

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/01

Listening

General comments

Although, as always, this Paper produced a good range of marks, it was particularly pleasing to note the large numbers of candidates scoring marks in the 30's or above. Such work showed pleasing levels of attainment in both specific and general comprehension tasks. Overall, several factors helped make the Paper accessible to candidates:

- careful vetting at the preparation stage so as to reduce the amount of writing that candidates have to produce in French. Questions were phrased in such a way as to ensure that short responses in French would be sufficient to display comprehension;
- all multiple choice questions were written so that choices were short and clear in order to reduce the pressure on candidates to read and retain written material whilst listening for the answer;
- the continued emphasis on communication which means that answers written in inaccurate French are rewarded provided that the message is clear. Teachers may find the following helpful when assessing work in the classroom; if the answer sounds like French and reads like French then it is acceptable provided that it conveys the message;
- the introduction of a new test-type on **Section 2 Exercise 2**. This new test-type, favourably commented upon by Centres, required candidates to correct a detail which had been crossed out in a statement and was well attempted by the candidature.

Most candidates had been thoroughly prepared in Centres and were well aware of what was required of them. Only a small number mistakenly ticked more than six responses in **Section 2 Exercise 1**. As usual, most candidates chose to attempt all three sections of the test and, of course, **from June 2007 all candidates will be required to attempt all three sections.**

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This exercise tested the comprehension of short conversations of a factual nature. Occasionally, candidates who went on to score well on the other questions in this exercise failed to score on the first question. This could indicate nerves and a 'settling in' factor. **Questions 1 and 2** testing time and directions were less well done than **Questions 3-8**.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-15

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise. They were required to tick boxes and complete very short notes (one word/number) on the topic of tourist activities in Étapes. All candidates answered **Question 9** well, but were not always able to identify the number '63' on **Question 11**. **Questions 13-15** were well done.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Candidates attempted this exercise well. They heard four young people talking about brothers and sisters and their relationships with them. They then had to identify the correct six statements. The most common incorrect option ticked by candidates was option **f**.

Exercise 2 Questions 17-21

The first part of this exercise featured a new question type. Candidates heard the first part of an interview with a French singer and had to correct one detail in each of five statements in French. In **Question 17** many correctly identified that he sang in French and on **Question 18** most were able to identify that he had looked at his *courrier électronique* although the spellings of this concept were often inaccurate. Likewise the spelling of *jus* in **Question 19** also proved problematic to many. Candidates answering *orange* alone did not score the mark. **Question 20** was answered well but on **Question 21** weaker candidates frequently wrote *froid* instead of *public* which indicated that they had not identified the significance of the past and present time frames as highlighted by the word *maintenant* in the question.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-26

In the second part of this exercise, candidates heard the continuation of the interview and needed to answer via short responses in French. Weaker candidates found **Questions 23, 24 and 25** challenging. On **Question 22**, *ambiance* was often poorly spelt, but recognisable. On **Question 23** many did not gain the mark as they indicated that he listened to songs on his computer rather than wrote them. **Question 24** was well answered, but only stronger candidates went on to say that he did not have a private life or that he had to share his life with the public for **Question 25**. On the last question, candidates needed to be able to express the idea that cinemas were open late. The inclusion of a wrong time or one which was not specific enough often invalidated answers. Reference to cinema alone was not enough to score the mark.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 27-32

This exercise tested both specific and general comprehension skills. Candidates heard an interview with an air traffic controller. Candidates did this exercise slightly better than in previous years and many scored very good marks. The last three questions were better attempted than the first three, but there was no obvious pattern of incorrect answers.

Exercise 2 Questions 33-41

This final, demanding exercise did feature some easier questions which could be answered briefly and even less able candidates managed to score one or two marks, usually on **Question 33** (*centre-ville*), **Question 35** (*police*) or **Question 36** (*route nationale*). On **Question 36** the verb *garer* was not well known by many and was often rendered as *carer*. **Question 37** proved a good discriminator – only the most able correctly identified that customers actually went into the bakery in their car – and likewise **Question 38** where the best candidates correctly identified that the number of customers had increased. **Question 39** was well done, most were able to answer that customers were surprised. On **Question 40** many were able to identify that customers could watch the *fabrication du pain* and on the last question there were some good attempts to identify Alain's future plans. Candidates did need to include the concept of *ouvrir* at some point in their answers. The word *souterrain* was not well known.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

Overall, this paper was comparable in demand to previous papers. The general performance was good to excellent and it was clear that candidates had, on the whole, been very well prepared for this examination. Candidates appeared to have plenty of time in which to complete the paper and the level of presentation generally was satisfactory.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Full marks on this exercise were common. Where candidates experienced problems it was usually with **Question 2**, (they did not know *gorge*), **Question 3** (*natation* occasionally confused with *équitation*) and **Question 4** (they did not know *timbres* and/or *poste*).

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Candidates often managed to score full marks on this exercise. No question seemed to cause particular problems.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Again, full marks were common. Where difficulties arose this was usually on **Question 15** where E was given instead of F.

Exercise 4 Question 16

In spite of difficulties with *faire du vélo/de la bicyclette/du VTT* (often rendered as *le cycling* or *le bicycle*) most candidates managed to communicate the required points sufficiently clearly to score three marks for communication. Verb forms, other than *je suis*, were *variable* and *nous logons* and *nous cyclones* were very common. However, a good majority of candidates were able to score at least one mark for language.

Candidates should be reminded that answers to this exercise can be brief and that only as much detail as is necessary to convey each communication point is required, eg *Je suis avec Pierre. Je loge dans une tente. Je fais du vélo* is sufficient to score full marks.

A few candidates responded to the prompts in the spaces by the pictures and then went on to write a postcard on a completely different subject in the space provided. Centres need to ensure that candidates are aware of the requirements of this task in order to avoid any confusion on the day of the examination.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

Candidates coped well with this straightforward text about a youngster who has overcome his weight problems and even weaker candidates managed to score respectably. No question caused any particular problems.

Exercise 2 Question 25

Most candidates found the topic of this writing task accessible and scores for communication were good. Candidates had a lot to say about the person they love best in their family and those who kept a list of precise tasks provided on the question paper avoided straying into irrelevance. Candidates who did not focus closely on the list of tasks sometimes did not cover one or more of the required elements and this omission affected scores.

In terms of language, adjectival agreements were often poorly handled and some candidates seemed unaware of the need for accents. In addition, Examiners saw many spellings of *beaucoup* and *parce que* and *les cheveux* was often given for *les cheveux*

Nevertheless, the majority of candidates wrote a good (and sometimes touching) description of their favourite family member and were able to display a fairly good command of the language.

Section 3

As usual, the majority of candidates attempted **Section 3** and, of course, **from June 2007 all candidates will be required to attempt all three sections.**

In order to do themselves justice in this final section of the examination, candidates should be advised to:

- use the texts appropriately to answer the questions in such a way that the Examiner can see that text and question have been understood. Where candidates merely lift sections of the text in the hope that the Examiner will 'pick out' the portion that answers the question, they will not be rewarded.
- ensure that answers are structured in such a way that they answer the question, eg for some questions a single word may clearly communicate the answer, but sometimes a single word will be ambiguous and something more will be required.
- take particular care with the grammatical transfers required when moving from direct speech to reported speech.

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

Although this exercise proved quite challenging for some candidates, the majority understood the text and coped reasonably well with the questions. A few candidates appeared to disregard (or maybe did not understand) the rubric and provided a 'corrected' version of a statement, even when they had declared it to be VRAI. This did not affect their marks. Some candidates only attempted the VRAI/FAUX element of the exercise and made no attempt to correct the FAUX statements.

In general, **Questions 26** and **31** were correctly answered. **Question 27** was usually correctly identified as FAUX, but candidates who lifted *parti au mois de décembre du Maroc, il est arrive le 12 janvier dans les Iles Caraïbes* direct from the text did not gain the mark for the correction. **Question 28** was often correctly identified as FAUX and a correction involving *seul* was accessible to most. Although candidates were usually able to identify **Question 29** as FAUX, this proved to be the statement for which most candidates had problems providing a correction. **Question 30** was usually correctly chosen as FAUX but there were a large number of unsuccessful attempts to correct the statement. Incomplete corrections and incorrect 'lifts' were not uncommon. Even where candidates were able to communicate the idea and thus gain the mark, there were few accurate corrections.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-39

Questions 32 and **33** were often answered correctly. **Question 34** provided more of a challenge and it was not clear that all candidates understood *quel genre de misère* in the question. However, *les gens "sans-logis"* was enough to score the mark and proved quite accessible. **Question 35** was often correctly answered. In **Question 36** it was not uncommon to find *révolté, l'Abbé Pierre décide de faire réagir la population*. Examiners were looking for something along the lines of *une femme et son bébé meurent de froid or sont mort(s) sur le trottoir* to award the mark. **Question 37** was often correctly answered. Where candidates did not score it was usually because they simply wrote (i) *des vêtements* and (ii) *des tentes*, which were ambiguous in isolation and therefore did not score the marks. **Question 38** was not always understood. It is possible that candidates were confused by the use of *Qu'est-ce qui montre...* in the question, looked for the verb *montrer* in the text and therefore lifted *...la population de montrer leur*

générosité for their answer. Answers along the lines of *l'Abbé Pierre est revenu faire un appel à la radio il a de nouveau demandé la générosité des gens* gained the mark. In **Question 39**, Examiners were looking for just two words, *enthousiasme* and *générosité*, to award the mark. Many candidates copied the whole sentence from the text instead of answering precisely and did not score.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/03

Speaking

General comments

This Paper was common to all candidates who had followed both a Core curriculum and an Extended curriculum course. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and, as in 2005, a wide range of performance was heard by Moderators.

The Speaking test is a crucial and compulsory component of the IGCSE French examination, enabling candidates to show how well they can communicate in everyday situations. In the majority of Centres, tests were conducted efficiently and professionally, and examining was of a good standard with candidates being given plenty of opportunities to show what they knew and could do. In such Centres it was clear that Teacher/Examiners had prepared well and felt comfortable with the requirements of the test. This enabled them to ask questions at an appropriate level and elicit responses from their candidates which fulfilled the descriptions in the mark scheme. However, a small minority of Centres, some, but not all, new to the syllabus, did not seem fully aware of the requirements of the examination and as a result candidates were disadvantaged.

Administration

It was disappointing to note this year a much higher incidence than usual of clerical errors. Centres are reminded that they are responsible for the correct addition of all marks on the working mark sheet and the correct transcription of these to the MS1 mark sheet. Centres are also reminded to include the name of the Examiner conducting the test in the space provided for that purpose on the working mark sheet in order that the moderators' reports reach the relevant person.

Quality of recording

This was good in most Centres, but, regrettably, there were also several incidences of very poor recordings with much background noise and/or distortion. Examiners should try to avoid recording in large rooms wherever possible and remember to test the sound levels and the equipment prior to the test. If machines with integral microphones are used, these must be positioned to favour the candidate.

Examiners should identify the candidate name and candidate number and the number of the Role play card being attempted on the cassette. Candidates should not be asked to identify themselves. Once the recording starts for a candidate, it should be continuous: the recording should not be paused between the different sections of the test.

Finally, Centres are reminded of the need to label both cassettes and boxes carefully and clearly.

Duration of tests/Missing elements

The majority of Centres adhered to the recommended timings, but there were, regrettably, cases of long or short tests, both of which can disadvantage candidates. Long tests can result in candidate (and Examiner) fatigue. It is also crucial not to omit sections of the test: new Centres, in particular, are reminded that the test must include two Role plays (an **A** and a **B** Role play), a Topic/Discussion (approximately five minutes) and a General conversation section (approximately five minutes). There were reports from Moderators that in some Centres the General conversation section was very short and that in such cases candidates were not being given the opportunity to show what they were capable of. It is also worth reminding Examiners that it is helpful to both candidates and Moderators if some indication is given at the point of transition from the Topic/Discussion to the General conversation.

Application of the mark scheme

It was pleasing that many Centres required no or small adjustments to their marks in order to bring their marking in line with the required standard. Centres requiring changes usually fell into one of the following categories:

- failure to complete all the tasks in the Role plays;
- short Topic/Discussion and/or General conversation sections;
- lack of questioning to elicit a range of time frames in the conversation sections.

Centres with more than one Examiner usually marked consistently across Examiners. Such Centres are reminded to seek permission prior to **each** session from the Product Manager at CIE. If more than one Examiner is used, internal moderation **must** take place, a common standard of marking must be applied across all the candidates at the Centre, and one recorded sample submitted to represent this common standard.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Centres are reminded that the Teacher's Notes Booklet can be opened up to 4 working days in advance of the first Speaking test so that thorough preparation of the Role plays can be undertaken by the Examiner. (This booklet must remain in the Centre in secure conditions and the contents must not be divulged to candidates prior to their test.) It is crucial that Examiners study the Role plays before conducting their first speaking test and are familiar with the testing points in each Role play. In fairness to candidates, Examiners must keep to the tasks specified as it is for these tasks only that marks can be awarded. Where there are two parts to a task, candidates must be given the opportunity to attempt both elements as marks cannot be awarded for tasks which are not attempted. Different Role play cards should be used with different candidates.

Role plays A

As last year, The **A** Role plays were perceived to be of equal difficulty and a fair test at this level. They are designed to be easier than the **B** Role plays and are set using vocabulary and topics from the Defined Content (Areas A, B and C). Generally, candidates found them accessible and even the very weakest were able to score at least one mark per task.

At the station

This was well attempted on the whole, though many candidates still find it difficult to ask for a single or return ticket. Moderators frequently heard *billet/retourner* or *aller/retourner*. Other tasks were well done including Task 5 which required the candidate to ask a question.

At the grocery shop

Again, this was well attempted by candidates, but some did not give the required quantity and were not always prompted for this by the Examiner. Candidates should be discouraged from giving local brand names of food and drink as these may not be recognised out of the local context. Candidates again coped well with asking a question for the final task.

At the hotel

This was straightforward and well within the scope of all candidates. All were able to ask for the required number of rooms and state how long their stay would be. Again, many coped well with the need to ask a question about the hotel for the final task.

Role plays B

The **B** Role plays were more demanding in that they required the ability to use different tenses and to explain and justify where necessary. Although they differentiated well across the candidature, it was pleasing to see that with sympathetic examining even weaker candidates could often score 1 or 2 marks per task.

A phone call to Dominique

Task 1 proved demanding for weaker candidates as they mixed up the possessive adjectives *vos* and *vous*. In some cases, this then resulted in confusion as to who was doing the visiting. Tasks 2, 3 and 4 were attempted well and many were able to explain why they needed to change the dates of their stay with Dominique and what they would like to do in France (the *Tour Eiffel* remains a firm favourite!). The final task was demanding in that it required the expression of past and future meaning relating to the purchase of the plane ticket. This was well done by abler candidates.

A phone call to a restaurant

The first three tasks of this card were well done by most candidates, with even the weaker candidates being able to describe the jacket adequately. All candidates clearly understood the need to provide two details. Less well done, however, was the explanation of why the jacket was needed (despite the suggestions provided to help candidates). Most said at what time they would return to the restaurant, but some forgot to ask a question about the closing time and were not prompted by the Examiner.

At the hospital

This was generally approached well by candidates, but on Task 1 some forgot to explain that they were on holiday. In Task 3 many experienced difficulty in the correct use of reflexive verbs to describe their injuries and thus limited their mark to 2 (meaning successfully communicated, but inappropriate language usage). The best candidates gave some good responses as to how the accident occurred with some making good use of perfect and imperfect tenses. The last task was well done.

Topic/Discussion

As one Moderator commented, 'I really enjoy this part of the test, I actually learn things myself!'. As ever, this section of the test afforded some interesting listening. Moderators reported that candidates were generally well prepared and that they spoke on a wide range of topics. It was pleasing to hear candidates avoiding 'Myself' as a Topic: this is not a wise choice at this stage of the examination as it can pre-empt the General conversation test. Candidates generally chose Topics which were suited to their linguistic ability, but some gave very long monologues. Candidates should not be allowed to introduce their Topic for more than a minute or two – this part of the examination is not intended to be a mere test of memory, but must develop into a meaningful and spontaneous conversation. Conversely, Examiners must allow candidates the opportunity to deliver their prepared material for the stipulated time before questioning them. New Centres are reminded that although candidates will obviously have practised their Topic, they should not be aware of which questions they will be asked on it in the examination. Instead, questions should arise naturally out of the conversation. The best examining gave candidates the opportunity to work in past and future time frames (thus allowing them to score a mark of 7 or above on Scale (b)) and to express and justify their opinions. When Examiners pitched the level of questioning at an appropriate level of difficulty, all candidates could give of their best.

General conversation

Many candidates were helpfully told that they would now be moving on to the final section of the test and were then asked questions on at least two or three different topics. There was some very good work from candidates who had clearly been well trained in the classroom to work in a variety of tenses. Many Moderators commented on how well this section of the examination was generally conducted. It was pleasing to hear candidates responding well to open question types such as *Parle-moi de* rather than closed question types which can only elicit *oui/non* responses.

A wide range of performance was heard on many topics. Candidates frequently talked about holidays, life in another country, school, leisure, future plans, and family life. As always, it was fascinating for Moderators to hear at first hand about the lifestyle of this truly international candidature, and heartening to hear that for so many, learning a foreign language has clearly been an enriching experience.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

While comments made by Examiners on this year's performance by candidates were as usual very positive, reflecting the high quality of much of the entry for IGCSE French, the impression was that there were fewer outstanding scripts than in past years and rather more disappointing ones. This trend was apparent in answers to **Question 2**, the narrative set in the past. Many candidates scored quite well for **Question 1**, where tasks were very specific and the present was often the required tense, only to struggle in **Question 2** with the challenge of relating a series of events in past tenses. Less gifted candidates should perhaps consider simplifying their approach and instead of say, attempting to explain a complicated water fight to celebrate the end of the school year, opt for a more straightforward story. This is an exercise in guided composition but a fair degree of freedom is offered to candidates who may make their story as simple or as complex as they choose.

Examiners stress every year the importance of linguistic accuracy. Those who scored most highly for language were able to fulfil the tasks set with only a minor incidence of error, but many lost a number of marks for elementary slips, which should have been eliminated by a more painstaking approach. Others attempted to express material which was beyond the compass of their language skills.

Advice offered to candidates differs little from year to year. Most now do present answers of the appropriate length (140 words approximately) and this optimises the chance of a high score for communication. Those who exceed the limit risk losing potential marks for communicating the required details outside the word count. Conversely, those who write only short responses will automatically score fewer marks for language. Particular attention should be paid to verbs and verbal structures such as the use of infinitives and participles. As in the past, many lost marks for failing to handle regular and common irregular verbs in correct forms of past tenses. The failure to make correct agreements of adjectives and past participles was a common feature this year, and this could usually be put right with a little extra care.

As usual, there was little evidence of irrelevant material. When it occurred, as in the case of a 'forced in' accident and a rush to the hospital which was quite unconnected to the tasks set, no credit was given. Presentation varied in quality. Most scripts were neat and legible but there remains a minority whose work is so full of altered letters, poor handwriting and crossing out that it is sometimes impossible for Examiners to award marks. Centres are reminded that the use of correcting fluid is discouraged.

Despite the above criticisms one continues to be impressed by the enthusiasm and flair with which candidates tackle the Paper. The range of knowledge of French and the interesting content of many scripts are most commendable.

Question 1(a) Mes ambitions

The quality of answers for **(a)** and **(b)** was similar, but fewer opted for **1(a)**. This might have been because of the more open-ended nature of the subject.

Ambitions varied widely. but the most popular choice was for a career in medicine followed by law, business, teaching and sport. Some included, almost as an afterthought, the wish to marry and have a family, or the hope that they would have a happy life. Most gave several ambitions as the rubric intended (*mes ambitions*), but some limited their answers to just one and lost a communication mark.

The linguistic demands of this question were fairly straightforward. Inevitably perhaps, certain phrases were overused and some candidates began nearly every sentence with *je veux* or *je voudrais*. This was a pity as there were many alternative ways of expressing one's hopes and intentions without relying on the same phrase each time. A majority of candidates were comfortable using the future tense but some confused it with the conditional.

Reasons for one's ambitions could have been very simple to secure a mark for communication. *J'aime voyager* or *je veux aider les enfants malades*, for instance, would have been enough. Some candidates showed a lack of clarity in attempting to give more complicated reasons. There was a mixture of the worthy motives, such as to help the poor in the Third World, to improve or to serve society and the more materialistic desire to get rich and enjoy the good life. Boys tended to make success a priority, girls tended to put more emphasis on personal satisfaction and relationships. Sometimes ambitions and reasons overlapped and Examiners were generous in their interpretations. *Parce que je veux apprendre une nouvelle langue* might have been rewarded as an aim in itself or as a reason for wanting to do something.

As has been observed in the past, the best answers often occur when a candidate recognises an authentic and realistic task and relies on personal thoughts or experiences in his/her response. Those who seemed to write about their actual hopes and aspirations often gave the best answers rather than those who indulged in fancy, such as dreaming of life as a pop star or a sportsman.

Serious minded candidates recognised the need to work hard at college and acquire qualifications before deciding on a career. Many hoped to go on to university, often abroad, but had not yet given much thought to ultimate choices. Such candidates usually offered a list of possible careers which they might pursue one day. This often involved following their parents' example. Content was serious and interesting. Some wanted a life of comfort and luxury, but many acknowledged their privileged status as being already affluent and wrote, sometimes touchingly, about doing good works for others. Many responses were quite mature although sometimes the complexity of the ideas went beyond the candidate's capacity to express them.

Question 1(b) Letter of thanks

This was a more familiar task no doubt, although one suspects few had actually had the benefit of staying in a French family and many were relying on how they imagined life in France to be. There were, of course, no penalties for improbable impressions based on only slight knowledge of the country.

The apparent ease of the question seemed to attract many of the weaker candidates although the difficulty of the two questions seemed in fact to be very similar. The tasks in **Question (b)** were very specific and each was rewarded separately for communication. Failure to address any of these requirements meant the loss of marks.

Thanking the family was particularly well handled. Many were most gracious in expressing their appreciation of the hospitality they had enjoyed. The informal letter format seemed to be familiar to most although a minority incurred a small penalty for using inappropriate formal letter etiquette. Some confused *tu* and *vous* when addressing the family or a family member. *Tutoiement* was clearly inappropriate for Madame. Descriptions of the journey home tended to be overlong and contained much detail which sometimes meant that the later tasks were either treated very briefly or fell outside the word count. Journeys passed without incident or were filled with problems such as lost passports or wallets, delays to flights, noisy fellow passengers etc. Surprisingly, anglicisms such as *journée* for the journey and *travailler* for to travel were not uncommon here. Many referred to happy days spent visiting the Eiffel Tower or the Louvre, bathing or playing games on the beach, walking dogs in the countryside or visiting discos or restaurants. Charmingly, it was usually meeting the family themselves which seemed to have given most pleasure. The majority were able to use simple past tenses to relate events, but use of tenses other than the perfect was often faulty.

Differences between life in France and at home were allowed in either past or present tenses (*il fait/faisait plus beau en France que chez nous*), but many did not score well for this task. It need not have been so hard if weaker candidates had had the presence of mind to simplify their answers. Instead of attempting a difficult comparative they could have scored marks for *à Paris on mange à huit heures mais chez nous on mange à dix heures/plus tard*. No communication marks were awarded for simple observations such as *en France on mange beaucoup de pain* or *il fait beau tout le temps* with the differences merely implied. Many said that French people were much nicer than the people at home. Others thought life must be very relaxed in France, but then they had just spent a holiday there! A number of weaker candidates confused *vie* with *ville*.

Candidates who had been well trained in letter writing were able to sign off elegantly, anticipating a reciprocal visit in future.

Question 2: End of school year celebrations

As in the past, marks awarded for the continuous narrative frequently fell well below those given for **Question 1**. Some seemed overawed by the task and made only a token attempt. Others floundered and a confused account rendered in a mixture of tenses, with frequently faulty verb forms. Better candidates seized the opportunity to write an often entertaining account of a last day at school, scoring highly for amusing anecdotes and a colourful range of vocabulary and idiom.

Candidates should be advised not to copy out the introduction from the Question Paper as this is not counted in the answer. Most understood the rubric and attempted to describe a day of celebrations and the reactions of the candidates and the head teacher. Examiners awarded marks for what the narrator did with or without the help of classmates. Communication marks were given for preparations for the day or for what occurred on the day itself. These involved buying food and drinks, decorating the classroom, getting music ready etc. and later dancing, singing, eating, playing games. This was extended outside the classroom sometimes and in some cases the class all went to the cinema or the beach or a restaurant or on an expedition. Almost anything plausible was allowed. Many wrote about good intentions backfiring and drunks wrecking the party with vandalism or fighting and everything getting out of hand. The narrator was usually of impeccable character, bent on organising a joyful day for all, but was sometimes caught up in events beyond his/her control. The party usually went off very well however and all ended in harmony. Differences in approach were interesting as some candidates perceived a day of celebration to be a day free of school work when quiet games such as Monopoly or chess were allowed and the class all sent a card and a gift to the head to thank her for her generosity. While others turned the day into organised mayhem with paintball, water fights and much mess and even damage. Reactions were well handled this time. Candidates invariably had a great day they would always remember. The Head's reactions were either very positive, congratulating all concerned and promising a repeat next year, or she was outraged at the loud noise and devilment and punished everyone for abusing the privilege. In some cases everyone was very sad, especially the Head, as the children were all going their separate ways and it was the end of a happy time.

Generally, the demands on language did not seem excessive. The background to events was familiar to all, being the school environment, so vocabulary should not have been a problem. Still candidates were prone to errors over the person of verbs to use with subjects such as *la classe* and *tout le monde*, the spelling of common words as such as *professeur*, *élèves*, and *cours* and the use of simple verbs such as *apporter*, *arriver*, *se fâcher* and *s'amuser*. The set tasks seemed to be straightforward, as communication marks could have been secured by giving three simple events in past tenses and two reactions. It was such a pity when a candidate who had shown competence in **Question 1** did not do themselves justice in **Question 2**. Weaker candidates should be urged not to panic when faced with a fairly open ended question such as the narrative, but to rely more on shorter statements to relate a simple story. The better linguists were given the chance to display their skills and they did this with relish. Some imaginative accounts were presented including fluent idiomatic language with few errors. Such work was a joy to read.