

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.
- 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 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. Elaborate 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.
- If the candidate's Topic Presentation is not related to a francophone country or society, the mark for Content/Presentation must be halved. Most teacher/examiners are now aware of this.

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 3–3.5 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. 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: 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 the country to which they are referring.
- 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.
- 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 examination.

Administration

Recordings

- Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still examples of faulty recording equipment. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the examiner's own contribution. There were a number of centres where the examiner was completely audible and the candidate(s) distant and hard to hear.
- Please choose a room which is quiet and where candidates are not distracted by external noise. There were some centres where there was excessive background noise.
- Only the examiner and the candidate should be present during the Test.
- Centres should keep a copy of the recording(s) in case a second copy is required by the moderator or a broader range of marks is requested.
- Where Centres use digital recording software, each candidate's file must be saved individually, as .mp files, 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.
- Recordings must be submitted by the specified deadline.

Submit for Assessment

- The vast majority of centres had no difficulty in successfully uploading paperwork and recordings via the Submit for Assessment platform.
- Some centres save sound files in formats other than .mp files and Working Mark Sheets in formats which cannot be opened.
- Centres must make sure that sound files and Working Mark Sheets are uploaded at the same time.

Paperwork

- There were a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transferring the total mark to Submit for Assessment. These should be checked carefully before submission. For the size of sample needed, please see the details online.
- 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.
- Several centres submitted Working Mark Sheets from previous examination sessions, often alongside the Working Mark Sheets for the current session.

Application of 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 did not halve the mark for *Presentation/Content* when the candidate's topic was not demonstrably and unequivocally related to a francophone country.
- Where a Centre engages two or more examiners to examine the same syllabus, examiners must standardise marks before submitting them. It is not expected that a centre engage more than one examiner for a small number of candidates.

Format of the examination

There are 3 distinct parts to the Speaking Test:

- 1 Presentation – (3–3.5 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. Both tendencies were evident this session.

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

Presentation (3 to 3.5 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*, *La pollution*. More unusual topics included *Le Guide Michelin*, *Les dots au Gabon*, *Les manifestations et le culture*, *La chirurgie esthétique*, *La misogynie*, *L'article L4354 du Code de la Sécurité*, *La guerre religieuse à Genève*. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues. The best topics are usually those the candidate feels most passionate about.

Most candidates did relate their topics to a francophone country. Where this is not the case, candidates will have their mark for *Content/Presentation* halved (see Speaking Test mark scheme) by the examiner.

Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched quite widely, and have to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3.5 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 should 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 3.5 minutes. This did not always happen.

Topic Conversation (7 to 8 minutes)

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

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

In each conversation section there are **5 marks** available for questions the candidates ask of the examiner: they should ask more than one question in each conversation section and it is the examiner's responsibility to prompt them to do so. Examiners should make sure that they do not spend too long on their own answers to candidates' questions, thereby depriving candidates of valuable time.

There were a significant number of exams this session where the candidate asked no questions in the Topic Conversation and/or was not prompted to by the examiner but did ask questions in the General conversation.

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 AS and A Level should be prepared for the conversation to move on to current affairs and more abstract topics appropriate to this level of examination.

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

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

Seeking Information and Opinions

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

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

Assessment

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

- A handful of examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness, Accuracy* and *Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.
- In rare cases, examiners misapplied the mark scheme, most frequently by awarding marks out of 10 for those categories like *Pronunciation/Intonation* and *Seeking Opinions* which carry a maximum of 5 marks.
- Examiners at centres with a large entry of able candidates should be aware that marks may be bunched and that it may be impossible to differentiate between candidates to a greater degree than the Mark Scheme allows.
- Where candidates ask questions to elicit clarification or obtain information during the course of conversation, they should clearly be rewarded, but examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that they are relevant to the topic under discussion. A significant number of candidates this session had prepared questions which were not relevant.
- Centres are reminded that, except in extenuating circumstances, they should engage only one examiner per syllabus, regardless of the size of the entry. In cases where the engagement of two or more examiners on the same syllabus is unavoidable, the examiners must co-ordinate with each other to establish an agreed standard and submit evidence of standardisation with the Moderation Sample.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/22 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words 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.
- 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 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

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 in ink (more or less precisely), scanning does not clearly distinguish the pencil version from the ink one. This can make the script very difficult or indeed impossible to mark on screen.

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 failed to 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 no 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. Some candidates neglect the straightforward answer and give over-complicate ones. 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 detract from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *Les enfants déplaisent-ils à leurs enfants...* (**3a**); *Les adolescents peuvent-ils bénéficier...* (**3c**); *Un enfant peut-il être affecté...* (**4d**). Answers beginning with *Parce que*, *En* or an infinitive are usually quite in order.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished significantly in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. 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 leaving the transformation unfinished e.g. *adopter de l'identité...* (from *l'adoption de l'identité* (3b) ; *capturer de détails...* (from *la capture de détails*) (3d) ; *éroder de la distinction...* (from *l'érosion de la distinction*) (4c). This indicated a lack of understanding sufficient to invalidate the answer.

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of the need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing. 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. **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 in recent sessions, 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. 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. 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 cause problems with legibility. If candidates wish to cross out preparatory notes, it is important that they do so clearly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates scored **(a)** (apart from a few who were careless about copying *illimité*), as well as **(b)**. In **(c)**, *pourtant* was offered almost as frequently as the correct *pleinement*. In **(d)**, most identified that the answer would involve *quotidien* but infringed the 'precise footprint' principle by omitting the necessary *du*, whilst *comprend* appeared frequently instead of *s'accorde* in **(e)**, *adoption* also chosen by some.

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)**, many set about forming the passive in the right way, but some then forgot to make the agreement of *facilité*, or wrote *sont*, presumably because the nearest noun (*pressions*) is plural. A few unnecessarily altered *ces jeux* to *les/ses/des jeux*.

In **Item 2(b)**, the most common error involved the lack of the agreements of *faciles* and *leurs*, or *comprises* and *compréhensibles*, although *à comprendre* also caused problems for some candidates.

In **Item 2(c)**, some candidates recognised the need for a subjunctive although not all of them formed it correctly, and there was frequent omission of at least one element of *nous ne les*.

Item 2(d) was probably the most successfully handled of all, although there was a tendency to add an *-e*, *-s*, *-es*, *-t* to the end of *réussi*, and to change *ses* to *ces collègues*.

Item 2(e) was less well done, with many candidates making mistakes with *pouvoir* and/or missing the agreement on *rappelés*.

Question 3

Item 3(a) was answered correctly by many with *Les enfants passent trop/tant de temps à jouer aux jeux vidéo* or similar. They often then went on to use either the reflexive *s'épanouir* or *développement* to earn the second mark.

In **Item 3(b)**, candidates found a number of appropriate verbs for the first two marks: *évacuer* (but not *évaquer* or *évacuater*), *éliminer*, *décharger*, *se débarrasser de*, and then *gérer* (but not *gester* or *gestater*). *Rétablir/restaurer/reconstruire son amour-propre/estime de soi/confiance* were all accepted for the third mark. Candidates often found the idea of adopting or identifying with a character they would like to be (i.e. a winner) less easy to express for the fourth mark – using *c(h)aractère* rather than *personnage* was not acceptable here.

In **Item 3(c)**, *comprendre* (not *compréhendre*) and *résoudre* (not *resolver*) were sensibly used by a number of candidates for two of the marks. *Traitement* was sometimes interpreted in a medical context.

In **Item 3(d)**, most candidates saw that using readily conjugated *-er* verbs (*se concentrer*, *observer* and *capturer*) was the easiest way to earn all three marks here, although some did not mention that it was speed of assimilating details that was an important element here.

In **Item 3(e)**, it was speed that was asked about for the first two points (in answer to this question relating to paragraph 5), so the frequent references to hand-eye coordination or decision-making were not relevant. The third point was not simply that players play lots of games but that they lose so often that they learn to carry on trying.

Question 4

Item 4(a) saw a good proportion of candidates scoring the first mark by using *banaliser* (sometimes confused with *bannir*) or *normaliser* or *présenter la violence comme acceptable/normale*, and then going on to say that that players thought that *les jeux reflètent/copient/imitent/reproduisent la vraie vie*. Not all were successful in finding *détruire* from *destruction* and many did not suggest that illegal behaviour was actively encouraged, rewarded or *valorisé* in the games, preferring to concentrate on not getting caught.

Item 4(b) rewarded those who offered *grignoter*, whereas others just thought that *les joueurs prennent du poids*. An inactive lifestyle was correctly identified by some, whilst lack of sleep and personal hygiene often scored the remaining two marks.

In **Item 4(c)**, *coupure du monde* was very often successfully reworked as *se couper* for the first mark, but fewer managed *rompre* from *rupture*, although *briser* was often a rewardable alternative. The plight of players unable to distinguish fantasy from reality was well described by those who managed to find an appropriate verb to replace *érosion*, although the omission of *ne* in *Ils différencient plus* caused confusion.

In **Item 4(d)**, the idea of dropping out of school was usually well expressed, as was the idea of an impoverished social life, although some clearly thought it was a question of earning less money by spending too much time in front of the screen.

In **Item 4(e)**, the first mark was successfully scored by a large number of candidates who mentioned the buying of extra items as the games progressed. Far fewer interpreted what was wanted for the second mark, which was the notion of parents having to spend sums that they had not anticipated at the outset.

Question 5(a) (Summary)

Question 5(a) asked candidates to summarise the benefits and dangers of video games as presented in the texts.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, which many candidates handled very successfully. Some wrote unnecessary introductions which often wasted over 20 per cent of the word allowance: *Les jeux vidéo on leurs bon et mauvais cotés. Comme toutes choses on doit surveiller la consommation de jeux vidéo pour les jeunes. Ça a beaucoup de bienfaits comme par exemple...* . Others started making the content points very efficiently with well-structured answers in which the benefits and dangers were clearly presented.

The most commonly identified benefits included:

- Getting rid of stress/handling pressure.
- Restoring self-esteem/adopting a positive image of oneself.
- Training the brain.
- Ability to analyse situations.
- Ability to concentrate and absorb details.
- Speed of reaction/decision-making.

The most commonly identified dangers included:

- Encouraging violence.
- Unhealthy life-style.
- Blurring of the distinction between the virtual and the real.
- Glorifying crime.
- Dropping out of social activity, the family and school.

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

Question 5(b) (Personal Response)

The **Personal Response** asked candidates what rules concerning video games they would establish as parents. Many responses were text-derived, but there were also lots of original ideas, the most common ones being: imposing strict time limits, not allowing video games on school days, before all homework and chores had been done or after bed-time, and never at meal-times. Their confiscation would be automatic if school results were poor or if the children were not spending enough time on other activities (sporting, cultural, social) or with the family. Parents would also want to vet the suitability of the contents and any additional costs.

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 candidates 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 phonetic: (e.g. *sa/ça/s'a; son/sont/s'ont/sonts; ces/c'est/ses/se/s'est ; se/ce; ceci/ceux-ci/si; ceux-là/cela/sela*), whilst the choice between verb endings such as *-er, -é, -ez* often appeared random. The most common spelling error was made in probably the most commonly word used in this paper: *jeurs/joers/jouers/jueurs/joues/jeus/jours*

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 largely arbitrary in many scripts.

Often, 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 empêche* is *ils empêchent* or *ils empêchents*. On the other hand, when nouns or adjectives required to be made plural it was not uncommon for *il est facile* to emerge as *ils sont facilitent*.

Incorrect verb forms were frequent even for common irregular verbs such as *vouloir*, *devoir*, *prendre*, *croire*, *tenir*, *venir* and their compounds. Constructions with certain verbs were also frequently problematic, e.g. *aider*, *empêcher*, *permettre*, *interdire*, *plaire*, *apprendre*.

Many anglicisms were spotted. Verbs: *distincter*, *depicter*, *convictionner*, *restricter*, *concentrater*, *érosionner*, *prevenir*, *appauvrir*, *réacter*, *disturber*, *destrucster*, *avoider*; nouns: *la rappelation*, *la critiquation*, *la préservérisation*, *la failure*, *le détruisement*; adverbs: *accruement*, *approfondamment*

English often intruded in other ways too – *balancer* for *équibrer*, *rester* for *se reposer*, *abilité* or in phrases such as *il faut avoir le famille temps* or *il doit dormir sur temps* or *écran temps*.

Reflexives caused particular difficulties, with frequent errors over *se concentrer*: *se couper*, *se développer*, *s'épanouir*, *s'occuper de*, *se laver*, *se sentir*, *s'éloigner*

The incorrect *plus mieux*, *plus bien*, *plus meilleur*, *plus/trop beaucoup* all appeared fairly regularly.

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

Paper 9716/23
Reading and Writing 23

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9716/32 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to take the time to read the questions carefully, highlight the key terms and 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 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

Most candidates managed to communicate their ideas on their chosen question and tried to construct an argument using examples to back up the points being made. Many candidates, however, did not address the precise wording of the question although there were only a few completely irrelevant answers. Candidates in general were able to produce essays that followed a reasonable structure, with work organised into paragraphs and the inclusion of an introduction and conclusion. However, sometimes the introductions did not add anything of particular value to the essay and the first paragraph of the body of many essays was like a new introduction. Many introductions contained superfluous definitions of key words from the topic such as the family and pollution. These introductions lacked relevance and focus and did not show if the candidate had understood the context of the question or had a plan for how they would approach the question set. Some ended with reference to the question in the form of a rhetorical question (often inaccurately expressed), but this often seemed merely tacked on and not related to what had preceded it. Conclusions were often weak and unconvincing, reiterating material that had gone before without proffering a considered judgement on the issues discussed or even being directly related to the terms of the question answered. Answers generally would have benefited from a wider range of clear and targeted examples and only the best candidates wrote the detailed, well-informed and tightly argued response that scored a very high mark for content.

The candidates' work was generally well presented although there were some examples of poor handwriting. Some candidates made excessive numbers of untidy revisions or additions in the text of the essay, which hindered the Examiner's ability to follow an argument.

There were inconsistencies in the use of basic grammar, including prepositions and agreements (masculine/feminine, subject/verb, adjectival) and the use of articles even in some good scripts, but most candidates were able to communicate their ideas and attempted to include variety in their choice of vocabulary and structures. At the top end, candidates displayed an impressive command of the language and confident use of complex vocabulary and structures. At the lower end, candidates resorted to using English words instead of using French equivalents. Phonetic spelling was evident as well as minor slips that could have been avoided by checking.

Planning is a key element when writing a discursive essay, but many candidates appeared to bypass this important phase, writing just a few key words, or nothing at all. It was clear that those candidates who planned their essays carefully, defined the terms of the question in the introduction, wrote a logical and persuasive argument, and arrived at a balanced conclusion, gained the highest marks.

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

Incorrect spelling of common words: *problem, développement, government, environnement, le stresse, l'impacte, concluire, à fin, activitée, réseaux sociaux, l'emploie, néanmoins.*

Incomplete negatives: *les adolescents pensent qu'à*

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

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

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

Reference to *personnes* as *ils*

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*

Overuse of *plusieurs, choses, beaucoup*

Anglicisms and anglicised structures: *ils ne sont pas donné, consister de (with noun), résulter dans, définitivement, afforder, en addition*

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

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

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

La vie familiale: source de rires et de larmes. Discutez.

This was an extremely popular question and candidates of all abilities were able to make pertinent points. Many candidates treated the question as the positives and negatives of being part of a family and the importance of family life for the individual. The best scripts made closer reference to the terms *rires* and *larmes* in the title. They described the joys of welcoming a newborn in the family, family celebrations or simply just time spent together enjoying the company of siblings and family jokes. Candidates in general did not spend as much time on the *rires* as the *larmes*. Their discussion of the situations which might bring sadness and tears to a family included frictions, arguments about homework or clothes but also some more serious issues. Some scripts devoted too much time to defining the family, describing different types of family and showing how the family is the primary educator. The best scripts concluded that the highs and lows of family life mirrored life itself and it was important for families to ensure that the positives outweighed the negatives.

Question 2

Protéger le public entraîne un risque de violence policière. Discutez.

Few candidates chose this question. Most dealt extensively with police violence without putting it into the context of protecting the public. It was generally agreed that the police used too much violence and various reasons were given for this, including lack of training, poor discipline within the force, and lax recruiting procedures. Some candidates felt that police officers are fallible human beings and at times they are put under significant pressure and fear for their lives. This can lead to mistakes. Candidates often cited infamous incidents of police violence that made the international press, and many made reference to countries where the police force operates a brutal regime. The best essays also considered the role of the police as protectors of the public in managing difficult situations and dealing with criminals and saw that this role could therefore be extremely challenging. They concluded that to be effective, police officers must be well trained and accountable for their actions.

Question 3

Le tourisme de masse est un mal nécessaire pour certains pays. Qu'en pensez-vous?

This was a popular question and generated some thoughtful responses. Most candidates could see the positives and negatives of tourism, although many failed to specifically reference the *de masse* idea. It was generally felt that tourism was a good thing for developing countries as it creates jobs, brings in money and investment, a better infrastructure for the local population and allows cultural exchange. Many candidates thought that having a large number of tourists was good as it brought more money. Others felt that too many tourists led to serious environmental issues such as depletion of local resources, accumulation of waste and destruction of environmentally sensitive sites such as coral reefs. The best answers understood that the *mal nécessaire* in the title meant that developing countries often have no choice but to accept and tolerate mass tourism because the consequences of not having it could be catastrophic for the economy. It was felt that the way forward could be ecotourism where travellers are sensitive to the environment and local culture so that they bring in money but have a low impact.

Question 4

Les rencontres face à face sont devenues moins importantes à cause de l'évolution de la communication virtuelle. Discutez de cette affirmation.

This question was quite popular and attracted candidates across the range of ability. The strongest responses were those that took a balanced and nuanced view and linked the two elements of the title. They pointed out the advantages offered by virtual communication; allowing professional meetings to take place without the necessity for expensive and pollution-causing travel, conversations between families and friends separated by distance and the provision of education for candidates unable to attend school particularly during the pandemic. They did recognise that humans are social animals, and that virtual communication could not ever replace the joy of being close to someone, reacting to body language and sharing experiences. Some responses were less nuanced and merely described the benefits of the internet and social media and felt that these developments far outweighed the need for face-to-face meetings. Their arguments failed to recognise the disadvantages of meeting people online as opposed to face to face or the isolation suffered by people permanently glued to their screens. The best responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the issues in the title, demonstrated a balanced view and used a good range of examples to illustrate their arguments.

Question 5

L'indifférence est le plus grand obstacle à la lutte contre la pollution. Êtes vous d'accord?

Candidates answering this question mostly wrote about the different types of pollution and the problems it caused. The most nuanced answers pointed out that the attitudes of governments and people were often an obstacle in the fight against pollution. They understood that political solutions are necessary in order to counter the apathy of the general public or the inability of consumers to make the necessary changes such as moving to more eco-friendly forms of transport. Candidates pointed out that governments were not necessarily indifferent to or ignorant of the problems but had considerable immediate issues (e.g. poverty or war) to deal with in their own countries which might take precedence over pollution. Some essays placed the blame firmly on the richer economic countries who had choices they could make, whereas poorer countries were struggling to survive. It was generally agreed that indifference was an obstacle to fighting pollution, but many candidates failed to explore this fully, preferring to stick to their well-prepared discussions of the impact of the various types of pollution.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/33
Essay 33

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/42
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 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 showed sound knowledge of their chosen texts and constructed balanced, structured responses. In some cases, however, candidates failed to address the question fully, either losing direction during the writing process, or merely offering detailed summaries of the plot. It is of crucial importance that candidates stay on track by referring to the question as they write their essays.

Communication was generally effective in responses to both the extract and the essay questions. However, there were some cases of very poor handwriting, or sub-standard grammar or spelling, which occasionally made it difficult to decipher the candidate's responses. Nevertheless, it was pleasing to note that many candidates drafted essay plans before starting their answers. It was also evident that candidates were successful in managing their time in the exam room, and there were few examples of rushed replies to the final question.

The passage-based questions were generally well dealt with, particularly so the Françoise Sagan novel, which is clearly popular. Nevertheless, it is worth repeating that these questions should not be used by candidates merely as an opportunity to retell the story of the play or novel: they require analytical skills and close attention to the particular requirements of each question.

The essay questions were largely well structured. Most candidates now commence with an introductory paragraph, demonstrating their understanding of the question and, in some cases, explaining how they intend to go about addressing it. Many responses however started with lengthy, pre-learned introductions which bore little relation to the question, but which described the background to the work, the author's life or his/her literary output. Such extraneous commentaries **do not attract marks** and they waste valuable time which could be spent on answering the question.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 – *Le Mariage de Figaro*, Beaumarchais

A large number of candidates attempted one of the Beaumarchais questions, the majority opting for the passage-based question.

- (a) (i) Often a lot of time was wasted in explaining who Beaumarchais was, what he wrote and what the political situation was at the time of the play's composition. Many candidates also failed to locate the extract accurately and were therefore unable to assess the Countess's state of mind correctly. In essence the Countess is shocked at coming so close to dishonour – the Count has only just failed to discover his wife alone in her room with another man. Suzanne and her fiancé have saved the day, but it was Figaro's note that had brought the Count back to the château unexpectedly and the Countess is furious that his scheming has almost ruined her (*'la jolie scène que votre étourdi m'a valu avec son billet'*).
- (ii) Part (ii) was often misunderstood. Some candidates merely copied parts of the original text into their answer. However, there were some, who realised that *'le grand monde'* and *'les dames comme il faut'* refer to noble women. Nobility and Bourgeoisie are not the same. Most of the answers referred to women's liberation, gender inequality and the French revolution, but the fact that women are forced to tell lies to survive was also generally mentioned. Very few put the remarks into the context of Suzanne talking to the Countess in her distress. In part, Suzanne is trying to reassure the Countess, after the shock she has had, by complimenting her – 'you aristocrats are really good at lying'. It is a back-handed compliment – a joke intended to lighten the mood. But by suggesting that the privileges of aristocracy lead to more accomplished dishonesty, there is also a social critique.
- (iii) The third part of the question was better handled. The countess recognises the inherent riskiness of her plan to meet the Count in disguise that evening. The ribbon reminds her of the fondness that she has for Chérubin, but she realises that such thoughts are inappropriate for a woman of her status. She would never have thought of the young page, had her husband been faithful. She doubts her own intentions – does she really want to confront the count? After all, she does love him despite his many imperfections.
- (b) The question was not as popular as 1(a) and was often chosen by candidates who simply narrated the plot of the play. Nevertheless, there were some very good responses. The best candidates were able to present several of Figaro's plans, showing how they were thwarted, and demonstrating Beaumarchais's skills to make the play rebound.

Question 2 – *Les jeux sont faits*, Jean-Paul Sartre

Questions on the Sartre work was attempted by a small percentage of candidates. The extract and the essay question were equally popular.

- (a) Candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the text.
- (i) This part was well handled. Ève and Pierre are talking about Pierre's inability to stop the insurrection and save his comrades. They also talk about Ève's failure to rescue her sister, Lucette, from the clutches of André. Pierre expresses sympathy for Lucette, but Ève, now dead again, can only show indifference.
- (ii) There were some comprehensive responses to this question. The old man had acted as a guide to Pierre in the world of the dead and had taken Pierre to visit the Regent, where Pierre had learned that the insurrection had been exposed. He was surprised that Pierre had failed to save his comrades and stop the insurrection but was even more astonished that Ève and Pierre had failed to meet the conditions set for their return to the living.
- (iii) Candidates generally explained the significance of Ève's closing lines very well, some interpreting her words in the context of Sartrean existentialism. Ève and Pierre have failed to take advantage of the opportunity given to them. Trapped by their past, they have each focused on old personal concerns, rather than the need to devote themselves to each other for the sake of their combined

future. Ève expresses her regret at their failure, but it is too late – ‘*les jeux sont faits*’ – they are condemned to return to the world of the dead.

- (b) There were relatively few answers to this question, but most of those who chose to address it performed very well. Of the two, Ève is much more committed to their success as a couple and appears not to notice or care about the social and political differences between herself and Pierre. Pierre, on the other hand, is ill at ease with Ève’s status as wife of the secretary of the militia. Her social status and the opulence of her apartment and clothes disturbs him, as do the condescending attitudes of André and Ève’s snobbish friends. Ultimately, Pierre’s revolutionary aims prove stronger than his love for Ève.

Question 3 – *Eugénie Grandet*, Honoré de Balzac

Only a small minority of candidates addressed **Question 3**, responses being equally split between 3(a) and 3(b).

- (a) Responses to the passage-based question were very satisfactory.
- (i) Charles has just arrived in Saumur, believing that he has come to display a little ‘*Parisian glamour*’ for the benefit of his country cousins. Charles bears a letter addressed to père Grandet which reveals that Charles’ father is bankrupt. The letter begs père Grandet to take Charles under his wing and to take responsibility for his brother’s debts. We learn later that Charles’ father has committed suicide.
- (ii) The description of Charles’ room was well analysed. Charles is astonished because what he finds is not the luxury he had expected. He had heard that his uncle was very rich and lived in a castle, but the room and its furniture give off an air of poverty and neglect.
- (iii) **Part (iii)** was fairly well answered, though not all candidates described Charles’ impact on Eugénie in its full effect. Charles is a glamorous breath of fresh air for Eugénie. He represents the elegance and excitement that is so missing from her own dull and uninteresting existence. Inevitably, Eugénie falls for Charles, though he fails to return her affection. She gives Charles all of her savings, hoping that he will return from his travels to marry her. Though they plight their troth to each other, Charles eventually abandons her.
- (b) The essay question was well handled. Grandet epitomises the society in which he lives. He is obsessed by money, gives his wife the minimum she needs for subsistence, and displays his generosity by giving his daughter just a single coin to add to her meagre savings every year. He insists on a large discount when buying Charles’ remaining jewels and reduces to a minimum the payment to his brother’s creditors. Wealth and its acquisition drive the other characters whom we encounter. The Des Grassins and the Cruchots vie for Eugénie’s favour as this will give them access to Grandet’s wealth. Only Eugénie and her mother have no interest in money.

Question 4 – *Bonjour Tristesse*, Françoise Sagan

Perhaps unsurprisingly given its subject matter, *Bonjour Tristesse* appears very popular, and candidates showed real engagement with the text.

- (a) The passage-based question was handled very well.
- (i) Most candidates identified how the carefree, hedonistic lifestyle that Cécile enjoys was threatened by the arrival of an outsider. Cécile also fears that the close relationship with her father might be placed at risk. Nevertheless, some candidates slightly misunderstood the question and provided information about why Cécile did not want Anne to come on their holiday. This is a misunderstanding because, by line 2, Cécile does not know who will be arriving. She is merely unhappy that someone is.
- (ii) **Part (ii)** was well answered overall, although some candidates copied whole parts of the text when describing Anne, rather than providing their own interpretation. Anne is a refined and sophisticated woman, whose lifestyle is very different to that of Raymond, Cécile and Elsa. She is older than her father, whose only connection with Anne is that she was a friend of his late wife. Cécile simply

cannot understand why her father would want to invite this woman to their villa, particularly when Elsa is in residence.

- (iii) The third part of the question was a pleasing conclusion to a very satisfactory overall response in most instances. Though Cécile at first admires Anne's sophistication and is glad that her father is happy in her company, she soon begins to begrudge the discipline that Anne imposes on her and resents Anne's intrusion into the relationship she shares with her father. She plots Anne's downfall in a cynical manner but is left haunted by the feeling that she is responsible for Anne's death.
- (b) Despite some very good responses, many candidates took the approach of recounting all the potential or actual incidents of sadness that touched the various characters in the novel. Most missed the point that this is a first-person narrative and therefore it is clearly Cécile who is writing about how her carefree existence was transformed by the entry of sadness into her life as a familiar constant. Too few referenced Cécile's own utterance of the phrase at the end of the book. Cécile is clear that her sadness is a response to Anne's death and guilt at her involvement in it.

Section 2

Question 5 – *Un Secret*, Philippe Grimbert

The Grimbert novel was a reasonably popular choice with the majority opting for **Question 5(a)**.

- (a) Many candidates ended up summarising the novel rather than focusing on the question: the consequences for the narrator of discovering and relating his family history. There were a few excellent responses from candidates who understood the unexpected technique used by Grimbert to reveal his family background. They understood the maturity of the narrator who appreciates the weight his parents carry in their heart. Lesser responses presented a young boy neglected, even despised by his parents for his lack of physical beauty, compared with their own. There was some storytelling and much misunderstanding about the parents' death. Few understood the importance of the visit to the dog's cemetery in the grounds of Laval's daughter's chateau.
- (b) There was much confusion about the cemetery. Some thought that it was a Jewish cemetery, others did not mention whose family owned the property. The 'dog' symbol is present throughout the novel, but few candidates had noticed. The visit is a catalyst for the narrator: the small headstones remind Grimbert of a children's graveyard. It is from that memory that his decision to write the novel grows.

Question 6 – *Petit Pays*, Gaël Faye

- (a) Very few candidates attempted this question and some candidates struggled to answer it relevantly. Many candidates saw the theme of exile only through the eyes of Gaby's mother, Yvonne, born in Rwanda and exiled to Burundi, where she experienced some level of xenophobia. Few candidates mentioned Gaby's status as an exile in Burundi: a métis and the son of a French colonist; a Tutsi in a country where 85 per cent of the population is Hutu. Fewer still mentioned Gaby's exile in Paris and his nostalgia for his homeland, or his return to Burundi to discover that his friends have disappeared and that the landscape of his childhood is no longer recognisable.
- (b) **Question (b)** was much more popular. The question allowed those candidates who knew the text well to display their knowledge and many candidates showed a sound understanding of the changing relationships amongst the friendship group. Gino and Gaby's keen friendship and its demise was well understood. Some detail was produced about Armand and the twins. The importance of Francis was occasionally over-developed, but not always irrelevant.

Question 7 – *La Maison de Claudine*, Colette

- (a) **Question 7(a)** was addressed by a small percentage of candidates. The concept of '*la maternité*' was quite well explored, with candidates focussing primarily on the maternal qualities of Claudine's mother, Sido. Fewer candidates talked about maternity in the broader context of animals, though many did allude to the narrator's relationship with her own child. Unfortunately, some candidates assumed that the wording of the question encouraged them to argue that maternity was not as important as other themes in the novel, and they ended up focusing on other aspects such as love, nature and childhood with no sense of purpose.

- (b) There were too few responses to **Question 7(b)** to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 8 – *No et moi*, Delphine de Vigan

Delphine de Vigan's novel remains very popular, and many candidates addressed one of the two questions, though **Question 8(a)** was far more popular than **8(b)**.

- (a) There were some very strong responses to this question, and the answers were often well constructed and organised. However, there was also some storytelling. Many candidates could not help describing how much No's life had been improved when she stayed with the Bertignac family. But the majority of responses focused on Lou, her problems and how well she blossoms when she realises she has found a friend, and she can help her.
- (b) **Question 8(b)** was less successfully dealt with. The better responses focused on school as the centre of the roots of the story. The importance of Monsieur Marin in Lou's life was noted. Some perceptive candidates observed that the project, though it originated in school, enabled Lou to gain knowledge and experience of real life and social problems. In some cases, '*le milieu scolaire*' was misunderstood, leading to some rather generalised essays, and weaker candidates tended to focus on the difference in the education levels of Lou and No.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/43
Texts 43

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.