

FRENCH (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9779/01
Speaking

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- In **Part 1**, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reactions to it
- In **Part 2**, choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where French is spoken
- In **Part 2**, choose a subject with factual content and which offers opportunities to express opinions and make judgements
- In **Parts 1 and 2**, be prepared to take the lead in conversation and to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion.

General comments

Administration

Administrative matters were dealt with by nearly all schools in an efficient way. Centres sent details of the candidates' chosen topics by email and as hard copy.

Chaperones were provided in the room, or just outside but visible.

The examination room should be large enough for three people. The chaperone should sit out of the line of sight of the candidate, have a book to read, and refrain from speaking to the examiner in between candidates.

Please would Centres provide these forms:

- The attendance register
- A mark-sheet with the candidates' names and candidate number filled in
- A copy of their candidates' topic forms.

Discussion of article

Candidates had a preference for **Cards 3 and 1**.

Candidates should heed the title of the article and the general topic area.

In summarising the article, they should not read directly from their notes or lift sentences from the card. They must keep to one minute.

They should listen carefully to the type of question the examiner is asking. Sometimes they need to show awareness of a problem, not give an answer; sometimes they are asked for their personal opinion; sometimes they are required to see a problem from a different point of view. It would be good if the candidate provided a specific example from the article or their own experience.

Candidates sometimes miss the point of the question by answering too hastily. Indeed, they should not respond with 'undue hesitation' but they are allowed a moment to take in what is being asked.

Candidates had understood the articles well in general but did not always understand certain specific terms. Some candidates were not fully prepared for the discussion on the topic heading (in bold in English).

Card 1 – Health and fitness

Generally well-understood. Candidates supported the idea of *salles de consommation* but were reluctant to see one in their area. Many had difficulty explaining what *produits de substitution* were in this context.

Card 2 – Equality of opportunity

Candidates who chose this card did not always have a good enough knowledge of the French school system. They could not explain its elitist nature or why politicians might be reluctant to change the system. The theme of inequality proved to be a difficult one in the wider discussion.

Card 3 – Pollution

The most popular card. Some candidates did not fully understand *covoiturage* or *penser usage plutôt que propriété*. Most candidates were able to come up with reasonable ways to tackle pollution problems in the future.

Card 4 – Food and drink

Some candidates had difficulties with certain concepts. Few could explain why it might be important for packaging to be easier to open. Some could not explain the benefits and disadvantages of genetic modification.

Card 5 – Work and leisure

Some good summaries by the few candidates who chose this card.

Card 6 – The media

Few candidates chose this card. Only the best noted that some children with difficulties might use television to escape their problems. All understood the concept of *télé-réalité* but there was some confusion with television and screen-use in general.

Topics

The introduction should not exceed one minute. If it does, the candidate must expect to be interrupted. Candidates should not try to squeeze too much information into the introduction or simply read out the headings on their topic form. They should not waste time saying how they conducted their research.

Candidates were well-prepared and had ample material for the discussion. Most gave a clear introduction within the one-minute time-limit. A small minority overran by trying to include too much information.

Candidates need to be aware of the balance between presenting facts and having opinions to discuss. A good choice of topic is important: some were too vast (la gastronomie française, la Résistance) or rather vague (le tourisme en France) or not French enough (l'utilisation de la drogue en France). Very few candidates took the opportunity of bringing pictures to support their topic.

The best candidates were able to enter into the discussion fully by listening and responding to the particular questions asked by the Examiner, and avoiding the production of pre-learned material.

Some examples of the topics chosen in this exam series:

Social and political: Les Gilets Jaunes; Emmanuel Macron; la laïcité; le québécois; la guerre d'Algérie; Zola: j'accuse; Michel Foucault; Simone Veil

Literature: Tintin au Congo; Boule de Suif; Les Fleurs du Mal; l'Etranger; Leila Slimani: Chanson douce; Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme

Film: Tomboy et Ma Vie en Rose; Le festival de Cannes; Les 400 coups; Chocolat (Claire Denis)

Art/Music: Edith Piaf; Coco Chanel; Debussy; La Haine; Jacques Brel

History/philosophy/other: Evariste Galois; Les réformes domestiques de Napoléon Bonaparte; Philippe Pinel, psychologue; Les Pieds-Noirs; Les années Sarkozy: succès ou échec; les Courses hippiques en France

Language

Many candidates demonstrated a very good knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary and syntax and a commendable level of accuracy. Pronunciation was generally good, often improving in the topic discussion as candidates relaxed after discussing the article.

Areas of weakness:

- Pronunciation: alcool, gouvernement, environnement, maire/mairie; vécu; plural endings, ou/u
- False friends and anglicisms: issue (question); appliquer (faire la demande); spécialement (surtout); choquant (choqué)
- Grammar: à with le, de with le; beaucoup de; conjugation of pouvoir; à or en with country or town
- Use of and omission of articles
- Impersonal expressions such as il s'agit de
- Genders of common words
- Overdoing of opinion phrases (A mon avis je pense que)
- Using set phrases better suited to the essay paper than to the oral
- Overuse of bien que and subjunctive

FRENCH (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9779/02
Reading and Listening

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
- pay particular attention to conveying the required information to the examiner in unambiguous language.

General comments

Performances spanned the whole of the ability range. In the strongest scripts, candidates made a good attempt to express themselves in their own words, and their answers were concise and to the point. The best answers really targeted the precise terms of the questions. Other candidates' answers were missing a key element. These candidates could improve by focusing on exactly what is asked in the question. In some cases, candidates provided various alternative answers or they incorporated surplus, contradictory information that invalidated correct information given elsewhere. Overall there were very few instances where students copied substantial chunks of text from the question paper. Most candidates attempted all the questions and very rarely candidates answered a question in the wrong language thus scoring no mark for the question.

There was only a relatively small group at the lower end and above the 50 marks. A pleasing number of candidates scored marks in the thirties and forties.

Comments on specific questions

Part I – Reading

Texte à lire 1

This text was well understood by the vast majority of candidates. They tended to fare better in this exercise than in the second reading exercise. On the whole, candidates had clearly been well prepared by teaching staff to use their own words and transform the language from the text to provide a grammatically correct answer to the question. Practising transforming verbs to nouns and nouns to adjectives is a very useful exercise, which would also help candidates broaden their vocabulary for other parts of the examination. A number of candidates could improve by practising identifying tenses and answering in the same tense as the question. This would allow them to produce correctly formed verbs in different tenses more consistently.

Question 1

The answer required candidates to say that the people were isolated, which would score on its own. Alternatively, candidates could say that they were in distress or difficulty, but most candidates tried to make an adjective out of *détresse*, writing *détressés* instead of *en détresse*, which invalidated the majority of responses.

Question 2

This question was generally well answered. Candidates were asked what the role of the volunteers was in creating Parentibus. Most candidates were able to answer correctly that they supported its creation. A small number of candidates stated the support was purely financial, thus invalidating their answer. Some candidates needed to read the question more carefully as it asked about *la création* of Parentibus rather than what the volunteers did as a whole.

Question 3

To answer this question well, candidates needed to use the conditional tense: *leurs problèmes empireraient*. The future or the use of *peuvent* were also accepted. Some candidates may have recognised the conditional from the question but then used the imperfect in their answer. A few picked up the *n'* from the text which sometimes lead them to use a negative e.g. *les problèmes n'empireraient* giving the opposite meaning to the one intended.

Question 4

Candidates needed to make a comparison between *Parentibus* and *les services sociaux* to answer this question correctly. Some candidates answered this question very well and were able to explain the difference between the two services very clearly. The need for the comparison meant that there was quite a lot to write for one mark. Most candidates only half answered with reference either to *le Parentibus* or social services.

Question 5

Candidates needed to explain the phrase *il est tout à fait transposable ailleurs*. Around half the candidates were able to explain that the idea/the project could be copied/used anywhere. Many candidates thought that it meant that the bus could move around or that it was beneficial for everyone. *Transposable* was taken to mean *transportable* or even *disponible*.

Question 6

This question required candidates to transform verbs into nouns. A fair number of candidates successfully produced *de la r(é)assurance, des conseils, de l'orientation, de l'anonymat*. Some candidates managed to avoid transforming verbs to nouns in this way by using *doivent rassurer, conseiller...*, which was an acceptable way of rephrasing. A few candidates wrote *l'anonymité*, which does not exist. Candidates need to remember to avoid writing too much, particularly for a question such as this where there is a list to pick from and they are only required to give two details.

Question 7

This question required candidates to give their own opinion based on the information given in the text, essentially *pour garder la confiance des passagers, parce que c'est de l'information personnelle, privée*. Most candidates answered well. The main difficulty for the candidates was the word *nouvelles*, which many took to mean new passengers on the bus.

Question 8

Most candidates scored one out of the two marks available for Question 8. The vast majority of candidates correctly answered that the number of passengers rose from 276 in the first year to 751 last year. Candidates could improve their answers by paying attention to detail as quite a few candidates did not recognise the conditional *devrait* and lost the second point by saying that there was already a second bus in operation instead of there being a plan for a second bus.

Texte à lire 2

This was the most challenging exercise, the principal reason being that many candidates found it challenging to translate the key ideas of the text into correct English. Candidates should be reminded to re-read their answers in order to ensure that the intended meaning is clear in English and not just a word-for-word translation of the French.

Question 9

Nearly all candidates understood that Mr Durand went to Italy to help migrants cross the border into France, but most lost the mark by omitting or mistranslating 'illegal'. Centres should ensure candidates know the expression *en situation irrégulière* as many tried to translate it word-for-word.

Question 10

Less than half the candidates were able to explain that the state is fighting against the people traffickers. Very few candidates seemed to know the word *passeurs*. Lots answered that the state was trying to stop illegal immigration and did not include any notion of a network of people traffickers.

Question 11

Few candidates understood *pourchassés*. More often than not, it was translated incorrectly as 'persecuted' instead of 'pursued' or 'fleeing'.

Question 12

Most candidates correctly identified that France wanted to be a land of refuge at the start of the Revolution, but they needed to go further and include how attitudes to foreigners changed later in revolutionary France. Quite a few candidates needed to read this question more carefully as they missed the need to talk about change in revolutionary France and talked about *l'ancien régime*. *Étrangers* was also, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, often translated as 'strangers', which was not appropriate in this context.

Question 13

Premier pays d'immigration was misunderstood by some to mean 'the first country of immigration' instead of 'the principal country for immigration'. As in question 9, candidates needed to understand *en situation régulière* and that the immigrants were not illegal and were entitled to be there in order to score the second point for the question. Candidates should also avoid giving superfluous information about Nazi Germany and/or the economic crisis.

Question 14

This question was generally well answered by the majority of candidates. A few candidates could improve by avoiding word-for-word translations of the expression *reposant sur une idée de justice* as this did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the text.

Question 15

Most candidates were able to score at least one of the points awarded for this question. Some missed the *presque* when talking about Europe. The best candidates were able to give some very good translations of *dépend du moment*.

Texte à lire 3

The majority of candidates achieved at least 50 per cent, some making good use of the reading passage, so gaps in vocabulary were generally not a problem. Some of the structures or manipulation needed in order to make use of the vocabulary in the reading passage proved to be an issue for many candidates. A number of candidates fared very well, clearly well prepared for the traps posed by this translation. Many candidates seemed to find the first half of the translation challenging whilst the second half was generally dealt with better. The tenses in the first half posed some problems. The last two sentences of the translation produced the most accurate responses. The main points that emerged were as follows:

- Some candidates could improve by having better knowledge of vocabulary such as 'whereas' (many candidates used *bien que*, *lorsque* or *malgré que* instead of *tandis que*), 'with open arms', 'thousands', 'as a duty of hospitality', 'policy' (which was in the text) and 'labour' (as in workforce). 'Undertook' also proved challenging, although a number of translations were accepted (*s'est engagé à*, *a entrepris de*, *s'est mis à*, *s'est chargé de*).
- The words and phrases given in the second reading text were on the whole accurately used, the only two exceptions being *politique* for 'policy' and 'migrants' sometimes translated as *immigrés*. *Accueillir* was usually correctly copied but not always correctly conjugated, losing a letter in the process. Some minor mistakes in *accueilli* were tolerated. Candidates should be reminded that *bienvenu* cannot be used as a verb.
- Concordances and agreements of verbs were on the whole less subject to mistakes than last year.
- Knowledge of genders is an area that could be improved: *un manque* and *l'agriculture* were sometimes in the wrong gender, and *un changement* was sometimes rendered incorrectly as *une change*.
- The use of correct prepositions after verbs was less of an issue this year. *Commencer à* and *s'engager à* were mostly correct. The correct preposition was more of an issue with expressions like *de l'autre côté*, *à bras ouverts* and *par devoir d'hospitalité*.
- Centres could help candidates by focusing on the translation of 'one could': in this context, it should be translated with the imperfect *on pouvait* rather than the conditional *on pourrait*.
- *Tous ceux* – candidates should be reminded of the spelling and agreement of *tout* depending on the context.
- *Gouvernement* was pleasingly usually spelt accurately.

Part II – Listening

The average marks were a little higher for this section than the reading section, with the exception of the summary. To improve, candidates should work on summary technique. There were some instances of candidates attempting to write phonetic versions of what they had heard rather than communicating meaning and demonstrating real understanding. Candidates should avoid writing down all the details they hear and instead give the overarching idea needed to answer the question. For example, exact numbers were often not necessarily needed, but if candidates chose to write them and did so incorrectly, they could invalidate their answers.

Texte à écouter 1

This proved to be the easiest section for candidates, many of them achieving their best mark for this section and some achieving full marks.

Question 17

Nearly all candidates demonstrated comprehension of the fact that the aim of the project was to provide electricity to people in Africa. Some candidates wrote *importer* or *donner* rather than *apporter* / *fournir* and, in some instances, there were incorrect attempts at *750 millions* which meant candidates missed out on marks. Candidates should take care over the spelling of *africains*. Wrong gender was not penalised here.

Question 18

This question was well answered. Most candidates wrote too much with the unnecessary preamble of '*ils ne sont pas dans le vieux schéma de l'aide au développement d'autrefois*', and *le vieux schéma* was frequently misunderstood, alternatives being *chemin* or even *chez moi*, but most candidates went on to write the correct answer of *Ce sont les Africains qui conduisent les opérations*. A few candidates did not pick out the main point needed to answer the question.

Question 19

This question was usually well answered, although there were a number of misspellings of *renouvelable*, which meant candidates lost marks.

Question 20

This question was also well answered. *À effet de serre*, needed to be included in the answer.

Question 21

A lot of candidates included *les premiers bulldozers sont déjà en action* as part of their answer, which did not score. To get the two marks, candidates needed to say that *l'Afrique a un potentiel énergétique hors du commun* and *il suffit d'y mettre les moyens pour l'exploiter*. The vast majority of candidates were able to score at least one mark, managing the first part, but then gave the details of the different types of energy, which perhaps led them to believe they had done enough for two marks. The expression *mettre les moyens* was a challenge for a number of candidates.

Question 22

Some candidates had some difficulty formulating their answer in a way which enabled them to score a mark.

Question 23

Nearly all the candidates understood that they would stay in Africa. *Elle ne va plus immigrer* instead of *émigrer* was tolerated when it was in addition to the first part of the answer. A few candidates used the correct word for the context which was *émigrer*.

Question 24

This question posed few problems for most candidates who were able to transcribe more or less successfully *l'importance de l'oralité* (sometimes rendered as *l'auralité* or even *l'horalité* – which did not communicate understanding but was accepted in line with the marking principles), *un différent sens du temps* (sense was also found) and *une vraie fraternité*.

Texte à écouter 2

This section was generally answered well.

Question 25

Many possible answers could score here. Centres should encourage candidates to practise the correct rendition of numbers prior to the exam to avoid confusion between 75 and 65, and numbers such as 15 000, for example. Many candidates wrote a lot of information, therefore scoring the 2 marks despite some mistakes.

Question 26

This question had two possible answers, either of which could score the one mark. The majority of candidates understood that one priest can be responsible for several parishes. Far fewer candidates elicited the other correct answer that priests were imported from abroad. A relatively common mistake was the misinterpretation of *plusieurs* for 'more' rather than 'several'. Centres should remind candidates to take care to read the question properly: in this case, a consequence rather than a cause of the shortage of priests was required.

Question 27

Many candidates narrowed their answer to only the African priests being overworked, or they took *déracinement* to mean that they were victims of racism, both of which invalidated their answer. A surprising number of candidates thought that *surcharge de travail* referred to overcharging for their work rather than being overworked.

Question 28

Candidates were asked how a priest's work was characterised. Candidates needed to communicate the overarching ideas rather than listing all the aspects of a priest's work. The correct answer was that it is a very complex job, it is easier to be a business manager than a priest or it is different to what it used to be in the past. Any one of these points would score one of the two marks available. Many candidates scored at least one of the two marks available.

Question 29

This question was usually well answered. Some candidates lost out on the mark because they wrote 'the consumer attitude' without mentioning 'towards religion'. A pleasing number of candidates understood that dissatisfied customers wanted their money back after a wedding or baptism.

Question 30

Most candidates were able to score at least one mark for this question as they understood that the church was offering a product that no longer meets demand or that the message was incomprehensible to its listeners. There were some interesting attempts at translating *incompréhensible* into English which were not always successful.

Texte à écouter 3

Question 38

It is pleasing to report that the summary exercise was executed well by many candidates. Most candidates stuck to the word limit for this task. The most successful candidates had written and re-written their summaries. Candidates need to be reminded to cross out or clearly mark their draft work. There were some infringements of the word limit, which, in the interest of fairness to all candidates, were consistently penalised with all material beyond the 100-word limit disregarded. A lot of candidates seem to think they need to write a structured paragraph whereas if they wrote bullet points under four different headings, they would be able to get more information across in fewer words. Candidates should be made aware that titles of headings are not counted in the word count.

Candidates should be encouraged to read through their summary to ensure it makes sense and is written in good English, and that they have covered all four bullet points. Bullet point 3 (his comments about staff) proved more challenging for the majority of candidates. Often, candidates' summaries were too vague to score. Good candidates covered all the ground within the permitted number of words and scored highly, the best among them qualifying for full marks. Candidates need to be careful not to distort the key details of what they hear, that their ideas are precise and that key items are not omitted, for example:

- 'He rejects standardised food' rather than 'he buys high quality produce'.
- 'He can make ends meet with the revenue stream of his nine shops' rather than 'new shops'.
- 'His Parisian clientele is prepared to pay a lot of money' – candidates should be encouraged to question whether their response makes sense in the context (some candidates provided a literal translation of *ils sont prêts à payer le prix d'un cochon pour un bon bifteck*).
- 'He also sells sculptures for thousands of euros' – candidates could again improve by revising numbers prior to the exam (thousands became millions or another number on occasions).
- The fact that staff is a key concern because everything is made by hand – some of the information here was often missing.
- 'He needs motivated and skilled workers who will copy his lead' was often translated word-for-word – candidates should be careful of literal translations such as 'able to follow him in his creation' which did not score.
- The technical details of the last point were usually rendered well, but candidates needed to complete the point by saying that 'it was entirely made of chocolate and technically difficult to construct' or 'lacked a frame'.

FRENCH (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9779/03
Writing and Usage

General comments

The Writing and Usage paper (Paper 3) is designed to test candidates' ability by means of a series of exercises. They have to write a discursive essay on a contemporary topic, know the correct verb form to use in a particular construction, manipulate language and demonstrate comprehension of the content of a current affairs article by filling in gaps with the appropriate word or phrase chosen from a selection of four options. The paper is designed to give candidates across the whole range the chance to perform according to ability. The paper has some testing grammar points and five essay questions which give candidates the chance to demonstrate familiarity with contemporary global issues or talking points as well as the critical thinking skills that will enable them to form a cogent argument.

The selection of essay topics in this summer's paper covered what constitutes success in life, women's liberation, doping in sport, keeping healthy and the role of work. The usage section of the paper tested knowledge of verb forms in **Exercise 1** including sequence of tenses with *si*, use of the subjunctive, construction after *après*, use of reflexive verbs and preceding direct object. **Exercise 2** tested the ability of candidates to manipulate language and included structures used after *pendant que*, use of the relative pronoun, use of the negative, inversion in a question and subjunctive usage. **Exercise 3** provided candidates with a newspaper article about one French region's approach to countering the scourge of air pollution. Candidates were given a grid of possible words and phrases to fill in the gaps in the text. For the Discursive Essay question, 24 marks were awarded for Accuracy and Linguistic Range and 16 for Development and Organisation of Ideas. In the usage section, **Exercises 1** and **2** were worth 5 marks each and **Exercise 3** was worth 10 marks.

Candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and understood the requirements of the paper. There is, however, a growing number of candidates who write essays in excess of 1500 words, in some cases up to 2000 words. The rubric clearly states that the length should be 350–450 words. Writing essays in great excess of this length can prove to be unhelpful for candidates since the quality of the writing can deteriorate. They get carried away and lose focus which can result in a rambling and repetitive answer. Paragraphing gets forgotten and language errors accumulate. There were some very good essays at the upper end which demonstrated a strong engagement with the topic tackled. These answers showed a real maturity of thought and were able to draw conclusions after a rigorous discussion of the elements of the question. These candidates had at their disposal an impressive range of complex structures, idiom and vocabulary which meant that their essays had concision and clarity. Most candidates wrote essays that were relevant to the questions set and it was evident that they had studied a range of contemporary issues, had learned the appropriate vocabulary and had opinions they wished to express. Other candidates needed to provide responses that were less superficial with more illustration. They needed a greater range of linguistic structures, and the control of grammar and vocabulary necessary to write an essay of this type. In these cases, arguments needed to be clearer. These candidates should avoid simply describing situations or making very minor points. They should have a level of French that enables them to move away from English structures and vocabulary, and create a more French-sounding essay.

It must be said, however, that in the large majority of cases, candidates were able to offer some interesting and varied views on their chosen topic.

Common errors in the essay section involved:

- use of English words such as *pervader*, *les expectations*, *la balance*, *la recognition*, *les expérimentations*, *similairement*, *luxuriéux*, *les advertissements/adverts*, *réguler*, *restreindre*, *undéniablement*, *actuellement* (*en fait*), *espace* (*place*), *change* (*changement*), *stage* (*étape*), *définitivement*
- incorrect genders of common words such as *âge*, *monde*, *avantage*, *public*, *crime*, *manque*, *problème*, *service*, *effet*, *thème*, *rôle*, *type*, *programme*, *aspect*

- overuse of *le taux*, often incorrectly used for *le nombre*
- misspellings such as, *example*, *personellement*, *traditionel*, *gouvernement*, *significant*, *cases* (for *cas*)
- incorrect use of a past participle agreement such as *ils ont menés*
- use of *mieux* for *meilleur*, *mal* for *mauvais*, *bien* for *bon*, *vite* for *rapide*
- failure to discriminate between the forms of *leur* and *leurs* such as *leur enfants*, *leurs donner* and use of *leur* for *eux*
- phonetic spellings such as *ce* for *c'est* or *ceux*, *ses* for *ces* and vice versa
- inability to form reflexive verbs correctly particularly in the *nous* form such as *nous devons s'occuper de la forme*
- paragraphs starting with inappropriate link words such as *aussi*, *ensuite*, *alors*
- confusion of *penser à* and *de*
- incorrect preposition use with *permettre*

Individual questions

Part I: Discursive Essay

The essay question gives candidates the opportunity to discuss their chosen title in any way that they wish and there is no correct answer or viewpoint. Their argument should be convincing and with a degree of balance. If a candidate argues for one side of the argument very strongly, there should be at least some recognition that there is another view. Planning is clearly an important part of the art of essay writing. Most candidates wrote plans but these were often sketchy and written in English. They then tried to translate the ideas with the result that the essay sounded stilted and awkward. It is definitely to be recommended that plans are written in French which will get the candidate into the right frame of mind for thinking in French. Some candidates wrote very long plans in the extension booklets or even a complete first draft of their essay which they then had to copy out. As in previous years, many candidates listed numerous phrases that they would try to incorporate into their essays come what may. These phrases which give a framework to a serious piece of discursive writing were often used to pad out responses. In some centres, most candidates used the same stock phrase to begin their essay – e.g. *Tout le monde s'accord(e) à penser qu'un grand(e) problème auquel nous devons faire face de nos jours est celui de l'obésité/dopage/libération des femmes*. Phrases such as *autant que je sache* seemed to be used not merely to pad out sentences but also to notch up another subjunctive. There is a generally held belief that essays must be stuffed with subjunctives to be successful. This strategy can lead to forced and awkward expression and often a simpler structure would be more appropriate, clearer and more French. Candidates should also avoid including unsupported and improbable statistics from a range of journals, magazines and unnamed academics.

Candidates in this cohort appeared to have understood the major implications of the questions set and, having acquired some relevant information from their reading of French texts and articles, were able to offer some genuine personal insights into the topics. In general, candidates need to consider carefully their opening paragraph as it is this which sets the tone and parameters of the argument. A definition of the terms involved in the question helps to set the essay off in the right direction. It is, however, important that candidates do not make extravagant claims about their essay in their introduction which they cannot then fulfil. Most candidates did adhere to the rubric about the suggested number of words but a significant number, as already stated, ended up writing in excess of 1500 words.

Question 1(a) « Le succès ne dépend pas de ce que vous possédez, mais plutôt de ce que vous faites de votre vie. » Êtes-vous d'accord?

This question was attempted by a small number of candidates. It elicited some strong personal responses and a variety of different approaches. Many candidates felt that success was a difficult concept to pin down as it means different things for different people. They felt, though, that having money was a key part of making a success of one's life as it gives better life chances. They spoke of the opportunity to have a good education, a comfortable lifestyle and the chance to have a range of experiences whether in travel, fine dining, music, art or sport. It was clear though that success can be measured in different terms to having money or possessions. It may be measured through the degree of happiness or satisfaction experienced in one's life, and in the quality of one's interactions with others such as family, friends and work colleagues. Candidates were keen to mention those who had little in the way of worldly possessions but were considered to be successful because of their impact on others and their ability to change the world in some way – Gandhi was one such example. Often the success of a life is not recognised until the person is dead and they leave an important legacy. Candidates were quite philosophical in their approach to this question and most of them realised that personal success depends on many things and can come from many quarters such as one's work, one's hobbies or one's relationship with others.

Question 1(b) « La libération des femmes n'est jamais venue et ne viendra jamais. » Partagez-vous ce point de vue?

This was the most popular question and was answered by candidates across the ability range. There were some very good insights into the current state of women's role in society. It was clear that some candidates were very familiar with the work of Simone de Beauvoir and many quoted her. Essays showed a good balance of where we were, where we are and where we should be in relation to the role of women. Candidates gave a historical context to their answers by referring to the Suffragette movement, the importance of women during the world wars and their increasing liberation during the Sixties. It was felt that progress had clearly been made but that there was still some way to go. Reference was made to the salary gap still in evidence today, the MeToo and BalanceTonPorc movements highlighting the ongoing significant levels of sexual harassment and abuse, and the anti-abortion laws passed recently in Alabama. Candidates were also clear that women could not be considered to be liberated until there was global liberation. Things may have improved for women in many developed countries but there are still countries in the world where women are subjugated and considered to be the property of men. This question brought out some strong reactions and was, on the whole, well answered with some thoughtful, relevant and mature insights.

Question 1(c) « Autoriser le dopage rendrait le sport plus juste. » Dans quelle mesure est-ce que vous partagez ce jugement?

This was a less popular question with candidates. Responses were quite balanced with candidates able to see the potential benefits of allowing all athletes to take drugs while recognising that this would not necessarily solve the problem of equality in sport. It was generally thought that those countries or teams with the most money would be able to access better drugs, commission research into new drugs and look after the health of their athlete/players better. Those athletes with less money behind them would still be at a disadvantage. If doping was made legal, then there would be a huge pressure on athletes to take drugs whether they wanted to or not and many would be forced to take possibly dangerous substances which would damage their health. Many candidates believed in the purity of sport. They felt it was an opportunity to test the natural speed, endurance or skill of the human body and that legal doping would disrupt this and spoil the public's enjoyment of sport. Others felt that doping would enable better performance and thus a more exciting experience for the spectator. It was felt that currently there is inequality in sport since there are some people who use drugs and others who do not. It was felt that testing needed to be more rigorous and that drug cheats should receive lifetime bans. Candidates were generally able to see both sides of the question, provide some good illustration and come to some form of conclusion.

Question 1(d) « Se maintenir en bonne forme est le devoir de l'individu. » Qu'en pensez-vous ?

This was a popular question that was answered by candidates from across the ability range. Some essays could have been better by talking less generally about the importance of staying healthy and more about whether it was a *devoir* or not. On the whole, candidates felt that to stay healthy and in good shape was beneficial to one's experience of life and should be encouraged. They felt, however, that certain forces in society hindered the ability to lead a healthy life. Poverty was considered to be one of the main causes of obesity and general poor health. Candidates felt that people living in deprived areas would need assistance to remain healthy and could not be held wholly responsible for the state of their health. Blame was set squarely on the government for creating the kind of austerity that left people unable to afford healthy food

such as fruit and vegetables and left them at the mercy of the local cheap takeaways. Social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram were held responsible for various eating disorders among young people by their constant portrayal of images of perfect bodies. It was felt that children need help and support to lead a healthy lifestyle but that adults should be personally responsible for their own health insofar as their circumstances allowed. Essays that scored highest for content were those that mentioned the importance of staying healthy and fit in order not only to gain full enjoyment from life but also to prevent oneself being a burden on the state. Candidates pointed out the cost to the health services of people with obesity, diabetes and heart disease caused by poor diet and lack of exercise. Overall, candidates took quite a hard line and considered that it was really the duty of the individual to look after him/herself and to exercise some self-control.

Question 1(e) « Le travail, c'est la vie ; sans lui, l'existence ne signifie rien. » Discutez.

This was a popular question and mostly attempted by those candidates with a philosophical bent. There were some very good answers that explored not just the role of work but that of existence itself. The question was clearly understood and it was the level of sophistication of the approach which determined the mark. Candidates were quick to point out that work takes up a large part of one's life and therefore, life tends to revolve around it. It is a means to an end in that it provides the money to enable people to have a full experience of life. It gives meaning to life and can provide the stimulus to keep the brain active as well as providing the counterpoint to leisure. It was, however, made clear that this notion of work does not apply to everyone. Many people are unemployed or cannot work but it would be hard to say that their existence means nothing. Those that are in jobs that take up the major part of their lives can be said to be living only for work – these could be people working in a factory in China or highly paid executives who are workaholics. Candidates were keen to point out that, in their view, work should only be a part of life and that existence is about much more than that – it is more a state of being. The more philosophical then talked about the search for meaning in life. They felt that for most people, work is a very important part of that search for meaning as well as a major component of self-identity. It provides friendship, challenge, engagement and with any luck, some degree of fulfilment. There were many different views on this subject, most of which were interesting and showed a strong personal response.

Part II: Usage

Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well understood by candidates with most achieving 3 or 4 out of 5 marks. Incorrect answers were distributed across all questions and included the following:

Question 2 – *venirai, viendrais*

Question 3 – *va, ira, aillé*

Question 4 – *avoir appris, avoir apprit*

Question 5 – *téléphonés*

Question 6 – *a/avait donné*

Exercise 2

This exercise tested a range of grammatical points. Few candidates achieved full marks but many achieved 3 or 4 out of 5. The following incorrect answers were seen:

Question 7 – *voyageions, nous soyons voyagés*

Question 8 – *laquelle, le quel*

Question 9 – *nous ne sommes que restés*

Question 10 – *faisait-il*

Question 11 – *est-il, il est, il soie*

Exercise 3

Candidates of all abilities achieved good marks on this exercise, showing that they had understood both the content and grammatical structure of the passage. **Questions 16, 19, 22, and 24** were some of the clearer discriminators although incorrect answers were distributed across the whole exercise.

General administration issues

When students write their essays using a computer, the Cambridge cover sheet must be signed by the invigilator and the comments box completed with anything unusual that may have occurred e.g. a candidate finishing early, being unwell, computer problem.

Standard Continuation booklets must be used for any extra work. Spare lined paper should not be used.

FRENCH (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9779/04
Topics and Texts

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- read the question with care and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close attention to the question
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid simply retelling the story.

General comments

Candidates should plan their essays before setting pen to paper. A well-structured essay will be sensibly paragraphed, and the discussion will lead from an introduction to a conclusion. In responding to the question on a literary text, candidates should reflect on the whole question, not just focus on one specific word.

For both parts of this paper, a good level of understanding and knowledge of the texts and films is required, expressed in well-argued responses with relevant illustration. The topics section invites the acquisition of a broad cultural knowledge of the topic studied through the material chosen. It is recommended, and required, to write on two sources rather than three. For answers in French, candidates should strive to achieve a high level of accuracy, and determine to use a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns; a sense of idiom would be a bonus.

In both parts of the paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully
- plan their answer keeping the question in mind throughout
- define the terms of the question in the introduction
- support any assertions with close references to the text and/or film
- make sure that quotations, if used, support the argument
- make sure that all quotations are accurate
- use paraphrasing and allusion as an alternative to overlong quotations
- make sure to include analysis and argument, and avoid narrative
- demonstrate knowledge by using it as supporting evidence for the argument
- exclude information that is irrelevant to the question.

Part I: Cultural Topics

Candidates should:

- make sure that they learn the necessary vocabulary to write about their topic when preparing for this part
- remember that the rubric requires reference to only two of the works. Writing about all three may lead to a lack of depth
- try to demonstrate their knowledge of underlying themes, and mention comparisons and links between the two works
- proofread carefully after writing, paying special attention to verb forms and adjectival agreements.

Part II: Literary Texts

In context questions candidates should:

- make sure they analyse the extract, showing how its content is related to the rest of the work
- avoid using the passage as a springboard for a general essay
- be careful to analyse, rather than re-tell the story of the extract.

General comments

This paper combines an exploration of a cultural topic in French with the analysis of a French literary text in English. The examiners continue to be impressed by the candidates' preparation for, and engagement with, this paper, now in its tenth year. The quality of answers indicates that teachers and candidates have established a good grasp of the requirements of the syllabus and of the demands of this paper. The candidates' scripts confirm that the aim of the syllabus to raise cultural awareness and to develop critical faculties is being fulfilled, often impressively so. It is also pleasing to note that new centres are well aware of the demands of the paper and have prepared their candidates appropriately.

The vast majority of answers engaged well with the terms of the questions, with the best answers revealing detailed knowledge of the texts and films used as supporting evidence in a cogent and coherent line of argument. The level of language was, in the main, of a satisfactory to good standard, and often quite sophisticated in the use of both vocabulary and syntax. The overwhelming majority of candidates managed to strike a good balance when approaching two texts and/or films and showed the ability to draw considered comparisons between the two works according to the terms of the question, either in the body of the essay or in the conclusion.

The answers on cultural topics indicated a good knowledge of the source material and that the narrative approach was less in evidence. All the topics were studied this year by Centres. The quality of language was at least satisfactory, and often very good, indicating that candidates had built up the requisite vocabulary for this register and were comfortable in writing extensively in the target language. Common problems were finding French equivalents for 'happiness', 'isolation', 'to expect' and 'valid'. The perennial confusion between direct and indirect object pronouns was much in evidence (especially with 'aider').

The best answers to the second part of the Paper, Texts, showed an excellent ability to organise material in direct reference to the terms of the question and also showed command of detail of the text studied; they proved to be cogent and considered arguments. All the texts were studied by Centres this year, reflecting a wide range of tastes. Most candidates were well practised in structuring their answers, notably in defining the terms of the question with a clear introduction and conclusion. The examiners noted the generally satisfactory quality of English and the use of appropriate register in the vast majority of scripts. There was, though, some evidence of inventiveness in English, especially in coining of abstract nouns (e.g. 'admittal', 'obstination', 'tragicness'). A number of candidates confused *climactic* with *climatic*, and the phrase 'in regards to' sometimes used instead of 'with regard to'.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Question 1

- (a) This was a popular topic where the film *Intouchables* was compared with either the other film or the novel, which made for plenty of material for discussion. Candidates wrote extensively on instances of help being offered. Stronger essays were able to comment on how support and comfort influenced both the recipient and the giver of help, developing an informed discussion about fraternity. In a number of essays, candidates focused on the improvement in Philippe's life, but did not acknowledge that Driss was the one made 'heureux' by helping Philippe. Some mentioned the 'carers' rejected by Philippe who certainly gained no pleasure from their work. Philippe chose Driss partly because he could see that his unusual helper was lively and would gain as much happiness as he would from their relationship. Indeed, the deepest happiness felt by Philippe is not simply, as candidates mentioned, in the excursions and the fun, but in Philippe feeling that, despite his disability, he was of use to someone else. Discussion of *No et Moi* was lively and well-informed. Good answers observed that it was not just Lou who benefitted from helping No, but Lou's mother and Lucas also changed. Whilst good knowledge of the individual scenes was in evidence, there was little mention of the satirical nature of Poiré's film. On occasion, previously written essays about liberty, equality and fraternity were reproduced with less successful adaptation to the title. The comparative element between the works was generally well handled, though in some cases paragraphing of argument could have been improved, particularly when there was a change of focus from one work to another.
- (b) Most answers could find material to support the proposition in the question, though the idea of a 'forte critique' was not always given sufficient attention. The differences (class, background,

personality) between Driss and Philippe were always mentioned, but sometimes without any particular conclusions being drawn. Stronger answers recognised the stark divisions between wealth and poverty, education, culture, crime, drug use etc. and were able to link these to a thoughtful argument. Some candidates found it easier to discuss *No et Moi* in this respect. Those who dealt with Poiré's film were not always able to find the most convincing illustrations in the film to argue their point. In a number of answers, candidates wrote well about social criticism, but tended to overlook the economic aspects.

Question 2

- (a) This question allowed candidates to shape their arguments effectively. They showed good awareness of common themes: criticism of hypocrisy, self-aggrandizement and indifference to 'inferiors'. They saw Molière's play as a comedy with an individual as its target of criticism. The Chabrol film was seen as a more straightforward indictment of the bourgeois attitude to the working class. The satire of the Buñuel film was appreciated, especially the importance of keeping up appearances and fears of not conforming to class expectations; there were also some relevant comments about cinema technique and surrealism. Essays were supported well by short quotations from the films and the play.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates chose to compare the two films. Answers displayed a very good knowledge of both films and enjoyment of the topic was evident in candidates' enthusiasm. Stronger responses were able to develop a cogent argument allied with apposite illustration of their points in discussing the title. Other answers were keen to point out the competing attributes of altruism and selfishness in weighing up potential heroic qualities, though in some cases, the essay was driven more by the examples rather than by argument. The motivation and courage of the resistance fighters (especially Felix and Devaivre) was well analysed, and contrasted usefully with those acting out of more selfish motives. Some of the other characters (e.g. Mathilde, le Chanois) could have provided further grist to the mill, but were not always mentioned. There was, nevertheless, thoughtful examination of what constituted heroism, especially against a background of fear and shortages.
- (b) Answers to this question were generally well-informed, though only the best could compare and contrast in a rigorously organised development. In some scripts, the discursive tendencies precluded thorough analysis; many listed scenes, which related either to pessimistic traits or, in more persuasive answers, to ambiguity of message, without a synthetic overview. Some candidates attempted thematic plans. These could have been improved by avoiding swamping the overriding argument with illustrations. The focus on discussing one work then the other was usually a more effective approach.

Question 4

- (a) Answers were generally well-informed and could give many examples of Marjane rebelling against the constraints of the Iranian regime (e.g. clothing, music) and how life experience (e.g. exile in Vienna, a failed marriage) developed sufficient inner strength and confidence for her to stand on her own feet. Some essays which concentrated on her opposition to the hijab and her comparative freedom in Vienna did not link these to a broader appreciation of her maturation in seeking personal freedom and political free thinking. Some candidates read 'liberté d'action' as 'liberté', but this did not seriously impede their discussion. Surprisingly, the gender of 'voile' in this context was sometimes insecure. Regarding *Bonjour Tristesse*, candidates had much to write about Cécile and Elsa, the two main protagonists who were keen on a certain fluidity in their social relationships, and compared them usefully to Anne. Anne was variously seen as a concerned, mature woman who wanted to put Cécile on the right path, or as an interfering and unjustified brake on Cécile's freedom to do as she wished. It was clear that candidates could identify with the plight of the protagonists and enjoyed engaging with these works.
- (b) Centres chose to compare the film with Sagan's novel. There were a good number of high quality answers to this question, demonstrating perceptive analysis together with judicious illustration from the works. In some cases, the discussion would focus on the interchange between different characters without seeking to develop the analysis more broadly, which could have led to some more interesting comparative study. For *Persepolis*, answers generally thought that the family was

a determining factor, especially Marjane's mother and grandmother, though the political element and the encouragement to be freethinking and happy in her Iranian identity were sometimes underplayed or omitted. Sagan's novel brought out a range of evaluations, some feeling that Cécile was a contemptuous egotist, bent on her own hedonism, others identifying her machinations to remain free from Anne's constraints as perfectly understandable.

Question 5

- (a) This proved the more popular question for this topic. There was some confusion over the concept of 'exil physique' with some candidates thinking it was something metaphysical when 'geographical' covers most of it. The novel invites comparison between Sebbar and Huston's lives, and candidates successfully showed that Sebbar found adaptation harder than Huston and that both succeeded, to various degrees, through the act of writing. Introducing a comparison with the film was found to be a more difficult task. Candidates underplayed the extreme nature of Nawal's alienation in her home land and in Canada – a sense of exile her daughter acquires after her death when seeking the truth about her mother's past.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Part 2

Question 6

- (a) There were a number of outstanding responses to the commentary which illustrated, through close reading, the importance of this moment in the play. They showed, for example, that the repeated 'si', the reference to duty, willpower and virtue form part of an appeal to reason through argument: love can be controlled and diminished through reason and absence. They noted the echo of 'croyez-moi' in Néron's counter-argument, and the disdainful tone of the emperor putting Burrhus in his place as an advisor in any field but that of love. The final monologue anticipates the birth of Néron as a monster. Those candidates who had not practised the art of commentary were less successful: they did not detect the finer points in the extract, some ignored Burrhus's conclusive soliloquy. A very small number of candidates took the passage as an excuse to write all they knew about Burrhus and Néron.
- (b) Most candidates argued successfully that 'what Britannicus is' is the cause of his fall, while showing the other side of the argument and supporting their work with apt quotations. Although it was the least popular option on Britannicus, there were some first-rate answers displaying excellent ability to marshal material and argument, as well as clear enjoyment of the form of neo-classical French tragedy.
- (c) This was the more popular question on Racine, and all answers revealed a good knowledge of the play. Candidates had to demonstrate the significance of the role of Junie, not just describe her role. The best noted that Junie is a character added by Racine whose role is essential to show the tyranny and cruelty of Néron. She represents human values of fidelity and love which do not belong in Néron's world. There were some excellent essays, well-supported by short quotations. Other scripts made reference to Junie as representing the voice of truth and reason, but were apt to concentrate on her position at the centre of a love triangle and as a catalyst for the plot, rather than examine the broader significance of her character.

Question 7

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) There were some very good scripts discussing the importance of reason. The way in which candidates showed their skill in analysis, their maturity of thought and ability to write on philosophical themes is a credit to their diligence, application and the guidance they received. Elsewhere, answers demonstrated a commendable knowledge of the *contes*, but were not always successful in developing thematically the illustrations given. Criticism of tradition, preconceptions, religion and use of force were all mentioned as targets of Voltaire's pen.
- (c) Candidates had clearly enjoyed engaging with these two *contes* by Voltaire and there were some very good answers which showed real engagement with the question. They articulated the idea of different functions of humour and irony and balanced analysis from both stories. Some answers

enumerated examples of different types of humour, linking example to purpose. More engaging ones held in mind the overall purpose of Voltaire's style and were able to discuss variations of humour and satire, often within the context of eighteenth century thought. In general, good comments were made about relativism in *Micromegas*. Some essays, though, did not mention most of the targets of satire in *Zadig* or did not refer to satire at all.

Question 8

- (a) There were a fair number of candidates who attempted the commentary question this year. Some, though, were not aware of the methodology and technique of the exercise. The better answers were able to make convincing cases by close analysis of the text before widening the perspective to show how such elements were evident elsewhere in the work, or to show how Thérèse's character developed. A number of answers, for example, chose to discuss the significance of specific words in the passage (e.g. 'jaune') without relating them to the context of Thérèse's thoughts about the *jeudistes*. Nonetheless, there were examples of excellent commentaries which analysed both the style and substance of the extract, and which discussed with acuity what it revealed about Thérèse.
- (b) This was by far the preferred option for candidates answering the Zola question. However, only the best candidates managed to marshal enough textual evidence for the proposition, or really explore what was meant by 'madness'. Most candidates felt that it was important to explore what they understood of Zola's Naturalism, commenting on milieu, environment, heredity etc., but this sometimes meant that they veered away from the real focus of the question. Where essay technique could be improved, candidates are advised not to use the introduction to disclose the whole line of argument; they ought to keep their powder dry. In some cases, the introduction or the conclusion appeared rushed or overly generic and non-committal.
- (c) Many of the answers plotted the lead up to the murder, the mechanics of the murder and the remorse which then followed, leading to feelings of increasing guilt. There was clearly good command of the material and some understanding of the psychological burden borne by the two main protagonists. On occasion, essays forced Zola's scientific determinism onto the structure of the essay without examining sufficiently the significant and enduring effects of transgression and guilt on not just the mental state of Thérèse and Camille, but also their physical appearance. Comparatively few answers, however, succeeded in looking at the deeper significance of crime and punishment in the novel (e.g. the relevance for both narrator and characters, its use as a structural leitmotiv, the suicide pact as the only way out of an unbearable life).

Question 9

- (a) Those who attempted the commentaries showed appropriate training and impressive, sustained analysis. In particular, they noted the imposing facade of the Préfecture de police which still stands as it was in the forties. This building contrasts in its apparent solidity with the human uncertainty and transience within. The people are no longer there; the trace of many has vanished and no answer was ever given to hundreds of letters. Ironically, at the moment when these letters are being rediscovered, nobody is there to give a reply.
- (b) Most candidates tried with varying success to give a 'both – and' answer. The lack of enough historical documents, the single interview and the gaps in records were noted. More was written about Modiano's affinity with the plight of Dora, his identification with her and his recreation through memory and writing of a picture both individual and typical. Dora represents the countless lost and aspects of Modiano himself. Essays showed a close knowledge of the text and an excellent appreciation of the historical, philosophical and moral aspects of the novel.
- (c) There were some very good essays on the character of Dora, and on her significance as the representative of a lost generation and as a figure with whom Modiano identifies. Candidates also understood the recreation of Dora's life as a way of gaining access to the past through memory. It was pleasing to see the degree of insight and understanding in relation to a demanding text.

Question 10

- (a) This was a fairly popular choice. The approaches to commentary passage on this novel were generally satisfactory; there were fewer attempts to depart from the passage. The precise context of the passage might have been described with greater precision. Examiners were struck that even

candidates who wrote with sensitivity on the passage did not find much to write on the section between ll. 6 and 11. Candidates understood well enough the sense of triumph that Bernard exudes here, in the novel as a whole, but could have concentrated more on what the passage itself reveals of his attitude and personality. The very best candidates were able to pick up the narrator's irony, depicting Bernard as a man of limited feelings and intellect.

- (b) Some candidates dealt in too general a manner with the win/lose issue, sometimes losing sight of the evidence in the novel itself. The question of what hold Bernard still held over Thérèse divided candidates, the best scripts showing a good understanding of the situation and arguing clearly and persuasively. It was generally felt that Thérèse had mixed feelings when she ended up in Paris and justification was usually pertinent. Essays were generally effective at mentioning the suffocating effect of joining the family and the subsequent reaction of rebelling against her situation. In terms of identifying 'révolte' in the novel, the question was approached in a variety of ways, with Thérèse seen as breaking out of: bourgeois society, preoccupied with property; the family, as her forebear Julie Bellade had before her; the intellectual limitations of the rural area as her horizons were widened, evident in her conversation with Jean Azévédo; an unloving marriage, fuelled by her jealousy at Anne's relationship; her sense of isolation and imprisonment by Bernard after the trial. All candidates discussed Thérèse in Paris, some seeing her 'escape' from Argelouse as a major reason for arguing for a 'win' for Thérèse. More discerning answers pointed to a more nuanced interpretation of the final conversation between Thérèse and Bernard.
- (c) There were various approaches to this question. A number of essays examined the importance of the preface and related it to Mauriac's treatment of Thérèse. Answers discussed the role of religion in bourgeois provincial life effectively, especially the lip service paid to spirituality, and most mentioned the significance of Jean Azévédo's role. However, a few answers did not perceive Bernard's hypocrisy (causing Thérèse's contempt) when he parades with the members of the clergy. There were a good number of essays evidencing a thorough understanding of the material, expressed with nuance and sophistication. A number of candidates wrote at length about Mauriac's life and attitude to religion, and a few mentioned their own opinions on Catholicism. Given the exam conditions, time would be better spent concentrating on considering the evidence in the novel.

Question 11

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) Answers displayed a generally good understanding of the text and illustration of points made was judicious. A number of answers were effective in sketching the rigidity of bourgeois society and Anne's sense of rebellion, though not all were explicit in linking rebellion to her psychological state. Others repeated that there was a correlation between her lifestyle and her desire for revolt, but did not connect the two. Some essays focused more sharply on the theme of inevitability and fate (occasionally fatalism), notably the presence of the bar lady seen as a Fate and the significance of the colour red, but did not indicate how this generated rebellion in Anne. In a number of answers, conclusions could have been stronger (e.g. 'Anne's rebellion is inevitable to a certain extent'), sometimes reflecting more of a focus on the inevitability of rebellion, rather than how rebellion manifested itself, its cause and consequences.
- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 12

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) This was not as popular as the next question. On the whole, answers were effective in bringing out this key element of the play. Discussion of role-play, identity and masks is not only good theatre, but also contributes to the dramatic interest. Good knowledge of the play was in evidence. However, a number of answers concentrated on characters' roles rather than role-playing, thereby misreading the title of the question. These did not adequately address the main thrust of the question.
- (c) Answers to this question fell into two groups: those who understood Roxane's role or part in the play, and those who read the question carefully and recognised that analysis of the significance of her role was required. Pretty well all answers demonstrated a good knowledge of the play. Quite a

few examined Roxane's role as the love interest of Cyrano, Christian and de Guiche very effectively. Some went on to argue that she did not have many lines in the play, therefore she was not as important as Cyrano. Quite a few concluded that without Roxane, there was no play. Stronger responses spotted Rostand's gentle satire on *préciosité* and the development of Roxane's character. Answers showed candidates' enjoyment and enthusiasm for this play.

Question 13

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) It was clear that the candidates had enjoyed studying the text and were generally at ease with understanding and analysis. Candidates wrote intelligently and with good illustration on the importance of nonsense and the surreal elements. Most answers recognised that comic and playful language were an integral part of Vian's style and that it served to detract from the pessimism of the plot. There were a good proportion of sophisticated and thoughtful responses to the question, which were a joy to read. A few scripts evidenced a listing of comic or surreal elements, without relating illustration to an argument.
- (c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.