

FIRST LANGUAGE FRENCH

Paper 0501/01

Reading

Key message

To do well in this paper:

In Part 1 candidates should take care to read the question carefully, taking into account the number of marks available, in order to produce a relevant and full response. Candidates should use their own words as far as possible in order to gain higher marks for Language.

In Part 2, candidates should produce a structured response, making each point briefly, rather than expanding on each point.

General comments

Most candidates responded very positively to the theme of the tourism, holiday and the threat tourism can bring to local people and their environment. The second text was much simpler to understand than the first text because it was more factual and written in a journalistic style. The first text contained more comparisons of a literary nature, which seemed to confuse some candidates as explained below in individual questions.

All candidates with one exception completed the paper. Many candidates had time to write a plan or a rough draft, and it was a positive indication that they had been well prepared in the techniques and requirements of the examination, as well as coached on how to manage their examination time allowance. The word limit recommendation in **Question 2** was respected much more this year and very few candidates wrote beyond the 250 words recommendation.

Even more than in previous years, the Examiner noticed a marked improvement in the quality and accuracy of the language used in the answers overall, although there were more incidences of 'anglicismes' as detailed in the language section below.

The Examiner would like to mention that the candidates this year gave more evidence of having read the questions from **Question 1** more carefully and made sure that they answered in the format required as well as including the number of items needed to score the full mark.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

The questions in **Question 1** ranged from very easy (a, b, d) to challenging (h and i). The rest of the questions fitted in the middle band, where, as long as the text was understood well, the answers presented no difficulty. Therefore there were opportunities for all candidates to perform according to their ability.

Content

- (a) This question was very successful and most candidates were able to explain that the author was alone with her friend on the beach. Although the author was clearly a woman as the question included the word *elle*, the Examiner did not penalise the candidates who referred to the author with *il*, as it had no bearing on the comprehension of the text or the question, as long as the full meaning was conveyed.
- (b) Most candidates responded with adjectives such as *gentils*, *étonnés* or *patients*, which showed an effort to answer without quoting the text directly. Some candidates failed to connect their answer to the tourists and only described the action of the ladies knitting and chatting.

- (c) This answer could be seen on two different levels and the most able candidates managed both. The simplest meaning was that the film had a great success, but the secondary meaning was that the film brought people to St Tropez and high numbers of tourists started to destroy the town. The most able candidates expressed the two ideas in the same sentence. Answering that the film was a bad thing and not explaining why was not considered a satisfactory answer as it did not reflect any understanding of the text.
- (d) (i) and (ii) Most candidates were able to express how the tourists had affected the town in (i). In (ii) some candidates did not seem to understand that the question required individual quotes from the text.
- (e) (i) and (ii) When the candidates looked into the third paragraph, the answer was easy to locate as money is quoted at the very beginning. However the second part of the question presented a greater challenge and was a good discriminator. Candidates must remember that only quoting the text to explain a point does not reflect understanding. The Examiner would like to suggest that candidates explain their points in their own words and only use quotes from the text if they feel it will add to their explanation.
- (f) Most candidates succeeded in finding one or two arguments to explain the changes. The question was worth three points: that means three **distinct** points had to be found. Very few candidates identified the meaning and understood that the *exposition permanente* meant that the tourists were showing off with their money, cars and boats etc. Some candidates saw this phrase as a possible point but thought that it meant that the locals had changed their behaviour or that St Tropez was showing off. The concept of the pollution was easily identified and generally well explained by most candidates. The expression *lancent leur argent sur le tapis bleu de la Méditerranée* created a lot of confusion, although the simple mention of money and its consequence was sufficient to score the point. Some candidates thought the tourists were throwing money in the sea and a few had them buying carpets. It was encouraging that practically no candidate scored no marks in this question.
- (g) Candidates who truly understood the text formulated a very good answer and managed to explain the association of the tourists' admiration and its bad effects or consequences in their own words. It was very pleasing to see that a high number of candidates actually did understand well. When understanding was more shaky, however, candidates either rephrased the two words or failed to link them to the text.
- (h) More able candidates understood that the dark picture/painting in question represented the negative aspects of St Tropez. The second expression presented more difficulty with some candidates failing to spot either the different seasons in the text or confusing who was aimed at the "rancune" feeling. *Rancune* was also often formulated as regrets, which is quite different. Again, although not fully correct for the majority of candidates, it was encouraging to see that all candidates attempted to answer and managed to identify part of the answer and scored at least 1 mark.
- (i) (i) The answers for this question ranged from repeating the text to a very advanced analysis of the metaphores, the adjectives, the vocabulary used and its effects on the reader and the *description meliorative*. Some candidates had clearly been very well prepared in the art of *analyse de texte*.
- (ii) This question was the most successfully answered of this paper with the vast majority of candidates expressing their desire to visit St Tropez and why. Some expressed their feeling of sadness or hope towards such a beautiful place.

Language

There was much evidence of the candidates' better use of French in this question, as good candidates were often successful in re-wording the ideas from the texts but the Examiner found a greater incidence of direct lifting from the text than in the past. It must be stressed that the language mark can only apply to the French actually written by the candidate in an original fashion and that direct copy from the text will firstly indicate a lack of understanding and eventually cause the candidate to miss out on some language marks. The main mistakes included the spelling of *tourist* and *tourism*, which were often used in their English form. Further *anglicismes* were the verbs *invader* and *attacter*. For some candidates, verb endings are still a challenge, as is the use of the *passé simple* alongside the *imparfait*. For such candidates, as in previous years, the

Examiner would like to advise manipulating the passé composé, which tended to pose fewer problems. This year saw a continuing trend of improvement in the quality of language and the preparation undertaken by candidates prior to the examination was quite transparent in some scripts.

Question 2

Content

With regard to the content, this question was completed successfully by most candidates who found at least a couple of identical ideas and differences between the two texts. It was not difficult to achieve a high content mark because each text provided a wealth of information on common themes or on diverse attitudes.

The best candidates began their writing with a short introduction, which already contained some ideas, then wrote the two paragraphs, one for the common ground and one for the differences, and lastly finished with a clear but short conclusion.

The Examiner's advice is to follow the layout of the question. The candidates who did so tended to score higher marks than the candidates who just narrated the content of each text. It is also very important to make each point quite briefly. Poorly scoring candidates picked one point, such as the threat to the environment, and elaborated at length, quoting the texts, and thus using many words to score one single mark. In this question it is not necessary to provide evidence of the statement made. More marks can be scored by listing points that are different from each other. The Examiner would like to suggest that if candidates have the time to do so, they write a list of 15 bullet points organised in similar and different items, before writing out their essay.

Language

Most candidates were successful in writing the comparative essay in the right amount of words, using the vocabulary from the source texts as well as their own. Most candidates used suitable words and appropriate sentences to indicate a clear comparison (*par contre, ainsi que, en ce qui concerne, dans le premier texte, dans le deuxième, etc.*)

The same language mistakes found in **Question 1** were also present in **Question 2**, but it was very encouraging to see that many candidates had reread their essay and made some obvious language corrections.

FIRST LANGUAGE FRENCH

Paper 0501/02

Writing

Key message

To do well on this paper, essays should be accurate, use a wide range of vocabulary and structures, be well organised and coherent, with well-developed ideas.

General comments

The examination consisted of two essays, one that allowed candidates to demonstrate their ability to discuss and argue a point, and one that required an aptitude for describing or narrating. The essays were each marked out of 25, comprising a maximum mark of 12 for style and accuracy and a maximum of 13 for task achievement. Most candidates observed the rubric regarding the number of words used (350-500 words each), only a few wrote too little producing essays that lacked development and structure. In descending order of popularity, the pattern was as follows: **Section 1: Question d, Question c, Question a, Question b; Section 2: Question d, Question c, Question a, Question b.** The very best essays were characterised by a high level of accuracy and a wide range of vocabulary and managed successfully to achieve a particular atmosphere; the essays were well structured (introduction, development and conclusion) and contained well defined and well developed ideas. At the other end of the spectrum, weaker candidates' essays were full of serious errors and candidates struggled to commit their thoughts to paper within the confines of a narrow lexical and structural range. Some candidates wrote words phonetically which made it difficult to follow the argument or the story. Among a number of recurrent weaknesses and errors, the following were seen:

- Omission of accents, e.g. *a* and *à*, *ou* and *où*
- Conjugation of past historic, e.g. *elle s'éteigna*, *j'alla*, *on parti*, *il ouvra*
- Adjectival agreements
- Errors in the spelling of such words as *confiance*, *aggraver*, *agression*, *embarrasser*, *compagnie*, *ressource*, *goutte*, *honnêteté* and *mensonge*
- Phonetic misspellings, e.g. *ses* for *ces*, *ceux* for *ce* and vice versa.
- Confusion between *ce* and *se*, *c'est* and *ces*, *quand* and *quant*, *tout* and *tous*.
- Confusion between imperfect tense, perfect tense and past historic
- Disregard for appropriate register, e.g. *truc*
- Failure to discriminate between the forms *leur* and *leurs*, e.g. *leur parents*, *leurs donnent*
- Paragraphs started with inappropriate conjunctions, e.g. *puis*, *aussi*, *alors*, *ensuite*
- Past participle used as infinitive: *je devais allé*, *avant de mangé*
- Loose usage of such words as *ils*, *ces*, *cela* and the object pronoun *les* when the antecedent is not clear
- Overuse of words such as *ça*, *chose*
- Inaccurate use of accents
- Use of the *tu* form instead of the *vous* form
- Imperfect tense of *faire*.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question a

This question required candidates to demonstrate their ability to argue the purpose of studying History. There were many examples given from the past emphasising the importance of History such as World War Two, the impact of the monarchy in our world, inventions and past civilisations which were successfully used to prove that without a knowledge of History mankind would not have been able to progress in the future. Some excellent candidates took a very philosophical approach and concluded that mankind needs History to live and move forward. Most candidates referred to the idea of learning from the past, i.e. not repeating past

errors such as conflicts and battles. On a broader level, essays for more scientific candidates were more flattering or positive about the role of History in the curriculum. Very few candidates argued that it was totally archaic and redundant in today's world.

Question b

This question revealed conflicting opinions with most candidates agreeing that it is important to think about environmentally sound technology for the wellbeing of our planet as well as the financial benefits for the local community, but also the detrimental effects wind turbines may cause such as the level of noise, the effect on the wildlife (injury to birds) and the seasonal variation in wind levels to produce electricity. Some candidates were adamant that this initiative would not work on the basis that they live in a wind free zone; others suggested that wind turbines would be better situated offshore rather than inland whilst others accepted making sacrifices within their community in order to save the environment. Excellent candidates gave an account of the current situation: shortage of fossil fuels and oil and the necessity to find alternatives in order to cope with our predicted energy demands. At the end of the essay it was essential to focus on the question, which a very small number of candidates forgot to do.

Question c

The best essays here focus throughout on the idea of Truth, examining the question on both an individual level and in broader terms. Too many candidates argued in a very simplistic way stating directly that it was wrong to lie to close friends but omitted to elaborate on the implications that might result. Instead, they reiterated their basic premise. Some chose to give the example of their parents lying about the existence of Father Christmas. Some essays became repetitive and pedestrian. On a higher level some candidates demonstrated the importance of telling the truth in various situations highlighting the self satisfaction this was to elicit. Lying to conceal a crime or to get someone into trouble was clearly condemned in most essays. Some candidates also referred the value of lying in a positive way for example to protect people from an oppressive regime.

Question d

This attracted the highest number of candidates partly because this question was probably more topical and candidates could relate to the topic. A very small number of candidates unfortunately misinterpreted the word *publicité* which they understood as media and their main essays focused on how celebrities were using it to their advantage. The best essays elaborated on the different ways and levels of advertising highlighting the financial benefits for most companies in today's world (more profit, more employment opportunities) versus the influence advertising may cause on people, mainly on the young generation. It was made clear by candidates that although it would be impossible to contemplate a society without advertising, it is essential to have some sort of control over it. Some candidates agreed that the society and its government must play a relevant part in monitoring advertising.

Section 2

Question a

Most candidates described firemen in action or related a story about a single heroic act by an individual who happened to be in the right place at the right time. Some essays lacked details and were unable to develop an appropriate atmosphere though others were exceptionally full of imagination using very complex words to detail the setting. A very small number of candidates misread the task and gave a thorough definition of what they thought courage meant.

Question b

It was essential to focus on the work of an artist and not on the artist. This resulted in some essays mainly describing the life of a singer or a painter just concentrating on biographical details which were not required. Other candidates chose to describe a painting and succeeded in sharing their enthusiasm utilising a high level of vocabulary to express the emotions portrayed on the canvas. The task required a description of only one piece of work and not three or four.

Question c

Some candidates managed successfully to provide details and develop a story which culminated in an unexpected event. There were a good number of balanced elements in order to achieve the required length. A few candidates omitted the required sentence and some essays lacked originality. Some essays narrated special events such as birthdays or seeing a comic show. The errors were common when using the past historic which made the reading difficult to follow.

Question d

Most candidates narrated their experience on board a ship at sea facing an incredible storm and how they had to cope, for example, with a broken mast or a sinking boat. Some effects were successfully achieved and some stories were most engaging. Other essays were too predictable and although characters and setting were identified the climax was not managed effectively. Very few candidates used the third person singular when the first person singular or plural was needed whilst others omitted to mention the storm.