

# 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), particularly in the Topic Conversation.
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section, but keep your own answers brief. A candidate cannot qualify for marks while the Examiner is speaking.
- More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks and Examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- Candidates' questions should relate to the topic under discussion. Please see the Mark Scheme.
- Cover a range of topics (not just a single topic) in the General Conversation, some in depth, vary questions and topics from one candidate to another, be prepared to identify and follow the interests and passions of the candidate (not your own), and keep your own contributions to a minimum.
- Create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit one-word or purely factual answers.
- Avoid topics of a highly personal or sensitive nature.
- Ask questions at an appropriate level and avoid IGCSE-type questions except as openers to fuller discussion.

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. Many topics were borderline in this respect.
- Candidates are advised that it is better not to ask the Examiner direct questions during the Topic Presentation, as they disrupt the flow of the Presentation and do not count towards *Seeking Information* in the conversation sections.
- A number of candidates asked rhetorical questions in the Topic Presentation. Rhetorical questions are not a requirement of the Test, but they may constitute, if desired, an appropriate part of the Presentation. However, candidates should be aware that they do not count towards *Seeking Information* in the conversation sections.
- It is not in the spirit of the Test that candidates ask their teacher/examiner for key (or indeed *any*) vocabulary.

## General comments

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

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

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

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

## **Administration**

### Recordings

- Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still examples of faulty recording equipment. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner's own contribution.
- Please choose a room which is quiet and where candidates are not distracted by external noise.
- Only the Examiner and the candidate should be present during the Test.
- Centres should keep a copy of all the recording(s) for all the candidates 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 .mp3, 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 & 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 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 are always 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 International website.
- 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 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 and unequivocally related to a francophone country.
- Where a centre engages two Examiners to examine the same syllabus, Examiners must standardise marks before submitting them to Cambridge International 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 sets 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 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'immigration*, *La Technologie*, *L'égalité des sexes*, *Les Médias Sociaux*, *Le Sport*, *La Famille*, *Le Tourisme*, *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 well prove very useful in the topic conversation section. In general, candidates had no problem speaking for the required time and many were able to give full and interesting presentations.

Candidates would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects e.g. *La famille* and *Le Sport*. The mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to 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.

Increasingly, candidates spend time giving dictionary definitions of very familiar topics at the expense of expressing their own ideas and opinions.

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

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

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

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

In each conversation section there are 5 marks available for questions the candidates ask of the Examiner: they should ask more than one question in each conversation section and 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 there seemed to be fewer varied and in-depth discussions this session. In a centre with a number of candidates, candidates should not all be asked to talk about the same list of subjects – themes should be varied from candidate to candidate and should on no account return to the original subject of the presentation.

This section is intended to be a conversation between Examiner and candidate, so it is not appropriate for the Examiner to ask a series of unrelated questions, to which the candidate responds with a prepared answer, after which the Examiner moves on to the next question on the list! Examiners should display sensitivity in asking questions about topics of a personal nature i.e. religion and personal relationships and should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas. Examiners should not regard the examination as a platform for imposing their own views on the candidates.

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

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

### **Assessment**

- The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where Topic Presentations did not relate to a francophone country, in which case the mark for Content/Presentation must be halved.
- A handful of Examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness, Accuracy and Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.

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

# 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 begin the answer by re-working the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of the word limit is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

## General comments

The fact that scripts are scanned and marked on screen has created some issues of which candidates need to be aware: some appear to write a pencil version of their answers which they then write over (more or less accurately) in ink. Scanning does not clearly distinguish the pencil version from the ink one, which can make the script very difficult or indeed impossible to mark on screen, especially in a paper where a single letter or (or even a defining accent) may make all the difference between 1 and 0.

Legibility in general was sometimes a significant problem, with answers littered with crossings-out and squeezed-in insertions, not to mention poor or minute handwriting. In particular, candidates from some centres have a way of writing a *t* which involves curling the bottom of the letter upwards, inwards then outwards again which makes it impossible to know whether the word ends in *t*, *s* or *r*. This again can make all the difference between 1 and 0.

Thankfully, there were very few cases of centres submitting the text inserts with the answer booklets, a practice which significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, approachable by the overwhelming majority and similar in level of difficulty to previous years. The subject matter of the texts was clearly of some topical interest and relevance. There were many very good scripts from able and well-prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy. At the other end of the range, there were some whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

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

Many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language marks – e.g. *En ce qui concerne la participation des femmes, les Jeux Olympiques ont-ils changé...* (**3(a)**); *Le pourcentage de femmes participant aux Jeux a-t-il évolué...* (**3(b)**); *Les femmes et les filles restent-elles désavantagées...* (**4(a)**). Answers beginning with *Parce que* or *En* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

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

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished significantly in recent series, with more candidates understanding how to ‘work’ the text to avoid ‘lifting’, but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply ‘lifting’ items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications (see previous paragraph). Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3** and **4** below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

This was a relatively straightforward first exercise which enabled a good proportion of candidates to get off to a positive start.

- **Item (a)** was correctly offered by most candidates.
- In **(b)**, *concourent* was identified by a large majority, although some lost the mark by not transcribing it accurately.
- **Item (c)**, proved the most difficult, with the frequent inclusion of *seulement* after the correct *soit* breaking the 'footprint' rule – see General comments above. *De plus*, *alors* and *ce n'est que* were also quite common.
- In **(d)**, candidates were largely successful in finding *depuis*, but a number reversed things with (*pour arriver*) *jusqu'à*.
- In **(e)**, the search for a feminine adjective correctly led many to *parfaite*, but *exponentielle* and *parité* also appeared quite frequently.

#### **Question 2**

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

##### **Item 2(a)**

The transfer into the passive proved straightforward enough for many, but some did not see the need to make the participle agree. Others lost the mark by changing the tense to a *passé composé*, or by the addition of a curious *par nous*.

##### **Item 2(b)**

The passive here required not only the agreement of the past participle but also the change from *à* to *de*, which proved problematic for many. Others missed out the necessary *par le CIO*.

##### **Item 2(c)**

There were a number of elements which made this a challenging task for many: the conjugation of *parvenir*; the sequence of tenses; the agreement of *leur* with *statut*. The omission of the necessary *y* compounded the problem.

### Item 2(d)

The conjugation of another irregular verb (*atteindre*) again caused problems even for those who had done the difficult bit in recognising the need for a subjunctive. Others omitted the agreement on *soit atteinte*.

### Item 2(e)

This item was not handled very well, maybe due to the reluctance of many candidates to form a simple negative with both *ne* and *pas*. Candidates who successfully negotiated *ni ... ni* often spoiled things by including *et*, and those who remembered the *n'* then destroyed it by the addition of *pas*.

## Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, most candidates scored the first mark either by saying that women couldn't compete in 1896 or that they could in 1900, or both, although there was some mixing up of the dates. There were plenty of easy ways to avoid lifting *admises*. Some did not make the point that their participation (second mark) was limited by the small number (five) of events open to them, simply stating that there were only 22 *sportives* or that each had to enter five events. Their performance (third mark) was limited by their attire (*portaient que des longues jupes et des chapeaux*).

In **Item 3(b)**, candidates found good ways of expressing a dramatic increase in numbers. Errors in calculating percentages were disregarded where possible. For the second mark, candidates were generally successful in finding ways of expressing the aim of equal numbers of male and female competitors, without lifting *parité*.

In **Item 3(c)**, the need for new Olympic sports to include women's events was generally well answered. The second mark referred to the tripling of the number of women's events, rather than necessarily a tripling of the number of women athletes. *Comporter* was sometimes thought to have something to do with *le comportement*, whilst others suggested that women would compete against men in all events.

In **Item 3(d)**, most candidates successfully scored both marks, although some unnecessarily lifted *l'introduction de la boxe feminine*.

**Item 3(e)** required mention of the women's football World Cup being organised in France for the first mark, and an understanding of *gagner du terrain* in this context for the second. Some interpreted this as meaning the acquisition of more pitches or the building of new grounds.

In **Item 3(f)**, successful candidates followed the prompt in the question (*aider à faire*) and replaced the nouns *démolition*, *érosion*, *combat* and *lutte* with corresponding verbs. There was some confusion caused by the suggestion that girls giving up sport regretted it or that they had to *choisir l'adolescence au lieu des sports*.

## Question 4

**Item 4(a)** needed candidates to make the point that women athletes were more *visibles/médiatisées* and then to find ways to avoid simply lifting *un manque d'opportunités* (e.g. *elles manquent...*), *une insuffisance d'investissements* (e.g. *on n'investit pas suffisamment...*) and *la persistance de préjugés* (e.g. *il existe toujours...*).

**Item 4(b)** was the most successfully handled in this question, with candidates often scoring both marks, although some thought that it was women players themselves who were eliminated or that women's prize/appearance money actually exceeded men's.

In **Item 4(c)**, a good proportion of candidates thought that men were more professional than women in their approach, rather than achieving professional status more often. Others did not make it clear that their average monthly contracted salary was higher too.

In **Item 4(d)**, most candidates managed the first mark for pointing to the increased television coverage of women's sport. Some went too far in suggesting that none of the French team's matches were televised in the women's soccer World Cup in Canada, but a good number attempted (albeit with varying degrees of success) to produce the required conditional or conditional perfect to express how things would have been different in the case of the men's team.

In **Item 4(e)**, the increased participation in women's sport was generally successfully mentioned for the first mark, but some then lapsed into lifting *un profil rehaussé* (or misreading it as *un profit rehaussé*) and *l'égalité de statut*. The importance of women assuming key posts in the sporting world was well paraphrased by stronger candidates.

## Question 5

### (a) Summary

This question is effectively a **précis** in which 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**. *Les deux textes concernent les femmes dans le monde sportif. Le premier présente les progrès faits dans le sport féminin depuis 1896. Le deuxième indique ce qu'il reste à faire pour atteindre l'égalité des sexes dans ce domaine* wasted over 25% of the word allowance without scoring. A similar number of words could have been used at the outset to score the first 4 of the 10 marks available: *Depuis 1900 les femmes peuvent participer aux Jeux Olympiques (A). Leur nombre a augmenté énormément (B) et le but est d'arriver à 50 % en 2020 (C). Tous les sports olympiques offrent maintenant des épreuves pour les femmes (D).*

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

In addition to the four points (A–D) above, the most commonly made included

- The increased participation of women in sport in general
- Women playing traditionally 'male' team sports, and the increased popularity of women's football in France
- Need for equality of professional status/prize-money/salaries
- Greater media coverage
- Breaking down barriers/overcoming sexist stereotyping and prejudice

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**.

### (b) Personal Response

In the Personal Response many candidates did not read the question properly before seeing the words *argent, hommes et femmes* and jumping to the conclusion that they were being asked whether it was justifiable to pay sportswomen less than sportsmen. Sadly, this produced many answers which were irrelevant and unrewardable.

Those who did read the question produced some interesting points, mostly in favour of '*les vastes sommes*'. The justifications included:

- sportsmen and women have to train long and hard
- they have to make sacrifices, including time with their families.
- they represent the honour of their country
- they have to have a special diet and equipment which can be expensive
- sport can be dangerous, and they risk injury or even death
- sport is big business controlled by millionaires so they deserve their cut
- they help sell products and merchandise and make money for others
- their career is usually short-lived
- they are ambassadors and act as role models for young people
- they have a very special and rare talent which deserves to be rewarded highly, on the principle of supply and demand.

Of those against, the following were mentioned:

- there are those in far greater need
- other occupations/professions (surgeons, miners, firefighters) are paid much less yet are more important
- sport should be for love not money

- the money should be spent on encouraging everyone to do sport and become more healthy
- the money should be spent on better community sporting facilities or on reducing world poverty
- it makes the sportsmen and women arrogant and encourages excessive consumption and the cult of celebrity.

### Quality of Language

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

The approach to spelling in some scripts was at best phonetic: *assés, mal hallaise, célà, aubliiger, par appor a, pas sur le même pied d'estal* and the ubiquitous *faire fasse à*.

The choice between *ce, se, and ceux; sa and ça (sela); ces, ses, c'est and s'est; ci and si; on and ont; donc and dont; ou and où; par and part* often appeared random. The use of *eux* instead of *elles* caused particular confusion in answers which involved gender inequality. This was further compounded by the use of *légalité* for *l'égalité* (or even *l'illégalité*) *des sexes*.

This phonetic approach frequently extended to grammar too. *Les matchs aurait était diffuser; Elles n'on pas éteaint mis en avant*. The use of the infinitive *-er* ending – or indeed anything else that sounded similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (*-é*) in some scripts.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) again appeared largely random in many scripts.

Not uncommonly, when attempts were made to make verbs agree as plurals, it was simply by putting an *s* on the end of the singular: *elles participes, ils gagnes*. There also appeared to be a belief that feminine/plural subjects of verbs conjugated with *avoir* require feminine/plural past participles: *les femmes ont gagnées, les chaînes n'ont pas diffusées...*

Incorrect verb forms were numerous, even for common irregular verbs such as *pouvoir, vouloir, devoir, prendre, courir, (par/de)venir, (per)mettre*.

Constructions with certain verbs took their usual toll, in particular: *encourager, décourager, persuader, aider, empêcher, réussir, permettre, interdire*. Attempts at forming passives were also problematic: *les femmes ont été permises; la France a été donnée/attribuée la Coupe*.

Comparatives *plus/moins ... que* caused some problems, with *plus beaucoup* appearing not infrequently, as did *nombre* with singular nouns (e.g. *participation/argent/diffusion*).

Although most of the above inevitably focuses on weaknesses, 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 commendably accurate French which was a pleasure to read.

# FRENCH

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<p><b>Paper 9716/23</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. 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 writing out the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess the word limit is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

## General comments

Legibility and presentation were sometimes a significant problem, with extremely poor or minute handwriting and answers littered with crossings-out and squeezed-in insertions making marking problematic.

Overall, the texts were felt to be of an appropriate level and of some interest and relevance to the candidates.

The paper was largely comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years. There were some very good scripts from candidates who were well versed in handling the various tasks, but, at the other end of the range, there were some whose level of linguistic competence and knowledge was very much stretched by what was being asked of them.

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

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy. Most of the questions on this paper could be answered in short sentences containing straightforward grammar and vocabulary, but some candidates still neglect the simple answer and over-complicate things.

Too 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 significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *Les membres de la famille doivent-ils ... (3(b))* ; *Les parents trouvent-ils ... (3(d))* ; *Les adolescents peuvent-ils ... (4(a))*. Answers beginning with *parce que* and *en* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

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

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent years, with more candidates understanding how to ‘work’ the text to avoid ‘lifting’, but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply ‘lifting’ items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks at this level. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary complication. Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3** and **4** below.

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

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of 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.

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

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

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are still unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (maybe because of different practices in other subjects). The word limit is already tight to achieve ten points and, from the outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé/précis* 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 showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which greatly diminished standards of presentation and legibility.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

Candidates would be well advised to narrow down the choice by identifying the part of speech involved, or at least making sure that a plural is replaced by a plural, for example.

- **Item (a)** got most candidates off to a good start by identifying *définir*, although some transcribed it erroneously as *definer* or *defenir*.
- **Item (b)** produced a large number of incorrect attempts to track down a synonym for *fondamentaux*, with many not recognising it as an adjective: *principes*, *constamment*, *parmi*, *tâches*, *au sein*. Some who did find *de base* infringed the 'footprint' rule (see **General comments** above) by including *principes*, which would have given *principes principes de base*.
- In **Item (c)**, *fléchir* often proved elusive: *poser*, *adopter* and *gâter* at least had the merit of attempting to replace an infinitive with an infinitive, but there was no obvious reason for choosing *parmi*, *égoïste*, *tâches* or *pédopsychiatre*.
- In **Item (d)**, the meaning of *abdiquent* was not always known, but narrowing down the choice to a verb in the third person plural would have helped to avoid *consentant* or *caprices*.
- In **Item (e)**, *confus* was often correctly identified as being replaceable by *désorienté*, with a smaller number making the wrong choice with *abandonné*.

### Question 2

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

In **Item 2(a)**, many candidates did not see the need for a straightforward transformation into the passive here, or were unable to produce *être gâté* if they did.

In **Item 2(b)**, the subjunctive seemed challenging to some, but stronger candidates recognised the need for it here, even if there were some incorrect attempts at forming it – e.g. *se sentisse*.

**Item 2(c)** required two manipulations of the original: the first involved inserting an *à* before *exercer*, but some candidates who managed this part then forgot to make *compliquée* agree.

In **Item 2(d)**, the need to form the passive was often recognised, but some candidates struggled to find the correct form of the past participle – *remetté/remettu/remisés/remettrise*.

In **Item 2(e)** the transformation into indirect speech again required a number of manipulations. Some had difficulty with the pronoun *elle* (offering *lui*, *soi* and *sa*), but the most common source of error involved attempts at the present tense of *faire* (*faisent*, *font* or *font*).

### Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, successful candidates often took the hint in the question (... *à faire*) to use verbs and gave the very simple answers *discuter/contester* and *négocier*. Others were less successful with, for example, *négociater* and *discusser*.

**Item 3(b)** was again best handled by those who found verbs to replace the nouns *participation*, *soutien*, *franchise* and *respect*.

In **Item 3(c)**, there were some good explanations of the concept of *l'enfant roi: un enfant qui règne sur la famille/dicte tout/peut faire ce qu'il veut/à qui les parents obéissent*.

In **Item 3(d)**, successful candidates understood the difficulty of deciding on the limits to impose and explained the fear that parents may have of losing the affection of their children, avoiding 'lifting' *craignant la perte...* with *ils ont peur/craignent de perdre ...*

In **Item 3(e)**, a good number saw the need for parents to present a united front and not to be afraid to say 'no'. They also need to be prepared to give way on less important things (*se montrer flexible/fléchir sur/tolérer/faire des compromis/accepter/laisser passer* etc.).

#### Question 4

In **Item 4(a)** successful candidates pointed to the fact that rules which are too strict can lead adolescents to *se révolter/rebeller/mutiner* or *refuser d'obéir* and to *contester/remettre en question l'autorité des parents*. Some appeared to think that *de bonnes relations* referred to being good parents/relatives or that the rules would mean that their children would no longer be *sur bons termes*.

**Item 4(b)** was often well handled by candidates who again followed the prompt of the *faire* of the question by using verbs to avoid using the nouns of the original, and scored three straightforward marks with *prendre des risques*, *rechercher des sensations intenses* and *explorer les limites*.

In **Item 4(c)**, the idea that parents who try to control their children *en les menaçant/punissant* may mean that the latter *ne développent pas leur indépendance/autonomie* was often well expressed, scoring both marks.

In **Item 4(d)**, *la location de leurs enfants* was presumably not quite what was intended, but *ils (leur demandent constamment ce qu'ils font/ce qui se passe/où ils sont)* was fine for the second mark, as was *Ils peuvent devenir agressifs/hostiles* for the third.

In **Item 4(e)**, one suspected that *dissimulation* may not always have been fully understood, but candidates often did the sensible thing and decided on the verb *dissimuler*. Unfortunately, the same tactic did not work for *mensonge*.

In **Item 4(f)**, stronger candidates displayed a good range of vocabulary, finding many good ways of explaining *disponible*: *être accessible/présent/à disposition/joignable/à l'écoute* or even simply *là*. They were similarly inventive for *discret*: *sans être trop en évidence/envahissant/savoir se distancer/rester dans les coulisses/l'ombre*.

#### Question 5

##### (a) Summary

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

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

The most commonly identified reasons why rules are important included:

- Need to establish some basic expectations for family life
- Adolescents ready to challenge anything and everything
- Adolescents try to break free from parental control/test limits/try new things
- To protect children
- To prevent children becoming spoilt.

The most commonly identified difficulties included:

- Deciding on what rules to impose
- Being too strict or too lax
- Not wishing to destroy affection/good relations
- Danger of over-protection
- Child not being able to develop independence.

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.**

- (b) The **Personal Response** asked what would be the specific risks against which the candidate would endeavour to protect a child. A good number did not respond to the question asked, but simply stated that it was important to have rules and that they would attempt to impose them, which could not be credited. Those who did identify the risks were concerned about the influence of a bad

group of friends, peer-pressure, undesirable material on the Internet, cyber-bullying, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, a poor diet and unhealthy life-style, obsession with image and body shape, stress and depression and other threats to mental health in general.

### Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a commendable control of structure. The weakest struggled with the basic nuts and bolts of the language, which inevitably limited their ability to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively.

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

There were difficulties in conjugating some common irregular verbs: *faire, mettre, pouvoir, devoir, prendre, vouloir, venir*. Constructions following other common verbs also caused problems: *aider, permettre, demander, interdire*.

The approach to spelling was in some cases at best phonetic, even in common words: *par se que, mai (mais), praît (près), comême (quand même)*.

Non-French words were much in evidence, often heavily influenced by English: *efficientes, appropriate, admirance, excitement, affectionate, apparaissance, immovables, agreement, capabilité, le truste, l'establishment, revenge, irate, amicable, explanation, un relationship, le freedom, l'obédience*.

This was particularly true of verbs: *proviser, confuser, proteger, néglacter, permiser, franchisser, participater, établir, arguer, challenger, destruire/destroyer, damager, exiter, priser, attempter, puniter, réduiser, moniter, dissimulater, mensonger, envahisser, protrayer, rupturer, occurer, inforcer*.

Some candidates seemed to think that the way to form a verb from a noun is simply to add an *-er* on the end. Studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be helpful in rectifying this belief.

# FRENCH

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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 actual 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**

Overall, candidates have produced a pleasing level of work, with few very poor scripts and, at the opposite end of the spectrum, a number of impressive pieces of writing.

The majority of candidates managed to communicate ideas on their chosen topics. Some candidates showed an excellent command of the language and produced mature answers. Candidates clearly engaged with their topics and most made a genuine effort to address the question set and construct a logical argument. There were few largely irrelevant essays. Most candidates showed a good understanding of the topics, which they were able to convey with varying degrees of success. The best scripts offered a mature response, with a wide range of pertinent points, using examples both from within their local communities and internationally. They also showed an extensive knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary.

The candidates' work was generally clearly presented although there were some examples of poor handwriting. Those who did not plan properly wrote essays that were poorly constructed and often full of alterations, making them very difficult to follow. Introductions were often too long and involved definitions and reworking of the title as well as spurious and sometimes misattributed quotations of little or no relevance. Lack of punctuation at times resulted in lengthy, convoluted phrases, where clarity suffered. There was an amount of repetition throughout some scripts and conclusions were often disappointing being merely a short reiteration of the points made previously in the essay rather than a considered judgement on them. Ideas were often presented in a muddled way with no clear prioritisation or sense of balance. It is clear that those candidates who define the terms of the question in their own mind and organise the material into some kind of order before writing will be more likely to gain the higher marks for content. Paragraphing was, at times, weak, with poor or inappropriate links and no clear development shown. Some candidates wrote their whole essay as one paragraph jumping from one idea to another. Candidates often did not have the skill required to present two sides to an argument without appearing to blatantly contradict themselves. Many candidates, however, did plan their essays carefully, defining their understanding of the question in their introduction and writing a coherent and convincing argument, arriving finally at a balanced conclusion. They used a range of structures and idioms and argued their case successfully.

The quality of language was variable, but most candidates were able to communicate their ideas. Weaker scripts, and even some good ones, showed inconsistencies in the use of basic grammar in particular the use of adjectival and subject-verb agreements, incomplete negatives, use of articles and infinitives. Many candidates also had difficulty with prepositions. Spelling errors or missed agreements were much in evidence, even in good scripts. There were also a number of scripts where candidates had made, perhaps, last minute changes, but overlooked how these impacted on the rest of the sentence, in particular on adjectival and subject-verb agreements. Most attempted to use a variety of structures and a range of vocabulary. At the top end, scripts showed an impressive command of the language, in terms of grammatical and lexical precision, as well a confident use of complex structures.

Some arguments were riddled with clichés couched in very superficial terms and simple language. Answers generally would have benefited from a wider range of clear and targeted examples.

The most common errors were as follows:

Incorrect spelling of common words: *écosystem, les loies, campaign, développement, government, environment, individue/individuel, le stresse, l'impacte, enforcir, concluire, composte, le peut de temps*

Missing out words e.g. articles and partitives in lists or enumerations, e.g.

*il y a beaucoup d' hôtels, restaurants, services et infrastructure;  
ce qui s'applique à l'enfant, adolescents, jeunes adultes et parents.*

Random use of paragraph linking words such as *néanmoins, toutefois, tandis que, cependant*

Misuse of pronouns : *il faut s'en servir de ; il y en a des gens qui*

Use of *faire* instead of *rendre*

Overuse of *plusieurs*

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions

Frequent incorrect use of preposition after common verbs: *préférer de, sembler de, dépendre sur, aider de*

Anglicisms, e.g. *place* for *endroit*, *balancé* for *équilibré*, *consister de, en addition, définitivement, avertissements, individuel* for *individu, facilités, locaux, expérimenté*

Lapses of register, e.g. *ça, truc, boulot, tu* instead of *vous*

Inappropriate use of *personnes/gens* (e.g. *certains gens*)

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

Using *cela* followed by a plural verb

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

Confusion between/misuse of : *ces/ses, les/des, 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*

## Question 1

**Pour réussir dans la vie, il est essentiel d'avoir de bonnes relations avec les autres. Discutez.**

This was a popular question. Most candidates agreed with the statement that good relationships are essential for a successful life. Examples were mainly drawn from contexts relating to school and/or work, family and the wider community. Often friendship groups, as well as partnerships or marriages were addressed. Occasionally the need to have a good relationship with oneself was mentioned as a way of leading a successful and fulfilled life. They spoke about the benefits of maintaining good relationships with all such as obtaining emotional support and practical help, candidates working better at school with their peers, teachers being more willing to help candidates with whom they get on well and employers being more likely to offer work or promotion. They also mentioned the personal benefits in terms of well-being and happiness. Candidates mainly referred to their own experiences and cultural or social backgrounds. A large range of very valid points were used to illustrate the importance of positive relationships from the start of life. The best essays went further and considered the need to learn to be independent in life and not rely too heavily on others, arguing that good relationships can stand in the way of achieving ambitions if others are always put first. Examples of unpopular or unlikable people who have done well for themselves and care little about what people think of them were also mentioned as well as those who had succeeded because of family wealth or status rather than establishing good relationships.

Recurrent language issues included the use of *avoir besoin de* and the use of *support* for *soutien*. *Avoir de bonnes relations* often became *avoir des bonnes relations* or *avoir une bonne relation*.

## Question 2

### **L'éducation est le seul moyen de réduire la délinquance juvénile. Êtes-vous d'accord ?**

This question elicited good responses and looked at how schools and parents can equip youngsters with the academic qualifications, but also the values, support and discipline that can protect them from wanting to commit crimes. The best candidates took a broad view of what was meant by education and discussed the importance of the family environment as well as school and academic results in enabling young people to choose the correct path in life. These candidates were able to offer up other solutions to tackling juvenile delinquency such as more severe punishments but also the need for social care to rehabilitate young criminals and avoid reoffending. Some candidates pointed out that young delinquents often have low educational achievements, have dropped out of school, or come from deprived homes. If parents' economic status was frequently seen as a key factor, some candidates pointed out that delinquency affects youngsters from all backgrounds and that peer pressure plays a key part, hence the need for parents to be vigilant and present for their children. Some candidates spoke of the negative or even brutalising effect that schools could sometimes have on vulnerable teenagers, where bullying and peer group pressure could lead to becoming involved in the world of drugs, alcohol and crime. They spoke of the need for radical changes in society to combat inequality and social injustice. These were seen as the root causes of addiction, crime and the gang culture prevalent among young people. With boredom and a lack of job prospects as further potential causes for youth crime, candidates were keen to see more leisure activities created as preventative measures to keep young people off the streets.

A recurrent language issue was the use of *facilités/aménités* for facilities and the use of *drogeurs* for drug addicts.

## Question 3

### **Le travail – obstacle à la liberté ? Qu'en pensez-vous ?**

This was a popular question. The best answers discussed the importance of work in people's lives and discussed the different ways in which it enables people to be free financially, creatively, socially and mentally. Many candidates were able to discuss the constraints put on people due to long working hours, harsh working conditions and the stresses and strains of working in a 24-hour culture. Mention was also made of impositions put on workers such as wearing a uniform, or having rules about dress, hair styles and tattoos. Some candidates made reference to modern slavery and child labour as extreme examples of workers being deprived of their freedom. Employment was most often viewed, thought, as the only way to achieve one's dreams and have status in society. Some candidates argued that work for some people, particularly artists and top sports professionals, can be a way of freeing their creativity and skill. Far from being an obstacle to freedom, work was also seen as a means to financial and intellectual freedom for women in some societies, enabling them to break free from patriarchal rules. Some answers were somewhat limited by candidates treating the question as the advantages and disadvantages of work rather than addressing the specific terms of the title. This led to the essay being in two rather contradictory parts with little link between them. These essays also tended to be quite repetitive. Most candidates concluded that work need not be an obstacle to freedom as long as a sensible work/life balanced was established.

A recurrent language issues was the use of *travaux* instead of *emplois* and confusion between *employé* and *employeur*. *Balancer* was often used instead of *équilibrer*.

## Question 4

### **Il faut interdire toutes les armes nucléaires. Discutez.**

This question was not widely chosen. The best answers focused very clearly on the undoubted dangers of nuclear weapons but also the necessity of keeping them in order to act as a deterrent to avoid future conflicts. Many candidates described in detail the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and suggested that the devastation and long-lasting impact on the environment and the local population should be a reason for a total ban. They went on to argue that tensions between countries, such as the US and North Korea, mean that the whole world could be on the brink of another disaster and that so much power should not be concentrated in the hands of a few world leaders. Some candidates were not able to differentiate between conventional and nuclear weapons, writing vaguely about the evils of war in general and often even confusing nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. There appeared to be, in many cases, quite a vague awareness of historical events and the development and deployment of nuclear weapons.

## Question 5

### **La lutte contre la pollution doit commencer au niveau individuel. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?**

This was by far the most popular question and one which struck a chord with many candidates. Introductions included definitions of different types of pollution, key statistics and examples illustrating the increasingly alarming consequences of climate change. Often too much time was spent on describing the devastating consequences of all types of air, water and soil, as well as noise pollution, instead of discussing possible ways in which the threat might be countered. On an individual level, most candidates mentioned the 3 Rs of *réduire, réutiliser, recycler* as being the most productive ways of helping the environment. They also mentioned the use of electric or hybrid cars, use of public transport, *co-voiturage* or walking to get to work or school or to do local shopping. They felt that individuals can have a strong effect on the behaviour of others and Greta Thunberg was often quoted as an example of an individual who has raised awareness on a grand scale from simple beginnings. Overall, though, candidates felt that without government involvement, any individual action would be limited or even futile, and they called on governments to introduce stricter laws to punish industries and individuals who pollute. They felt that education, campaigns to raise awareness and policies to encourage the development of renewable energies were areas where governments should take a lead. The best responses included comments on the individual's role as a consumer in changing the ways in which the manufacturing and farming industries do business.

Recurrent language problems included misspellings of key words such *environnement, jeter, monoxyde de carbone, individu* and *renouvelable*. *Se servir de* was often incorrectly used.

# FRENCH

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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. Paragraphing is also important to show both clarity of thought and logical progression through an argument.

## **General comments**

In this paper, candidates are given a choice of 5 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 the paper and essays were generally of the correct length, although a small number were very short. Focus on the question set was sometimes poor and the arguments superficial. Most of the candidates did attempt a plan but it was often short, in list form and rather sketchy in content. Those who did not plan wrote essays that were poorly constructed and often full of alterations, making them very difficult to follow. Ideas were often presented in a muddled way, with no clear prioritisation or sense of balance. Candidates often appeared to contradict themselves as they drifted from one point of view to another. It is clear that those candidates who define the terms of the question in their own mind and organise the material into some kind of order before writing will be more likely to gain higher marks for content. It is particularly important that essays should not merely relate to the general overarching topic area (e.g. *La pollution*) paying little regard to the actual question set. This often leads to generic and sometimes pre-learned material being used with its inevitable consequence on the content mark.

Opening paragraphs which should contain an introduction to the candidate's understanding of the question set often contained instead 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 spurious and failed to elucidate the argument. 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, inaccurate use of idiom and a considerable amount of interference from mother tongue were common, along with examples of phonetic spelling. Some essays were rendered largely incomprehensible by a lack of grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness. Others displayed a good range of grammatical structures and topic-specific vocabulary, were not over-ambitious and managed to express ideas in accurate and succinct language, with logical, clear and coherent arguments focusing tightly on the question set.

## **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 demonstrating that candidates have read a range of media on subjects as diverse as the work of the police, psychological problems in the workplace, aid to war victims and pollution.

Use of a range of verbs such as *accompagné de, reposer sur, promouvoir, justifier, cesser de*.

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): Incorrect spelling of common words: *écosystem, les loies, campaign, développement, government, environnement, individue/individuel, le stresse, l'impacte, jalousie, concluire, coûter, composte, le peut de temps*

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 and *cela* with plural verb.

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

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions.

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

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

Anglicisms, e.g. *place* for *endroit, balancé* for *équilibré, consister de, en addition, définitivement, avertissements, individuel* for *individu, facilités, locaux, expérimenté, capacité*.

Lapses of register, e.g. *ça, truc, boulot, tu* instead of *vous*

Incorrect use of present participle.

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

#### **Le principal ennemi de l'amitié est la jalousie. Êtes-vous d'accord ?**

This was a popular question and generated some strong opinions. Candidates were keen to point out how jealousy can ruin friendships at all stages of life – from primary school to mature adulthood. In particular, they considered the jealousy in teenage relationships, often illustrating this with long anecdotal examples of school friends. They understood that jealousy can destroy a relationship as it breeds suspicion and lack of trust. It is a powerful emotion and links closely to feelings of self-preservation and self-worth. Serious psychological issues can result when this kind of emotion takes over a person's thinking. Many candidates appeared to understand jealousy as envy, talking about how a friendship can be ruined because one party has better clothes or hair, or better results in examinations. Some more mature answers demonstrated that there are many other reasons why friendships might break down such as incompatibility, having different interests or just growing apart.

## Question 2

**Dans certains pays, la police a une mauvaise réputation. À votre avis, dans quelle mesure cette réputation est-elle justifiée ?**

Candidates answering this question were robust in their arguments about the police and its reputation. They included many anecdotal examples of police brutality which might lead to their bad reputation in some countries. Examples were given of peaceful demonstrations where police had acted with undue force. It was generally held that police in some countries were corrupt, racist and violent when it should be their role to protect and serve the public not act as a government tool. Candidates felt that the police should try to establish a good rapport with the public so that they were not then the targets for aggressive behaviour. There were some good heartfelt answers to this question which weighed up the good and bad elements of policing.

## Question 3

**Le monde du travail est de plus en plus responsable des problèmes psychologiques. Discutez.**

This was a very popular question and generated many answers about work/life balance. Candidates felt that there is a tendency for people now to work longer hours than before, largely because of the influence of technology. Since smartphones and laptops are accessible to all, it is now the case that employees are effectively always on call. Their work carries on long after they have left the workplace. This is having an effect on their leisure time and time with their families. This can be the cause of psychological problems for many workers. Candidates also mentioned that there is often bullying in the workplace together with very strict rules and sometimes even toilet breaks are limited/controlled. Mention was made of short-term contracts, the fear of being sacked and then finding oneself unemployed. These were leading to a perilous mental state for many employees. Some candidates felt that there were certainly many other causes of psychological problems such as family issues and the use of alcohol and drugs but that work takes up a large part of one's life and can therefore have a significant effect on mental health.

## Question 4

**Les grandes puissances doivent donner plus d'aide aux victimes des conflits armés. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez ?**

There were very few answers to this question. Candidates felt strongly that governments in the developed world should contribute towards helping those in need after armed conflicts. This aid could come in the form of money to help support the work in hospitals, camps and the local infrastructure. This money would be needed to enable a country to start operating again after the destruction of war. However, it was felt that too much money over too long a period could prove counterproductive. There was a need for countries to become self-sufficient again without relying on foreign aid. This would only be the result if programmes were set in place that would empower local people to improve their own environment and infrastructure. Candidates criticised the corruption in some war-torn countries which had led to financial aid being diverted to warlords.

## Question 5

**Combattre la pollution coûte cher mais ne pas la combattre coûtera encore plus cher. Discutez de cette affirmation.**

This was a popular question. Most candidates understood the significance of the question and were quick to point out that the world has reached a critical state and that we need to act now. Many described the different types of pollution at great length which did not add much value to the answers. Those candidates who took on the challenge were able to show that the cost of stopping pollution was huge and needed to be assumed by all countries. They could see that the effects of not battling against it would be the destruction of the planet. It was vital that there should be global agreement through the use of summits and treaties to address the issues of climate change, global warming and overdependence on fossil fuels. The cost of changing production methods, of building more electric or hybrid cars, of developing solar, wind and wave energy would be great. However, set against the human and environmental cost of not doing it would be very small. Candidate could see little way out but to make changes now, but were not confident of success given the reluctance of some countries to take responsibility and recognise the urgency of our current state.

# FRENCH

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

Teachers should:

- ensure that candidates are prepared to answer questions on **three separate texts**
- consider carefully which texts to prepare with their classes: some texts might present conceptual problems that are challenging for certain candidates
- encourage candidates to consider which kind of question suit them better in **Section 1**: the passage-based **(a)** questions provide a ready-made structure for answers but the freer option **(b)** essay questions leave more room for creativity.

Teachers should train their students to:

- manage their time in the examination room, ensuring 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 and plan their responses before they start to write
- stay on track as they write their responses by referring regularly to the question.

Candidates should:

- label their answers with the question number, ensuring that the passage-based questions are correctly labelled with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If passage-based questions are not properly labelled, it can look as though some parts have not been attempted.
- commence responses to the passage-based **(a)** questions in **Section 1** with a **brief** introduction, locating the extract within the text and briefly explaining what events have preceded the extract
- ensure that answers to the option **(b)** questions in **Section 1** and all questions in **Section 2** include;
  - an opening paragraph, acknowledging the question and giving a brief indication of how it is to be addressed.
  - a closing paragraph, which should summarise the points made in the essay.

## General comments

The passage-based questions were capably dealt with, for the most part. The best responses were able to address the detail required by the question whilst also demonstrating good knowledge of the text. A few candidates still attempt to answer these questions by quoting extensive parts of the extract text, but then don't explain what their quotations illustrate. If (lengthy) quotations are to be used, it is imperative that candidates explain their relevance.

The essay questions were generally well structured, and it is pleasing to see that most candidates now start their essay with a relevant introduction and end with a summarising conclusion. However, there were still instances of irrelevant storytelling and answers that wandered off the point. Candidates do need to try to remain focused on their answer by referring to the question title at regular intervals as they compose their response. Candidates should not waste time at the start of their essay by describing the background to the work, the author's life and literary output. It is not necessary to begin the response by writing out the question.

If a premise is provided in the question, candidates must not be afraid to disagree with it. Far more important is that the candidate should give an opinion and that this opinion should be validated with relevant evidence from the text.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1 – Beaumarchais: *Le Barbier de Séville***

A large majority of candidates addressed the Beaumarchais text, most opting for **Question (a)**.

- (a) The question was generally very well answered.
- (i) The relationship between Figaro and Count Almaviva is rather complex. There remains a degree of respect on the part of Figaro towards his former master, but there is also a hint of insolence: Figaro is quite prepared to mock Almaviva. However, the two are clearly well-disposed towards each other and treat each other as equals. Figaro freely offers his support to the Count in his quest for Rosine's hand, but he is motivated as much by financial gain as by friendship. What is clear is that, despite his status, the Count is more than prepared to take the back seat and be directed by his former valet.
- (ii) Some candidates went a little too far in interpreting 'le reste' and described at some length Figaro's intrigues throughout the play. At this early meeting, Figaro undertakes to do whatever is necessary to facilitate the Count's initial access to Rosine. This will include disabling Bartholo's servants, singing Lindor's praises to Rosine and giving Bartholo so much to think about that he will not have time to suspect the drunken cavalier.
- (iii) Although some candidates misunderstood the meaning of 'doué pour l'intrigue' and lapsed into storytelling, there were some well-constructed responses to **part (iii)**. Some saw the Count as a capable actor, quoting his ability to dupe Bartholo, initially through his role as an inebriated cavalier and subsequently as Alonzo, the pupil of don Bazile. Others were less convinced, citing the Count's initial inability to grasp Figaro's plan and his ultimate failure to obtain his primary objective – that of securing accommodation in Bartholo's home. The best responses saw both sides of the argument.
- (b) Responses to the essay question were generally less successful. Many candidates identified and described in considerable detail two scenes that they had appreciated but neglected to indicate the elements of comedy that had attracted them. Where comic elements were referred to, most candidates limited themselves to citing instances of Bartholo's naivety and stupidity. Only a handful of responses addressed in any detail the full range of comic effects employed by the author. Many many candidates chose to ignore the second part of the question, thus failing to describe the impact that their chosen scenes had on the dramatic action of the play.

#### **Question 2 – Gustave Flaubert: *Madame Bovary***

Questions on the Flaubert work were attempted by about one third of candidates, with **Question 2(b)** being significantly more popular than **Question 2(a)**.

- (a) (i) Most candidates did well to recall a lot of relevant detail about Charles' first wife, Héroïse, whose appearance in the novel is admittedly rather brief. She is a widow, significantly older than Charles and was chosen by Charles' mother because she was understood to be endowed with an attractive annual income. Physically, she is not amongst the most attractive of women and is variously described as being gaunt, spotty and having cold feet in bed. She rules the roost at home, dictating what Charles may say or do, and she is jealous and suspicious of her husband, eavesdropping on his consultations with female patients. To cap it all, she is something of a hypochondriac and uses her feigned illness as a means of capturing Charles' attention.
- (ii) **Part (ii)** was less successfully answered and many candidates felt that the description of nature in the extract reflected the idyllic beauty of the countryside surrounding Charles' home. Flaubert describes the countryside as being flat, monotone and dull, with few distinguishing features. To that extent it echoes Charles' somnolent state (he has just been raised from his bed to attend to farmer

Rouault). Moreover, the countryside reflects Charles' rather plodding, uninspiring character and may be seen as an omen of future misfortune in his life.

- (iii) 'La demoiselle' is, of course, Emma, daughter of farmer Rouault. Charles is taken aback by her beauty and admires the whiteness of her nails and the loveliness of her eyes. He betrays his feelings when he blushes with embarrassment as he brushes up against Emma during the search for his riding crop. He is so enamoured with the young lady that he returns to the Rouault household the very next day, and at regular intervals thereafter, on the pretext of tending to his patient. Unfortunately, some candidates failed to read the question carefully and chose to focus on Emma's reaction to Charles, rather than vice versa.
- (b) The essential element that responses to **Question 2(b)** needed to address was the complete transformation of Léon during his two years' absence in Paris and the consequences that this was to have for Emma. Most candidates successfully described the bored, rather shy young clerk who meets Emma as she arrives in Yonville with her husband. Léon shares her interests, particularly the love of literature, and is seen by Emma as a kindred romantic spirit. Léon's failure to reveal his growing feelings for Emma stems from his timidity, rather than (as often suggested by candidates) from his moral opposition to extra-marital relationships. Nevertheless, the early relationship fails to develop beyond the platonic and it is not until he leaves to pursue his studies in Paris that Emma fully realises the depth of her affection for Léon. Some candidates failed to stress that the Léon whom Charles and Emma meet when attending the opera in Rouen two years later is a very different man. He is more mature and worldly-wise, and he now expects, and gets, much more than an innocent flirtation. However, both soon tire of their physical relationship and Léon's failure to alleviate Emma's financial problems contributes directly to her decision to take her own life.

### Question 3 – André Gide: *La Porte étroite*

A good proportion of candidates addressed **Question 3** with responses split equally between **3(a)** and **3(b)**.

- (a) Key to **Question 3(a)** was an understanding that Alissa knows that she is dying, whereas Jérôme does not.
- (i) Jérôme has returned unexpectedly to Fongueusemare to find a pale and sickly-looking Alissa. Though he does not realise it, Alissa is dying. Alissa knows, however, and it is for this reason that she wants to return Jérôme's precious gift to him: it represents both a final rejection of Jérôme's love and a 'memento mori'. Most candidates identified the ending of the relationship: fewer mentioned Alissa's impending demise.
- (ii) **Part (ii)** was answered comprehensively, if not always subtly. Jérôme has not quite given up hope that Alissa will return his affection and, unaware that she is dying, he completely fails to understand why she wants to give his gift back to him. He cannot grasp why Alissa is talking about 'her name' being given to a child of his and he misses the significance of her words 'en souvenir de moi'.
- (iii) Alissa remains insensitive to Jérôme's pleas. They take what turns out to be their final farewell and Alissa (symbolically, perhaps) bolts the door on him. Outside, Jérôme bursts into tears. Concerned for Alissa's wellbeing, Jérôme writes to her sister and learns from Juliette's reply that Alissa is dead, having checked into a sanatorium in Paris shortly after Jérôme's last visit. It is only upon reading Alissa's journal, left to him in her will, that Jérôme finally comes to understand the torment that Alissa had been suffering, compelled by her faith to deny her love for him.
- (b) **Question 3 (b)** was very well and rather sensitively answered by most candidates, perhaps understandably, given that the theme of virtue lies at the heart of the novel. Formed by her strict protestant upbringing and in reaction to her mother's infidelity, Alissa devotes herself to a life of virtue and self-abnegation which does not admit of earthly happiness or physical love. Indeed, the pursuit of virtue becomes an end in itself and the denial of Jérôme is the means (the 'hair shirt') by which she pursues her religious asceticism. She thus lives a tormented and unfulfilled life in which she is unable to give in to her strong affection for Jérôme because of her greater devotion to God. Alissa's inner conflict is only revealed to Jérôme after her death when he reads her journal.

#### Question 4 – Eugène Ionesco: *La Cantatrice chauve*

Many candidates attempted **Question 4**, and responses were equally divided between **4(a)** and **4(b)**.

- (a) (i) A number of candidates struggled to analyse the impact of the stage directions. The flat monotone in which the actors are instructed to deliver their lines renders the extraordinary revelations of the Martins rather banal and the lack of nuance in their voices makes redundant the repeated exclamation 'Comme c'est curieux!' The monotonal delivery produces an eerie, dreamlike feel (as though the Martins are sleepwalking), which adds to the absurdity of the scene.
- (ii) The surprising elements of the dialogue were well summarised, although fewer candidates thought it astonishing that it had taken the Martins five weeks to get from Manchester to the Smiths' residence, or that (as if to highlight the lack of any real surprise in the conversation) the Martins immediately fall asleep on discovering that they are in reality married to each other.
- (iii) **Part (iii)** was also well answered. The scene's absurdity is, of course, typical of the rest of the play and most candidates went on to give other examples. The strongest responses also attempted to explain what the author might have been attempting to demonstrate through his use of the absurd.
- (b) Responses to **Question 4(b)** were somewhat disappointing. Most candidates rightly identified that Mary is by no means a typical maid: she does not know her place in a middle-class household; she is rude and answers back when talking to her employers; she chastises her employers' guests; she interrupts a social gathering to which she is not invited and shows inappropriate affection in public towards the Fire Chief. However, in many ways she is very typical of the stock theatrical maid (comparable to Molière's Antoinette or Dorine): she is spirited, independent and pushy, she is more intelligent and has far more personality than her employers and, like every stock theatrical maid, she brings humour to the play.

#### Section 2

#### Question 5 – Marie-Claire Blais: *Une Saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel*

This was quite a popular text and many candidates attempted **Question 5**, with **5(a)** being almost twice as popular as **5(b)**.

- (a) This was a very good question for candidates who had studied the text closely and could recall relevant facts. Le Septième is the black sheep of the family. He returns home from the fields stinking of alcohol and retires to the cellar, where he and his brother Jean Le Maigre smoke cigarette butts and play cards. He sets fire to the school and recounts with glee the story of the little hunchbacked girl that he and his brother torments. Grand-mère despairs of his bad influence on Jean Le Maigre and urges father to beat him without mercy. But Le Septième also has a more sensitive, vulnerable side which few candidates thought to mention. He acts as Jean le Maigre's confidant, protecting him from bullying in the orphanage and worrying how his brother will cope without him in the novitiate. He greatly admires, and contributes to, Jean Le Maigre's poetry and saves his brother's writings from destruction by their father. And of course, in spite of his swaggering attitude, it is Le Septième who is brutally attacked and almost murdered by frère Théodule.
- (b) This proved to be a challenging question. Most candidates extended their answers to cover Jean Le Maigre's writings in general and attempted, with varying degrees of success, to show how these were important for the boy as he struggled with his illness and the harshness of his daily existence. Rather too many responses lapsed into storytelling. Few candidates examined the importance of poetry for the work as a whole.

#### Question 6 – Jean-Marie Gustave le Clézio: *Le Chercheur d'or*

**Question 6** was attempted by very few candidates. The majority opted for **6(a)**.

- (a) There were some comprehensive responses which covered each of the ethnic groups represented within the novel and dealt competently with the issue of racist attitudes amongst the white population. Most candidates rightly pointed out that Alexis (perhaps representing the views of the author) was oblivious to such attitudes and delighted in his friendship with Denis and his relationship with Ouma in complete disregard of the bigoted views of his sister, Laure, and his

cousin, Ferdinand. However, it was clear that 'groupes ethniques' was not universally understood. Some candidates chose to dwell upon differences in prosperity or social class, focusing in particular on comparisons between Alexis' father and Uncle Ludovic. Unfortunately, there was a considerable amount of mere storytelling.

- (b) **Question (b)** was answered less successfully, perhaps because candidates found it difficult to recall specific details of Alexis' experiences in the trenches. A relevant answer required detailed knowledge of the text. Few students had concentrated on this part of the novel and responses were often disappointing, with immediate digression into narrative and the post-war episodes. Amongst those who attempted to deal with the war, Odilon was quoted, together with general comments on the horrors of war, although many responses remained rather unspecific. Most candidates felt that Alexis was fundamentally transformed by the war, even though they went on to describe how ready he was to resume the search for lost treasure almost immediately after his discharge.

#### **Question 7 – François Mauriac: *Le Désert de l'amour***

This is a popular text and **Question 7** was attempted by a large proportion of the candidates. Most opted for **7(a)**.

- (a) Most candidates succeeded in producing a robust and convincing response to this question. Essays were well developed and gave competent analyses of the significance of Mauriac's title.
- (b) There were many similarities between the themes of **Question 7(a)** and **Question 7(b)**. Indeed, it was often difficult to distinguish which question the candidate was addressing. However, the key instruction in the question was 'Évaluez **sa** vie de famille' and the better responses focused more clearly on how Raymond's character, and his relationships with women in particular, had been impaired by the lack of affection that he experienced as a child and the strained relationships that existed between the members of his family.

#### **Question 8 – Irène Némirovsky: *Tempête en juin* (from *Suite Française*)**

**Question 8** was attempted by a minority of candidates, all of whom opted to address **8(b)**.

- (a) There were no responses to **8(a)**.
- (b) **8(b)** was competently dealt with, although some candidates focused a little too closely on the tangible losses suffered by each social class, thus failing to give adequate weight to the psychological reactions and the varying responses of rich and poor in the face of grave danger.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/43  
Texts

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- (i) Jérôme has returned unexpectedly to Fongueusemare to find a pale and sickly-looking Alissa. Though he does not realise it, Alissa is dying. Alissa knows, however, and it is for this reason that she wants to return Jérôme's precious gift to him: it represents both a final rejection of Jérôme's love and a 'memento mori'. Most candidates identified the ending of the relationship: fewer mentioned Alissa's impending demise.
- (ii) **Part (ii)** was answered comprehensively, if not always subtly. Jérôme has not quite given up hope that Alissa will return his affection and, unaware that she is dying, he completely fails to understand why she wants to give his gift back to him. He cannot grasp why Alissa is talking about 'her name' being given to a child of his and he misses the significance of her words 'en souvenir de moi'.
- (iii) Alissa remains insensitive to Jérôme's pleas. They take what turns out to be their final farewell and Alissa (symbolically, perhaps) bolts the door on him. Outside, Jérôme bursts into tears. Concerned for Alissa's wellbeing, Jérôme writes to her sister and learns from Juliette's reply that Alissa is dead, having checked into a sanatorium in Paris shortly after Jérôme's last visit. It is only upon reading Alissa's journal, left to him in her will, that Jérôme finally comes to understand the torment that Alissa had been suffering, compelled by her faith to deny her love for him.
- (b) **Question 3 (b)** was very well and rather sensitively answered by most candidates, perhaps understandably, given that the theme of virtue lies at the heart of the novel. Formed by her strict protestant upbringing and in reaction to her mother's infidelity, Alissa devotes herself to a life of virtue and self-abnegation which does not admit of earthly happiness or physical love. Indeed, the pursuit of virtue becomes an end in itself and the denial of Jérôme is the means (the 'hair shirt') by which she pursues her religious asceticism. She thus lives a tormented and unfulfilled life in which she is unable to give in to her strong affection for Jérôme because of her greater devotion to God. Alissa's inner conflict is only revealed to Jérôme after her death when he reads her journal.

#### Question 4 – Eugène Ionesco: *La Cantatrice chauve*

Many candidates attempted **Question 4**, and responses were equally divided between **4(a)** and **4(b)**.

- (a) (i) A number of candidates struggled to analyse the impact of the stage directions. The flat monotone in which the actors are instructed to deliver their lines renders the extraordinary revelations of the Martins rather banal and the lack of nuance in their voices makes redundant the repeated exclamation 'Comme c'est curieux!' The monotonal delivery produces an eerie, dreamlike feel (as though the Martins are sleepwalking), which adds to the absurdity of the scene.
- (ii) The surprising elements of the dialogue were well summarised, although fewer candidates thought it astonishing that it had taken the Martins five weeks to get from Manchester to the Smiths' residence, or that (as if to highlight the lack of any real surprise in the conversation) the Martins immediately fall asleep on discovering that they are in reality married to each other.
- (iii) **Part (iii)** was also well answered. The scene's absurdity is, of course, typical of the rest of the play and most candidates went on to give other examples. The strongest responses also attempted to explain what the author might have been attempting to demonstrate through his use of the absurd.
- (b) Responses to **Question 4(b)** were somewhat disappointing. Most candidates rightly identified that Mary is by no means a typical maid: she does not know her place in a middle-class household; she is rude and answers back when talking to her employers; she chastises her employers' guests; she interrupts a social gathering to which she is not invited and shows inappropriate affection in public towards the Fire Chief. However, in many ways she is very typical of the stock theatrical maid (comparable to Molière's Antoinette or Dorine): she is spirited, independent and pushy, she is more intelligent and has far more personality than her employers and, like every stock theatrical maid, she brings humour to the play.

#### Section 2

#### Question 5 – Marie-Claire Blais: *Une Saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel*

This was quite a popular text and many candidates attempted **Question 5**, with **5(a)** being almost twice as popular as **5(b)**.

- (a) This was a very good question for candidates who had studied the text closely and could recall relevant facts. Le Septième is the black sheep of the family. He returns home from the fields stinking of alcohol and retires to the cellar, where he and his brother Jean Le Maigre smoke cigarette butts and play cards. He sets fire to the school and recounts with glee the story of the little hunchbacked girl that he and his brother torments. Grand-mère despairs of his bad influence on Jean Le Maigre and urges father to beat him without mercy. But Le Septième also has a more sensitive, vulnerable side which few candidates thought to mention. He acts as Jean le Maigre's confidant, protecting him from bullying in the orphanage and worrying how his brother will cope without him in the novitiate. He greatly admires, and contributes to, Jean Le Maigre's poetry and saves his brother's writings from destruction by their father. And of course, in spite of his swaggering attitude, it is Le Septième who is brutally attacked and almost murdered by frère Théodule.
- (b) This proved to be a challenging question. Most candidates extended their answers to cover Jean Le Maigre's writings in general and attempted, with varying degrees of success, to show how these were important for the boy as he struggled with his illness and the harshness of his daily existence. Rather too many responses lapsed into storytelling. Few candidates examined the importance of poetry for the work as a whole.

#### Question 6 – Jean-Marie Gustave le Clézio: *Le Chercheur d'or*

**Question 6** was attempted by very few candidates. The majority opted for **6(a)**.

- (a) There were some comprehensive responses which covered each of the ethnic groups represented within the novel and dealt competently with the issue of racist attitudes amongst the white population. Most candidates rightly pointed out that Alexis (perhaps representing the views of the author) was oblivious to such attitudes and delighted in his friendship with Denis and his relationship with Ouma in complete disregard of the bigoted views of his sister, Laure, and his

cousin, Ferdinand. However, it was clear that 'groupes ethniques' was not universally understood. Some candidates chose to dwell upon differences in prosperity or social class, focusing in particular on comparisons between Alexis' father and Uncle Ludovic. Unfortunately, there was a considerable amount of mere storytelling.

- (b) **Question (b)** was answered less successfully, perhaps because candidates found it difficult to recall specific details of Alexis' experiences in the trenches. A relevant answer required detailed knowledge of the text. Few students had concentrated on this part of the novel and responses were often disappointing, with immediate digression into narrative and the post-war episodes. Amongst those who attempted to deal with the war, Odilon was quoted, together with general comments on the horrors of war, although many responses remained rather unspecific. Most candidates felt that Alexis was fundamentally transformed by the war, even though they went on to describe how ready he was to resume the search for lost treasure almost immediately after his discharge.

#### **Question 7 – François Mauriac: *Le Désert de l'amour***

This is a popular text and **Question 7** was attempted by a large proportion of the candidates. Most opted for **7(a)**.

- (a) Most candidates succeeded in producing a robust and convincing response to this question. Essays were well developed and gave competent analyses of the significance of Mauriac's title.
- (b) There were many similarities between the themes of **Question 7(a)** and **Question 7(b)**. Indeed, it was often difficult to distinguish which question the candidate was addressing. However, the key instruction in the question was 'Évaluez **sa** vie de famille' and the better responses focused more clearly on how Raymond's character, and his relationships with women in particular, had been impaired by the lack of affection that he experienced as a child and the strained relationships that existed between the members of his family.

#### **Question 8 – Irène Némirovsky: *Tempête en juin* (from *Suite Française*)**

**Question 8** was attempted by a minority of candidates, all of whom opted to address **8(b)**.

- (a) There were no responses to **8(a)**.
- (b) **8(b)** was competently dealt with, although some candidates focused a little too closely on the tangible losses suffered by each social class, thus failing to give adequate weight to the psychological reactions and the varying responses of rich and poor in the face of grave danger.