

# FRENCH

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<p>Paper 9716/01 Speaking</p>
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## Key messages

For teachers/Examiners:

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below) and, if necessary and appropriate, interrupt the Topic Presentation if it overruns significantly.
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section, but answer briefly.
- More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks and examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- In the Topic Conversation do not go back over questions already answered or material already covered in the Topic Presentation.
- In the General Conversation do not return to the topic of the Topic Presentation.
- 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 a one-word or purely factual answer.

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.
- 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. 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.*

## General comments

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

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

- 1 Very long, complex questions tend to unnerve candidates and rarely facilitate discussion.
- 2 Closed questions usually elicit short answers, sometimes just yes or no, and should be avoided unless they are intended to open the way for a deeper discussion.
- 3 Open questions such as *Comment?* or *Pourquoi?* are more likely to allow a candidate the freedom to answer at much greater length and in greater depth.

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

## Administration

### Recordings

Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still examples of faulty recording equipment and of the microphone favouring the Examiner rather than the candidate. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner's own contribution.

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 a .mp3 file, 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.

Please ensure that all recording material (including CD cases) is labelled with details of the centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their full names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a centre has candidates at both A and AS level, they should be recorded on separate CDs.

Centres are reminded that the sample of recordings they send should represent candidates throughout the range of the entry, from highest to lowest.

Please also avoid sticky tape or labels coming into contact with the recording side of CDs, as this makes them unplayable and runs the risk of damaging the equipment on which they are played.

### Paperwork

There were a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transferring them to the MS1. These should be checked carefully before submission and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings. For the size of sample needed, please see the details on the *Cambridge samples database* on <http://www.cambridgeinternational.org>.

Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to send the Working Mark Sheet, a copy of the MS1 (computer mark sheet or equivalent), and any other relevant paperwork.

### Application of Mark Scheme

There were some 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.

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

If a centre has two examiners or more for the same syllabus, Examiners should standardise marks before submitting to Cambridge for moderation.

### 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 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 their own contributions, the less time candidates have to develop their ideas. Responses to questions asked by candidates should be kept brief.

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

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation, lasting about three minutes, on a specific topic of his or her choice, taken from one of the topic areas listed in the syllabus booklet. This is the only prepared part of the examination and the only part for which candidates are able to choose what they want to talk about. 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, remained *L'Internet*, *L'immigration*, *La Technologie*, *L'égalité des sexes*, *Les Médias Sociaux*, *Le Sport*, *La Famille*, *Le Tourisme*, *La Mode*, *La Cuisine Française*, *L'environnement* and *La Pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage and discrimination, a few dealing with culture or politics in a French-speaking country, as well as personal interests such as art or music. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues.

For the most part, candidates were clearly aware of the need, stated in the syllabus, that the presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken. Where this is not the case, candidates will have their mark for *Content/Presentation* halved (see Speaking Test mark scheme) 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 prove 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 are advised to steer clear of very factual subjects – the mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and 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.

### **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 should not ask questions which allow a repetition of the same material already offered – their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily 'right' answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed. 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 many were successful in expressing additional ideas and seeking the opinions of the examiner.

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

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

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

The General Conversation is the most spontaneous section of the examination. Candidates will have prepared their own choice of topic for the Topic Presentation (to be continued in the Topic Conversation), but here they do not know what the examiner will choose to discuss (and it is the examiner who chooses, not the candidate). Clearly the areas of discussion will be those studied during the course, but 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 remember not to answer at too great a length.

### **Assessment**

The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where topics did not relate to a francophone country.

A handful of examiners also found it difficult to 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, this should clearly be rewarded, but examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that they are relevant to the topic under discussion.

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.

# FRENCH

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<p>Paper 9716/21 Reading and Writing</p>
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## Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) 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. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material over the word limit cannot be credited. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, 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

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who generally handled the various tasks with fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence appeared somewhat over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one which was approachable and of some interest to candidates.

Candidates generally knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where they scored consistently poorly, it was sometimes because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were very few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although some answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy.

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 detract from the overall impression for the **Quality of Language** mark. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and tend to over-complicate things. Candidates should 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 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. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary complications. 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.

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.

**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 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 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, both semantically and grammatically – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond the word limit cannot be taken into consideration 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, some candidates still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good **Personal Responses** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford an introductory preamble**. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply wasted 20 per cent or so of the available words on this for no reward – not to mention the potential errors: *Selon le texte 1 et le texte 2, j’a appris que il y a bienfaits de utiliser du vélo mais aussi il y a inconvénients. Les bienfaits sont que ...* 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 show clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Question 1**

In **(a)**, correctly identifying *quotidiennes* as the substitute for *tous les jours* got a large number of candidates off to a good start.

In **(b)**, many candidates found *détendue* to replace *calme*.

In **(c)**, *au bout du compte* was a good fit for  *finalement*, but *au bout* did not work on its own.

**Item (d)** proved to be the most challenging item in **Question 1**, with relatively few finding the simple alternative of *vont*. One suspected that those who offered *nettement* may have thought it was a third-person plural verb to match *se rendent*.

**Item (e)** was much more successfully answered, with a good number correctly identifying *gratuite* for *non payante*.

## Question 2

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

**Item 2(a)** Some could not handle the necessary transformation into the passive, and others had a problem with making *lancée* agree.

**Item 2(b)** This item proved quite challenging, but a good number of candidates was still able to find the *lui* required as part of the transformation into indirect speech.

**Item 2(c)** *Il est content que ...* was recognised by many as requiring a subjunctive. However, having done the difficult bit, some candidates offered the singular *soit* and did not gain the mark.

**Item 2(d)** Here again, having done the difficult bit of working out how to re-model the sentence to follow *Deux fois plus ...*, some could not produce the third-person plural form of *prennent*.

**Item 2(e)** The past participle of the verb *redécouvrir* proved elusive, with the noun *découverte* from the original proving irresistible to some.

## Question 3

- (a) This was a good opening question, enabling candidates to score the first mark by indicating the passion either for cycling in general or for the Tour de France in particular. Most then pointed to the view of cycling as a weekend entertainment or leisure activity rather than as an everyday means of getting to and from work. Clarity was hindered by reference to *les Françaises*, misuse of *user* to mean *utiliser* and the appearance of *fréquemment* and *le temps livre*.
- (b) Candidates pointed to the benefits for health and the pocket, avoiding lifting *le portefeuille* by saying things such as *utiliser le vélo ne coûte pas cher/rien/est économique*. As far as environmental benefits are concerned, the lack of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and traffic jams were often successfully identified for the remaining two marks.
- (c) Those candidates who saw that the easiest way of answering the question of what employees need to do was by the use of verbs to replace the nouns *abandon*, *trajet domicile-travail* and *déclaration* were those who fared best here: *Ils doivent abandonner la voiture/les transports publics, venir au travail à vélo et déclarer le nombre de kilomètres parcourus*.
- (d) The question offered four opportunities to score the three marks: no need to spend money on petrol or gym membership, a less stressful journey to work and less time spent in traffic-jams. Most handled these quite well, although *faire de la gymnastique* and *moins de trafic de voitures* rather distorted things.
- (e) The text spoke of employees who come to work on a bike as *arrivant à l'heure* more often, whereas the question asked what employees who came to work by bike did less often, to which the answer needed to be *arriver en retard*. Less complicated was the idea that *ils sont moins (souvent) absents/s'absentent moins (souvent)*.

## Question 4

- (a) *Le temps* was sometimes misunderstood here as referring to the journey by bike taking less time, but many candidates deduced that *estival* had something to do with summer and successfully offered *le fait que c'est l'été* or *le beau temps en été*. They then found synonyms to avoid lifting *ils y renonceront*: *ils abandonneront le projet* or *ils vont retourner au vélo en automne*, for example.
- (b) If candidates were unsure of the meaning of *trempe* or *frissonnant*, there were clues in the previous sentence about rain and cold, which they used to good effect.
- (c) Candidates often avoided lifting here by rephrasing *routes surchargées* as *trop de véhicules sur les routes* or *circulation intense*, and *poids lourds* as *camions* to earn the two marks available.

- (d) Candidates sympathised with the fact that the lack of anywhere safe or under cover to leave his bike at work meant that Bernard risked finding it missing or soaked by the rain at the end of the working day. The use of *sécre* and *pleurer* impeded comprehension of some answers here.
- (e) The concern about the air pollution encountered by cyclists in the streets was well appreciated and expressed, but a good number were also able to point to the fact that pedestrians breathe the same air and that the worst pollution is found inside cars.
- (f) The difference between levels of traffic and provision of efficient public transport in large cities and small towns was used to explain different levels of bicycle usage. But *les anciens adeptes de bus et de train* was sometimes mistaken to refer to senior citizens who nowadays cannot use their bicycles before they are too old.

### Question 5

The Question asked candidates to summarise the benefits and disadvantages/dangers of going to work by bicycle, and then to suggest what other measures (unrelated to bicycles) might be envisaged to reduce transport-related urban pollution.

#### (a) Summary

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a fair number. Some candidates simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

Among the positives most frequently identified were the benefits to health and the environment, the saving of money, the avoidance of traffic jams and the stress they cause, and the reduction in late arrivals and staff absence.

The commonly mentioned negatives included exposure to inclement weather, lack of safety due to roads crowded with lorries and the absence of cycle paths, lack of provision of secure designated parking space for bicycles at work, and the dangers of breathing polluted air in the streets.

#### (b) Personal Response

Candidates had some sensible suggestions to offer here, including car-sharing, using public transport, electric cars and other vehicles such as trams and the *métro*, banning cars altogether from town- or city-centres, using skates, skate-boards or *trottinettes*. Others suggested getting up earlier in the morning to walk or run to work where employers would presumably provide showers on arrival, or encouraging people to live as close as possible to their place of work in order to reduce the length of daily commuting.

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** will lead to **reduction of the Quality of Language mark**.

### Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to poor. Many candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a generally robust control of structure. However, some candidates struggled to express their ideas in a readily comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects appeared somewhat random in a number of scripts. It is tempting to put this down to simple carelessness and lack of checking, but one suspects that the problem in some cases may go deeper than this and reveal a lack of understanding of some of the principles involved.

The approach to spelling was sometimes phonetic: *tré* (*très*); *movait* (*mauvais*); *peut cantité*; *le bolou* (*boulot*); *pasque*; *bocoup* (*beaucoup*); *quelcon* (*quelqu'un*); *come* (*comme*).

Incorrect verb forms were quite frequent, with some struggling to conjugate common irregular verbs such as (*per*)*mettre*, *prendre*, *vouloir* and *pouvoir*. Constructions with other common verbs, such as *permettre*, *interdire*, *aider*, *demander* or *encourager* took their usual toll.

# FRENCH

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<p><b>Paper 9716/22</b> <b>Reading and Writing</b></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 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 to begin the answer by re-working the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material over the word limit cannot be credited. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, 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

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

Candidates should be instructed not to use an additional booklet unnecessarily for a few extra words which could easily be included in the space provided in original answer booklet. In extreme cases, this involved only two or three words written in an otherwise blank 8-page additional booklet. Apart from the obvious waste of resources, this significantly lengthens the scanning and marking process.

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The subject matter was one which was accessible and appeared to be one which was of some interest to candidates.

Most candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks, although some candidates didn't read the questions carefully enough or take note of the indication in square brackets of the number of points to be made in each question.

Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**, or because they allowed their personal opinions to dictate their responses, rather than focusing on what the text actually said.

There were very 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. Some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and tend to over-complicate things. The most successful answers are often the most concisely and simply expressed. Some of successful candidates chose to lay out their answers by numbering the points made: e.g. full marks (3/3) were scored in **4(d)** by the following:

- i) *Les petits commerces perdraient des clients.*
- ii) *Beaucoup de petits commerces disparaîtraient.*
- iii) *Beaucoup d'emplois seraient supprimés.*

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 detract from the overall impression for the Quality of Language marks – e.g. *Qu'est-ce qui pénalise les grands magasins est que ... (3(d)) ; Virginie serait-elle attirée par la perspective parce que ... (3(e)) ; Les petits commerces seraient-ils affectés parce que ... (4(d))*. Answers beginning with *parce que* 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 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. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary 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.

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.

**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 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 invalidates the answer.

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 the word limit cannot be taken into consideration 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, some candidates still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good **Personal Responses** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford an introductory preamble**. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply wasted 20 per cent or so of the available words on this for no reward – not to mention the potential errors: *Selon le texte 1 et le texte 2, j'ai appris que il y a bienfaits de utiliser du vélo mais aussi il y a inconvénients. Les bienfaits sont que ...* 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.

Other candidates dwelled too long on one point or went into unnecessary detail, for example wasting words in the summary by including needless reference to Richard Lemaître or Virginie.

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

The most successful candidates often show clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of presentation and legibility.

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

This was a relatively straightforward first exercise which was quite successfully negotiated by the majority, with a good number of candidates scoring highly.

- Item **(a)** was usually well handled, although *imposant* appeared quite frequently, presumably on the basis of having located another present participle.
- In **(b)**, *hebdomadaire* was generally successfully identified (if not always accurately transcribed). *Tous les dimanches* perhaps came close but not close enough.
- Item **(c)** proved more elusive, with *incohérentes*, *exceptions*, *manifestations* as well as *unanimité*.
- In **(d)**, there was the occasional *souhaitent*, but this probably proved the most straightforward of all. *Préfèrent* might have been acceptable had it not come from outside the first two paragraphs.
- Item **(e)** proved to be the most challenging, producing *récemment*, *actuellement*, *accélééré*, *confuse*, *souplesse*, *soldes* and even *bricolage*.

#### Question 2

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

**Item 2(a)** required knowledge of the possible constructions following *permettre* or *permettre que*. Even then, some candidates chose to change *leurs revenus* to *leur* or *ses revenus*.

**Item 2(b)** similarly required knowledge of the possible constructions following *autoriser*. A good number coped with *autorise certains magasins à ouvrir* but then some renders it incorrect by writing *s'ouvrir*. Those who chose the alternative of *autorise l'ouverture de ...* generally fared better.

**Item 2(c)** needed a subjunctive, which proved uncharted territory for many. Others formed it incorrectly – *soit* or *soivent* – or offered *que les Français soient favorisés*.

**Item 2(d)** revealed problems over the meaning or handling of possessive adjectives, as well as in manipulating the tense of *pouvoir* in indirect speech.

**Item 2(e)** involved a straightforward transformation into the passive, which a good number handled satisfactorily. Some missed the consequential need for the agreement of *suscitée* however, or unnecessarily altered the tense. Others reversed the order with *La confusion suscite les exceptions*.

### Question 3

**Item 3(a)** offered good start, with most candidates finding an appropriate verb (*adopter* being the most obvious) to express the idea of the French government passing a law. The verb *mettre* (*Ils ont mis une loi*) did not work here. The second mark was gained by saying that the law meant that Sunday opening or Sunday working in general were no longer allowed. The key here was to resist lifting the easily avoidable *adoption*, *interdisant*, *imposant* or *fermeture*.

**Item 3(b)** offered more challenge. Some candidates misunderstood *Il est temps de* to have something to do with opening hours or even the weather, while others thought *manifestation* had something to do with going out onto the streets to demand change. *Application* was quite commonly thought to indicate the need to apply to the authorities for permission to open. Many saw the need to avoid lifting *éclaircissement*, but were unable to find the corresponding verb, and others found it challenging to find an acceptable alternative to *souplesse* (e.g. *flexibilité*).

**Item 3(c)** saw many candidates pointing to the need for couples who work all week to do all their shopping on Saturdays if shops are not open on Sundays, although *se concentrer sur leurs achats* suggested a misreading of the text. The second mark proved more elusive, with candidates needing to mention the inability to plan what to do when over the weekend.

**Item 3(d)** required candidates to point to the fact that on-line shopping operates 24/7, not just that it exists. *Travailler* did not 'work' as an appropriate verb here. Most managed to avoid lifting *augmentation de salaire* either by using a verb or finding synonyms for *salaire* to earn the second mark. *Conciliation* was misunderstood by a number of candidates.

**Item 3(e)** required candidates to suggest that Virginie was pleased by the prospect of having some free time to herself out of the house and away from her children. Her husband was frequently not mentioned, and when he was, his role was often to *occuper/regarder les enfants* rather than to *s'en occuper*. The ability to deduce the likely meaning of the phrase *mettre du beurre dans les épinards* as suggesting some idea of 'extras' or little luxuries earned the third mark.

**Item 3(f)** proved straightforward for those who identified that the easiest way to avoid lifting was by the simple mechanism of using finite verbs: *stimuler*, *accélérer*, *créer* – but not *des bulots*. Others thought that *consommation* referred specifically to eating habits.

### Question 4

**Item 4(a)** asked about the role of un *porte-parole*, attempting to elicit a general definition rather than specifically referring to union leaders and (shop)workers' rights. The benefits of workers having time to rest and relax and spend time with their families were usually successfully identified and often expressed without lifting the nouns *détente* and *repos*.

In **Item 4(b)** the best answers were often the simplest: *la vie familiale serait détruite, les relations sociales diminueraient*.

In **Item 4(c)** many candidates focused simply on the idea of *protester*. Others found good ways of warning against the potential loss of employees' *bonheur* for the second mark.

In **Item 4(d)**, a good number of candidates decided to look for verbs to replace the nouns *disparition* and *suppression*. Some went too far in implying that small shops would lose all their customers and would all have to close.

In **Item 4(e)**, most candidates score at least one mark on this four-mark question. A good number scored the first two marks by pointing out that Sunday working could occur only with the employee's agreement, and that this consent had to be given in writing, although the appearance of the word *les employeurs* caused confusion. The remaining two marks were often successfully scored by pointing to the need for increased payment and a day off in lieu.

In **Item 4(f)**, successful candidates often combined in a single sentence the 'symptoms' of being unable to resist the temptation to buy more and more things and the inability to wait any length of time to do so, sometimes avoiding lifting by something as simple as re-phrasing *ont perdu la capacité* as *sont incapables*. Interpreting *la surconsommation* as over-eating produced some suggestions of obesity and diabetes.

## Question 5

This question asked candidates to summarise the arguments for and against the opening of shops on Sundays, and then explain their own view about '*une société obsédée par la surconsommation*'.

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

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a good number, with the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. Some candidates simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified arguments in favour included the greater freedom of families to organise their weekends, increased income for families and students if they choose to work on Sundays, shops being able to compete with on-line selling, and the creation of employment and economic growth. Points against included the lack of necessary rest which may have consequences for physical health and happiness, the harm done to family and social life, the threat to small shops and their employees, and less commonly the notion that whilst in theory employees can refuse, the fact that some accept puts pressure on others to do the same.

Although there is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, **excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to be penalised in a reduction of the Quality of Language mark.**

The **Personal Response** elicited plenty of safe and worthy paragraphs on the evils of materialism and consumerism in modern society. Some unfortunately limited their response by simply focusing on the consequences of over-eating and the over-buying of food, leading to waste. Others added further dimensions by suggesting that it was all about defining oneself and proving one's superiority through one's possessions. Others talked of an obsession with technology and gadgetry, of the influence of advertising and marketing, and the absurdity of queuing up in front of mobile shops to be the first to have the latest smart-phone. Some saw this as nothing to be ashamed of, whilst others took the view that it was not a feature of less affluent societies, communities and families.

## Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from the virtually flawless to the very poor. Many candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. Some suffered from a tendency towards verbosity and over-complexity, coupled with the use of impressive-sounding vocabulary whose meaning one sensed they did not always fully understand. 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.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects and even the process of making nouns plural was problematic for many candidates. It is tempting to put this down to carelessness and lack of checking, but one suspects that the problem may in some cases lie much deeper than this: it would not be unreasonable to ascribe *Se n'aient pas favorable* (a single example among very many) to something more fundamental than simple carelessness.

Not uncommonly, when attempts were made to make verbs agree, it was either by putting an s on the end (*Ils fermes*) or with the object rather than the subject: *l'ouverture les (more often leur(s)) aideraient*.

Many incorrect verb forms were in evidence, even with some of the common irregular verbs such as (*per*)*mettre*, *prendre*, *vouloir* and *pouvoir*, *devoir*, *recevoir* and *détruire*. *Créer* on the other needs to be more widely recognised as an entirely regular *-er* verb.

The use of the infinitive (*-er*) ending was used interchangeably with the past participle (*-é*) in some scripts: e.g. *ils vont fermé*. The conditional tense, which featured several times in the questions, was often a source of error – especially where *améliorerait* / *créerait* / *perdrerait* were concerned.

The approach to spelling was often phonetic, even with very common words: *travayer* ; *m'être* ; *le réso* ; *c'ete (cette)* , *le tôt de chômage* ; *dehort* ; *grasse* ; *pençer* ; *pacer* ; *acause / avoire* ; *fer (faire)* ; *assé/asser* ; and even *wui (oui)*.

As usual, *leur, leurs* and *ses* appeared interchangeable in a large number of scripts, as did *ce, se,* and *ceux (seux)* ; *sa* and *ça (sela)* ; *ces, ses, c'est* and *s'est* ; *on* and *ont*.

There was a lack of awareness of the differences between *quelques, plusieurs, plus* and *beaucoup* / *employés* and *employeurs* (not *employers*) / *un salaire* (not *une salarie*) and *un salarié* / *travail, travaux, travaille, emploi* and *metier* / *avantage* (not *advantage*) and *davantage* (not *d'avantage*).

Time studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be well spent: *introduction/introduire* ; *interdiction/interdire* ; *détente/se détendre* ; *disparition/disparaître* ; *défense/défendre*.

Incomplete negatives (missing *ne*) caused some confusion, as did the inconsistent insertion of *y* and *en* in some scripts. The use of *par* instead of *en* + present participle was not uncommon, nor were *plus bon/bien* or *meillure*.

Although some of the above inevitably points out the negatives, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the strongest candidates wrote very impressive, idiomatic, fluent and accurate French which was a real pleasure to read.

# FRENCH

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<p>Paper 9716/23 Reading and Writing</p>
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## Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) 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. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material over the word limit cannot be credited. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, 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

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled the various tasks with fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence appeared somewhat over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one which was approachable and of some interest to candidates.

Candidates generally knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where they scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were very 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.

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 detract from the overall impression for the **Quality of Language** mark. Answers beginning with *parce que* 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 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. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary complications (see above). 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.

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.

**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 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 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, both semantically and grammatically – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond the word limit cannot be taken into consideration 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 some candidates still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good **Personal Responses** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford an introductory preamble**. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply wasted over 20% of the available words on this for no reward: *Le service civique volontaire et obligatoire tous les deux ont des avantages et des désavantages. Dans les deux textes il y avait points de vue différentes. Texte 1 présente l'idée que ...* 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.

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

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

The most successful candidates often show clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

In (a), *de service* was incorrectly offered by some, presumably because it shares a *de* with *de rigueur*. One suspected that *en faveur* may similarly have owed something to a shared *-eur* ending. *Obligatoire* was correctly identified by a good number, but some were tempted by *préliminaire*.

In (b), a good number of candidates included a superfluous *la* before *mise en place* (which would have given rise to *la la création*) or omitted the *en place* which was necessary to complete the sense of *création*.

In (c), a similar problem occurred because the inclusion of *s'* before *accomplir* would have given rise to *s's'effectuer*.

In (d), most candidates successfully identified *variés*.

Item (e) was also well done for the most part, although *tout au long* appeared on occasions.

#### Question 2

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

**Item 2(a)** Many candidates appeared familiar with the meaning and use of the *venir de* construction, even if some chose to retain an unnecessary *récemment*.

**Item 2(b)** The transfer to direct speech was competently handled by the majority.

**Item 2(c)** was recognised by many candidates as requiring a subjunctive, and most of these candidates were then able to form the subjunctive correctly.

**Item 2(d)** The transfer to indirect speech revealed some uncertainty over the use of the pronoun: *son service s'a(vait) apporté*

**Item 2(e)** The process of transfer to the passive was successfully negotiated by a fair proportion.

#### Question 3

- (a) This was a good opening question, enabling candidates to score the first mark by indicating that national or military service ceased being compulsory in 1997. Most then found simple ways of expressing how *le service civique* of today is different in being *volontaire, facultatif, pas obligatoire*, even if not all made it clear that it is now open to both genders.
- (b) Successful candidates here found several ways of expressing the help that participants receive, without resorting to lifting *formation préliminaire fournie* or *conseils offerts*, although the conjugation of the verbs *fournir* and *offrir* caused some problems. Others saw *formation* as suggesting that groups were formed.
- (c) Many candidates realised that the easiest way of answering the question of what volunteers can do was by the use of verbs to replace the nouns *accompagnement, pratiques sportives, restauration* and *reconstruction*.
- (d) The possibility of combining *le service civique* with a course of study or a part-time job was correctly identified by a good number of candidates who were successful in rephrasing *une poursuite d'études* and *un emploi à temps partiel*.
- (e) The problem of a lack of funding for the scheme was often understood, as was the government's promise to make more money available, but use of the new verb *étendre* was not rewardable.
- (f) Attempts to avoid lifting *un sentiment d'appartenance* were sometimes unsuccessful because of the incorrect use of *sentir* and *se sentir*, but the lifting of *une meilleure compréhension de la valeur* was generally avoided without difficulty by the use of an appropriate verb.

#### Question 4

- (a) Candidates successfully pointed to *les attentats/attaques terroristes* in Paris as being one of the reasons behind the re-emergence of the idea of *le service civique obligatoire*. The two remaining marks available for identifying the benefits for national unity and social integration were often scored.
- (b) There was also an appreciation of the need for the projects undertaken to be worthwhile rather than just giving the participants something to do. The other three marks were available for pointing out the difficulties involved in finding enough such missions and enough people qualified to take charge, alongside the problems of financing the programme.
- (c) Some candidates simply stated that the scheme stigmatises young people, without going on to explain the injustice of implying that it is needed because young people lack *le sens civique*. Others understood that making the scheme compulsory would undermine its principal virtue of being voluntary.
- (d) The dangers of the scheme being presented as being equivalent to a salaried job in order to disguise true levels of unemployment were recognised by the more successful candidates, as were the difficulties experienced by young people in obtaining their first 'real' jobs.
- (e) Not all appeared to understand the term *peu scrupuleux*, but the most successful saw the dangers of participants being exploited as cheap labour and being used to dispense with more expensive regular employees.

#### Question 5

The Question asked candidates to summarise the benefits and dangers of *le service civique* and then to suggest what factors might influence their own choice of project.

##### (a) Summary

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

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a fair number. Some candidates simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The benefits of the scheme most commonly identified included useful projects to serve the community, an increased sense of belonging, solidarity, social integration and national unity. The young people involved are enriched by feeling useful and develop a positive vision of the future.

Commonly identified difficulties and dangers included the lack of suitable projects, supervisors and funding. Making the scheme compulsory would imply that young people lack civic responsibility and have to be coerced into it, thereby removing the essential voluntary nature of the scheme. It would also be open to exploitation by governments and employers wishing to cut costs.

##### (b) Personal Response

An occasional candidate ignored the question which states *Vous avez décidé de faire du service civique* and wrote that they would not undertake it because it would get in the way of starting a career and earning money. Others were keen to identify projects which would benefit a wide range of people, be sustainable and of lasting worth. Relevance to future career plans (perhaps in health or education) was important in some cases, as was the prospect of being able to study or earn money at the same time. Others wanted entirely new experiences, perhaps helping the underprivileged, but generally not in projects which would put them in any form of danger. There was something of a lack of specific areas identified, although some specifically mentioned children, sports, the old or the handicapped. Above all, the wish seemed (not unreasonably) to be for projects in which their own interests, enthusiasms and competences would be put to best use.

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

### Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to poor. Many candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a generally robust control of structure. However, some candidates struggled to express their ideas in a readily comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects and even the process of making nouns plural appeared somewhat random in a number of scripts. It is tempting to put this down to simple carelessness and lack of checking, but one suspects that the problem in some cases may go deeper than this and reveal a lack of understanding of some of the principles involved.

The approach to spelling was sometimes phonetic: *assait (assez)* ; *celon (selon)* ; *en temps que (en tant que)*.

Incorrect verb forms were quite frequent, with some struggling to conjugate verbs such as *(per)mettre*, *prendre*, *vouloir* and *pouvoir*. Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll, in particular: *permettre*, *interdire*, *aider*, *demander* and *encourager*.

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates enabled them to transmit required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and generally accurate French which made very good reading.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/31  
Essay

## Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully, take sufficient time to plan their essays (preferably in French), write logical, well-illustrated answers and arrive at a conclusion that does not merely reiterate points made elsewhere in the answer. Candidates also need to use a wide range of grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions in order to attain high marks for language.

## General comments

There was a range of ability demonstrated in this cohort of candidates. The candidates' work was mostly well presented although, where candidates didn't plan their essay, there were significant numbers of revisions in the text of the essay which can challenge the Examiner to follow the argument. Candidates who did not target their essays fully on the question set inevitably scored lower marks since their answers contained much unfocused and often irrelevant material. Some candidates concentrated their answer on the overall topic heading and avoided the question altogether. Some essays were relevant but superficial in tone and content as well as lacking clear development or exemplification of points. They tended to be unconvincing and therefore unable to access the higher mark ranges.

In some cases candidates had a poor knowledge of linguistic structures and appropriate vocabulary and register. There was often considerable interference from the mother tongue. More successful candidates expressed their arguments using a range of complex structures and idioms with attention to detail of grammar and spelling. They defined the terms of the question in their introduction, and wrote a coherent and convincing argument before arriving at a balanced conclusion.

## **Common errors included :**

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *nutritionnelle, racisme, niveau, critère, obésité, responsabilité, monde, effet, problème, manque, travail, pays, environnement, développement, gouvernement, entreprise, phénomène, choix, aspect*

Use of *le taux* for *le nombre* and *le/la média* for *les médias*.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de* and *tous que* instead of *tout ce que*.

Use of *car* for *parce que*.

Random and inappropriate use of words and phrases to link paragraphs such as *aussi, néanmoins* (usually wrongly spelled), *pourtant, toutefois*.

Overuse of the word *personnes* (for gens) and *cela/ça*.

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Inaccurate and careless use of accents including words used in the questions such as *phénomène* and *égalité*, and examples of candidates using one type of accent for all occurrences.

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

Use of plural verb with a singular subject and vice versa.

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

Overuse of *plusieurs* and use of *de/des* after *plusieurs*.

Phonetic spelling e.g. *attirait* for *attirer*, *ce ta dir* for *c'est-à-dire*

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

Candidates were clear that the responsibility for teaching young people about healthy eating lay with various different groups. They thought that primarily the family was the first place where healthy eating habits should be instilled in the child by the parents. They felt that schools also had an important role to play as children spend a large part of their day there. This might involve lessons about the essential constituents of a healthy diet, the importance of eating from the different groups of foods and always in moderation. They also felt that school canteens should offer healthy food to children. The role of the government was another aspect mentioned by candidates. It was generally agreed that there should be fewer advertisements for fast foods and sugary drinks aimed at children and that the government should impose laws restricting companies from targeting impressionable young people. There should also be clearer messages from government about the damage caused to health by poor diet including obesity and diabetes. Answers to this question were often repetitive and lacking in clear exemplification.

#### **Question 2**

Not many candidates opted for this question. Those who did often avoided the question as set, preferring to concentrate on the overall topic heading of equality of opportunity in general. In those answers that did target the question, there was some discussion of the difficulties encountered by immigrants arriving in a new country as they tried to find work, housing and a place in society while suffering discrimination from the local population. They were clear that racism was not decreasing and that with mass immigration and the growth of terror groups with a religious or political agenda, it was in fact growing. They felt that all people should be given a chance and that racism is a potent and dangerous force. They felt that, in some instances, it was appropriate to apply positive discrimination to allow people from ethnic minorities to have the same chance as everyone else in obtaining jobs and a decent standard of living for themselves and their families.

#### **Question 3**

This was a popular question. Candidates were keen to point out that sport has now become big business and has therefore lost its way in many senses. They concentrated particularly on the situation in football where players are sold like commodities from one club to another and the salaries are ridiculously high. The pressures applied to sportsmen and women in all sports were mentioned with the emphasis now being more on success and money rather than on participation and enjoyment. These pressures could lead to a doping culture where the only way to succeed was to enhance performance by any means possible. For those who do not reach the top level there can be a sense of failure leading to depression. Candidates were keen to point out that sport can still be enjoyed for pleasure and they gave the example of playing for a local or school team with the great spirit of camaraderie and support engendered. They felt that the values of sport are there in sport when played for pleasure and for health reasons but that money is destroying sport at international level. Candidates had clearly thought about the issues involved and most were able to produce relevant arguments according to their ability.

#### **Question 4**

Candidates here referred to measures used to evaluate the level of social development in a country. They mentioned poverty and unemployment as being important indicators of the social health of a country. They were keen to point out the importance of social development as countries grow and develop economically. They pointed out that many countries stress the economic over the social. This can lead to public unrest and a greater disparity between the rich and the poor. Education and Schooling were also seen as vitally important measures of success in social development. Governments must use the gains made in their economic success to support the people in the country. This might be in the form of social benefits to help the poor or in education and training to ensure that people can move into the workplace and have a decent standard of living. Other indicators mentioned were respect for others, in particular for immigrants, equality in

society and lack of corruption. Candidates generally understood the issues involved and had some examples to offer.

### **Question 5**

Few candidates answered this question. Those that did had some points to make about the effect of tourism in the modern world. They recognised the benefits of tourism for the economy of those countries visited, particularly for poorer countries such as those in South America or South Asia. They were keen to point out, however, that tourism can lead to some detrimental effects for conservation and the environment. They mentioned the destruction of forests in order for hotels and transport links to be established. This could lead to the loss of habitat for native flora and fauna and, in particular, for species at risk of extinction. They also spoke of damage to the environment of travel in general which could in turn impact on the habitats of rare animals such as the polar bear. Some candidates felt that a move towards eco-tourism more recently might eventually have some impact but they were not confident that mass tourism could be stopped.

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

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully and take sufficient time to plan their essays before starting to write. They then need to create logical, well-illustrated answers on the question set beginning with a clear introduction to the topic and ending with a conclusion that does not merely state what went before. In order to attain top marks for language they need to have a good range of complex grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions at their disposal.

## General comments

The candidates' work was generally clearly presented although there were some examples of poor handwriting, and scripts where significant numbers of revisions had been made in the text of the essay making it very difficult for the examiner to follow an argument. Many candidates planned their essays carefully, defined the terms of the question in their introduction and wrote a coherent and convincing argument, arriving finally at a balanced conclusion. They used a range of structures and idioms and argued their case successfully.

In some cases, however, it was clear that candidates had a poor command of linguistic structures and appropriate vocabulary and register. Their answers were frequently in inaccurate language and often avoided the question set, concentrating instead on the overall topic heading. In some cases exemplification of points was lacking or insufficient. Candidates who did not target their essays fully on the question set inevitably did less well since their answers contained much irrelevant material. In weaker scripts, introductions too often contained a long definition of the subject to be discussed e.g. food or sport which added little to the essay. Other introductions used spurious and sometimes wrongly attributed quotations of little or no relevance followed by an unnecessary repetition of the title, often with misspellings. Paragraphing was, at times, weak with poor or inappropriate links and no clear development shown. Candidates often did not have the skill required to present the two sides of their argument without appearing to blatantly contradict themselves. Conclusions were, in many cases, disappointing, being merely a short reiteration of the points made previously in the essay rather than a considered judgement on them.

Weaker scripts showed frequent inconsistencies in the use of basic grammar, in particular the use of adjectival and subject-verb agreements, and there was sometimes interference from mother tongue. Many candidates had difficulty with prepositions. Most, however, attempted to use a variety of structures and topic-specific vocabulary with varying levels of success. At the top end, scripts showed an impressive command of the language, in terms of grammatical and syntactical precision, as well a confident use of complex structures. Even amongst the strongest candidates, however, many answers would have benefited from a wider range of appropriate examples, thus enabling candidates to access the good band for content.

Among a number of common errors, these were seen:

Common words spelt wrongly or given wrong gender, e.g. *doppage*, *recommandé*, *government*, *campagne*, *adults*, *development*, *alcohol*, *recontre*, *meuilleur*, *environment*, *exercice*, *example*, *manque*

Incorrect use of definite/partitive articles, e.g. *jouer le sport*, *faire le sport*

Y and *en* were incorrectly used, e.g. *il y en a des gens*

Use of *faire* instead of *rendre*

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions

Anglicisms, e.g. *place* for *endroit*, *balancé* for *équilibré*, *dépendre sur*, *consister de*, *en addition*, *définitivement*, *avertissements*, *individuel* for *individu*

Lapses of register, e.g. *ça*, *truc*, *boulot*, *môme*, *pote*, *mec*

Use of *qui* in contexts where *ce qui* was required

Use of *personnes/peuple* instead of *gens*

Using *cela* followed by a plural verb

Incorrect agreement of past participle, e.g. *ils ont toujours faits*

Incorrect preposition used in verb and infinitive constructions, e.g. *préférer* and *aider* followed by *de*

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*, *près/prêt*, *comme/comment*

Use of English words/phrases in inverted commas where a simple translation is possible, e.g. *Botanical Gardens*, *Solar panels*, *bodybuilding*, *Olympic Games*

### Question 1

This was a very popular question. Most candidates were able to provide a number of reasons why schools might be able to play a key role in educating children about healthy eating. They felt that schools should not just offer academic subjects but more practical ones as well which focused on obtaining life skills and general information. Children spend a long time in school and teachers are in a good position to pass on information about nutrition. Schools can also ensure that healthy food is served in their canteens and they can ban the sale of sugary and fatty foods and fizzy drinks on school premises. It was clear to candidates that society needs to address the problems caused by an unhealthy diet such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease and that school was a good place for this process to start. Some candidates digressed into describing everything their school does to provide a healthy lifestyle such as physical education and sport. Others limited their argument to what school could offer, missing the idea of *rôle clef* in the title. Good candidates discussed the equally important part played by parents in establishing healthy eating practices at home and the role of the government and the media in creating campaigns to counteract the potentially dangerous influence of the food industry. The very best answers succinctly presented the case for schools, offering some relevant examples of their power to influence for good or bad, then moved on to other potential sources such as parents, government, self-control.

A recurrent language issue in this essay was the conjugation of the verb *promouvoir*.

### Question 2

This question was attempted by few candidates but it did elicit some strong personal responses. Most candidates limited themselves to talking about inequalities related to money, giving examples of limited access to education from primary to tertiary which in turn limits openings into the world of employment. Candidates were clear that social background and parental income were determining factors in a child's success. Most felt that access to higher education was impossible for poorer students. It was felt also that there was a great disparity between the developed and the developing world in terms of opportunities available. Candidates who limited their arguments to just one aspect (e.g. money or gender) tended to score lower than those who discussed a variety of issues in a balanced way. The best answers discussed how gender, disability and prejudice also play a part in creating inequality of opportunity. They gave examples of women receiving less pay than men for the same job, discriminatory practices against disabled people and people from minority groups. Some candidates mentioned the legislation created by governments to ensure equality of opportunity, access to education and jobs and the work of some charitable organisations in standing up for the rights of women, the disabled and minority groups.

### Question 3

This was a very popular choice for candidates but a significant number either ignored or only made passing reference to the notion of obsession mentioned in the title. Some wrote essays mainly concentrating on the advantages and disadvantages of sport suggesting that an obsession with it was a good thing. They interpreted obsession as passion for sport and focused on its positive benefits for health, social life and

longevity with a brief mention of its potential to cause injury if practised to excess. Answers often began with a dictionary definition of sport which in many cases was partial, garbled or incomprehensible. There was a tendency to describe rather than analyse in this essay with candidates giving long lists of sports available, their favourite footballers and teams, and the health benefits of playing sport.

The best essays covered the potential results of obsession such as violence, aggression, the purchase of expensive sports paraphernalia, gambling, excessive salaries, the idolising of sports stars, the money spent by the public on travel and match entrance fees. They also mentioned the effects of the media on the public with their extensive coverage of all kinds of sport. Sport is clearly big business with advertising and sponsorship in evidence throughout the world. There were mentions of the pressure this might bring to families as they felt the need to buy expensive specialist TV channels, football kits and merchandise, or tickets for international events such as the Olympics or World Cup matches. There was plenty of material to explore, and the best candidates chose judiciously where to focus their attentions. They were also able to discuss the counter argument that many people regarded sport merely as a pleasurable pastime, and some, in fact, had no interest at all.

A recurrent language issue in this essay was the use of expressions such as *jouer du sport*, *faire le sport*, *aller à la gym*.

#### Question 4

This question was attempted by few candidates but was, in general, well answered with some mature and well exemplified arguments. The important element was to address the two halves of the question and to relate them to each other. Many candidates demonstrated the ability to develop a logical response describing the links between economic and social development. Most argued that economic development was crucial particularly for developing countries and this meant that some serious compromises had to be made with social development. Candidates spoke of environmental damage caused by the pursuit of economic growth: high levels of pollution in some cities, deforestation to make space for intensive farming, diminishing stocks due to over-fishing. Others gave corruption as a reason why some country leaders might favour economic over social development as it would keep those in power in a very wealthy position while the poor were subjugated. The best essays carefully weighed up governmental approaches to the universal problem of getting the correct balance. They concluded that economic growth and social development are inextricably linked, arguing that for a country to succeed economically it needs a well-educated and healthy population to provide the workforce but that a country also needs to have the financial security and infrastructure to pay for social benefits, housing for the poor and an education and health system for all. In order to achieve the latter, compromises may have to be made. Candidates, overall, showed good understanding of the issues involved and provided a wide range of examples to support their arguments

#### Question 5

This question was generally well answered and the subject gave all candidates a real opportunity to present clear and detailed arguments about their country's green initiatives.

Candidates were able to argue with specific examples taken from their own experience such as the new metro project, new road developments, fishing bans at certain periods of the year, the creation of parks and walking routes and the ban on the use of plastic bags. There was a high degree of personal involvement, with candidates having strong feelings on the importance of protecting the environment. This was possibly the best question in terms of exemplification as candidates, when talking about environmentally friendly initiatives, illustrated them with specific examples of birds, plants, parks, local/national organisations or laws. Many candidates also displayed a pleasing knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary. The best scripts explained how priority given to development and tourism can impact on nature and the locals' enjoyment of their natural environment. Some mentioned the need to promote greener policies and to educate the population, and visitors, so that they can also take responsibility for their environment. In some cases, more detail was required on exactly how the government could enable local people to benefit from the various initiatives such as being able to view endangered animals and plants, to appreciate wild, unpolluted places or to help in the conservation process.

From a language perspective, there was a fair amount of repetition, with some confusion over *le plastique/les plastiques*. Many candidates misspelled *gouvernement* even though it was in the question and *environnement* was also frequently misspelled.

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<p><b>Paper 9716/33</b> <b>Essay</b></p>
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## **Key messages**

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to choose an essay title about which they can write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated and coherent. The aim should be to use accurate and idiomatic French which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary. Candidates should plan essays carefully, using the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and the conclusion to show their considered final judgement of the issues they have discussed.

## **General comments**

In this paper, candidates are given a choice of five questions and are awarded up to 24 marks for quality of language and up to 16 for content. It was clear that most candidates understood the rubric for this paper and essays were generally of the right length, although a small number were very short. Focus on the question set was, however, sometimes poor and the arguments superficial. Most of the candidates did write a plan but it was often short and sketchy, written in English and very basic in content. Planning is clearly an important first step in writing a good discursive essay. It is clear that candidates who define the terms of the question in their own mind and organise the material into some kind of order before writing, generally gain higher marks for content. Some candidates who had not written a plan launched straight into their answer and the result was a kind of interior monologue which drifted first one way then another with apparent contradictions. There were often multiple alterations which made the essay very hard to follow.

An essay that considers all elements of the question as set and is logically constructed will be highly rewarded in its content mark. It is particularly important that essays should target the precise terms of the question and not merely relate to the general topic area. Essays on the overarching topic area (e.g. *le sport*) will always score poorly on content as much of the material is irrelevant to the specific question.

Opening paragraphs which should contain an introduction to the candidate's understanding of the question sometimes contained pre-learned and formulaic definitions of the overall topic or repetitions of the title. In these instances, there was a discrepancy between the standard of language in the opening paragraph and the rest of the essay. Quotations were often used but didn't elucidate the argument in many cases. Conclusions were sometimes disappointing, being merely a reiteration of the points made previously in the essay rather than a considered judgement on them.

In terms of language, pre-learned grammatical or discursive essay type phrases were sometimes used which often only served to highlight the deficiencies in the candidates' own writing. Awkward use of idiom and mother tongue interference were common along with examples of phonetic spelling. More able candidates successfully used a range of structures and appropriate vocabulary, were not over-ambitious and managed to express their ideas in accurate and succinct language.

## **Examples of good use of language include:**

Appropriate use of words and phrases to link paragraphs and ideas such as *grâce à, pourtant, cependant, de même, puisque, en revanche, en outre, ensuite, en fin de compte, non seulement... mais aussi.*

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive.

Use of a range of verbs and verb forms.

Use of idioms such as *il s'agit de, il convient de, en d'autres mots, étant donné que, tel que*

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary on subjects as diverse as the sport, healthy eating and diet, and equality.

Correct use of idioms such as *nul ne saurait nier que, il est généralement admis que, il s'agit de, tel que, il convient de, en d'autres mots, on dirait que, en ce qui concerne*

**Common errors:**

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *responsable, tendance, manque, travail, monde, gouvernement, environnement, exemple, développement, aspect*

Confusion of *avoir* and *devoir* for 'to have to'.

Overuse of *aussi* at start of sentences and paragraphs.

Incorrect use of *en* and *dont* e.g. *il y en a des gens*.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de* and *car* for *pour*.

Overuse of the word *chose/choses* and *cela/ça*. Use of *personnes* for *gens*.

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

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Frequent use of *beaucoup des* with plural noun.

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*.

Use of *faire* for *rendre*

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

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

Use of anglicisms such as *actuellement, définitivement, tout en tout, dépenser sur, payer l'attention, capacité, travailler* for *marcher*.

Incorrect use of present participle.

**Comments on specific questions**

**Question 1**

Candidates felt that the growth of fast food restaurants throughout the world was leading to a health crisis. They quoted figures for obesity in the developed world and described the consequences of an unhealthy diet in some detail. They clearly felt that the power of the fast food industry lies in its ubiquity and also in its cheap tasty food which has mass appeal. Candidates felt that the modern world with its emphasis on work and the pursuit of money leads people to have too little time to prepare good healthy food at home. With both parents working, the options for cooking healthy food for the children are minimal; hence the reliance on the takeaway or the fast food restaurant which can be found at any street corner. They felt that one way to fight the problem was for the government to impose limits on the amount of sugar, salt and saturated fats in food provided in the fast food outlets. They also felt that more emphasis should be given to the promotion of traditional foods in restaurants, schools and businesses in order to try and break the reliance on unhealthy foods. Candidates were well able to see the difficulties caused by the fast food revolution and were able to suggest some possible ways forward.

## Question 2

Candidates were in agreement with the statement in the question that schools have a responsibility to ensure that all students are treated equally and given the same chances. School is where students spend a large part of their time and it is where important messages can be taught. Candidates felt that schools should not be just places where children learn subjects for examinations, but should also be places where positive values are instilled in them by teachers. They felt that teachers should treat children equally and prepare all of them for life after school with equal chances of success. Some candidates mentioned positive discrimination with teachers taking special care with students from challenging backgrounds or with disabilities. There was some interesting discussion about the idea of meritocracy and the differences between different social classes in education. Some candidates felt that schools were faced with a difficult situation when they were being encouraged to produce excellent results but still needed to give every student an equal chance. There was some stimulating discussion of the topic and all candidates were aware of the issues involved.

## Question 3

Candidates varied in their response to this question. Some felt that the role of schools was to educate young people with a view to their future in the world of work and that lessons in sport might be a waste of time. They quoted examples of students so tired after sport that they were unable to concentrate in lessons or do their homework. Others thought that sport was a good way to reduce stress and to create a feeling of relaxation and enjoyment. Many worried about the effects sport could have on young people such as a decrease in their self-esteem as they compared themselves to other students and to celebrity sportspeople. It was clear that for some students, sport helps with study and for others, it detracts from it. Mention was also made of some students who were physically unable to do sport and the effect that obligatory lessons might have on them as individuals. Other benefits of sport in the curriculum for young people were the values of fair play, determination and team spirit. These were seen to be clear advantages of involving young people in sport. It was generally felt that a holistic education would benefit all young people.

## Question 4

Few candidates answered this question. Those that did referred to the internet as being the greatest invention as it has made the world into a global community and this has benefited everyone. They felt that the ability to communicate with friends and family even when they live far away is a great advantage. They also felt that the ability to link up with people who share similar interests was another benefit of the internet and social media in particular. Other candidates mentioned the advances in public services such as health and transport which have led to better public health and the freedom to move about for work. In many cases, candidates did not address the question fully, writing more about advances in general (e.g. in science and medicine) and not concentrating on those with a particularly strong social impact.

## Question 5

This question was attempted by few candidates and was not answered very well. There was some discussion of how governments could help with the problem of species at risk of extinction. They could provide zoos or reserves where animals could be kept secure and given the opportunity to breed without fear of being wiped out by disease, climate change or the predations of poachers. It was felt that more needed to be done globally to prevent the loss of certain species including a ban on poaching and very strong penalties for those not obeying the law, a clearer approach to the problems of climate change and campaigns to alert the public to the problems being encountered by the world's flora and fauna. Candidates who detailed some of these issues with examples were rewarded with good content marks. Those who wrote more generally about conservation did less well.

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<p><b>Paper 9716/42</b> <b>Texts</b></p>
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## Key messages

Teachers should:

- consider carefully which texts to prepare with their classes: some texts can present conceptual problems that are challenging for some candidates.

Teachers should train their students to:

- manage their time in the examination room to ensure that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions.
- ensure that they do not answer two questions on the same text, remembering that 'soit... soit' means 'either... or'.
- think carefully about what the question is asking of them **before** they start to write.
- stay on track as they write their responses by referring back to the question regularly.

Candidates should:

- label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If passage-based questions are not properly labelled, it can look as though parts **(ii)** and **(iii)** have not been attempted.
- start each new essay on a fresh page and take care to attach any continuation sheets in order. It is not necessary to write out the text of question on the answer paper.
- note keywords in the questions and explore all elements of each question.
- answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read.
- answer the question precisely, stating briefly in the introduction how the question is to be addressed and coming to interim and final conclusions.
- finish with a concluding paragraph, which should summarise the points made in the essay and which may include a personal judgement.

## General comments

The passage-based questions were competently dealt with, on the whole, and there were relatively few purely narrative answers. However, candidates need to understand when answering these questions that it is important to explain the context of the extract and to highlight those issues which have relevance for the text as a whole. This was particularly important this year for the passage-based questions on *Thérèse Raquin* and *l'Alouette*, where many responses didn't expand beyond the extract itself. Moreover, some candidates still attempt to answer these questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then not explaining what the quotation illustrates. Candidates must give their own interpretation when quotations are used.

The better candidates were able to dissect the essay questions and address each element in their responses. A brief introduction is usually sufficient and candidates should not waste time by describing the background to the work and its author. Narration irrelevant to the question should be avoided – remember that the Examiner has also read the text – but candidates should aim to demonstrate their knowledge of the text while remaining focused on answering the question.

As always, the best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although these should be crossed out to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

## Comments on specific questions

### Section 1

#### Question 1 – Molière: *Le Malade Imaginaire*

The vast majority of candidates attempted **Question 1(a)**.

- (a) The question was competently answered by most candidates who correctly identified that the conversation between Argan and Toinette took place immediately after the misunderstanding between Argan and his daughter about the man Angélique was to marry. However, many candidates went into exhaustive detail, writing pages about the plot, the role of Béline, Argan's overweening preoccupation with money, the rights and wrongs of forced marriage, the rights of women in Louis XIV's France and the position of the servant in the seventeenth century household. This was often done to the detriment of their other answers. The best responses were carefully planned and rather more succinct.
- (i) Though there was a little confusion about the meaning of the word 'burlesque', Toinette is referring to what she considers to be the farcical plan of Argan to marry off his daughter, against her will, to the young doctor, Thomas Diafoirus. The plan is ridiculous because Angélique has never met Thomas, who is something of a fool and is scarcely a good catch in comparison with her dearly-beloved Cléante. The plan is selfish – Argan has no thought for his daughter's future happiness, he merely wants free access to medical treatment – and it is preposterous because Argan is not ill and is wealthy enough in his own right not to have to marry off his daughter below her class.
- (ii) The best responses examined both sides of the argument. Toinette deserves to be berated by her master because she is insolent, often sarcastic with Argan and does not know her place as a maid. On the other hand, she has the interests of Argan and Angélique at heart, she is doing her best to reason with Argan and, after so many years of loyal service to the household, she has perhaps earned the right to express her opinion.
- (iii) Argan shows that money and his health are of equal importance to him. He wants Thomas Diafoirus as a son-in-law so that he can have access to free medical treatment and he wants his daughter to marry into the Diafoirus family so as to secure her own financial security, particularly since Thomas will inherit not only from his father, but also from his Uncle Purgon, who is an enormously wealthy man. Toinette's final remark is a typically ironic observation that doctors are paid according to the numbers of people that they kill, reflecting the scant regard that she has for the charlatans who masquerade as medical men.
- (b) There were few answers to **Question 1(b)**, which focused on the importance of song and dance in the play. Comédies-ballets were a popular form of entertainment and the songs, dances, verse and prose contained in the *Églogue* and all of the *Intermèdes* were included to entertain the king and his court. Indeed the *Églogue* is a hymn of praise to the Sun King, Louis XIV, the patron of Molière's troupe. Candidates were able to identify some of the other functions that the musical interludes serve:
- They enhance the comic impact of the play (for example, the farce in *Intermèdes* 1 and 3).
  - They reflect some of the play's key themes (e.g. frustrated love, money).
  - The 'carpe diem' theme of the second *Intermède* is appropriate in that it precedes Béralde's attempt to persuade Argan to permit Angélique to marry her true love.
  - The chanting doctors of *Intermède* 3 heighten the play's mockery of the medical profession.
  - The duet between Angélique (the shepherdess, Phylis) and Cléante (the shepherd, Tircis) is a direct reflection of the play's storyline (shepherdess loves shepherd, but is thwarted by father who promises her hand to another whom she does not love) and is an integral part of the plot, allowing Angélique to talk freely to Cléante about her love for him and her antipathy towards Thomas.
  - In practical terms, the *Intermèdes* also allow for changes in cast and scenery between the acts and denote the passage of time.

## Question 2 – Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin*

Questions on the Zola work were attempted by a good number of candidates, with **Question 2(b)** being about twice as popular as the passage-based question.

- (a) The question was reasonably well answered, but not all candidates identified that the passage was taken from the very start of the novel, or that Zola's gloomy description of the alleyway was to set the scene for the tragic events that followed.
- (i) Most candidates identified the shopkeepers as the 'gens qui travaillent' and correctly highlighted Zola's portrayal of them as being disinterested and lacking in vitality, much like their ageing window displays. Better responses also picked up the apprentices and manual workers passing through the alley and the fact that they do so not out of interest in the shops, but merely as a shortcut, since the passage is far from being an inviting 'lieu de promenade'.
- (ii) The lowering, unhealthy, leprous presence of the wall was well described by most candidates, some of whom went on to link its 'cicatrices' with Camille's corpse or the bite-mark that he was to leave on Laurent's neck. Only a few candidates pointed out that it was this wall which entirely dominates the view from Therese's bedroom window, the same wall that Laurent was to throw the cat against in his later fear and frustration, the wall which symbolises the limitation of freedom and hope for Thérèse and foreshadows the tragedies to come.
- (iii) The colours, like the light that reaches the passageway, are dull, dirty and depressing which intensifies the dark, intimidating atmosphere of the shops and their displays. A handful of candidates went on to highlight that the sombre impression that Zola creates reflects the lack of joy and optimism in the lives of his characters and is suggestive of the fate that awaits his protagonists.
- (b) Though the question appeared to be well understood by the candidates who attempted it, some were not able to describe in any detail the physical transformation which the protagonists undergo, which is a little surprising given the heavy emphasis which Zola places on the physical. Some candidates set out to describe physical changes, but soon lapsed into recounting the changes in mental attitude which Thérèse and Laurent undergo, or merely summarised the story. Better responses highlighted at least some of the following:
- The physical changes that Thérèse undergoes: first as her long years of confinement with Camille weaken her and give her a pale, yellowish complexion which renders her almost ugly. Then her nervous re-animation in the passion of her illicit relationship with Laurent, followed by a more relaxed, talkative and outgoing disposition after Camille's murder as she is infected by Laurent's 'sanguinity'. Finally, realising the full horror of the act they have undertaken, Thérèse once again becomes taciturn and sickly and suffers from regular fevers. She discovers that she is pregnant, but miscarries the child.
  - Laurent initially puts on weight after the murder and loses his figure. Then, like Thérèse, he is gripped by the horror of the murder and loses weight, his face becoming thinner. His former art school colleague, visiting him at his studio, is shocked at his physical deterioration. The wound on Laurent's neck grows painful in the days following the murder and then returns to trouble him on his wedding day. In the final deterioration of their relationship, Therese threatens to sink her nails into the wound in his neck.
  - Both Thérèse and Laurent suffer from nightmares and insomnia after the murder, causing their eyes to become ringed with fatigue.
  - The physical changes in Mme Raquin occur gradually after the death of her son. She begins to have trouble walking, she loses her train of thought and her voice weakens. By the end of the novel she is fully paralysed ("elle devenait une chose") and her eyes are the only means that she has of responding to the horror of the stories that she hears from Thérèse and Laurent.
  - Camille undergoes extreme physical deterioration as his body decomposes in the River Seine, to the horror and fascination of Laurent, who discovers him in the morgue.

**Question 3 – Jean Anouilh: *L'Alouette***

A large number of candidates attempted the questions on *L'Alouette*, with part **3(a)** being slightly more popular.

- (a)** Parts **(i)** and **(ii)** were answerable from the extract, but many responses often relied upon wholesale lifting from the text, with limited attempt being made to explain the significance of the quotations supplied. A few candidates quite rightly took the opportunity in part **(iii)** to locate the extract within the play and to expand on Jeanne's story.
- (i)** Although quite a few candidates felt that Jeanne and the promoter hold the same view of the devil, their interpretations are in fact diametrically opposed. Jeanne, perhaps rather naively, believes that the devil must be ugly, since God can only make beautiful things. The promoter contends that the devil is intelligent and will present himself in whatever form is necessary to tempt a soul, though in presenting his argument the promoter reveals a little too enthusiastically what his own devil looks like.
- (ii)** Similarly, they each have opposing views of who has authority to recognise the devil. Jeanne believes that she is able to do so, but the promoter argues that only a member of the clergy can make the distinction and that, accordingly, there can be no salvation other than through the Church. Jeanne despairs for the poor who, unlike the rich, cannot afford to have their priest constantly with them and the promoter acknowledges that it is difficult for all people to avoid damnation.
- (iii)** The extract is drawn from the start of the play and, at her trial, Jeanne is just beginning to tell the tale of 'les Voix', the voices of the Archangel Michael and Saints Catherine and Margaret, who had instructed her to take up arms and lead the French against the English. The nature of these voices is at the heart of Jeanne's trial – is she motivated by God or the devil? A very small number of responses correctly identified that Cauchon's final words must be viewed within the framework of Anouilh's dramatic technique of a 'play within a play'. Though her judges know what is to come, Jeanne cannot yet be condemned for anything she might say, since she is just at the start of her story.
- (b)** The question was satisfactorily answered. Most candidates described the differing reactions of Jeanne's parents to her account of the voices. Jeanne's father does not believe her and he reacts savagely. He believes that she is hiding a relationship with a boy and is worried about the shame that she will bring upon the family when she returns home with 'le ventre gonflé, ayant deshonoré le nom de ton père'. He resorts to violence, believing that he can beat these ideas out of his daughter. Her mother is initially more sympathetic, but is similarly unwilling to believe Jeanne. She is shocked when she hears of her intention to dress in men's clothes and ride off at the head of the army. Like her husband, she believes that Jeanne's real intention is to become a camp follower. She advises her daughter to submit to her father's will if she wants a quiet life.

There were a number of creditable attempts to analyse the change in the parents' attitudes. Her father does show some self-doubt and guilt about his treatment of his daughter when he asks Warwick and Cauchon 'Qu'auriez-vous fait, Messieurs, à ma place?' He reappears in the final scene showing newfound pride in his daughter as he and his son help to dismantle the stake. One or two responses quite correctly pointed out that there is no evidence of any movement in the attitude of Jeanne's mother who, after her appearance at the start of the play, sits and knits in the corner of the stage, like a 'tricoteuse' at the Guillotine.

**Question 4 – Marguerite Duras: *Moderato Cantabile***

Part **4(a)** was attempted by few candidates with part **4(b)** being even less popular.

- (a) (i)** Part **(i)** was well dealt with, most candidates correctly identifying that the scene was taking place at an elegant dinner party being held at the house of the Desbaredes. The guests are in formal dress; the men are admiring their women who are wearing their finest jewellery and all are obeying norms of social behaviour. Only Anne is out of place: she had arrived late and drunk and she is refusing to eat or take part in the polite conversation that is taking place around the dinner table.
- (ii)** Some candidates had difficulty in identifying who the 'il' of 'doute qu'il eut raison' might be. This is perhaps unsurprising since the author is often intentionally obscure, but the passage goes on to make clear that it is Anne's husband who is having doubts about whether he had been right to value his wife so highly. After all, Anne is embarrassing him in front of important guests. She is dishevelled, her hair is in disorder and her eyes are bleary from having spent the afternoon drinking with a stranger down at the port. Perhaps for the first time in their relationship, she is failing to play the perfect hostess. Some candidates went on to point out that Anne's fall from grace reaches its climax at the end of this scene: as the guests leave the table, Anne slips away to go to her son's bedroom where, overlooked by the disapproving shadow of her husband, she vomits.
- (iii)** Part **(iii)** caused some problems. Most candidates identified that the men are viewing the women with some pride, since the finery of their dress and the sparkle of their jewellery are physical tokens of the men's success in business and society. Fewer candidates recognised that Chauvin is one of the men described in the extract. He is out in the park, observing proceedings in the house. The passion of his feeling for Anne, reflected by the scent of the magnolias, contrasts starkly with what the other men are feeling for their wives.
- (b)** This question was more successfully dealt with, even if some candidates resorted to inventing back stories about Anne's relationship with her husband, as if to compensate for the fact that he scarcely appears in the novel. Anne's devotion to her son, perhaps in response to the absence of love from her husband, was well described, as was the fact that he and his piano lessons represent an opportunity for Anne to escape the boredom of the house and taste some freedom. A few candidates astutely observed that Anne's relationship with her son is not quite so straightforward, since he represents a source of both pleasure and pain for her: she is embarrassed by his stubbornness at piano lessons, but is proud of his wilfulness ("ma petite honte, mon trésor") and she refuses to chastise him in the face of Mlle Giraud's criticism. The husband, like the son, is never named and only occasionally alluded to in the novel. The lack of any passion in their relationship, evidenced by the fact that Anne sleeps in a separate bedroom, is perhaps the principal reason why Anne is drawn to Chauvin and fascinated by the story of the murdered lover which Chauvin invents.

**Section 2**

**Question 5 – André Gide: *Les Caves du Vatican***

There were too few answers to **Questions 5(a)** and **5(b)** to make comment appropriate.

**Question 6 – Albert Camus: *Les Justes***

- (a)** The question was attempted by a good number of candidates. Although many candidates successfully related Kaliayev's statement to his beliefs and actions in the play (his sense of honour, his refusal to kill innocents, his willingness to accept death for the cause and his refusal to betray his comrades), quite a number departed rather quickly from the text and embarked on a moral disquisition about whether or not all killing was wrong. The best responses were able to point out that Kaliayev's claim was futile even in the very short term, since the killing would inevitably continue immediately after his death: Dora demands the right to join her lover by throwing the next bomb, Voinov returns to the fray, emboldened by Kaliayev's self-sacrifice, and Stepan, still embittered, will continue to pursue his aims regardless of the means.

- (b) The question, which was addressed by a similar number of candidates as question 6(a), was well answered by conscientious candidates, who were able to demonstrate their knowledge of the text. Although the Camusian ideal would appear to be Kaliayev, many candidates made good cases for others to be considered as 'le plus juste': Dora, who is prepared to give up her love and who continues to pursue the revolutionary cause after Kaliayev's death; Boris Annenkov, the impartial, clear-headed leader who ensures the cohesion of the group; Voinov, the idealist who returns to the fray in spite of his fear; the Grand Duchess who shows her nobility and true humanity in her discussion with her husband's killer. A small number of candidates tried, somewhat less successfully, to argue for Stepan because of his single-minded pursuit of his revolutionary ideals. There were some interesting exposés on Camusian v Sartrean existentialism, but many candidates were side-tracked by this forgot to deal with the detail of the play. The very best responses were able to compare and contrast a number of characters before reaching well-argued conclusions.

### Question 7 – Simone de Beauvoir: *Les Belles Images*

Question (b) was quite popular, whereas Question (a) was addressed far less so.

- (a) The question was not always well-answered, perhaps because the family's friends appear only fleetingly in the novel. They do, nevertheless, contribute significantly to the novel's message. The better scripts made reference to the shallow friends of Dominique and Gilbert, their materialistic ambitions and facile optimism about the future. They contrast starkly with the malaise that Catherine is beginning to experience following her discovery of poverty and unhappiness in the world. Some candidates pointed out that none of Dominique's 'friends' were there to help her in her crisis after the breakup with Gilbert. Few candidates referred to Brigitte and her influence on Catherine and the message conveyed by the author through her. There was no mention of Lucien lashing out at Laurence and her flippant entourage. A few thought of Marthe (not strictly a friend of the family), but did not often see that her Christian propensity to help others could have been linked to Catherine's desire to help the world.
- (b) The better responses to this question attempted to compare Catherine with each of the novel's female characters in turn. This approach enabled candidates to conclude that Catherine is quite like her mother in some areas (they each think quite deeply about the world and share a lack of confidence in themselves) and different in others (Catherine cares more profoundly about the poor and suffering whereas Laurence believes herself to be less caring and sensitive). Candidates also concluded that there were very few similarities between Catherine and Dominique or Marthe. Few candidates addressed the growing similarity in outlook between Catherine and her worldly-wise friend, Brigitte. In too many cases, however, the discussion veered around to focus on Laurence and stayed there, almost in defiance of the question. Weaker candidates inevitably relied on retelling the plot of the novel or slipped into rehearsed essays about women's liberation or bourgeois society.

### Question 8 – Romain Gary: *La Vie devant soi*

This continues to be a very popular text and Question (a) was attempted by over a third of the candidates. Question (b) was less popular.

- (a) There were a few excellent responses which explored in great detail Momo's use and abuse of the French language: his extensive, but wholly innocent use of profanities and other vocabulary emanating from the world of prostitution which he inhabits; his mispronunciation of words (e.g. 'amnistie' for 'amnésie'); the way in which he addresses sexual matters without fully understanding what he is talking about (e.g. 'l'hygiène' which prevents unwanted children, or Mme Lola's 'belles niches'); his shocking, but humorous descriptions of Mme Rosa; his ability to meander from one subject to another, then back again, like an old man; his occasional tendency to speak excitedly, like a child, without proper sentence structure, contrasting with his ability to be an old head on young shoulders (e.g. "Est-ce qu'on peut vivre sans amour?"). Unfortunately, there were some candidates who resorted to retelling the story or who focussed on amusing incidents in the novel, rather than on the humorous way in which Momo expresses himself.

- (b) Most candidates were able to recall Momo's feelings of inadequacy upon meeting Nadine's well dressed, beautiful children for the first time and his disappointment on discovering that Nadine was not free to act as a mother to him. Some also highlighted his shame at being identified as an 'Arabe', an insult which causes Momo to run away and over-react, leading him to upset the cashier in a cinema and to reach the conclusion that "la vie, c'est pas un truc pour tout le monde." A few candidates were also able to provide some contrast between Nadine's children and the residents of Madame Rosa's flat. "Les autres enfants du roman" are much more prominent than Nadine's, but few candidates exploited Momo's relationship with them, his authority over them and his deep understanding of their nature.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/43  
Texts

## Key messages

Teachers should:

- Consider carefully which texts to prepare with their classes: some texts present conceptual problems that are challenging for some candidates.

Teachers should train their candidates to:

- Manage their time in the examination room to ensure that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions.
- Ensure that they do not answer two questions on the same text, remembering that 'soit... soit' means 'either... or'.
- Think carefully about what the question is asking of them **before** they start to write.
- Stay on track as they write their responses by referring back to the question regularly.

Candidates should:

- Label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If passage-based questions are not properly labelled, it can look as though parts **(ii)** and **(iii)** have not been attempted.
- Start each new essay on a fresh page and take care to attach any continuation sheets in order. It is not necessary to write out the text of question on the answer paper.
- Note keywords in the questions and explore all elements of each question.
- Answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read.
- Answer the question precisely, stating briefly in the introduction how the question is to be addressed and coming to interim and final conclusions.
- Finish with a concluding paragraph, which should summarise the points made in the essay and which may include a personal judgement.

## General comments

The passage-based questions were competently dealt with, on the whole, and there were relatively few purely narrative answers. However, candidates need to understand when answering these questions that it is important to explain the context of the extract and to highlight those issues which have relevance for the text as a whole. This was particularly important this year for the passage-based questions on *Thérèse Raquin* and *L'Alouette*, where many responses did not expand beyond the extract itself. Moreover, some candidates still attempt to answer these questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then not explaining what the quotation illustrates. Candidates must give their own interpretation when quotations are used.

The better candidates were able to dissect the essay questions and address each element in their responses. A brief introduction is usually sufficient and candidates should not waste time by describing the background to the work and its author. Narration irrelevant to the question should be avoided – remember that the Examiner has also read the text – but candidates should aim to demonstrate their knowledge of the text while remaining focused on answering the question.

As always, the best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although these should be crossed out to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

## Comments on specific questions

### Section 1

#### Question 1 – Molière: *Le Malade Imaginaire*

The vast majority of candidates attempted **Question 1(a)**.

- (a) The question was competently answered by most candidates who correctly identified that the conversation between Argan and Toinette took place immediately after the misunderstanding between Argan and his daughter about the man Angélique was to marry. However, many candidates went into exhaustive detail, writing pages about the plot, the role of Béline, Argan's overweening preoccupation with money, the rights and wrongs of forced marriage, the rights of women in Louis XIV's France and the position of the servant in the 17th century household. This was often done to the detriment of their other answers. The best responses were carefully planned and rather more succinct.
- (i) Though there was a little confusion about the meaning of the word 'burlesque', Toinette is referring to what she considers to be the farcical plan of Argan to marry off his daughter, against her will, to the young doctor, Thomas Diafoirus. The plan is ridiculous because Angélique has never met Thomas, who is something of a fool and is scarcely a good catch in comparison with her dearly-beloved Cléante. The plan is selfish – Argan has no thought for his daughter's future happiness, he merely wants free access to medical treatment – and it is preposterous because Argan is not ill and is wealthy enough in his own right not to have to marry off his daughter below her class.
- (ii) The best responses examined both sides of the argument. Toinette deserves to be berated by her master because she is insolent, often sarcastic with Argan and does not know her place as a maid. On the other hand, she has the interests of Argan and Angélique at heart, she is doing her best to reason with Argan and, after so many years of loyal service to the household, she has perhaps earned the right to express her opinion.
- (iii) Argan shows that money and his health are of equal importance to him. He wants Thomas Diafoirus as a son-in-law so that he can have access to free medical treatment and he wants his daughter to marry into the Diafoirus family so as to secure her own financial security, particularly since Thomas will inherit not only from his father, but also from his Uncle Purgon, who is an enormously wealthy man. Toinette's final remark is a typically ironic observation that doctors are paid according to the numbers of people that they kill, reflecting the scant regard that she has for the charlatans who masquerade as medical men.
- (b) There were few answers to **Question 1(b)**, which focused on the importance of song and dance in the play. Comédies-ballets were a popular form of entertainment and the songs, dances, verse and prose contained in the *Églogue* and all of the *Intermèdes* were included to entertain the king and his court. Indeed the *Églogue* is a hymn of praise to the Sun King, Louis XIV, the patron of Molière's troupe. Candidates were able to identify some of the other functions that the musical interludes serve:
- They enhance the comic impact of the play (for example, the farce in *Intermèdes* 1 and 3).
  - They reflect some of the play's key themes (e.g. frustrated love, money).
  - The 'carpe diem' theme of the second *Intermède* is appropriate in that it precedes Béralde's attempt to persuade Argan to permit Angélique to marry her true love.
  - The chanting doctors of *Intermède* 3 heighten the play's mockery of the medical profession.
  - The duet between Angélique (the shepherdess, Phylis) and Cléante (the shepherd, Tircis) is a direct reflection of the play's storyline (shepherdess loves shepherd, but is thwarted by father who promises her hand to another whom she does not love) and is an integral part of the plot, allowing Angélique to talk freely to Cléante about her love for him and her antipathy towards Thomas.
  - In practical terms, the *Intermèdes* also allow for changes in cast and scenery between the acts and denote the passage of time.

**Question 2 – Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin* xxx**

Questions on the Zola work were attempted by a good number of candidates, with **Question 2(b)** being about twice as popular as the passage-based question.

- (a) The question was reasonably well answered, but not all candidates identified that the passage was taken from the very start of the novel, or that Zola's gloomy description of the alleyway was to set the scene for the tragic events that followed.
- (i) Most candidates identified the shopkeepers as the 'gens qui travaillent' and correctly highlighted Zola's portrayal of them as being disinterested and lacking in vitality, much like their ageing window displays. Better responses also picked up the apprentices and manual workers passing through the alley and the fact that they do so not out of interest in the shops, but merely as a shortcut, since the passage is far from being an inviting 'lieu de promenade'.
- (ii) The lowering, unhealthy, leprous presence of the wall was well described by most candidates, some of whom went on to link its 'cicatrices' with Camille's corpse or the bite-mark that he was to leave on Laurent's neck. Only a few candidates pointed out that it was this wall which entirely dominates the view from Therese's bedroom window, the same wall that Laurent was to throw the cat against in his later fear and frustration, the wall which symbolises the limitation of freedom and hope for Thérèse and foreshadows the tragedies to come.
- (iii) The colours, like the light that reaches the passageway, are dull, dirty and depressing which intensifies the dark, intimidating atmosphere of the shops and their displays. A handful of candidates went on to highlight that the sombre impression that Zola creates reflects the lack of joy and optimism in the lives of his characters and is suggestive of the fate that awaits his protagonists.
- (b) Though the question appeared to be well understood by the candidates who attempted it, some were not able to describe in any detail the physical transformation which the protagonists undergo, which is a little surprising given the heavy emphasis which Zola places on the physical. Some candidates set out to describe physical changes, but soon lapsed into recounting the changes in mental attitude which Thérèse and Laurent undergo, or merely summarised the story. Better responses highlighted at least some of the following:
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  - Laurent initially puts on weight after the murder and loses his figure. Then, like Thérèse, he is gripped by the horror of the murder and loses weight, his face becoming thinner. His former art school colleague, visiting him at his studio, is shocked at his physical deterioration. The wound on Laurent's neck grows painful in the days following the murder and then returns to trouble him on his wedding day. In the final deterioration of their relationship, Therese threatens to sink her nails into the wound in his neck.
  - Both Thérèse and Laurent suffer from nightmares and insomnia after the murder, causing their eyes to become ringed with fatigue.
  - The physical changes in Mme Raquin occur gradually after the death of her son. She begins to have trouble walking, she loses her train of thought and her voice weakens. By the end of the novel she is fully paralysed ('elle devenait une chose') and her eyes are the only means that she has of responding to the horror of the stories that she hears from Thérèse and Laurent.
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**Question 7 – Simone de Beauvoir: *Les Belles Images***

**Question (b)** was quite popular, whereas **Question (a)** was far less so.

- (a) The question was not always well-answered, perhaps because the family's friends appear only fleetingly in the novel. They do, nevertheless, contribute significantly to the novel's message. The better scripts made reference to the shallow friends of Dominique and Gilbert, their materialistic ambitions and facile optimism about the future. They contrast starkly with the malaise that Catherine is beginning to experience following her discovery of poverty and unhappiness in the world. Some candidates pointed out that none of Dominique's 'friends' were there to help her in her crisis after the breakup with Gilbert. Few candidates referred to Brigitte and her influence on Catherine and the message conveyed by the author through her. There was no mention of Lucien lashing out at Laurence and her flippant entourage. A few thought of Marthe (not strictly a friend of the family), but did not often see that her Christian propensity to help others could have been linked to Catherine's desire to help the world.
- (b) The better responses to this question attempted to compare Catherine with each of the novel's female characters in turn. This approach enabled candidates to conclude that Catherine is quite like her mother in some areas (they each think quite deeply about the world and share a lack of confidence in themselves) and different in others (Catherine cares more profoundly about the poor and suffering whereas Laurence believes herself to be less caring and sensitive). Candidates also concluded that there were very few similarities between Catherine and Dominique or Marthe. Few candidates addressed the growing similarity in outlook between Catherine and her worldly-wise friend, Brigitte. In too many cases, however, the discussion veered around to focus on Laurence and stayed there, almost in defiance of the question. Weaker candidates inevitably relied on retelling the plot of the novel or slipped into rehearsed essays about women's liberation or bourgeois society.

**Question 8 – Romain Gary: *La Vie devant soi***

This continues to be a very popular text and **Question (a)** was attempted over a third of the candidates.

**Question (b)** was less popular.

- (a) There were a few excellent responses which explored in great detail Momo's use and abuse of the French language: his extensive, but wholly innocent use of profanities and other vocabulary emanating from the world of prostitution which he inhabits; his mispronunciation of words (e.g. 'amnistie' for 'amnésie'); the way in which he addresses sexual matters without fully understanding what he is talking about (e.g. 'l'hygiène' which prevents unwanted children, or Mme Lola's 'belles niches'); his shocking, but humorous descriptions of Mme Rosa; his ability to meander from one subject to another, then back again, like an old man; his occasional tendency to speak excitedly, like a child, without proper sentence structure, contrasting with his ability to be an old head on young shoulders (e.g. 'Est-ce qu'on peut vivre sans amour?'). Unfortunately there were some candidates who resorted to retelling the story or who focused on amusing incidents in the novel, rather than on the humorous way in which Momo expresses himself.
- (b) Most candidates were able to recall Momo's feelings of inadequacy upon meeting Nadine's well dressed, beautiful children for the first time and his disappointment on discovering that Nadine was not free to act as a mother to him. Some also highlighted his shame at being identified as an 'Arabe', an insult which causes Momo to run away and over-react, leading him to upset the cashier in a cinema and to reach the conclusion that 'la vie, c'est pas un truc pour tout le monde.' A few candidates were also able to provide some contrast between Nadine's children and the residents of Madame Rosa's flat. 'Les autres enfants du roman' are much more prominent than Nadine's, but few candidates exploited Momo's relationship with them, his authority over them and his deep understanding of their nature.