
AS

FRENCH

Paper 1 Listening, Reading and Writing
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

In the second year of the new AS specification, there was a significant drop in the number of students taking the exam. Nevertheless, examiners still saw a good range of scripts from across the ability range.

Section A

Question 1

This question was well answered with the vast majority of students scoring at least 4 of the 6 marks available. The main stumbling block was part 1.5. Here, many heard the phrase *un gros avantage* but failed to pick up on the following sentence where it is stated that potential customers are unhappy *si la livraison est payante*.

Question 2

Generally, students coped well on this multiple choice question, though fewer scored on parts 2.4 and 2.5. In 2.4, the sentence *Je ne m'y attendais pas du tout* suggests the speaker was surprised but many heard the word *déçu* in *j'aurais été déçu si sa réaction avait été différente* and answered A rather than C. In a similar way, the sentence *J'ai prêté ma voix à des spots publicitaires* led many to select the incorrect answer C, rather than waiting for the phrase *Sans le théâtre de rue, je ne serais pas connu*, which should have led to the right answer, B.

Question 3

It must be stressed 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, and 80 words is the absolute deadline. Many students lost content marks by writing too much. They should be encouraged to answer the bullet points without writing unnecessary additional words such as *selon le texte...* or *dans ce passage j'ai appris que ...* As a result, many students who understood the final two points about having a guide and eating a pancake failed to score for these as they had already exceeded the word limit.

Despite this, many students did score well for content. Roughly half of all students scored at least 5 marks for answering the bullet points successfully. Some marks were lost since some suggested that the inhabitants did not want to repair their houses rather than the key idea of them not being able to afford to do so. There was some confusion caused due to poor spellings in trying to express the point about the government re-housing people. The inability to spell *reloger* was especially noted by examiners. The second bullet point was often answered very well, and most were given credit for the aims of the film. The third bullet point was also well understood and gave students the opportunity to manipulate the language used in the original transcript.

The full five marks for AO3 were harder to achieve, however, requiring a level of manipulation of the grammar as well as a good degree of accuracy. Though most students 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 incorrect adjectival agreements, inaccurate or invented verb forms (*le tremblement de terre a damagé les maisons*) and poor spelling (*relougier*). Note that English spellings are accepted for content (for example *les maisons tombent en ruine*) provided that it would

be clear to a sympathetic native speaker. Students are also encouraged to manipulate the original language as far as is possible. This does not mean just using synonyms. The original sentence *De nombreux habitants ont décidé de quitter le quartier pour des appartements plus modernes avec l'aide financière du gouvernement* could be expressed as *Certains habitants ont quitté le quartier car le gouvernement leur a donné de l'argent*. The level of manipulation here is clearly higher than just writing *De nombreux habitants ont décidé de quitter la région pour des logement plus modernes avec l'aide financière du gouvernement*. Similarly, answers such as *les habitants n'avaient pas assez d'argent pour faire réparer leurs maisons qui tombaient en ruine à cause d'un tremblement de terre* gained credit for both content and quality. On the whole, despite the problems with the word count identified above, students coped well with the task, scoring good marks for AO1, and there were very few poor scripts or un-attempted answers.

Question 4

This section required students to answer questions on a listening passage in French; this type of task discriminates well between students of different abilities. Students should be reminded that there is no need to manipulate the language here and full sentences are not always needed, depending on the context of the question. In 4.1, for example, the question *Comment est-ce que Geneviève a essayé de trouver un partenaire ?* could be answered without the use of a verb. Most students scored at least one mark in 4.1. There was a similar pattern in 4.2, though here the idea of the prospective partners not wanting children caused difficulty since some misunderstood and thought that they did not get on with Geneviève's (non-existent) children. The vast majority scored at least one mark in 4.3, but the correct spelling of *psychologue* was not always well known and sometimes led to the loss of a mark. In 4.4, there were many accurate answers, with many students scoring both marks. Question 4.5 was also successfully answered, though some students gave confusing answers about her parents not judging her, which failed to communicate this idea sufficiently clearly. Here, the incorrect use of pronouns led to ambiguity which could not be credited.

Section B

Question 5

This was very successfully answered with a large number of students achieving at least 3 of the 5 available marks.

Question 6

Most students scored well on this multiple-choice task. The most frequent errors occurred in parts 6.4 and 6.8. In 6.4, many chose answer A since they noticed *un tremblement de terre* but this clearly does not match the tense of the chosen answer. In 6.8, many selected B (*sont des enfants sans parents*) because they noticed the reference to *orphelin* without understanding the whole phrase *qu'il soit orphelin ou issu d'une famille défavorisée*.

Question 7

This task was based on an adaptation of a traditional African folk story and was well done on the whole, with most parts being answered successfully by at least two thirds of students. It was only 7.1 which stood out as being troublesome. Here the imperfect tense in the question was not noticed; answers such as *le lion a offert son aide* did not fit the question whereas *elle rentrait chez*

elle or *elle portait de l'eau* would have been more appropriate. Most scored at least one of the two marks available in 7.2, and 7.3 was also well done, apart from by some who failed to mention that she was scolded by her parents. Most scored well also in 7.4, though some failed to give a reason for the girl hitting the lion. Generally, fear and relief were identified as appropriate answers in 7.5, though some did make a correct inference and write about concern for the lion and surprise that the scar had healed. Most students scored in 7.6 by copying the relevant piece of the text but some mis-interpretations were noticed, such as *il faut toujours accepter de l'aide*.

Question 8

This was another summary task. Here the word limit was respected more frequently than in Question 3. Moreover, the marks were pleasing both for content and for quality of language (AO3). In response to the first bullet point students gained marks for fewer accidents, the lack of stress and older people being able to go out on the road again. The advantages for the environment were also well-expressed, though occasionally some omitted the point about fewer traffic jams. The third bullet point was the least successfully answered. Some failed to express clearly the problem with identifying the responsibility for an accident, with some vague answers such as *il y a des problèmes avec les assurances*. The second point about lack of visibility causing the car to stop was also sometimes missed, with some answers suggesting that driving was difficult without mentioning that the car would not work independently at all. The AO3 marks were affected adversely by the amount of copying seen in answers. Many scored highly for AO2 but did little to manipulate the original text. An answer such as *il y a une réduction du stress au volant* scored for content but many did not take the opportunity to use phrases such as *les conducteurs sont moins stressés*, where both AO2 and AO3 are addressed in quite a simple manner. It has to be said that summary tasks are challenging but that there are encouraging signs that students can cope well with this sort of task.

Question 9

This true/false task was very successfully answered, with many students scoring well throughout. Question 9.4 was by far the least well done, though even here well over half the entry gained a mark. This was almost certainly due to having to work out the meaning of the phrase *un âge moyen plus élevé que chez les couples hétérosexuels* and then to compare this with the figures for homosexual couples given in the previous sentence.

Question 10

The majority of students found this very challenging with only a third of students scoring more than half the available marks. The second part of the text was better done than the first. Each section has to be rendered completely accurately for a mark to be given. Precision is vital with attention to each detail in the text necessary for the awarding of each mark. Here is a summary of the main difficulties encountered:

Section 1: Many failed to translate *attire* correctly and so lost the mark. Some also failed to translate *étrangers*.

Sections 2 and 3: The verb *franchir* was not well known and led to a large number failing to score, and the pronoun *y* was frequently omitted. *Afin d'y apprendre* was often translated as after learning French.

Section 4: The main stumbling block here was the word *milliers*, which was often rendered as millions.

Section 5: This was, by some margin, the most successfully translated section.

Section 6: *Dont* caused problems here.

Section 7: *Venir de* was not conveyed, and the word *conçue* led to many incorrect guesses.

Section 8: This was generally well answered with many correct versions.

Section 9: The future tense (*recevra*) was not always conveyed.

Section 10: This would have been well done apart from a large number failing to convey *lui* in their answers.

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 is 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.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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