AQA

AS

FRENCH

Paper 2 Writing
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The paper discriminated well across both the translation question and the essay questions on books and films, the latter enabling students to demonstrate a good range of knowledge and to structure responses that were relevant to the questions set. The understanding of both texts and films was, at the top of the range, impressive and students selected a wide range of evidence to support the opinions and judgements expressed. Equally, here, there was evidence of a wide range of structures and lexis and a reasonably accurate handling of grammar. Some essays appeared to be 'recycled' responses from questions answered in term-time assignments or from questions taken from previous papers with little regard for the specific question being set on this year's paper. Students are reminded that the mark scheme rewards critical responses that are relevant to the question.

One feature that distinguished the best responses from the more mediocre to weaker levels of performance in the essay question was the degree of detailed planning undertaken before the essay itself was started. The importance of setting aside time to plan cannot be over-stated: it allows the student to focus on the question set and to select material that will be relevant to the answer. This combined with thoughtful exploration of the suggested bullet points provided makes for a fully meaningful and relevant response.

Section A

Question 1: translation into French

A lack of attention to detail caused many marks to be lost in this question, and the importance of reading the sentences carefully before translating them and of checking basic points of language during and after the translation must be stressed.

1.1. Many students could not translate accurately 'in most French films', using *beaucoup de*, *plusieurs* or *plus de* instead of *la plupart* or *la majorité des*. Many wrote *français* with an upper case F and so lost the mark; there were also many instances of wrongly identified vocabulary items taken from the source passage, so that *caissières* and *vendeuses* were wrongly used to translate waitresses and nurses. The agreement of the past participle of *joués* was often overlooked, as was the comparative younger as distinct from just young. This was the most challenging of the five sentences with only 9% scoring the full mark of 3, 30% scoring 2 and just under 50% scoring 1.

1.2. This sentence was handled with slightly more success but the impression is that students do not generally see the clues provided for them in the source passage. The feminine *réalisatrices* (masculine *réalisateurs*) provided the clue for converting *acteur* to the feminine *actrice*, but there were many who simply reproduced the English actresses. Again there was much confusion over words expressing quantity (many being rendered again by *plus de* or *plusieurs*). Few saw the need to express age using *avoir* (*qui ont plus de quarante ans*). The use of *continuer* was credited with one mark, which most managed to get, and an encouraging number used *leur* correctly though there were many examples of *son*, *sa* or *ses*. 51% scored 3 or 2 marks on this sentence.

1.3. Common errors here included the omission of *me* in 'it seems to me'; the omission of *que* after *veulent*; an infinitive to convey to remain. On the plus side, however, many showed an accurate use of the pronoun in *par eux* and a correct use of *cette industrie.* 16% scored the full mark of 3 for this sentence and 32% scored 2 marks.

1.4. This sentence was generally well handled. Just over 30% scored the full 3 marks available and 85% scored at least 2 marks. The most common error was to use *pas* with *plus* to form the negative. The mark scheme worked in the students' favour in this sentence in that *discrimination*, *entre* and *les sexes* were three distinct elements, and the vast majority of students scored on each one.

1.5. The pairing of the imperfect tense with the conditional in this *si* sentence was not accurately dealt with by the vast majority, although most managed to form the conditional of *refléter* correctly and also most were successful in differentiating correctly between *mieux* and *meilleu*r(*e*). Just under 20% scored the full mark of 3, 43% scored 2 and 36% scored 1 mark.

Sections B and C

What came across in the vast majority of answers to both films and texts was that students had enjoyed studying their chosen works. Perhaps not surprisingly given that this is a one-year course following on from GCSE, film was by far the more popular choice for the essay question, although the statistic was quite staggering. The split between film and text was 90% to 10%.

The popularity of film titles in descending order was:
La Haine 53%; *Au revoir les enfants* 16%; *Les 400 coups* 14%; *Entre les murs* 10%; *L'auberge espagnole* 4% and *Un long dimanche de fiançailles* 3%.

The top three literary works were:
No et moi (32%); *L'étranger* (24%) and *Un sac de billes* (17%)

Question 2 Molière : Le Tartuffe

The first of the options was chosen by students who studied this work and was well handled. Good use was made of the bullet-points which clearly identified appropriate pairings of male and female characters.

Question 3 Voltaire : Candide

The second of the options proved the more attractive and there was a good account provided of the changing attitude of Candide towards the philosophy of Optimism preached by Pangloss.

Question 4 Guy de Maupassant : Boule de Suif et autres contes de la guerre

Both questions proved attractive. There was some very good examination of the positive and negative aspects of the relationships between Boule de Suif and her companions on the journey. In the second option there was a general impression that students chose their favourite stories, or stories they had decided they would use ahead of the exam itself, rather than those which best suited the question.

Question 5 Albert Camus : L'étranger

Option 2 was the more popular but both questions prompted some good responses that showed a clear understanding of the events leading to the murder of the Arab and the importance of Marie in the work. In the case of the latter there was good examination of how the relationship between Marie and Meursault throws light on the attitudes and approach to life of the latter.

Question 6 Françoise Sagan : Bonjour Tristesse

Both questions were generally well handled, with students showing a good knowledge of the attitudes of Cecile, Anne and Elsa towards Raymond, who himself seemed to provoke quite a lot of antipathy among readers, and a good understanding of the importance of Anne as a character in the novel.

Question 7 Claire Etcherelli : Elise ou la vraie vie

There were no responses to either of the questions for this text.

Question 8 Joseph Joffo : Un sac de billes

There was a fairly even split between these two questions, with some very good answers at the top end that showed a sensitive understanding of the reaction of the two boys to their experiences and adventures and an equally sensitive understanding of the profound effect on their lives that the war and the occupation had.

Question 9 Faïza Guène : Kiffe kiffe demain

The first option was the more popular, and again good use was made of the bullet-points as a steer through the question, with a sound understanding of the roles of the female characters and their importance in Doria's life.

Question 10 Philippe Grimbert : Un secret

There were some very good answers to Question 10.1 which showed an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the narrator and the characters identified in the bullet-points. Option 2 was slightly less well-handled and resulted in lengthy summaries of what had happened in the past rather than the effect that these events had on the behaviour and attitudes of the characters.

Question 11 Delphine de Vigan : No et moi

Of all of the literary texts this, clearly, is one that students find very accessible both thematically and in terms of relationships presented. Option 1 was the more popular and there were some excellent answers that showed a clear understanding of the relationship between No and the other characters. Option 2 tended to be over-descriptive of what happens in the school rather than linking this to the different attitudes towards education.

Question 12 François Truffaut : Les 400 coups

There were some excellent answers exploring the friendship between René and Antoine, which some students linked to the parallels with Truffaut's own life. This was the more popular choice of question, though option 2 also produced some very good answers. In some cases, students were very scathing of the treatment of pupils in the film and of the negative attitude of the teaching staff.

Question 13 Louis Malle : Au revoir les enfants

Of the 183 responses to this question 92 were on Option 1 and 91 on Option 2, so clearly students were happy with both the questions set. Responses were very good and showed a sound

understanding of the impact of the war on the lives of the pupils, with may pointing out that, despite the difficult circumstances, there was evidence that they could still hold on to something of their childhood in their daily routine. There were some excellent character studies of Pere Jean.

Question 14 Mathieu Kassovitz : La Haine

Option 1 was the more popular and there were some excellent answers that dealt with both the thematic perspective of the portrayal of the *banlieue* but also with much technical detailed knowledge and evidence. Many students wrote at length on this film and showed an impressive command of both cinematographic content and of film-related language. Those who opted for Question 13.2 again documented clear and detailed evidence to illustrate how Kassovitz evokes our sympathy for the three key characters.

Question 15 Cédric Klapisch : L'auberge espagnole

Both questions proved equally appealing although, on balance, option 1 was handled better in answers dealing with the relationship between Xavier and Martine, how they are affected by their separation each in a different way, and how their lack of communication poses problems. The Erasmus question prompted some quite descriptive answers around the occupants of the flat in Barcelona and their different cultural backgrounds.

Question 16 Jean-Pierre Jeunet : Un long dimanche de fiançailles

Option 1 was the more popular and was well handled. Detailed knowledge of the plight of Manech and the other condemned soldiers was evident in the answers and this was used very effectively to show how Jeunet evokes our sympathy for these characters. Responses to option 2 tended to focus on what the female characters did and what happened to them without much evaluation of their importance.

Question 17 Laurent Cantet : Entre les murs

Option 2 was the more popular and there was some good detailed knowledge demonstrated of the situation of the girls in Monsieur Marin's class, although the weaker answers tended to focus on what each of the girls said and/or did with little reference to their importance. In option 1 there was evidence that students had really engaged in a very sympathetic way with the situation of Monsieur Marin's students and they were able to identify those elements that had evoked their sympathy.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.