
AS

FRENCH

Paper 1 Listening, Reading and Writing
Report on the Examination

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General comments

This first listening, reading and writing paper for the new AS qualification produced a wide range of responses. Most students appeared to have grasped the requirements of the different task types satisfactorily, although a few had difficulties with the summary questions and with Questions 4 and 9, which required concise answers in French. Rubric infringements were few and there was little evidence of students running out of time. Although quality of written French was only assessed in the summary tasks, certain major errors or omissions could prevent students from conveying the necessary information in Questions 4 and 9. It is important that students check their work carefully for careless mistakes.

Overall, examiners felt that the majority of students had made a good effort to respond to all the questions and, considering the increase in demand from the current GCSE specification, they generally did very well in tackling the paper.

Section A

Question 1

This question was very successfully answered with the vast majority of students scoring at least 3 of the 5 marks available. The main stumbling block were answers H (where some did not pick out the significance of the negative *ni...ni*) and L (where the use of the conditional perfect may have caused difficulty). As a result a minority wrongly chose J and K respectively.

Question 2

This section was also generally well-answered, especially Questions 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6. The largest number of wrong responses was found in 2.4, where *sur le point de* was not noticed and A was chosen (*a déjà célébré son anniversaire*) rather than B (*va bientôt célébrer son anniversaire*). In 2.7 the phrase *loin de décevoir* led many to choose B rather than C.

Question 3

The summary task is new to this specification. The first point to stress is that the instruction in the rubric to write 70 words is strictly enforced with marking stopping at the first natural break after the word limit has been reached. Many students lost content marks by writing too much. They should be encouraged to answer the bullet points given without writing unnecessary additional words such as *selon le texte* or *dans le passage on dit que...* Answers starting with phrases such as *Ici on parle de la transformation du rôle de la femme au sein de la famille parce que depuis la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, on a remarqué trois grands changements...* were common; these used up a large number of words and obtained no marks at all. Students could have started with *Les familles nombreuses sont moins communes, les femmes ont des enfants quand elles sont plus âgées et elles ne veulent plus rester au foyer*. This would have scored all three marks for the first bullet points while leaving students with plenty of spare words to complete the whole task, and would also have generated a good quality of language (AO3) mark.

In fact, many students did score well for content. Roughly half of all students scored at least 5 marks for answering the bullet points successfully. There would have been a larger number of maximum marks but for the fact that many students could receive no credit for women doing the bulk of the housework and childcare in response to the last bullet even when this was

well-expressed as they had already exceeded the word limit. In the second bullet points some marks were lost since women studying was not always linked to university and some mistakenly thought that there were more jobs available in *écoles maternelles*.

The full five marks for AO3 were harder to achieve, however. Though most did gain at least three marks, there were many basic errors which prevented the award of marks in the higher bands. Common errors were the use of masculine pronouns when referring to women, incorrect adjectival agreements (*les familles nombreux sont rare*), inaccurate verb forms (*les femmes represente, elles font*) and poor spelling (*elles font une carrier*). Note that English spellings are now accepted for content (for example *des écoles maternel*) provided that it would be clear to a sympathetic native speaker but inevitably this can have a detrimental effect on the quality of language mark. Students are also encouraged to manipulate the original as far as is possible. Answers such as *les femmes font plus de ménage et s'occupent des enfants plus souvent que les hommes* gained credit for both content and quality. On the whole, despite the above points, it is worth saying that students generally coped well with the task and there were very few poor scripts.

Question 4

This section required answers in French to a listening stimulus and has proved challenging in the past. Here there was a good spread of marks which discriminated between students of different abilities. It should be pointed out that there is no need to manipulate the language here and full sentences are not always needed, depending on the context of the question. However, where the omission of the verb means that the question is not answered in a comprehensible fashion then the candidate cannot score marks. In 4.3, for instance the question *Que font les bénévoles* could be answered by *la vente, la marche* and *la natation*. However, in 4.1, although two thirds of students scored at least one mark, many lost a mark due to the wrong tense being used in the answer because the question was not fully answered without the inclusion of the verb. There was a similar pattern in 4.2, though here the confusing use of the incorrect pronoun caused difficulty, for example a phrase such as *ses amies s'ont encouragé*. The vast majority scored at least one mark in 4.3 but *la vente* was not always well known. In 4.4 the past tense was again often absent and there was a large variety of spellings for *réfugiés*. 4.5 was successfully answered though some omitted the fact that the children are disabled or did not pick out *Amérique du sud* and wrote *Etats-Unis*.

Section B

Question 5

This was very successfully answered with a large number achieving maximum marks.

Question 6

Most students scored at least five marks out of the possible eight in this gap fill task. The most frequent errors occurred with the words *démontrer* and *deviner* which not appear to be as familiar to students as the other infinitives.

Question 7

This true/false task based on an adaptation of a literary text was well done on the whole, with most parts being answered successfully by at least two thirds of students. It was only 7.2 which stood out as being troublesome. Here the word *sage* was not well known.

Question 8

This was another summary task. Here the word limit was respected more frequently than in Question 3. However, the marks were far more disappointing both for content and for quality of language (AO3). Students lost marks because they did convey the idea of *patrimoine bâti*, though some did refer to the architecture or to buildings. From an accuracy point of view, it was unfortunate that so many students wrote *les villages sont belles* in answer to the first bullet point, though it was of course given credit for content. Some appeared to misunderstand the word *critères* in the first bullet point and wrote about the number of villages chosen or the joy of inhabitants on hearing the result. The second bullet point was better done, though many simply copied out the text. A small number wrote confusing answers since they appeared to confuse *village* and *ville*. In the final bullet point the increase in visitors was often linked to the incorrect percentage and the point about car parks was often missed because the wrong tense was used, suggesting they had already been built. The AO3 marks were affected adversely by the amount of copying seen in answers. Even this was not always well done, with *vie urban* or *le nombre des visitors* often seen. Simple manipulation such as *les petits villages provoquent la nostalgie* or *les Français sont fiers de leurs régions* would have been well rewarded.

Question 9

The synonym section was generally successfully answered, though 9.5 was by far the least well done, perhaps because *conduite* was taken as a verb. As the rubric makes clear the words were all to be found in the first paragraph but there were examples of answers coming from near the end of the text. Most students scored at least one mark in 9.6 and 9.7, while 9.8 was very well done. However, 9.9 caused problems since copying *les enfants sauront résoudre leurs problèmes* did not convey the key idea.

Question 10

The majority of students found this very challenging with only a minority scoring more than half the available marks. The first section of the text was better done than the second. Each section has to be rendered completely accurately for a mark to be given. Here is a summary of the main difficulties encountered:

Section 1: many talked about Mathilde being fifteen years old and so lost the mark. There were some confusing translations of *association caritative*.

Sections 2 and 3: the word *dont* was not well translated by all, though this was a better-answered section.

Sections 4 and 5: *Après avoir fait des collectes alimentaires dans les supermarchés* was often very well rendered.

Section 6: here, the expression *encore plus* was not fully translated and the imperfect tense *elle souhaitait* was often translated by the present.

Section 7: *donc* was often omitted and there was widespread guessing at the meanings of both *conseillère* and *bénéficiaires*.

Section 8: *un véritable défi* caused problems and *ce que* was ignored.

Section 9: *désormais* was not at all well-known and led to many errors.

Section 10: the conditional tense in *on devrait* was often missed. The other main mistake here was omitting *une telle*.

Summary questions: advice to students

Students should first read the task on the question paper carefully so they know what the item is about. They should listen to or read the stimulus material in its entirety, identifying which sections of the stimulus material correspond to each of the three bullet points. They should then listen to or read the stimulus material a second time, pausing as necessary to make notes on each bullet point. Students should look at the number of marks available for each bullet point and ensure they identify sufficient pieces of information.

Once they have noted the key information, students should look again at the wording of the bullet points and write their answer on the question paper in such a way as to answer the bullet points directly. This will normally require some manipulation of linguistic structures, such as changing from direct to indirect speech or changing from a subordinate clause to a main clause. However it is not necessary to find synonyms for individual words or phrases.

Students should count their words and ensure that they stay within the word limit. Anything they write after the first natural break between 70 and 80 words (AS) or 90 and 100 words (A-level) will not be marked. Students should therefore avoid writing an introductory sentence or paragraph, as this would be likely to use up words without scoring marks. They should omit points of detail or examples unless these are specifically targeted by the bullet points.

The two marks available for the summary tasks - Content and Quality of Language - are awarded independently. For Content students will receive one mark for conveying each of the seven required pieces of information unambiguously. For Quality of Language students will receive a global mark out of five for the successful manipulation of the language. Anything that is lifted directly from the stimulus material cannot earn credit for Quality of Language. While students should try to use as wide a variety of structures as suits the task, they should also bear in mind the need to maintain accuracy.

Use of statistics

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.