossian philosophy of optimism, though Martin's role in this process was often overlooked. Most candidates concluded that the ending of the *conte* was broadly optimistic, though few could give a clear

account of why the Turk's advice or the moral 'Il faut cultiver notre jardin' should lead to this conclusion.

- (b) This question was far less popular than **Question (a)**. Some good knowledge of the text was shown in candidates' responses, but the challenge was to draw this together into an organised and reasoned response. The work is a satire of religion. The religious are portrayed as hypocrites: they do not practise what they preach. Quite the reverse: they are brutal and hostile. The main targets of satire are the Catholic Church, the Jesuits, the Calvinists and the Muslims. Those without religion, the primitive *Oreillons*, are no better – the 'state of nature' in which they live brings perversity and cannibalism. By contrast, the Eldorado episode shows deism as an ideal religion in a utopian society. Many candidates mentioned only the Catholic Church and the Jesuits. Candide's journey is a quasi-religious one: banished from the 'garden of Eden' in the Château for the sin of acquiring carnal knowledge, he travels round the world seeking to recover what he lost...and failing.

Question 8

No et moi, Delphine de Vigan

A fair number of candidates answered questions on this text, though **Question 8(a)** was twice as popular as **8(b)**.

- (a) Most answers contained an adequate description of Lou Bertignac's character, though not many of them focused on how her character developed and changed in response to her interaction with others. Few candidates mentioned how therapeutic the arrival of No in the Bertignac household proved to be for Lou and her family. The occasional candidate seemed to ignore the question and treat the essay as a discussion of Delphine de Vigan's social agenda through the actions of Lou.
- (b) The candidates who chose this question knew their text well and were able to analyse in detail the cause of the psychological problems for many characters. There were some excellent conclusions, summarising the causes of the troubles and finding the fault within society. Some were more positive, suggesting that most people survived difficulties and became stronger because of them.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/43
Texts

Key messages

Teachers should:

- Ensure that candidates are prepared to answer questions on **three separate texts**, including one text from **each section** of the examination paper.
- Encourage candidates to manage their time carefully in the examination room, so that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions.

Candidates should:

- Think carefully about what the question is asking of them and **plan** their responses before they start to write.
- Commence responses to the passage-based (**a**) questions in **Section 1** with a **brief** introduction, explaining what events have preceded the extract.
- Start essay questions with a **short** introductory paragraph which acknowledges and defines the question, and end with a conclusion which summarises the points made in the essay.

General comments

Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the texts and very good understanding of the tasks. There were relatively few rubric errors. The quality of the language was pleasing, communication was effective, and it was gratifying to note that many candidates drafted essay plans before starting their answers. Time management remains an issue, however, and there were many instances of a decline in the candidate's performance owing to a rushed response to the final question.

The commentary questions were quite well managed, particularly so the Faïza Guène text, which is clearly popular. Perhaps inevitably in view of the complexity of the plot, a few candidates overlooked critical elements in their replies to the question on the Beaumarchais text. It is worth repeating that, whilst the commentary questions in **Section 1** form a framework for candidates to show their knowledge of the text, they should not be used as an opportunity to retell the plot in its entirety: candidates should use their analytical skills, and their responses must be firmly focused on the specific requirements of each question.

The essay questions were generally well structured. Most candidates recognise the importance of writing an introductory paragraph to demonstrate their understanding of the question. In this introduction, any terms in the question should be defined: it is not adequate to merely repeat the question itself. A concluding paragraph, briefly summarising the main points made, will also be rewarded. Regrettably, there were quite a number of responses which began with lengthy, pre-learned introductions which bore little relation to the question, but described the background to the work, the author's life or his/her literary output. Such extraneous commentaries do not attract marks.

It was once again pleasing to see candidates arguing against the premise contained in the question – particularly so for **Question 7(a)**. Such an approach is to be encouraged, providing the candidate's opinion is supported by relevant evidence from the text.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Le Mariage de Figaro, Beaumarchais

The Beaumarchais questions were fairly popular, with the commentary question being selected on twice as many occasions as the essay.

- (a) (i) The question was relatively well answered. Most candidates correctly analysed Suzanne's feelings, although not always explained in detail. She is happily looking forward to her marriage, which can now take place because the Countess has given her a dowry, thus enabling Figaro to buy himself out of his contract of marriage with Marceline. Explanations of the causes of the Countess's mindset were a little vaguer: she is unhappy and wants to humiliate the Count for his infidelity. For that reason, the Countess is still intent on executing the plan of taking Suzanne's place to meet and embarrass the Count in the garden that evening.
- (ii) **Part ii** was well handled, most candidates identifying the cause of this slight setback in the relationship between the Countess and Suzanne. The Countess is upset to hear Suzanne say that the rendezvous that evening will not go ahead. She feels that Suzanne has deceived her. She briefly becomes distant, wishing that she had kept her plans secret. Suzanne feels a little wounded by the Countess's words, but she hastens to assure her of her loyalty. The two are reconciled and set about planning the rendezvous.
- (iii) This was the least well-answered part in that some candidates struggled to identify the role that the pin played in the development of the plot. Figaro sees the Count prick his finger on the pin and read the note, though Figaro initially believes that the Count is reading a *billet-doux* from some unknown admirer. However, when Fanchette subsequently arrives to look for the pin which the Count has instructed her to give back to Suzanne, Figaro immediately assumes that Suzanne has been unfaithful to him. He announces his intention of seeking his vengeance on both the Count and his fiancée.
- (b) There were some pertinent responses to this question, but too few candidates were able to identify all the elements of social criticism in the play. Most candidates addressed the mockery of the aristocracy and the inherent challenge to the accepted order of society, given Figaro's clear intellectual advantage over his master, the Count. Fewer referred to the author's criticism of the subservient role of women in 18th century France, or to the attack on the corruption of the legal system. The best responses pointed out that, despite the author's censure of contemporary French society, the play is a comedy and Beaumarchais' parody was used primarily for entertainment via comic effect, rather than for political impact.

Question 2

Les jeux sont faits, Jean-Paul Sartre

- (a) There were too few responses to **Question 2(a)** to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) There were no responses to **Question 2(b)**.

Question 3

La Mare au Diable, George Sand

- (a) There were no responses to **Question 3(a)**.
- (b) There were no responses to **Question 3(b)**.

Question 4

Kiffe kiffe demain, Faïza Guène

The Faïza Guène text remains very popular, with most candidates attempting **Question 4(a)**.

- (a) The commentary question was very well handled.
- (i) Most candidates identified the psychologist, Mme Burlaud, and her role in Doria's life, though a few candidates confused her with the social worker, Mme Dutruc, who visits Doria and her mother.
- (ii) Good detail was given in **part ii**. Though she refuses to admit it, Doria has been left traumatised by the departure of her father. She cannot talk about her half-brother because this would reinforce her belief that her father had resented her, since he had always wanted a son rather than a daughter.
- (iii) The analysis of the relations between Doria and her psychologist was less well handled by some. Rather than concentrating on what the extract shows, some candidates focused on Doria's relationship with Mme Burlaud in more general terms, citing her mockery of her psychologist early in the novel, then skipping to Doria's acknowledgement towards the end of the tale that her psychology sessions had done her good. What is clear **in the extract** is that Doria resents Mme Burlaud's intrusions into her private life. She responds **mechanically** to Mme Burlaud's questions and accuses her of trying out untested new techniques on her. She is annoyed when she is caught unprepared by the photograph of her half-brother and, though she tries to argue that there is nothing to be read in her response, she realises that Mme Burlaud has hit on a real sore point.
- (b) There were too few responses to **Question 4(b)** to allow for meaningful comment.

Section 2

Question 5

Tanguy, Michel del Castillo

- (a) There were no responses to **Question 5(a)**.
- (b) There were no responses to **Question 5(b)**.

Question 6

La Rue Cases-Nègres, Joseph Zobel

- (a) There were no responses to **Question 6(a)**.
- (b) There were no responses to **Question 6(b)**.

Question 7

Candide, Voltaire

Candide was reasonably popular, with slightly more candidates answering question (a) than (b).

- (a) A lot of good knowledge was shown, and some aptly chosen examples were given. Candidates cited, among other things, Pangloss's unreasoning optimism, Martin's profound pessimism, the old woman with her unbelievable tale of horror and mistreatment and the indefensible boredom of the wealthy Senator Pococurante as examples of characters who lacked credibility. Several candidates contended that *Candide* was, by contrast, a wholly credible character: his extensive education at the hands of Pangloss and his relatively young age inevitably left him clinging to a naively optimistic outlook on the world.
- (b) Again, some good knowledge of the text was shown in candidates' responses, though most found more to say about Cunégonde than her brother, the young baron. The contrast between the two

characters is considerable. They have little in common, other than the circumstances of their birth and the fact that each repeatedly suffers – and survives – death in the conte.

Question 8

No et moi, Delphine de Vigan

No et moi is another very well-liked text: **Question 8(a)** was four times as popular as **8(b)**.

- (a) This essay was very well handled, and most candidates gave detailed descriptions of Mme Bertignac's descent into clinical depression following the death of her infant daughter, with some appropriate examples of the effect that her withdrawal had on Lou and her father. Anouk's gradual recovery following the arrival of No was also well described. Only a handful of candidates remarked upon the fact that Anouk's recovery and No's regression develop in parallel.
- (b) Candidates were divided as to whether Lucas was right to say that he and Lou were not strong enough to succeed in their efforts to assist No. Some candidates pointed to Lou's inability to live a normal family life, her gradual redescend into drug abuse and prostitution, and her eventual return to the streets as evidence that Lucas was correct. Others highlighted the positives – No's growing confidence in the Bertignac household, her developing friendship with Lou, her willingness to open up to Lou's mother and the fact that she does, for a time at least, find a steady job and begin to keep normal hours – as evidence that Lucas was not correct and that the overriding message of the novel was positive. Both approaches were equally valid, providing they were accompanied by relevant evidence from the text.