

FRENCH

<p>Paper 0520/11 Listening</p>
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Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in June 2017. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was similar in standard to that of June 2017. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- There were still cases of candidates whose answers were not clear due to them appearing to overwrite their first attempts to answer. This was often very difficult to read. Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Most candidates appreciated the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension. Some candidates still need to be more aware concerning ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.
- Poor handwriting often made scripts difficult to read.

General comments

This session's paper was found to be in keeping with the demands made in 2017. The candidature overall performed well on the first two sections of the paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with weaker candidates being able to be successful on a few questions in each of the two exercises. A full range of performance was seen across the paper and Examiners found the paper to be at an appropriate level of difficulty for the candidature. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were accessible to all candidates.

The majority of candidates were usually familiar with the rubrics and were aware of the requirements of the test types. Some candidates remain unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. This year, there were fewer cases of candidates ticking too few or too many boxes but this practice is still in evidence. A few candidates tried to use a system of both ticks and crosses. Either is acceptable but not both used together. Should candidates need to take notes during their listening time, they should be advised not to write these notes in the space intended for the answer.

As last year, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which was tested in the first two sections of the test was drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates usually appreciated the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates also seemed aware of the need not to answer or infer from general knowledge. Candidates should not try to include extra material not on the recording and should not try to paraphrase answers.

This year, many cases of poor handwriting sometimes made it very difficult to read answers. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. **Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly. This is particularly important on multiple choice questions.** If Examiners see alternative answers the mark is not awarded. Likewise, letters should be clearly written as poorly shaped letters may be seen as unacceptable spellings of answers. Also this year, candidates left a blank on some questions. Candidates should always be encouraged to attempt every question.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Candidates need to be reminded to read all questions with great care during the reading time. It remains important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested getting around, clothing, food and drink, personal items, household items and activities, shopping. Rubrics and visuals were generally well understood by candidates.

This opening exercise caused few problems to candidates and candidates answered confidently. Scores were generally very good on this opening exercise. On **Question 1**, some were unsure as to the meaning of *buffet* and, on **Question 2**, weaker candidates were unfamiliar with *robe*. On **Question 7**, some were also not familiar with *souris d'ordinateur* and sometimes gave option **B** as their answer. Other questions were well answered.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured an advert for a holiday centre. Questions tested a date, tourist and leisure activities, chalet and garden facilities. Candidates generally approached this exercise well but, on **Question 9**, incorrect answers often gave attempts at *août* rather than *juin*, and such candidates did not read the *à partir du* carefully enough on the question. Sometimes candidates wrote *jeunes* in response. Many found it difficult to spell *juin* correctly. **Questions 10, 11 and 12** were well done with many picking up all the marks. On **Question 13**, however, *draps* was not always well known and option **C** was frequently chosen on this question instead of **B**. **Questions 14 and 15** were very well done. Overall, numbers scoring well on this exercise were good.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was very good this year with high numbers of candidates scoring 5 or 6 marks. Candidates are, mostly, well accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still, however, some cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates should also be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks **or** crosses are both acceptable, but are likely to cause confusion when used together. They should not attempt to put a tick and/or a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

Candidates heard four young people talking about their free time. The topic was very accessible to candidates. Occasionally, candidates slipped up on the last section about Marianne, sometimes choosing option **(l)** instead of option **(k)** but Examiners could not see any pattern of incorrect ticks.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard two interviews with a young French girl, Olivia, who talked about a stay in Argentina. In the first interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise.

Candidates often approached this first part of the exercise confidently but incorrect spelling of key items of vocabulary often let down weaker candidates. On **Question 17**, most attempted this question well but some could not give an acceptable spelling of the commonly met word *frère*, and the spelling *fraire* was often seen on incorrect answers. **Question 18** was also attempted well by most candidates but found to be demanding by weaker candidates who were unfamiliar with the word *sympa*. **Question 19**, *ville*, was usually very well done but a few misheard this as *vie*. **Question 20** was more demanding but as any part of the verb *rencontrer* was acceptable a fair number of candidates picked up the mark. The final question on this part of the exercise, **Question 21**, proved tricky for some who were unable to give an acceptable spelling of *horreur*. Here, *horror* and attempts at *heureux* were frequent incorrect answers.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

Candidates heard another interview with Olivia and were required to give short answers in French. Here candidates scored very much in line with the work seen on the comparable exercise last year with many scoring 2 or 3 marks. On **Question 22**, most were successful in identifying the word *fête* but weaker candidates often wrote *sport* or *disco*. Good numbers went on in **Question 23** to identify *stade de foot*. Many answered **Question 24** correctly but some left out *feu* or invalidated their answer by joining the two words together. **Question 25** asked what Olivia was doing whilst she was packing. The answer required part of the verb *pleurer* to score the mark. Some just wrote that she was unhappy rather than said she was crying. If they added *elle était malheureuse* to a correct answer this was allowed as it was heard on the recording and was correct in context. Some candidates found *pleurer* hard to spell and wrote *plurer* instead.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Lisa who talked about her voluntary work in France. The topic area was generally accessible and candidates made a good attempt at this exercise. Even the weaker candidates were usually able to score a few marks on the exercise. Generally, candidates fared better on the first four questions than on the last two questions. This was a suitably demanding exercise for this stage of the examination. A full range of marks was evident with a fair number scoring 4 or more marks. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events.

Question 26 was done well by the majority of candidates but others seemed unfamiliar with the word *blessée* given in **A**, the correct answer. **Questions 27, 28** and **29** were better attempted with no evidence of a pattern in incorrect answers. **Question 30** proved to be more challenging. Half the candidates understood the text fully and showed global skills of understanding. Candidates heard *Il faut bien sûr aimer les jeunes mais il faut surtout ne pas avoir peur. C'est une question de confiance en soi*. Such candidates understood the significance of the word *surtout* and understood that most of all it was a question of not being afraid and having confidence in oneself. This then led to the answer *Être sûr de soi*. Some instead opted for option **A** on this question. Candidates fared slightly better on **Question 31** and understood that the experience had made Lisa grow up.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

As in 2017, this was found to be an appropriately demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. A full range of performance was seen on this last exercise. Many weaker candidates made commendable efforts to answer at least some questions and were usually able to score a few marks. There was a good mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. The best work featured brief responses without additional distorting detail.

Candidates heard an interview with Benjamin who talked about his summer job in a supermarket. Candidates found **Question 32** difficult and only the better candidates identified *avant* and *bac*. Many answered *les grandes vacances* which was referred to by the interviewer in the opening question. The second question from the interviewer clearly asked *Quand as-tu cherché un job ?* This wording of the question mirrored exactly what was heard. Many found it difficult to identify *avant* and wrote *avons*. Some then went on to write *Pâques* instead of *bac*. Candidates made quite good attempts on **Question 33**. Some had trouble in identifying *personne ne répondait*. Candidates fared much better on **Question 34** which most candidates attempted well. They were usually very successful in identifying that Benjamin was motivated. On **Question 35**, candidates were less successful in using a correct part of the verb *déménager*. There were good attempts at this but some invalidated their answers by adding extra distorting numbers or the word *saison*. **Question 36** was a good test of listening skills. Candidates needed again to listen to the whole utterance before deciding as two different *rayons* were mentioned. *Fromagerie* was heard first and many candidates immediately wrote this rather than listening to all the relevant information surrounding the word before deciding upon their answer. Those who did correctly identify *boucherie* were not always able to write it successfully. Many wrote *butcherie* or *bucherie* and did not score the mark. **Question 37** was found to be the most demanding question on the paper. Any part of the verb *pousser* plus *chariots* gained the mark. Some rendered *pousser* as *pusser* and spellings of *chariots* were frequently incorrect. **Question 38** required part of the verb *se dépêcher* to score the mark. Some good attempts were made but, again, some invalidated otherwise acceptable answers by adding extra distorting detail. Slightly better attempts were made on **Question 39** and good candidates realised that the working hours were not regular. The spelling of *régulières* proved difficult for some. The mark scheme was tolerant and allowed many versions of acceptable spellings here but the key was identifying the *pas* and some missed this out. Finally, on **Question 40**, there were incorrect attempts at *agréable* such as *réable*. Some mistakenly said that he would earn more money in a hotel but many candidates made quite good attempts at *plus agréable* and ended the examination on a positive note.

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<p>Paper 0520/12 Listening</p>
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Key messages

- The format and question types in the Listening test were the same as in June 2017. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was similar in standard to that of June 2017. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to overwrite answers in pen but left first attempts at ticks or words visible, which was often very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Most candidates appreciated the need to write as briefly as possible, as full sentences are not required in responses. Candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension. Some candidates still need to be more aware concerning ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.
- Poor handwriting often made scripts difficult to read.

General comments

This paper was found to be generally in keeping with the demands made in previous sessions. The candidature overall performed quite well on the first two sections of the paper with very few candidates omitting questions. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with weaker candidates being able to answer a few questions in each of the two exercises successfully. A full range of performance was seen across the paper. A large proportion of candidates scored well on the paper. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were accessible to all candidates.

The majority of candidates were familiar with the rubrics and were aware of the requirements of the test types. A handful of candidates, however, were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple-choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. There were a few cases of candidates ticking too many or too few boxes. If candidates need to take notes during their listening time, they should be advised not to write these notes in the space intended for the answer.

As last year, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions, reasons and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which was tested in the first two sections of the test was drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates in many centres had appreciated the need to write briefly and clearly, and understood that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of adding extra distorting material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Poor handwriting sometimes made it very difficult to read answers. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. **Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly.** If Examiners see alternative answers the mark cannot be awarded.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

It remains important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

The opening exercise was completed very well by all candidates and provided candidates with a very confident start to the exam. There were very few questions where the candidates were not able to attempt an answer. The first four questions were answered very well but candidates found the concept of *station-service* in **Question 5** less accessible. Many candidates who answered this question incorrectly chose answer **D** instead. In **Question 6**, some candidates did not understand *chauffage* but there was no clear pattern of incorrect answers. *Gants* in **Question 7** was not well known. The final question was answered correctly by large numbers of candidates.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

The first question in this exercise was successfully completed by many candidates, recognising *décembre* as the month required in the answer. Some candidates invalidated their answer by introducing the idea of *24* (candidates heard *24 heures sur 24*) and giving the answer *de janvier au 24 décembre*. **Question 10** proved to be the least accessible question in this exercise with candidates opting for answer **A** or **B**. There were many more correct answers in **Questions 11** and **12**. Many candidates scored all three marks in the second part of the exercise.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

In this exercise, candidates heard four young people speaking about different forms of transport. There was a full range of marks here with many candidates scoring 4, 5 or 6 marks. Candidates were readily able to identify the correct answers in **(a)**, **(h)** and **(l)**, with the least able candidates correctly answering at least one of these three. While there was no clear pattern of incorrect answers, many candidates found either **(f)** or **(k)** less accessible.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In the first part of this exercise, many candidates scored 3 or more marks. Candidates were able to answer **Question 17** either with a number or in words and this proved to be an accessible opening question in this exercise. Many candidates correctly recognised *comique* as the correct answer in **Question 18**, but **Question 19** was seen as more challenging. Only the more able candidates correctly identified *envie* as the correct answer. Some attempted answers such as *en vie* but the incorrect split of the word meant that no mark could be awarded. **Question 20** proved to be a very successful question, with many candidates scoring the mark and **Question 21** allowed many candidates to gain a mark with some very good renditions of *maquillage*.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

In the second half of this exercise, many candidates scored 1 or 2 marks. Many candidates correctly answered **Question 22**. A significant number of candidates found the answer to **Question 23**, *merveilleux*, difficult to communicate. **Question 24** was seen as the most accessible question in this part of the exercise. Only a minority of candidates answered **Question 25** correctly.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Agnès, who talked about her summer job. It was notable that candidates found one half of this exercise more accessible than the other and many candidates scored 3 marks or more.

In the first part of this exercise, the more able candidates scored 2 or 3 marks, correctly identifying answers **C**, **D** and **B**. **Question 27** proved to be the most accessible.

In the second half of the exercise, candidates found the answers to **Questions 29** and **30** quite challenging. The most successful answer was to **Question 31** and the least able candidates were able to gain a mark here, correctly recognising *admiration* when they heard it on the recording.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

This exercise was based around Frédéric, who lives in Iceland. Many answered **Question 32** correctly, but a minority of candidates incorrectly answered *habiter à Paris*. In **Question 33**, the concept of *policiers* was recognised by a significant number of candidates and the majority was able to score the mark here.

Question 34 was not answered well and proved to be challenging across the ability range. Candidates heard *l'ambiance qu'il a su créer* and wrote answers such as *ambiance sucrée* which distorted the correct answer. Many also added distorting elements such as *paysages* and *gens* which, although mentioned, are not *le plus apprécié* as required by the question.

Candidates did well in **Question 35** and the answer to **Question 36** proved to be more accessible. In **Question 37**, candidates had two elements to identify (*travailler + groupe*) and did not gain the mark if one of those elements was missing.

Only the most able correctly identified the answer to **Question 38**. On the other hand, **Question 39** was extremely successful and the vast majority of candidates readily recognised *beaucoup de distractions* as the correct answer here. **Question 40** was successful for a significant number of candidates, although some omitted the *trop* from their answer or answered with *très tranquille* (which was an incorrect intensifier) and were not able to score the mark.

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<p>Paper 0520/13 Listening</p>
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Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in June 2017. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was fairly similar in standard to that of June 2017 but in this session, more candidates experienced difficulties on the final exercise of the paper than last year. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- There were still cases of candidates whose answers were not clear due to them appearing to overwrite their first attempts to answer. This was often very difficult to read. Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- As last year, some candidates ticked an incorrect number of boxes on multiple choice questions and also on **Question 16**, where six boxes only should be ticked.
- Most candidates appreciated the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.
- Poor handwriting often made scripts difficult to read.

General comments

This session's paper was found to be generally in keeping with the demands made in previous sessions. The candidature overall performed quite well on the first two sections of the paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with weaker candidates being able to be successful on a few questions in each of the two exercises. A full range of performance was seen across the paper. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were accessible to candidates.

The majority of candidates were usually familiar with the rubrics and were aware of the requirements of the test types. Some candidates, however, were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. There were cases of candidates ticking too few or too many boxes. A few candidates tried to use a system of both ticks and crosses. Either is acceptable but not both used together. On questions requiring a written answer, any notes taken during the listening time should not be written in the space intended for the answer.

As last year, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. All the vocabulary which was tested in the first two sections of the test was drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates usually appreciated the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates also usually seemed aware of the need not to answer or infer from general knowledge. Candidates should not try to include extra material in answers which is not on the recording and should not try to paraphrase answers.

This year, there were again many cases of poor handwriting which sometimes made it very difficult to read answers. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. **Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly. This is particularly important on multiple choice questions.** If Examiners see alternative answers the mark is not awarded. Likewise, letters should be clearly written as poorly shaped letters may be seen as unacceptable spellings of answers. Also, some candidates left some questions blank. Candidates should always be encouraged to attempt every question.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Candidates need to be reminded to read all questions with great care during the reading time. It remains important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed well on this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested travel details, food and drink, personal objects, transport, opening times and tourist information. **Questions 6 and 7** were slightly less well attempted than other questions. Most candidates were very successful on the last question. Performance on this opening exercise was comparable with that seen in 2017.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured information about a swimming pool. Questions tested days of the week, parking facilities, sports activities and sports clothing, numbers and food. The first three questions were very well done. On **Question 12**, some could not identify *maillot de bain*. **Question 13** was well done but **Question 14** proved to be the most difficult question in this section with many candidates not recognising *plats chauds*. **Question 15** was very well done by candidates. The standards seen were very much in line with those of 2017.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was good and continues to improve as many candidates become accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still, however, cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates must be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks or crosses are both acceptable, but are likely to cause confusion when used together. They should not attempt to put a tick and a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

Candidates heard four young people talking about family and friends, a very accessible topic. Candidates generally coped well with the first three extracts heard but found options concerning Damien trickier to handle. The most difficult option to identify appeared to be option (I). There was no particular pattern evident in ticks incorrectly placed. Good numbers, as last year, scored at least 4 marks on this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard two interviews in which Stéphanie talked about her job and her working day as a *surveillante* in a school in Paris. In the first interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise. Some good attempts were made at *prénom* on **Question 17** but some invalidated their answers by

splitting the word or writing in a language other than French. **Questions 18** and **19** proved to be the most difficult ones on this first part of the exercise with only a minority of candidates able to give an acceptable spelling of *bavards* on **Question 18**. Likewise, on **Question 19**, a great variety of spellings were offered. *Couloir* was not well known. Candidates made better attempts on the next question, **Question 20**, with good numbers able to give part of the verb *parler*. **Question 21** produced some fair attempts with just over half the candidates able to give an acceptable part of the verb *déjeuner*.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

Candidates heard a second interview with Stéphanie about her day at school. Candidates made a fair attempt at the second part of this exercise but clearly found some questions more challenging. On **Question 22**, many candidates had understood she had first worked in a *centre de vacances* but did not give her actual job there. *Monitrice* was poorly spelt by candidates. Candidates attempted **Question 23** more confidently and many gained the mark with an acceptable spelling of *après-midi*. Some candidates split words incorrectly here and offered versions such as *la pre midi* which showed a lack of comprehension. **Question 24** was attempted quite well and many could identify the commonly met word *devoirs*. On **Question 25**, candidates needed to identify that Stéphanie filled in papers at the end of her school day. Some put that she went home and others gave a variety of spellings which did not convey the correct concept.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Patricia who talked about her lifestyle working, first as a vet and then as a riding teacher. The topic area was generally accessible and candidates made a fair attempt overall at this exercise. Usually, even the weaker candidates were able to score some marks on this exercise. This was a suitably demanding exercise for this stage of the examination. A full range of marks was evident on the exercise with a fair number scoring 3 or more marks. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events. The questions best attempted on this exercise were **Questions 26, 28** and **31**. On these questions, candidates showed the ability to identify specifics about Patricia's ambitions when she was young, how she felt about her life when first working as a vet and how her life had finally changed. On the other three questions, **Questions 27, 29** and **30**, candidates fared less well as a higher level of skill was required which needed them to go beyond identifying a specific and deal with concepts depending upon gist understanding of the extract and paraphrasing of the correct concept in the written options.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

Candidates generally fared slightly less well than in 2017 on this last exercise. Many candidates did make commendable efforts to answer at least a few questions and were usually able to score a few marks but, as last year, some very weak candidates often failed to attempt answers to these last questions. It was clear that some did not understand the prepositions and adjectives heard and tested in some questions. This exercise was an appropriately challenging exercise at this stage of the paper but some candidates experienced difficulties in identifying and producing key high frequency vocabulary. Candidates need to be reminded of the need to learn all such vocabulary thoroughly.

Candidates heard an interview with Nicolas who retold the events of a storm and the role he had played in helping some children. There was a mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise. Most candidates scored some marks with some questions only being successfully answered by, as intended, the most able. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. Candidates should be reminded not to write long answers as sometimes they add extra detail which is not on the recording. This can distort and invalidate an otherwise correct answer. The handwriting seen on this exercise made some scripts very difficult to read.

Fair numbers made a good start and, on **Question 32**, were able to identify the job done by Nicolas. Fair attempts were made at *serveur* but some guessed *vendeur* or just wrote *dans un restaurant* which was not enough to score by itself. On **Question 33**, weaker candidates often could not identify *freiner* but many did make good attempts and gave an acceptable spelling. The next question, **Question 34**, required two key items, part of the verb *téléphoner* and the noun *pompiers*. *Téléphoner* was often spelt incorrectly but the mark scheme did tolerate spellings such as *téléfoner*. *Pompiers* was not well known. **Question 35** proved to

be the most difficult question on the paper but it was not beyond the ability of the very best candidates. Candidates needed to identify that the tree was too heavy. Some wrote *très* instead of *trop* and very few appeared to know the adjective *lourd*. Some combined the two words inappropriately and, consequently, did not score the mark. Slightly better attempts were made on **Question 36** and candidates were a little more successful in giving an acceptable part of the verb *descendre*. **Question 37** was found to be very challenging. Candidates heard on the recording *soudain, j'ai entendu un bruit bizarre*. The question was phrased in such a way as to mirror exactly what was heard with the cue *soudain* appearing both on the recording and on the question paper but very few were able to identify and give acceptable versions of the commonly met *bruit* and *bizarre*. **Question 38** proved to be equally challenging. Candidates again needed to identify two key items, *milieu* and *route*. Again, a lack of vocabulary let many down. *Milieu* was spelt in an acceptable version by very few. Many instead attempted to write *meilleur*. *Route* was often also not identified correctly and sometimes appeared as *roue*. Candidates did a little better on **Question 39** but this was not generally well done. Candidates had heard the correct part of the recording but the majority wrote *dermier le car* instead of *derrière le car*. The last question, **Question 40**, was attempted more successfully by candidates with better numbers being able to convey that the mother had thanked Nicolas.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/21
Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- select carefully the information from the text that answers the question, in particular in **Section 3**
- ensure that they answer the question asked, which may require slight manipulation of material from the text
- answer all questions, ensuring multiple-choice or *vrai/faux* boxes are not left unticked.

General comments

Candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete the paper, and almost all candidates were appropriately entered for the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

Questions 1–5 proved accessible to most candidates. *Gants* and especially *mobylette* were not universally known.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise did not cause problems for most candidates. **Question 9** proved the most difficult, but full marks were common.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This exercise provided a slight step up in challenge with the longer text. However, most candidates were able to deal with the questions. **Question 15** proved the most difficult.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Some candidates appeared to make use only of perceived meaning of the option words and the text, and did not use the grammatical markers in the sentences to assist with narrowing down their options. *Caravanes* was frequently chosen instead of *logements* for **Question 17** and *concerts* was frequently chosen instead of *activités* for **Question 19**.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–30

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text in which Céline spoke about her job in a restaurant. Most candidates were able to cope with the demands of the straightforward text, and the vocabulary covered largely very familiar ground. Although long answers are not required, and often only a few words would answer the question, a minority of candidates chose to copy a couple of sentences from the text for each question. For this exercise, extraneous material and incorrect tenses are often ignored as long as they do not in some way invalidate the candidate's correct response.

In **Question 24**, as well as candidates writing *voisins*, a minority of candidates wrote the answer to **Question 25** – *le patron d'un restaurant* – which in some cases caused problems for the next few questions. **Question 28** proved accessible, but **Question 29** and particularly **Question 30** caused problems, with candidates picking up on the consequences of the tiredness rather than the reason for it.

Some strong candidates lost marks across this exercise through needlessly paraphrasing all their answers and selecting vocabulary that was not close enough to the original idea. There is no advantage whatsoever for candidates to paraphrase on this exercise, and it is rarely a good strategy.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 31–35

In **Section 3**, Examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail and for candidates to be more selective of the information they take from the text when correcting the false statements. A small number of candidates merely added in the negative and need to be aware that this is not an acceptable correction to the sentence and that they need to look for other information in the text.

A high number of candidates got full marks on the *Vrai/Faux* element. Candidates should be aware that they cannot be credited with a justification if they have ticked *Vrai* for the statement, so there is no benefit in writing a justification for every response.

In terms of the justifications, candidates found **Questions 32** and **35** reasonably accessible, selecting an appropriate part of the text to copy in response. **Question 33** required more thought and manipulation of the text, and candidates found this very challenging. It is written in the mark scheme for every series that direct speech, however presented, is rejected in **Section 3**, so candidates need to be aware that copying a speech quote from the text will not score any marks.

Exercise 2 Questions 36–42

This final exercise was intended to be the most challenging part of the paper. Where stronger candidates lost marks it was often through writing too much and including information that did not answer the question. Weaker candidates often simply targeted the wrong information.

Most candidates were able to find the answer to **Question 36**, although reference to *une étape essentielle de la vie* cost some candidates who need to appreciate that a lot more precision is required at this stage in the paper. **Question 37** required more than a lift from the text and many candidates did not realise this. The answers to **Questions 38** and **39** were sometimes muddled and many candidates began their answer with *étant donné*.

The choice of tense caused problems with **Question 40**, but the last two questions were generally well done, with candidates managing the selective lifts from the text.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 0520/22 Reading</p>
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Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- keep their answers brief and focused, particularly in **Section 3**
- make sure that they read the texts and questions carefully
- check the accuracy of their spelling, especially with words used in the texts/questions.

General comments

The paper proved accessible to all the candidates. The vast majority attempted all sections and exercises on the paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

Many candidates scored the 5 marks available for this exercise. Those who did not usually chose **A** instead of **D** for **Question 3**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise was very successful and the vast majority of candidates scored the 5 marks available.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This multiple-choice exercise based on a short text proved very successful and the vast majority of candidates scored full marks. Some only scored 3 marks as they chose **A** instead of **C** for **Question 13** and **A** instead of **C** for **Question 15**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Some candidates found this task rather challenging and often only scored 1 or 2 marks out of 5. Candidates nevertheless attempted to complete the sentences with a grammatically appropriate item of vocabulary. There were, however, a significant number of candidates who scored full marks.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–28

For this exercise, candidates were asked to read a longer piece of text about Mimi spending her first holidays without her parents and then answer questions in French. What was required was for the candidates to locate the correct information within the text. The responses were marked for communication only and text lifted directly from the passage was rewarded. This exercise was very successful and the vast majority of candidates scored at least 8 marks out of 10. Candidates did not have to write in full sentences as the key words on their own were rewarded.

Questions 21 and **22** were very successful. **Question 23** was in two parts and some candidates got mixed up as they answered *dans un gîte* for (i) and *en colonie de vacances* for (ii). Some candidates gave a longer response than was necessary in **Question 24** and answered *elle a envoyé une liste de choses* which conveyed the wrong message. Many candidates, influenced by the next question, chose *son portable*. **Question 25** was also in two parts and the vast majority of candidates answered successfully. Some candidates answered *Mimi maman* for **Question 26** which conveyed a rather confusing message and could, therefore, not gain the mark. Whilst most candidates accurately answered **Question 27** with *au bout de cinq minutes*, a fair few chose *deux semaines*. **Question 28** was very successful.

Section 3

In **Section 3**, candidates need to answer questions in such a way as to demonstrate that they have understood the text/questions. Candidates who “lift” indiscriminately do not demonstrate genuine comprehension and, therefore, cannot score the marks. The inclusion of unnecessary connectives often results in the invalidation of an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates would do well to be guided by the length of the space allocated for an answer and should ensure that their answer fits within that space.

Exercise 1 Questions 29–33

Candidates were expected to read a longer text about Adeline’s ambition to become a dancer and then decide which of the five given statements were *Vrai* and which were *Faux*. Having made their choice, they had then to correct the false ones in the style of the example given. A small number of candidates merely added in the negative and need to be aware that this is not an acceptable correction to the sentence and that they need to look for other information in the text.

Questions 30 and **32** were the two most often incorrectly identified as true or false.

For **Question 29**, which was a *Faux* statement, the vast majority of candidates successfully located the relevant sentence. Those who omitted *de danser* in their answer, conveyed a different message and could not score the mark. **Question 30** was also a *Faux* statement. Many candidates were not discriminate enough when phrasing their answer and included *elle compte se lancer dans la vie professionnelle seulement...* **Questions 31** and **32** were *Vrai* statements and needed no correction. **Question 33** was quite well done as many candidates could successfully locate the answer. The inclusion of *elle a aussi beaucoup de détermination* showed a lack of genuine comprehension and was, therefore, not rewarded.

Exercise 2 Questions 34–39

This final exercise required the reading of a longer passage about Victor who had just completed a world tour on his bicycle. Candidates then had to answer a set of questions in French.

This exercise was, as intended, the most demanding part of the paper. Many were able to locate the correct part of the text but were not always selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response to the question or they were unable to manipulate the language to give an acceptable answer. Lengthy responses did not score the marks as they did not show genuine comprehension.

Candidates need to read the questions carefully and ensure that their answers fully address the questions. It is also important that they copy accurately words which have been given in the text/question and that they use the same time frames as in the questions.

The answer to **Question 34** was *plus de trois ans*. Many candidates could not score the mark as they either omitted *plus de* or added *et 50 000 kilomètres à vélo*. **Questions 35** and **36** were very successful and the vast majority scored the marks available. For **Question 37**, *dans la nature* was sufficient to gain the mark. The question was *Où Victor dormait-il quand il traversait l'Europe ? Il était facile de faire du camping dans la nature* was not rewarded as it did not address the question. A verb was not required for this question but if one was used, it had to be in a past tense. Many candidates scored the mark available for **Question 38**. They realised that *aussi* was to be omitted to convey the correct message. **Question 39** proved quite a challenge. Many candidates who just lifted the whole sentence *on a pu se faire comprendre sans difficulté en parlant avec des gestes et en montrant des photos* could not score the mark as they had copied indiscriminately.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/23
Reading

Key messages

In order to maximise their chances of success on this paper candidates should:

- ensure that they have provided an answer to all questions
- read all rubrics and questions very carefully
- make any alterations to a chosen answer clear
- allow time to re-check their answers.

General comments

This paper presented candidates with a fair challenge of their knowledge and skills at this level. The majority of candidates completed all sections of the paper and showed a confident understanding of the task types. The standards of legibility and presentation were generally good.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

This opening exercise proved accessible to most candidates, with the occasional exception of **Question 4**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Candidates had little difficulty generally with this exercise.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

Candidates were confident and generally successful with this exercise, showing good understanding of the text and the multiple-choice questions. In **Question 11**, option **A** was sometimes chosen instead of option **B**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Generally, this exercise was completed very well. Even where there were errors, candidates had often attempted to complete the sentences with a grammatically appropriate item of vocabulary from the list. **Question 16** was almost universally answered correctly but, in **Question 19**, *boissons* was a fairly common incorrect choice, as was *mois* in **Question 20**.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

Candidates read a letter from Justin on the subject of the effect his attraction to computer games had on his school work. This was a straightforward text and was clearly well understood by the majority of candidates and high scores were common. The range of question types and question words were also well understood.

Question 21 was usually correctly answered by the majority. Sometimes candidates did not score because of an incomplete answer, e.g. *la fin de l'année* which invalidated the response. **Question 24** was not always fully understood and some candidates answered incorrectly or invalidated an otherwise correct answer by the inclusion of *surpris*.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

For this exercise, candidates had to read a longer text about Céline's determination to continue her work in spite of suffering a broken arm.

A high number of candidates got full marks on the *Vrai/Faux* element. Candidates should be aware that they cannot be credited with a justification if they have ticked *Vrai* for the statement, so there is no benefit in writing a justification for every response.

Candidates should be advised to check that at least one of the two boxes is ticked for each question and a change of mind needs to be indicated clearly.

The task of correcting the incorrect statements was justifiably found to be quite challenging. **Question 30** was generally successfully corrected. **Question 32** was more challenging and **Question 33** was best answered by an answer such as *elle a travaillé comme réceptionniste*. Overlong lifting from the text was not an acceptable correction.

Exercise 2 Questions 35–40

This final exercise required the reading and understanding of a longer passage about Antonio who made a successful business venture after growing up in France as an immigrant child. Most candidates attempted answers to all the questions. The most successful responses to this task demonstrated careful reading of the text and the questions and the presentation of brief but focused answers. For some answers, manipulation of the language was required but in many cases a **careful** lifting of information from the text showed comprehension.

Question 35 was straightforward and required a selected lift as an answer. **Question 36** again could be answered by a selected lift but it was important to avoid including the *mais* from the text which would invalidate the response. Some candidates misunderstood the question and simply described what the *petits jobs* were. Many candidates answered **Question 37**. For **Question 38**, there were some instances of misunderstanding of *après peu de temps* in the question leading to reference to the job of *vendeur* rather than *directeur commercial*. Some manipulations of the language was required to answer **Question 39**. **Question 40** was frequently well answered.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 0520/03 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- The standard of performance was very similar to the standard heard in 2017.
- Some Examiners did not observe the correct timings for the exam. Some of the tests in this session were too short in the Topic conversation section and in some cases there was no Topic conversation section. Some of the General conversation sections were too long.
- The Role play sections were usually attempted well. Examiners must adhere to the scripts and must **not** create or change cues and tasks. Candidates needed to be concise and stick closely to the tasks to score well.
- Centres usually remembered to include questions in the General conversation section which would elicit past and future tenses from candidates. This was not always the case in the Topic conversation. Such tense usage is essential in **both** the Topic presentation/conversation **and** the General conversation in order to score 6 or more for Language.
- The best performances at all levels of ability were again in centres where there had not been over preparation of work and in which spontaneous and natural conversations could develop.
- Centres should aim to cover only two or three topics in the General conversation section with each candidate. In many centres too many topics were covered too briefly.
- The quality of recordings was usually very good. Some samples are still not identified according to the correct convention which can make it difficult to identify the correct candidates for moderation.

General comments

The format of the test was as in 2017 and centres were usually well aware of this format. The Role play section was usually conducted correctly in centres. In such centres, Examiners followed the cues, prompted when necessary and encouraged candidates to work for the marks. Examiners who did not follow the script and changed the tasks or who had not prepared fully sometimes made this section of the test harder for the candidates.

There were this year, some cases of short tests or very long conversation sections. In cases of short tests, candidates are not given the opportunity to develop their ideas and use a range of structures and tenses. In long sections, candidates can become tired and can start to make mistakes. In the interest of fairness to all candidates, Examiners need to make sure that each candidate is given the full examination time of 5 minutes for each conversation section. In the Topic conversation section, the two minute presentation is included in the five minute timing for the whole section.

Candidates had usually made good use of the 15 minutes preparation time. Examiners may have access to the confidential test materials (Teachers' Notes Booklet and Role Play Cards) in the 4 working days before the first Speaking test is conducted in order for the Examiner to prepare for his/her role. **The contents of these materials are confidential and must not be shared with candidates.** The confidential test materials must be returned to the secure storage facility after preparation has taken place and after each session of examining. Once the last Speaking test has been conducted, the materials must remain in secure storage until the end of the Speaking test period. Candidates must not be allowed to do any writing during their preparation time and must not be allowed to bring any written materials with them into the preparation area.

Most Examiners understood the requirements of the mark scheme and asked the right sort of questions which stretched candidates and gave them the opportunity to fulfil the descriptors in the higher mark bands. For example, Examiners who included unexpected questions and went beyond the straightforward "closed" questions gave candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on Table B, Communication. **It is also essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in both conversation sections as candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses for a mark of more than 6 to**

be awarded on Table C, Language. In many centres where reductions were made to the marks it was frequently the case that candidates had not been asked questions in past and future tenses in the Topic conversation and/or General conversation.

Most Examiners made it clear when they were passing on to the General conversation section and made a clear transition to the last section of the test. A few mistakenly made this transition in English. Centres are reminded that the whole of the test should be conducted in French.

The full requirements of the test are clearly laid out in the Teachers' Notes booklet and all centres are strongly advised to read through these in advance of the test so that they have plenty of time to clarify any uncertainties.

- **Clerical checks and sample size**

In the vast majority of centres, the clerical work had usually been completed efficiently. It is essential that all clerical work is checked very carefully so as to ensure that candidates receive the correct mark in centres. On the Working Mark Sheet, the addition of the individual marks for each candidate should be checked to ensure that the total mark is correct. Then, for each candidate, the transfer of the marks from the Working Mark Sheet to the MS1 mark sheet (or the electronic marks file) must also be checked. It is important to check that the marks on the Working Mark Sheet and the MS1 mark sheet match.

Centres generally understood the requirements of the sample size well and samples were nearly always correct. A few centres did not always submit the work of candidates at the very bottom or top of their mark range. Please ensure that the sample represents the full mark range in the centre. In some centres, a very helpful list detailing the sample was included which facilitated moderation. **In Centres where more than one Examiner is examining, a separate Working Mark Sheet should be enclosed for each Examiner rather than just one "master" Working Mark Sheet.**

- **Recording quality**

A high proportion of the recordings received were of a very good quality. Most centres submitted digital recordings which were very clear. Please check all recording equipment prior to the live exams. Also, please remember to avoid sticking labels on CDs and do not write on the surface of the CD without using a CD friendly pen.

Please ensure that each candidate's recording is labelled with the candidate name and number on the box for the CD. On the CD, the recording for each candidate must be saved individually as an .mp3 file and named as follows: centre number_candidate number_syllabus number_component number. **The recording for each candidate must be on a separate file.**

A list of the featured recordings should also be submitted with each CD. Each CD must include a recorded introduction by the Examiner, listing the CD number, centre number, examination number, examination name, name of Examiner and date. This introduction needs to be made only once, and should be saved as a separate file (named Recording introduction). The Examiner and **not the candidate** must introduce the candidate by name and number and the Role Play Card number. **Once the recording of a candidate has started, it should be continuous and not paused at any point.**

CDs must be carefully wrapped in some form of protective packaging before they are placed in the envelope with the moderation paperwork. The envelope containing the recordings and paperwork should then be packaged in another parcel/envelope and one of the return labels with the Cambridge address should be attached before it is returned to Cambridge. Please do not include Speaking tests for a different subject inside the same packet. In the very few cases of extra or replacement recordings being required, centres were quick to respond and provide new copies of recordings.

- **Timings of tests/missing elements**

Most centres adhered well to the correct timings but there were cases of very long and very short sections. In some cases, candidates made a presentation but there was no Topic conversation. In a few cases candidates were allowed to make presentations which were well over the 2 minutes maximum timing which meant the Topic conversation was very short and they did not have time to go into depth on their subject matter. **Where conversations are short or missing, candidates can be disadvantaged as marks cannot be awarded for tasks which are not attempted. In a few centres, marks had been awarded for missing sections which resulted in marks being reduced by Moderators.**

As in 2017, many tests were conducted efficiently and Examiners usually applied the mark scheme fairly and consistently. Some centres required no or only small adjustments to their marks to bring them in line with the agreed standard. There were, however, some larger adjustments to marks in some centres. This was often a result of lenient marking in the conversation sections. This, in turn, could often be attributed to short sections and few opportunities for candidate to answer unexpected questions or answer questions in a variety of tenses. Some centres had adjustments made just to part of the mark range in cases of lenient or harsh marking over part of the mark range in the centre.

In the role plays, some Examiners did not realise that a short response, if appropriate, can earn a mark of 3. If there are two parts to a task, then Examiners are free to split the task, but if only one part of a task is completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 1. **If a candidate uses a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2 and not 3 is appropriate.** Examiners are reminded that **poor pronunciation** should be queried especially if it prevents clear communication of a task. If pronunciation of a key element is not clear, a mark of 3 is **not** appropriate. Apart from the task in Role Play A which requires the candidate to listen to two options and then choose one, candidates cannot be awarded marks for material given by the Examiner which is then repeated by the candidate.

In the conversation sections, marking tended to be generous in some centres, as marks were awarded in the higher bands when there was no evidence that candidates could respond in a spontaneous way to unexpected questions or that they could communicate consistently and accurately in past and future tenses. It is important to differentiate the level of questions according to the ability of the candidate and to give candidates the opportunity, where appropriate, to go beyond basic straightforward questions of a closed nature which can limit the way a candidate develops his/her response.

Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in centres.

Internal moderation in centres with more than one Examiner

The standard of internal moderation in large centres with more than one Examiner was usually satisfactory. Indeed, in some centres, much effort had been taken to apply the mark scheme consistently and ensure a common approach across all Examiners. New centres are reminded that where more than one Examiner is used, Moderators need to be able to check that all Examiners have adopted a uniform approach to the test and applied the mark scheme consistently. It is essential that internal standardisation/moderation takes place within a centre **before a representative sample is chosen for external moderation by Cambridge.**

In most cases, the supporting documentation made it very clear to Moderators as to how the internal moderation had taken place in the centre. However, some centres changed the marks only to the sample candidates and not to the other candidates in the same examining group. In such cases, the internal moderation was incomplete. If, during the checking of marks, the marks for one Examiner are out of line, **even by a few marks**, it is good practice to check a further sub sample for that Examiner. **After checking the sample for a particular Examiner, if the decision is taken to adjust that Examiner's marks on a particular candidate, that adjustment must then be applied to the marks of all the candidates who were examined by that Examiner, and not just to the candidates whose work was checked in the sample.** Centres are encouraged to read their centre report on the test with care as thorough internal moderation relies upon the same standards being applied to all candidates within a centre. Incomplete internal moderation can lead to inconsistent application of the mark scheme across a centre and can disadvantage candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Centres generally encouraged candidates to attempt all parts of each task and prompted appropriately when candidates needed encouragement. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. As last year, two-part tasks were split into (i) and (ii) on the candidate role play cards. Examiners generally kept well to their script. Overlong answers are not to be encouraged as marks are only awarded for the set tasks. Indeed, if candidates add material extra to the set task, it may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates should be reminded that it is always important to listen to the Examiner as on all the Role Play A situations, there is always a task which requires them to listen and choose from the two scripted options offered by the Examiner. If one of these options is not chosen by the candidate, the appropriate mark to award is 0. Likewise, there is always one task which requires responding to an unexpected question on the Role Play B situations. Examiners are reminded **not** to change the cues in the scripts so as to ensure that the level of difficulty in the task remains the same for all candidates.

A Role Plays

As in June 2017, these tasks were appropriate and straightforward for all candidates. All of the Role Play A situations featured a task which required a question to be asked and one task which required candidates to choose an option from two provided by the Examiner. Candidates generally found the three situations to be equally accessible and usually scored well on this opening exercise. Centres had trained candidates well to include a greeting and thanks where required. Centres are reminded that often a short response (perhaps one word) will often be appropriate and in such cases a mark of 3 can be awarded. Examiners should introduce Role Play A and start the conversation off. English should **not** be used to introduce the test. It is always helpful to read out the introduction to candidates. **Examiners should query pronunciation if the meaning is not clear due to mispronunciation.** Generally, candidates had been very well prepared for the A role plays and made a confident start to the test.

Renting a parasol

This role play was done well by candidates. Nearly all candidates were able to say that they wanted to rent a parasol and pronounced it well. On the next task, nearly all managed to give a number of hours with ease. **Task 3** however was less well done with many mispronouncing *solaire* as *scolaire*. Most listened well to the options on **Task 4** and were able to choose a tube or a bottle. The last task was done well.

Buying salmon

Candidates generally approached this role play well. On the first task, candidates greeted appropriately but were often unable to pronounce *saumon* correctly. The next task was done quite well but some seemed unfamiliar with the word *portions* given in the cue. Candidates who just gave a number were still able to access a mark of 3. Nearly all were able to choose one of the given options on **Task 4**. On the last task, asking the price was usually well done but some just asked *Combien ?* or *Combien de prix ?* which was not the language most appropriate to the situation.

At a restaurant

Candidates made a confident start to this very familiar situation but fared less well on **Task 2**. Many mispronounced *terrasse*. Many also included incorrect prepositions but these were counted as minor errors at this level of achievement. The next task required candidates to listen carefully to the options given and nearly all were able to score well on this task and give either *menu touristique* or *menu du jour*. A wide variety of food was requested on **Task 4**. The last task was fairly well approached. Most chose to ask where the toilets were but went on to make the common error of saying *Où est les toilettes ?* Here, the message was understood but the inaccurate verb meant that a maximum mark of 2 was scored. Marking in centres was sometimes too generous on this last task.

B Role Plays

The Role Play B situations were deliberately more demanding in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, give an opinion, apologise or express pleasure. The level of challenge was balanced with some easier and more challenging tasks across each of the role plays. As last year, they differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score some marks on some tasks. Candidates should be reminded that there will always be one task in which they have to listen to the Examiner and reply to an unprepared question. They should be advised to consider likely questions for the context of the role play in the 15 minutes preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room. It is also well worth during revision time prior to the tests, checking that commonly used cue types are familiar to all candidates and that they are given practice in manipulating opening rubrics.

Changing the dates for a holiday house

Candidates usually made a good start greeting appropriately and saying they wanted to change the reservation. Some, however, gave an incorrect message and stated that they wanted to reserve a holiday house. On **Task 2**, some did not understand that they had to say when they had made the reservation and instead said when the reservation was for by including distorting extra material. Any appropriate date or period of time in the past such as *la semaine dernière* or *il y a 2 mois* was acceptable. Some also did not say how they had made the reservation. In such cases, a helpful recue from Examiners helped them to go on and score the marks available for the full two-part task. Most candidates found the given suggestions of methods of reservation helpful. On the next task, the first part of the task was to apologise. **Candidates need to be made aware of the commonly used cues *faites vos excuses* or *présentez vos excuses*.** Some candidates see this to be a list of excuses rather than needing to make an apology. Candidates who did not apologise only completed part of the task, thus scoring 1 mark. Many made good attempts at giving a reason for the change of dates. Many said somebody was ill or that they had exams. The unexpected task required them to say when they would like to rent the house from. Some were not familiar with the commonly met *à partir de quelle date* but most were able to give a new date. On the last task, most were able to formulate a correct question but some had problems transferring from *lui* in the cue to *vous* in their response. If candidates made a statement such as saying when they would phone back, they did not go beyond partial completion of the task as they did not formulate a question. Some also misunderstood the task and asked Madame Gilbert to ring back instead which failed to score the marks as the wrong message had been given.

Phoning a French friend about going to France

Candidates usually made a good start to this role play. On **Task 2**, the better candidates were able to express in the future how they would travel and when they would arrive. Weaker candidates made errors in using the present continuous or future tense but were usually still able to score some marks for communicating a method of transport and a specific date or time of arrival. Brief answers such as *en avion* plus *mardi prochain* were also able to score 3 marks. **Task 3** required some expression of pleasure at the idea of going to a theme park. The next part of the task required candidates not just to say they liked theme parks but **why** they liked them. Some candidates did not attempt both parts of this task. **Task 4** was quite well done with many saying what else they would like to do during their stay. Even weaker candidates were usually able to score 1 or 2 marks here. The last task required candidates to formulate a question and ask what they could bring as a present for the family. Some instead suggested what they would be bringing and, as on the above role play, if they did not ask a question they did not go beyond partial completion of the task as a question was required.

Phoning about a job in a holiday centre

Candidates made a confident start but some had difficulty in pronouncing *renseignements*. On **Task 2**, some omitted to attempt the first part of the task and just said what kind of work they had done. On **Task 3**, most were able to give a positive opinion about the work and give a reason **why** they liked working with children such as *ils sont mignons / amusants* or *c'est un travail intéressant*. Most were able to communicate when they would be able to start. A precise date was not required here and answers such as *en juillet* were acceptable. The last task was usually well attempted but sometimes the pronunciation of *loger* was poor and affected the communication of the message. In such cases, Examiners should feel free to query poor pronunciation as candidates are allowed to self-correct. A variety of correct question formulations were heard.

Topic presentation and conversation

The standard of work heard in this section covered a very wide range of performance across the candidature. Standards heard across the mark range were very much in line with those heard in 2017. The whole section (Topic presentation and Topic conversation) should last for a full five minutes. Centres usually understood that the maximum time to be spent on the presentation part of this section of the test was two minutes but there were instances of some very long presentations followed by very short conversations on the presentation topic. In some cases, there were no Topic conversations at all. In a few centres, some Examiners passed straight on to the General conversation. This therefore denied candidates the opportunity to converse on their chosen topic and this disadvantaged candidates. The presentation should be followed up by a conversation on this same topic for the remainder of this five minute section of the test.

Moderators heard a wide variety of topics this year. Candidates often chose familiar topics such as leisure activities, future plans, holidays, school life and their country or town of origin. There were very few who chose to talk on the topic *Moi-même*. This is a topic to be discouraged as it can replicate the General

conversation section and does not afford the opportunity to go into depth on one topic. Moderators reported hearing interesting topics on the environment, Formula One car racing, life in an international school, life in another country, the role of technology today, animal protection, films, school trips, festivals, a famous person, future plans and unusual holidays. Usually, centres had encouraged candidates to choose a good range of different topics within a centre and this led to the follow up conversation being of a more spontaneous nature. The best topics were ones in which the candidates displayed a genuine interest.

It was again clear this year that candidates had taken the preparation of their topic seriously and had prepared well. Most have realised the need to present their topic at a good pace and that they need not to give just factual information but also to express their opinions and, where possible, justify and develop these. It was also clear that in linguistic terms many used a good variety of structures, appropriate vocabulary and, often a good range of tenses where possible. The practice of including past and future tenses in the presentation itself is also increasing. Such a strategy is well worth encouraging as it ensures that both past and future tenses are present. It is worth reminding Examiners however that, even if both tenses are present in the presentation, they should still ask questions in past and future tenses in the Topic conversation section. This is to ensure that all candidates get the opportunity to use these tenses and therefore go beyond a score of 6 for Language. In some cases, the questioning in the Topic conversation did not give candidates the opportunity to show that they were in control of their material in a variety of time frames. Usually, Examiners kept the questions in the Topic conversation clearly on the topic in question but in some case the questions strayed too far off the chosen topic. Most Examiners gave candidates the opportunity to go beyond straightforward short factual statements. In such cases, questions were put to encourage candidates to talk in a spontaneous way and to give and justify their opinions routinely. Exchanges which sounded over prepared and lacking in spontaneity did not fulfil the criteria of the top marking bands. The very best performances in this part of the test continue to be the ones in which the standard heard in the presentation is maintained in the follow up conversation.

Most Examiners remembered to make a clear transition between this section of the test and the General conversation section. This is very helpful for both the candidates and the Moderators.

General conversation

Most centres had understood the need to cover only two or three topics from the syllabus with each candidate in the General conversation section but there were still some centres in which too many topics were covered too briefly with all candidates. It can be highly confusing for candidates to skip from topic to topic. It also usually results in few opportunities to show the ability of the candidate to respond in a genuine way to some unexpected questions. Coverage of too many topics usually leads to closed questioning which can disadvantage more able candidates who are capable of developing their answers.

As last year, there were many examples of very efficient and sympathetic examining in which the topic was clearly announced to the candidate and questions were well differentiated according to the ability of the individual candidate. Such examining aimed clearly to put candidates at ease and encouraged them to work to the best of their ability. The best Examiners spoke as little as possible and listened hard to the responses made by candidates, picking up interesting leads where necessary.

There was, this year, a good range of topics covered in centres. When examining the same topic with different candidates, efforts were also usually made by Examiners to try to vary the questions asked upon that topic. Centres are reminded that candidates must not be aware of which General conversation topics will be examined before the test. It remains important to make sure that a good range of topics is covered in each centre as, in a few centres, the range was found to be too narrow. It also remains important in this section of the test that candidate are given the opportunity to respond to unexpected questions which arise naturally and to follow up interesting leads which may arise in the examination room. This year, the questioning in this section of the test nearly always included questions in past and future tenses and Examiners were clearly aware of the need to give candidates the opportunity to show they could operate in different time frames. Many Examiners were patient and sympathetic to their candidates and encouraged them to work for the marks.

The standards heard were very much in line with those heard last year. There were very good examples achieving at all levels of ability with good numbers showing the ability to communicate beyond straightforward messages and develop their answers with opinions and justifications. Most were able to communicate well on topics such as home life, pastimes, shopping and fashion, holidays, school life, everyday routine, ambitions, the environment, technology, career plans, town and country, healthy lifestyles, sport and food and drink.

As last year, work heard illustrating standards at the lower end of the marking bands for Language showed some manipulation of structures and some awareness of verbs and a limited vocabulary. Work illustrating the performance in the middle bands showed the ability to produce some accurate examples in past and future tenses and to be aware of key Defined Content vocabulary together with some key adverbs of time. The more able candidates were also able to go beyond working in the first person and conjugate verbs with different subjects with greater control. Such work also showed the ability to communicate clear ideas accurately in a wide range of tenses **appropriate to the questions asked** and make accurate use of a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. At the top end of the performance, candidates also made good use of adverbs, adjectives and pronouns. Such utterances were longer and well connected by conjunctions. In terms of linguistic structures, there were examples of structures such as *si* + imperfect plus a conditional tense, *depuis*, perfect infinitives, correct future tenses (rather than an over reliance on *je voudrais*), *avant de* + infinitive and, on a few occasions, compound tenses such as the pluperfect and conditional perfect tenses. This **range of structures** is one of the important descriptors of the very best IGCSE performances in terms of linguistic performance.

It remains clear that the ability to converse in a foreign language is still central to learning activities in the IGCSE French classroom and many candidates said they had enjoyed studying the subject.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/41
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should be familiar with all the common interrogative adverbs.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must address all the tasks: the final task always requires a change of tense.
- The recommended word count for both **Question 2** and **Question 3** is not mandatory. Candidates should not feel obliged to remove significant detail to meet the word count.
- Candidates should respond to each task in **Question 3** in the tense indicated.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should make sure that they use common vocabulary and structures accurately.
- In **Question 3**, in order to access the top bands for Other linguistic features, candidates must demonstrate that they can use the complex structures which are detailed in the specification.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation.
- When candidates write in pen over an initial draft in pencil, their work is often difficult to read: this may have a bearing on the final mark awarded.

General comments

Question 1

As most centres are now aware, marks are awarded for each recognisable word which fits the context of the rubric, whether or not the item is one of those suggested by the pictures.

Question 2

Communication

A mark was awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Candidates are not required to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks. The most effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

The word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If candidates write over 80 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

The maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if the candidate omits a task.

Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use simple sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, a blog, a story line to be continued.

Candidates are advised to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance. Candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs. If a candidate produces a 'correct' verb form which is in the 'wrong' tense for the task, there is no reward.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses (e.g. *quand, si, parce que, car, qui*), object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (*ne...jamais, ne...plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions (e.g. *depuis, pendant, pour*) and were familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter.

It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Mes affaires de voyage

The vast majority of candidates gained 5 marks. There were some easy vocabulary items suggested by the illustrations. Some words presented difficulties: *argent* was often written *agent*. *Carte* has various meanings relevant to the context: those wishing to convey the sense of 'map' however sometimes resorted to *mappe*. *Plan* would have earned the mark. The spelling of *appareil photo* was a problem for many.

Question 2: Les vacances d'hiver

Communication

Many candidates gained more than 1 mark in **Task 1** for references to winter weather. Candidates living in warmer climates were not penalised and credit was given for statements such as *il n'y a pas d'hiver / dans mon pays il y a deux saisons, la saison des pluies et la saison chaude*.

Despite the weather being an area of basic linguistic knowledge, errors were common, e.g. *il faut* for *il fait*, *il pleure* and *il pluie* for *il pleut*. The spelling of other common vocabulary was insecure: *friod* for *froid* and *niege* for *neige*.

There was some confusion over the meaning of the word *temps*: some attempted to explain when winter occurred and how long winter lasted rather than give precise details about the weather. Some candidates referred to *le climat*, which was rewarded, but this was not so for those who mistakenly thought that *la météo* was an acceptable noun in the context.

In **Task 2**, there was some misunderstanding of the time reference and a significant number of candidates offered ideas such as *je vais en vacances à la montagne pour une semaine*. Although this did not qualify for the mark here, it did fit the context for the following task, and so a mark was awarded for such statements.

Candidates needed to use an active verb in **Task 3** and most did, often identifying a range of activities, each of which gained a mark. Many candidates gained at least 3 marks here. When an active verb is used in the question, candidates should not rely on the impersonal structure *il y a...* to convey the required information.

In **Task 4**, there were many detailed responses explaining preferences and making comparisons: a mark was awarded for each statement and each opinion. Many candidates added significantly to their total of

marks. There was one word which presented a problem: *la chaleur*. By analogy with *je n'aime pas le froid*, some thought that *je préfère le chaud* conveyed the intended meaning.

Most candidates realised that there was an opportunity to gain a number of marks in **Task 5**. The phrasing of the instruction allowed them to give a range of details and opinions, each of which was rewarded. The spelling of countries is important; when candidates wish to introduce the idea of visiting a country, they should always choose one for which they know the French word.

Language

The majority of candidates displayed sufficient control of sentence patterns to gain at least 4 marks for Language. The final task traditionally requires a future or conditional tense: candidates should be advised to reflect that when they frame their answers as the absence of a correct tense will limit the mark to a maximum of 4.

Section 2

Question 3 (a): La fête du sport

Just over 70% of candidates chose this option. This was a very accessible topic which allowed most of those who attempted it to gain some marks.

Communication

In **Task 1**, candidates were expected to say where and when they took part in the sports festival. This was a very straightforward task which could be communicated in a single sentence using a past tense verb. If candidates chose to give the required information in two separate clauses, then both verbs had to be in the past tense for the award of 2 marks.

There was some evidence of confusion over the use of the adjective *dernier*. There is a significant difference in meaning between *le week-end dernier* and *le dernier week-end*. Candidates who used the latter pattern were awarded only 1 mark.

Despite the clear indication of the tense in the rubric, too many candidates responded using a future tense.

Task 2 invited candidates to say what they did. Some candidates gave a simple description of what activities were available at the festival. Such information was appropriate as additional detail but not worthy in itself of the 2 marks.

Task 3 proved to be relatively straightforward. *C'est bon pour la santé* was a frequent response. More expansive answers included the social advantages of engaging in sport.

Many identified their favourite sports person in **Task 4** giving a range of reasons why they admired her/him. Sometimes this focused on their success, sometimes on their skill, sometimes on their qualities as a human being. Candidates did not always understand what was required here: the word *personnalité* triggered attempts to describe the particular qualities of sports people in general.

In **Task 5**, candidates were invited to explain why they would choose to try out a new sport. In some instances, they referred to activities they were already involved in.

Verbs

Many candidates have acquired the skill of producing sufficient correct verb forms in order to gain full marks: however, sometimes the additional details offered were of questionable relevance.

The topic of sport is a familiar one but candidates were not always as secure in their control as might be expected. Many candidates wrote *jouer du sport*, presumably by analogy with *jouer au hockey etc.*, rather than the correct *faire du sport*. Another quite common verb which featured frequently was *gagner*. The spelling was sometimes inaccurate: *ganger, gangner*. Some candidates varied their choice of verb, e.g. *j'ai pratiqué le rugby*, however many candidates lost the marks through misspelling: *j'ai practiqué*.

Other linguistic features

Candidates who wish to raise their marks must be able to produce a variety of accurate sentence patterns. Candidates who make frequent errors of gender, number and agreement, who misuse or omit common prepositions and who do not know the spelling of common items of vocabulary associated with the topic, will not meet the requirements of the higher mark bands. Basic vocabulary items presented some difficulties: there was evidence of confusion between the verb *jouer* and the noun *joueur*.

Question 3 (b): Gardez la forme !

This was the second most popular option, but it attracted only 24% of candidates. Proportionately, these candidates were more successful than those who opted for **Question 3 (a)**. The blogs were informative and often displayed control of a wide range of structures.

Communication

A very small number of candidates did not fully understand what was required here: they wrote a message to their friend rather than a blog about the situation. Candidates must be sure that they fully understand what is required before starting their accounts.

There were some very thoughtful responses in which candidates expressed both their sympathy for their friend and demonstrated some common sense in their handling of the situation.

In **Task 1**, many presented the friend's problem in simple terms. There were numerous instances where candidates identified a number of health issues: in many of these cases, it would have been better if candidates had used either the imperfect or the pluperfect tense, however this did not compromise the communication mark.

Some candidates successfully used *depuis* to convey the required detail, e.g. *mon ami fume depuis trois ans*. This structure gained the 2 marks available as it conveys the idea of a past time frame. Candidates who responded in the present tense gained only 1 mark.

A past tense was required in **Task 2**. Candidates needed to explain what they did to help their friend. Ideas ranged from simple statements, to descriptions of shared activities, to more complex ideas. Candidates who used the present tense were awarded 1 mark.

For **Task 3**, information about the friend's current activities was required. Most gained marks here. For those who responded in the past tense, 1 mark was available.

In **Task 4**, most candidates claimed that their friend was happier as a result of the changes. Some candidates reported that the friend in fact was still in difficulty: such details were also rewarded.

There were many different references to the problems of young people for **Task 5**, ranging from school issues to dietary problems, lack of exercise and bad habits.

Verbs

Many candidates provided enough correct verb forms to gain full marks. However, there was a number of errors in some verb forms and structures, e.g. *faire des amis* rather than *se faire des amis*. Many candidates did not know the structure required with the verb *aider à*... There was not much security regarding verbs requiring a preposition before the following infinitive: *essayer*, *choisir*, *décider*, *finir*, *commencer*. Equally, it was common to see *espérer* followed by *de*. This is an area where some improvement would make much difference to marks.

Other linguistic features

Success depended very much on using appropriately relevant vocabulary, e.g. *santé*, *sain/saine*, *sainement* over which there was a measure of confusion. Other vocabulary items, e.g. *nourriture*, *exercice*, *régime*, *paresseux*, represented problems for some candidates.

Question 3 (c): Pendant le week-end, mon père a perdu les clefs de la voiture.

Only 5.5% attempted this question. Interestingly, the candidates were broadly more successful than those who chose **Question 3 (a)**. There were some well-crafted accounts written in a confident and natural style, which captured the reader's attention.

Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to say what they did first on discovering the loss of the keys: *j'ai téléphoné à ma mère / j'ai cherché dans la rue / on a téléphoné à la police* were typical of the details offered.

In **Task 2**, candidates needed to explain how they travelled home. Candidates gained marks for simple statements such as *on a pris un taxi* or for more complex arrangements such as *mon grand-père est arrivé et il nous a conduits chez nous*.

There were some inventive ideas regarding further complications in **Task 3**.

Many candidates gained the marks in **Task 4** quite early in their accounts, as they gave their immediate response to the loss of the keys: *j'ai pleuré / j'étais énervée / j'étais en colère*. Others responded in more simple fashion with a concluding comment: *c'était affreux*.

The father's reaction was conveyed in varying ways in **Task 5**, e.g. *papa était vraiment désolé / il a ri*. If there was no such comment, marks were awarded to a detail about what he did on discovering the loss, e.g. *il a décidé de retourner au magasin / il a téléphoné au garage*.

Verbs

This narrative option required consistent use of past tense verbs. Candidates who are skilled at creating a simple story found it quite easy to reach the maximum mark, partly because the narrative did not require the repetition of particular verbs, as may be the case for options **(a)** and **(b)**.

Some candidates did not know the difference in meaning between *chercher* and *trouver*: this not only meant the loss of verb ticks but occasionally compromised the communication marks too.

The fact that the candidate was writing as an individual in a group situation meant that there was ample opportunity to vary the patterns.

Other linguistic features

One good way to organise an anecdote such as this is to mark each stage of the narrative with a time phrase. This adds to the style of the piece but more essentially it allows for a natural flow of information. Many candidates showed that they could do this.

Successful candidates conveyed their ideas using a variety of complex sentences and structures.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/42
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should read the whole task carefully before starting to write their answers and then check that they have addressed every task and sub-task.
- Candidates should produce clear answers which remain focused on the task.
- Candidates are advised to highlight or underline key words in questions and sub-tasks.
- Candidates should ensure that they respond in the same time frame as used in the question.

General comments

Question 1

As most centres are now aware, marks are awarded for each recognisable word which fits the context of the rubric, whether or not the item is one of those suggested by the pictures.

Question 2

Communication

A mark was awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Candidates are not required to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks. The most effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

The word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If candidates write over 80 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

The maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if the candidate omits a task.

Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use simple sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, a blog, a story line to be continued.

Candidates are advised to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks. Whilst

it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance. Candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs. If a candidate produces a 'correct' verb form which is in the 'wrong' tense for the task, there is no reward.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses (e.g. *quand, si, parce que, car, qui*), object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (*ne...jamais, ne...plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions (e.g. *depuis, pendant, pour*) and were familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter.

It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Vous visitez un zoo.

To maximise their chances of scoring the 5 marks available, candidates are well advised to provide a list of eight words. The eight pictures only serve as a guide and candidates are free to use different items provided that they fit the context of the question. Many candidates successfully provided a mixture of places and animals. Some candidates struggled with the correct spelling of *arbre* and *lac*. The vast majority of candidates gained 5 marks.

Question 2: Mon pays

Candidates kept to the recommended word count.

Communication

In **Task 1**, candidates who made full use of the suggestions included in the brackets managed to score several communication marks. Those who used separate sentences to include the details fared even better. It also showed that they were able to use a variety of verbs. Some candidates lost a communication mark as they were unable to give an appropriate spelling of their country.

In **Task 2**, many candidates had plenty to say about the weather in their country and many scored up to 6 communication marks for this task. Many did not seem aware that *il fait* rather than *c'est* is used to describe the weather in French. *Il pleut* or *la chaleur* were difficult to spell for some candidates.

For **Task 3**, candidates were expected to give specific details about the traditions in their country. Those who stated *il y a beaucoup de traditions dans mon pays* could not score a mark, as their answer was too vague. Once again, candidates who made full use of the suggestions offered, scored several points. Some candidates had not read the task carefully enough and wrote about what they eat (hamburgers), what they wear (jeans) and their own birthday. These details did not address the task set and could not be rewarded. However, many candidates were able to name the various traditional dishes available in their country, the typical outfits (style and colours) worn by men and women and the important religious festivals available throughout the year.

In **Task 4**, candidates were asked to list the things tourists could do and see in their area. *Il y a beaucoup de choses à voir et à faire* could not be rewarded as specific details were expected. Whilst many candidates mentioned the many monuments which could be visited, others concentrated on the many shopping malls, theme parks and beaches that attracted many tourists to their town/country. All these were acceptable.

As in previous series, **Task 5** required candidates to convey some notion of future time to express where they would like to live in the future. Candidates must ensure that they know the French for a few cities and countries. Many could not spell *Angleterre* and *États-Unis* accurately.

Language

The vast majority of candidates scored 4 or 5 for Language. They produced pieces of work which were coherent, showed that they could use relevant verbs and vocabulary with a fair degree of accuracy. To maximise their chances of scoring in the top bands for Language, candidates are advised to ensure that they use the time frames used in the tasks, present tense for the first four tasks and future/conditional for the final task.

Section 2

The vast majority of candidates kept to the recommended word count.

Question 3 (a): Mes études et ma carrière

This option was by far the most popular. Just over 73% chose this question.

Communication

Many candidates scored the 2 communication marks available for **Task 1**, even though the key word *matière* was not widely known. The inaccurate word *sujets* was tolerated provided that some recognisable subjects were listed. A few candidates resorted to English (physics, mathematics) to list the subjects they had studied. The spelling of *chimie* was often not known. Some candidates had not looked at the question carefully enough and did not use *étudié* which was provided in the task. The accurate use of a past participle is essential for the award of 2 communication marks. Errors such as *j'ai étudié*, *j'ai étude* were quite common.

Task 2 and **Task 3** invited candidates to say what their best memory of the year had been (a past tense was required) and to explain why. Any past event (party, outing, sporting activity) were all acceptable. The justification had to refer back to the chosen memory but could be expressed in any appropriate tense, for example *mon meilleur souvenir de l'année était mon voyage scolaire au bord de la mer car j'aime passer du temps avec mes amis* gained the 4 marks available. Others remembered with pride a sporting event in which they took part and that they won. Some candidates misunderstood the task and wrote about an object that they had acquired during the year. They could not be awarded marks for the object but were rewarded for any logical reason.

For **Task 4**, candidates had to indicate what job they would like to do in the future. A vast number of candidates stated that they would like to become a doctor or an engineer. Unfortunately, the words *médecine* and *ingénieur* could not be rewarded as they failed to give a clear message. Some candidates had been well prepared to describe their future plans. Many candidates were aware that an article must not be used before a job.

To score the 2 communication marks available for **Task 5**, candidates had to use a modal verb in the third person singular. Either stating *il faut / on doit être* + an adjective or *il faut / on doit avoir* + a noun. *Je suis travailleur / patient* could only score 1 mark as it only offered partial communication.

Many candidates produced very satisfactory essays and the vast majority scored 7 marks or more for Communication.

Question 3 (b) : Mon ami(e) s'est cassé le bras

This option was the second most popular choice. Even though, only 17% attempted this option.

Communication

In **Task 1**, candidates were expected to provide details about the accident. Those who just copied the rubric could not be awarded any marks. Many candidates were able to adapt the rubric to phrase a successful sentence. Many replaced *récemment* with *samedi dernier / la semaine dernière* and *en faisant du sport* with *en jouant au foot / au tennis*. Unfortunately, some candidates used *il / elle a cassé son bras* instead of *il / elle s'est cassé le bras* given in the title and the introduction.

To fulfil **Task 2** successfully, candidates were expected to use a modal verb in a past tense. Very few candidates were able to use a negative form of *pouvoir* followed by an infinitive. Many candidates used a verb in the present tense to describe the friend's problems. As using the wrong time frame compromised the message being conveyed, candidates could only score a maximum of 1 mark.

For **Task 3**, candidates had to use a verb in the present tense to describe what the candidate does to help their friend. Many used the wrong time frame and used a verb in a past tense. To avoid losing marks, candidates need to look at the task more carefully to ensure that they use the tense used in the question.

Many candidates found **Task 4** rather challenging. Whilst many of them could state *à mon avis, le sport est / n'est pas dangereux*, they found it difficult to explain why. Some were, however, able to explain that some sports were more dangerous than others and that it was important to use the necessary equipment carefully and to avoid taking unnecessary risks.

Candidates could gain an extra 2 marks if they had provided extra details for any of the first four tasks, provided the additional details were expressed in the tense required by the task.

On the whole, candidates who chose this option did not score as highly as those who chose **Question 3 (a)**. This was mainly due to their unsecure use of tenses.

Question 3 (c) : J'ai perdu mon argent.

Only 9% attempted this option. Some of the candidates who chose this option often did not have the linguistic skills to manage the storyline. Candidates who chose this option needed to have a very secure grasp of perfect and imperfect tenses as the whole story was meant to relate a past incident/event.

Communication

In **Task 1**, many candidates chose to phone home to alert their parents of the loss of their money. Many candidates knew *j'ai téléphoné*, but very few seemed aware that the verb needed a preposition before the recipient.

In **Task 2**, several candidates indicated that their friends gave them some money. There was some confusion regarding the use of the verbs *chercher / trouver / regarder*.

Task 3 required candidates to explain what happened next. Whilst some candidates decided to retrace their steps in search of their money or go to the airport information desk, some decided to suspend their search and go for a drink with their friends. All these actions gained communication marks.

For **Task 4** and **Task 5**, candidates had to give two reactions, theirs as well as their teacher's. These reactions could appear anywhere in the narrative and could be emotional as well as physical. Whilst many candidates were able to express how they felt, e.g. *j'étais triste* or *j'étais content(e)*, many omitted the teacher's involvement.

To enhance their overall marks for Communication and Verbs, candidates are advised to pay careful attention to the tense required by the task. Using a present tense when a past tense is required (or vice versa) incurs a double penalty as the sentence can only achieve partial communication and the verb cannot be rewarded.

Verbs

Candidates are advised to offer a variety of verbs throughout their essays. The repetition of *avait, était* or *étaient* should be avoided as the verbs can only be rewarded the first time they are used. Candidates are also advised to pay attention to the verbs provided in the rubrics and questions to avoid unnecessary spelling errors. Some candidates had been well trained to offer a wide variety of verbs in different forms.

Other Linguistic Feature

Candidates should take particular care with the agreements of adjectives and past participles and the spelling and gender of common nouns. Candidates who are not in control of gender and spelling of common nouns cannot expect to achieve marks in the top three bands.

There were frequent errors of spelling in common adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. Words such as *beaucoup, malheureusement, ennuyeux, intéressant* are widely used but regularly misspelt.

To be worthy of a mark in the top three bands, essays must give evidence of complex structures, variety of relevant vocabulary and a fair degree of accuracy. The repetition of *parce que, car, je pense que* fails to demonstrate the level of control and variety expected for the top bands.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/43
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should be familiar with all the common interrogative adverbs.
- Many candidates lost marks through the use of cognate forms in other languages.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must address all the tasks: the final task always requires a change of tense.
- The recommended word count for both **Question 2** and **Question 3** is not mandatory. Candidates should not feel obliged to remove significant detail to meet the word count.
- Candidates should respond to each task in **Question 3** in the tense indicated.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should make sure that they use common vocabulary and structures accurately.
- In **Question 3**, in order to access the top bands for Other linguistic features, candidates must demonstrate that they can use the complex structures which are detailed in the specification.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation.
- When candidates write in pen over an initial draft in pencil their work is often difficult to read: this may have a bearing on the final mark awarded.

General comments

Question 1

As most centres are now aware, marks are awarded for each recognisable word which fits the context of the rubric, whether or not the item is one of those suggested by the pictures.

Question 2

Communication

A mark was awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Candidates are not required to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks. The most effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

The word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If candidates write over 80 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

The maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if the candidate omits a task.

Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use simple sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, an article, a story line to be continued.

Candidates are advised to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance. Candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs. If a candidate produces a 'correct' verb form which is in the 'wrong' tense for the task, there is no reward.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses (e.g. *quand, si, parce que, car, qui*), object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (*ne...jamais, ne...plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions (e.g. *depuis, pendant, pour*) and were familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter.

It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Les glaces

The majority of candidates gained 5 marks. There were some easy vocabulary items suggested by the illustrations. Some words presented difficulties: candidates were familiar with *ananas* but were not always sure of the exact spelling. The two items which presented most problems were *cerise* and *fraise*.

Question 2: Chez moi

This was a familiar and accessible topic and some candidates were very successful. There were many however who did not stick closely to the tasks and, although they wrote extensively, did not provide the required information. Candidates who offered information in other languages lost marks. The use of *habitation* instead of *chambre* was especially noted.

Communication

Task 1 invited simple information about the candidate's home. There were some very detailed responses which identified a number of relevant facts. There was an opportunity here to gain a number of marks. The spelling of *maison*, sometimes written as *masion*, meant that some candidates lost marks unnecessarily. The spelling of the words for individual rooms, e.g. *cuisine, salle de bains*, and knowledge of the word *pièce* were not very secure.

There were few good answers to **Task 2**. All that was required was some information about what there was near the candidate's home. This task was often omitted.

In **Task 3**, candidates were required to identify their favourite room and give a reason for their preference. Many did not understand the word *pièce* in this context.

There was another chance in **Task 4** to gain a number of marks. Candidates were expected to mention how they help at home both during the week and at the weekend. It was common to see *j'organise ma chambre*: candidates should be advised that this is not correct French usage. Some candidates expressed the idea of walking the dog, which was worthy of reward. However, too many candidates thought that *promenade* is a verb. There was no mark for: *je promenade mon chien*.

It is standard practice that a different tense is required in **Task 5**. Here candidates were invited to say where they would like to live after their studies. This should be within the capabilities of most candidates as it requires the simple adaptation of the verb in the question. Some candidates misunderstood what was required and explained where they would like to study.

Language

The majority of candidates displayed sufficient control of sentence patterns to gain at least 4 marks for Language. The information required demanded the use of commonly used verb forms. The final task traditionally requires a future or conditional tense: candidates should be advised to reflect that when they frame their answers as the absence of a correct tense will limit the mark to a maximum of 4.

Section 2

Question 3 (a): Ma visite dans une grande ville

Just over 72% of candidates chose this option. This was a very accessible topic which allowed most of those who attempted it to gain some marks.

Communication

In **Task 1**, candidates gained 2 marks for a detail about their visit expressed in a past tense. Details such as where they went, when they went, how they travelled or how long they stayed were all relevant and acceptable details.

Task 2 invited a reference to something they did during the visit, again using a past tense. All details from the mundane to more cultural activities were rewarded.

In making their comparisons between their home town and the place they visited in **Task 3**, candidates gained marks for simple information, e.g. *ma ville est plus petite*, as well as for more extensive comparisons, e.g. *il y a plus de magasins à New York que dans ma ville*. At this level, it is important that candidates know how to use comparative forms of adjectives and adverbs.

In **Task 4**, candidates were invited to give a reason for preferring life in town or in the country. Opinions were divided, but it was very clear from many responses to both this task and the previous one, that pollution was an important issue for them.

A reason for returning, or not, to the place they visited was required for **Task 5**. For most candidates, the reason was positive.

Verbs

There was an opportunity here to use very familiar, common verbs, such as *acheter, aimer, aller, faire, manger, visiter, voir* etc. Some candidates achieved the maximum mark, but many more could have gained a higher mark if they had checked carefully for common errors, e.g. *j'ai allé / je ai visité / j'ai fais*.

Other linguistic features

The general level of performance in this area was modest. There were many errors of gender and spelling of common basic vocabulary.

Question 3 (b): Un festival traditionnel

Only 12% of candidates chose this option. This proved to be quite a challenging question. Some candidates did not have the basic vocabulary necessary, whilst others attempted to convey rather complex ideas when more simple ones would have sufficed. Overall candidates who responded to this question were less successful.

Communication

In **Task 1**, candidates were required to state when and where the festival took place. The simplest way to do this was to adapt the structure in the question, e.g. *le festival a eu lieu à...*

Task 2 and **Task 3** invited candidates to say which part of the festival they preferred and to give their reasons for their preference. The most effective way to respond to these two tasks was to link the answer directly to the following one. Candidates generally referred to the food and the music they enjoyed.

Candidates understood what was required in **Task 4**, but were rarely able to convey the idea of the importance of traditions. Among the more successful attempts were ideas about the heritage, the economic benefits and the social advantages.

Most candidates answered **Task 5** successfully.

Verbs

The level of performance was modest. Few candidates gained marks for past tense verbs. The few marks which they gained were for verbs describing the festival or stating their preferences.

Other linguistic features

The accounts rarely displayed control of language and structure and there were very few well-constructed, longer sequences of language.

Question 3 (c): Un week-end avec mon petit cousin/ma petite cousine

Just over 15% of candidates chose this option. This question was generally more challenging than the other two options as it required the candidate to make consistent use of past tenses in order to convey the story line. Many candidates chose this question but did not have the necessary control of language and structure to create a convincing narrative.

Communication

In **Task 1**, a simple detail regarding what the young cousin did on the first day was sufficient for 2 marks.

Candidates needed to say how they had entertained their cousin in **Task 2**. Typically successful details included *nous sommes allés au parc*.

As the rubric suggested, the visit did not run smoothly and some candidates responded by suggesting various problems at meal time for **Task 3**.

In **Task 4**, a few candidates were able to explain clearly why the parents found the visit difficult.

In **Task 5**, candidates often commented that the cousin was quite happy with the visit, despite the problems caused.

Verbs

Control of verbs in perfect and imperfect tenses is essential for this question. It was possible to write a coherent account using quite familiar verbs, such as *aller, faire, jouer, manger, regarder* but there were some candidates who attempted to convey ideas for which they did not have the requisite vocabulary.

Other linguistic features

To some extent, the ablest candidates used the greatest variety of complex structures seen over the three questions. There was some very effective use of object pronouns in particular.