

# FRENCH

Paper 9716/01  
Speaking

## Key messages

- Centres need to make sure that candidates are aware that their Topic Presentation must make reference to francophone culture or society;
- candidates should try to expand on simple statements and develop their ideas and opinions;
- candidates are expected to ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections, and should make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion.

## General comments

Candidates have the chance to choose a topic of real personal interest for their presentation and research and structure it in any way they choose – the only proviso is that this should be related in some way to francophone culture or society. It is not enough just to choose some general topic and then say... *et c'est la même chose en France...* and candidates living in a francophone country must still make the connections clear. The syllabus warns that where this is not the case, the content mark must be halved. Candidates should also be made aware that a factual topic is less likely to score well for content - the higher mark bands are only accessible when their presentation includes ideas and opinions.

In the conversation sections, candidates need to be prepared to expand on the material of their presentation, and not content themselves with single sentence answers to questions – it is in their own best interests to develop their responses, defend their point of view and try to hold their own in discussion. They do not have to agree with the opinions of the Examiner, and they should remember that there are 10 marks available in the mark scheme for the questions they ask of the Examiner, 5 in each conversation section. Turning the question back on the Examiner *Et vous, monsieur / madame?...,* is the simplest way to ask a question, but this, on its own, is not enough to score in the highest bands - they need to be able to use a variety of question forms accurately and be prepared to try to find out the Examiner's opinions on the various subjects of discussion, too.

## Administration

The standard of recording was generally better, this year, with many Centres sending samples digitally recorded on CD. Please make sure that these are recorded as .mp3 files, and whether samples are sent on cassette or CD, Centres must make sure that these can be played on normal playback equipment, that the recordings of candidates and Examiner are clearly audible, and that all samples are labelled with Centre, syllabus and candidate details. Candidates for only one syllabus (i.e. AS **or** A-level but not both) should be recorded on each cassette or CD, and they should be listed in the order of recording, so that it is simple to locate particular candidates.

Please see the syllabus booklet for details of the sample size - recordings should cover the mark range as evenly as possible. Examiners should make sure that a copy of the Working Mark Sheet, showing how marks have been awarded for each candidate according to the criteria in the mark scheme, together with the Moderator's copy of the MS1 are enclosed with the sample recordings.

## ***Format of the examination***

The examination consists of 3 parts: the Topic Presentation, on a topic of the candidate's choice, the Topic Conversation, on the **same** topic as that chosen by the candidate for the Presentation, and the General Conversation, on a range of **different topic areas, chosen by the Examiner**. The whole examination should last no more than 20 minutes, and it is as unfair to candidates to give them too little time, as it is to prolong sections. In the interests of international standards, candidates should be given the same

examination experience, as nearly as possible. It is noticeable that in over-long examinations candidates become tired, and their ability to respond accurately decreases.

**Presentation (3 to 3½ minutes)**

There was a wide choice of topics at both A and AS Level: candidates dealt with the usual social themes of young people, family relations and the generation gap, education, health and fitness, work and leisure, tourism, food and drink, sport, and culture. The preference seemed to lie predominantly with sport, education, and the family. Some topics were particularly related to the situation in francophone countries, and some were most original, both in choice and treatment.

Candidates should remember that, even when they choose a francophone related topic, such as a French composer, it is often difficult to develop this past the factual, and treat it in an appropriate way for an examination at this level. When preparing a topic, candidates should try to think of at least half a dozen questions which could be asked about it, and not just questions which ask for further factual details. When researching a topic, they will inevitably find more material than can be used in the 3 to 3½ minutes allowed, but it is this depth of knowledge which will allow them to develop the subject further in the topic conversation section. There is no need to spend time at the beginning of the presentation outlining what they **intend** to say – they should get on and say it – 3½ minutes is not very long! There must be no script for this – candidates are allowed just a cue card, with up to 5 headings.

If candidates show signs of continuing longer than 3½ minutes, Examiners must interrupt them and begin asking questions – this is not a test of memory, neither is it intended to be the recitation of a speech – rather, an outline of a subject a candidate is interested in and will be able to talk about further in the topic conversation section.

**Topic Conversation (7 to 8 minutes)**

The topic conversation section often produced natural and spontaneous conversation, where the candidate had chosen a topic capable of development and was able to talk further about it. Questions must not just ask for a repetition of the material already given in the presentation, but should seek to explore further, and ask candidates to expand on their ideas and opinions. Candidates may be able to add details to factual information already given, but Examiners should be trying to develop a conversation, rather than working their way through a scripted set of questions and answers – to achieve marks in the higher bands, candidate must be able to show that they can respond to unexpected questions, and hold their own in discussion.

They must also be prepared to ask questions of the Examiner, and should be prompted to do so, where no questions occur naturally in the course of conversation – there is no penalty attached if they are prompted to ask questions, the full 5 marks are still available to be worked for - and they should try to ask more than one question. To score high marks for this element, they must be able to show that they can use a range of question forms, with a high level of accuracy. Examiners should answer questions asked of them **briefly**, in order not to take up time which could be profitably used by the candidate.

Examiners should signal the end of the topic conversation section and the beginning of the general conversation section, so that candidates are aware that they are moving away from their chosen subject, and into possibly less familiar territory.

**General Conversation (8 to 9 minutes)**

To help candidates cope with the change of subject, Examiners often begin with straightforward questions about the candidate's background and interests, but these should be very brief, before moving on to more abstract issues, or current events. It is often a helpful opening to say to candidates... *parlez-moi de...* but this should not be the cue for Examiners to let candidates recite a learnt response – they should be prepared to begin asking questions about the subject suggested, probing and challenging candidates, to stretch them and allow them to show what they can do. There is no prize for the number of different topics touched on in this section – it is infinitely preferable to discuss 2 or 3 in depth, in a real conversation, rather than asking 15 to 20 questions on topics discussed in class during the course, where answers come back pat and rehearsed. There are not necessarily “right” or “wrong” answers to questions, merely openings for discussion. Examiners must be prepared to engage with the candidates in order to give them opportunities to shine.

In Centres where there are a number of candidates, it should be remembered that subjects should be varied and the conversation should be varied from candidate to candidate – they should not all be asked the same predictable questions.

Candidates should be prompted to ask questions in this section, too – more than one question, since there are 5 marks to be worked for – and once again, Examiners must restrict their own contributions.

### **Assessment**

When Teacher/Examiners are working in isolation, in small Centres, it is difficult to find the pitch for marking because it is difficult to compare candidates with those from other Centres. Examiners generally made very conscientious attempts to apply the criteria from the mark scheme, and almost half the Centres entered had no adjustment made to their marks, or had their marks adjusted over only part of the range.

The most noticeable changes were where marks had been awarded for questions asked of the Examiner, although candidates had asked none - sometimes even though Examiners had correctly prompted them to do so.

If no questions are asked by candidates, a zero must be recorded in the final column of the working mark sheet for that conversation section – candidates must be warned that they are giving away a possible 10 marks if they choose not to ask any questions.

Generally, Centres coped well with the requirements of the examination, candidates were well-prepared and knew what to expect, and were given opportunities to express their ideas and opinions. There were some fascinating topics and conversations stemming from them, and many candidates showed themselves to be both well-informed, and able to maintain a conversation at a suitably mature level.

# FRENCH

Paper 9716/21  
Reading and Writing

## General comments

This was a fair test, similar in its level of difficulty to previous papers, but one which had to attempt to cater for an extraordinarily wide range of candidates. At the top end, there were candidates who were very much at ease in the language, handling it with assurance and displaying impressive powers of comprehension and expression. These candidates knew how to set about the challenges and were well equipped and prepared to cope with them. At the other end of the range, candidates appeared to have had relatively little exposure to the language and certainly not to the extent required at this level.

Candidates most often lost marks because they copied whole sentences or phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**, or because they preferred to give their own (often lengthy) opinions of what they thought the text ought to have said, rather than what it actually did say, or because they wrote general essays in answer to the first task in **Question 5**.

The topic (video games) appeared relevant to the experience of most candidates and one to which they appeared able to relate.

Apart from those who simply ground to an early halt faced with an unequal task, most candidates managed to attempt all questions, and there were few signs of undue time pressures. That said, **the practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. The most pointless and frustrating examples consist of simply copying out the entire question before proceeding to the answer. **It would help both candidates and Examiners if this habit could be discouraged.** There were also significant numbers of other candidates who insisted on trying to incorporate the words of the question as an introduction to every answer. For example, the answer to **Question 3(d)** does not need to start: *D'après le quatrième paragraphe, les jeux en réseau n'ont-ils pas été plus profitables financièrement parce que ... . On peut télécharger les jeux* is perfectly adequate for the first mark.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' sections directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. The rubric clearly states that candidates should answer **sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte**. Candidates should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

**Question 2**, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake.

In **Question 1**, candidates appear more aware of the need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing, but some marks are still lost on this - see **Comments on specific questions** below.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the question: 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the other sections and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores not awarded. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary section automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** A large number of candidates wrote answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin. Too often, good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

If, on the other hand, the responses to **Question 5** are significantly below the word limit, the overall quality of language mark is reduced accordingly.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that there is an ingrained fear (perhaps from the requirements of other subjects) of not introducing the topic, but it is easy to waste 20% of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points, and from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay (which is quite likely to score no points).

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *Qu'est-ce que c'est?*

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

This exercise held few fears for the majority and a reasonable number scored full marks. *Interaction* was sometimes incorrectly offered for *conours* in (a), but *inconnu* and *caves* were commonly correctly identified for (b) and (c). *Rejoindre* (d) defeated a fair proportion, and *répandus* was wrongly guessed at by some for *destinés* (e).

#### Question 2

There were some good answers to this question from the strong candidates, but as usual, the task proved demanding for candidates with a less-than-secure command of grammatical structures.

Item **2(a)** was not done very well. Those who recognised the need for a subjunctive were often unable to produce it in the *passé composé*.

Tenses were again a problem in Items **2(b)** and **2(c)**, with those who managed the active to/from passive manipulations sometimes spoiling things by using the *passé composé* – *ont dû / ont été*.

Item **2(d)** required the use of *on* which was successfully handled in a large number of cases, but *on peut télécharger* was by no means uncommon.

Item **2(e)** presented the initial difficulty of changing *il est difficile de* to *sont faciles à*, but as often as not it was the failure to provide the agreement on *faciles* that was the cause of a mark lost.

#### Question 3

Item **3(a)**: was well answered by those candidates who found easy ways of expressing *son copain de classe*, *un inconnu* and *la même passion*. *Où qu'il soit* and *quel que soit son âge* proved more difficult, but the maximum four marks from the five acceptable answers was not uncommon here.

Item **3(b)**: The idea of needing a physical link or cable to connect computers escaped some, as did the notion of *un non-initié*, but most understood that it was the arrival of the Internet that had increased accessibility.

Item **3(c)**: A lot of candidates simply 'lifted' *les adolescents et les personnes sans connaissances en informatique* and *en ajoutant des ressources informatiques plus avancées*. Those who made a re-phrase usually earned both marks.

Item **3(d)**: Candidates usually understood the problem of illegal downloading from the Internet for the first mark, but then often resorted to 'lifting' *souffre du piratage* and *imposer des contributions financières*.

Item **3(e)**: The first mark for identifying the need to purchase the software was often scored, but the idea of a monthly subscription was less frequently understood. Mention of the annual cost of 150 euros proved a readily accessible final mark here.

#### Question 4

Item **4(a)**: The idea that a parent or other adult may buy an unsuitable game for the child was well understood, as was the idea that this may be because they do not look properly at what the game contains. The point that children often know much more than their parents in this field was made less often.

Item **4(b)** produced some interesting responses. The point missed by many was that some German shops had decided to stop selling 'X-rated' video games to anyone, rather than to stop selling video games to people over 18. The point that children were likely to obtain them from other sources anyway was well made, but some candidates went too far in stating that it had been categorically proven that video games do not make people violent.

Item **4(c)**: Avoidable lifts – *troubles psychologiques, potentiel de violence* - were too tempting for some, but the first point about pre-existing vulnerability was generally made well enough.

Item **4(d)**: This question was well done by a large proportion of candidates who successfully identified the possible consequences.

Item **4(e)**: was again well answered by many candidates, some of whom displayed a pleasing range of vocabulary in ensuring that they avoided 'lifting': *évacuer/exprimer/canaliser/exorciser (se débarrasser de); substituer/remplaçant des parents/nourrice (baby-sitter)*.

#### Question 5

This Question asks the candidates to summarise the main issues of the two passages and then to reflect on them, giving their own views. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. *Le jeu vidéo de par sa grande présence dans l'univers des jeunes soulève des interrogations: est-il bon, sans effets ou au contraire néfaste pour les jeunes ? Le jeu vidéo présente en fait à la fois des avantages et des inconvénients. Ces avantages et ces inconvénients rendent donc ces jeux vidéo sujet à débats* is all very worthy but uses up over a third of the word allocation for no marks.

Candidates were required to summarise '*les avantages et les dangers des jeux en réseau et des jeux vidéo tels qu'ils sont présentés dans ces deux articles*'. The mark scheme identified 17 rewardable points, of which a good number of candidates managed 8, 9 or 10 (which was the maximum score). Of the advantages, the most usually mentioned were the possibility of connecting and interacting with a wide range of people regardless of age or location, ease of access, elimination of aggressive tendencies and encouragement of a spirit of competition. Dangers included access to violent games, accentuation of psychological problems, addiction, isolation and escape from reality.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts (e.g. the dangers of giving away personal details to strangers on line) and therefore could score no mark. Others latched onto one or two points early on and simply repeated them in different words.

The Personal Response gives the candidate the chance to express their own views on the topic, which some candidates did with some feeling – assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. There was less fence-sitting than sometimes, with opinions roughly evenly divided between the unacceptability of violence in any context, even virtual, and the healthy channelling of violent tendencies in a harmless way.

The quality of language varied from the excellent – fluent, accurate and idiomatic – to the very poor (if any) rewardable (or indeed, in some cases, recognisable) language. Verbs (even entirely regular ones in some cases) were as usual by far the most common sources of error: the choice of endings e.g. *-er*, *-ait* seemed largely random for weaker candidates and the rules of agreement of both verbs and adjectives were frequently either ignored or applied on an unconventional basis, the plural of *il achète* being *ils achète*. There was a marked tendency to spell words as they sound – e.g. *Sa nais pas juste* or the apparently interchangeable *ses*, *c'est*, *ce*, *ces*, *s'est* – or to invent new words: *piratager*; *confuser*

# FRENCH

Paper 9716/22  
Reading and Writing

## General comments

This was felt to be a fair test, similar in level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced a wide variety of marks. There were some first-rate scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic (video games) was relevant to the experience of the candidates and one to which they appeared able to relate.

The majority of candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of questions, revealing a good level of familiarity with the required tasks. Where candidates had problems, it was often because they copied whole sentences or phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**, or because they preferred to give their own (often lengthy) opinions of what they thought the text ought to have said, rather than what it actually did say, or because they wrote general essays in answer to the first task in **Question 5**. Another cause of lost marks this year was a tendency to over-complicate things in an apparent desire to impress linguistically: candidates sometimes passed up the relatively easy marks which could be obtained by straightforward re-wording or re-phrasing in **Questions 3 and 4** in particular, launching themselves instead into convoluted and impressive-sounding but ultimately unintelligible language when a few simple words could have gained them all the marks.

Most candidates managed to attempt all questions, and there were few signs of undue time pressures. That said, **the practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. The most pointless and frustrating examples consist of simply copying out the entire question before proceeding to the answer. **It would help both candidates and Examiners if this habit could be discouraged.** There were also significant numbers of other candidates who insisted on trying to incorporate the words of the question as an introduction to every answer. For example, the answer to **Question 3(d)** does not need to start: *Les différences entre passer des heures devant un écran de télévision et passer des heures devant une console vidéo sont que ...* The three available marks are scored simply by: *Les joueurs doivent réagir et réfléchir. Les téléspectateurs peuvent rester passifs.*

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text remains a common feature amongst some candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' sections directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. The rubric clearly states that candidates should answer **sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte**. Candidates should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

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In **Question 1**, candidates appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing, but some marks are still lost on this - see **Comments on specific questions** below.



In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the question: 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original text and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary section automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** A large number of candidates wrote answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin. Too often, good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

If, on the other hand, the responses to **Question 5** are significantly below the word limit, the overall quality of language mark is reduced accordingly.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that there is an ingrained fear (perhaps from the requirements of other subjects) of not introducing the topic, but it is easy to waste 20% of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points, and from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay (which is quite likely to score no marks).

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *Qu'est-ce que c'est?*

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

The performance on this question was uneven. *Avouer* was correctly found by many for **(a)**, although *agir* and *réalisés* were not uncommon offerings. *Avouer* also appeared not infrequently as an answer to **(b)**, which was nevertheless the most successfully handled item here. Most identified *éprouvent* for **(c)** although some lost the mark by writing *éprouver* or *éprouvent-ils*. There were occasional spelling problems with *davantage* in **(d)**, where *mieux* was quite often offered instead. *Tout de même* was offered for **(e)** almost as frequently as the correct answer *totalement*.

#### Question 2

There were some very good answers to this question from strong candidates, but as usual, the task proved very demanding for candidates with a less-than-secure command of grammatical structures.

Item **2(a)** was not very well done. The use of *ne* was arbitrary, and the tense of *prouver* caused problems. *Personne (n')a prouvée* was frequent, as was the addition of *pas*.

Item **2(b)** was generally well answered, although a minority lost the mark by omitting *dans nos recherches*, or by mangling *découvert* even though it appeared in the original.

Item **2(c)**: The basic transition to the passive was often successfully handled, but a good number lost the mark by failing to provide the agreement in *remplacée*.

Item **2(d)**: The need for the subjunctive was recognised by a lot of candidates, but the correct form of *fassiez* was not always found.

Item **2(e)** proved difficult, partly no doubt because of the number of operations to be performed. It was relatively rare to find *sont obligés de*, and even then there was a tendency to omit the agreement or to provide *dans* or *avec* instead of *par*.

### Question 3

Item **3(a)** was well answered by those candidates who recognised the need to re-phrase by using verbs rather than nouns, although *craindre* proved predictably difficult to handle for those who refused the *avoir peur*.

Item **3(b)**: The question asks *que font*, but responses frequently involved the simple 'lifting' of *sens de l'observation attentive* and *temps de réaction réduit*. The who understood the idea behind *multitâches* often managed to transmit it using phrases such as *plusieurs choses/tâches en même temps/à la fois*.

Item **3(c)**: A lot of candidates scored at least two of the three marks on this question, although a surprising number settled for *Ils ont eu des difficultés à trouver des joueurs avec des capacités mentales*. *Anecdote* confused some who tried to include it in their answer without knowing what it meant. *Résolver* and *résoluer* appeared quite frequently.

Item **3(d)**: The majority of candidates successfully made the contrast between active and passive occupations for the first two marks, but were less successful in expressing the idea of *réflexion*, for which *réfléchir* sometimes appeared.

Item **3(e)**: This question caused some difficulty for candidates who did not understand what *cinéphiles ou lecteurs passionnés* enjoy doing. Some were more successful in salvaging the third mark on offer here with *divertissement/évasion* etc.

### Question 4

Marks on this question were generally slightly lower than on **Question 3**.

Item **4(a)**: The first mark was frequently earned by candidates who were able to make the point about time spent in front of the screen or living in a virtual world, although there was some lifting of *aspirés dans un espace-temps virtuel*. The sense of *coupure* was transmitted more successfully than that of *repli*. Attempts to make the obvious change of *confusion* to a verb sometimes resulted in *confuser*.

Item **4(b)** proved quite challenging. Relatively few candidates understood or expressed the idea of creating games *deliberately* to cause addiction. Despite what one would have imagined to be easy alternatives - *veut arrêter mais ne peut pas* – many of candidates lost the second and/or third mark by lifting.

Item **4(c)**: The first point was not very well handled, with many not making the link between excess in all three areas and the effect on health. The second and third marks were gained by those candidates who resisted the 'lifts' of *amaigrissement* and *prise de poids*. *Prise des pois* gave an interesting new slant, as did *Si on ne mange pas, on devient auberge*.

Item **4(d)** This question was well done, although some candidates seemed to be under the impression that if they simply preceded the noun with a pronoun they would earn the mark, e.g. *ils abandon de toute vie sociale*.

Item **4(e)** was generally well answered by candidates who avoided lifting *augmentation ... addictions* and *diffusion ... connexions*.

### Question 5

This Question asks the candidates to summarise the main issues of the two passages and then to reflect on them, giving their own views. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. "*Dans le premier texte on nous raconte les effets positives qui sont présentées par les joueurs de jeux vidéos qu'on ne trouve pas chez ceux qui ne fait pas de ces jeux*" scores no marks but uses up over 20% of the word allocation.

Candidates were required to summarise '*les bienfaits et les dangers des jeux vidéo tels qu'ils sont présentés dans les deux textes*'. The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points of which a good number of candidates managed 8, 9 or 10. Of the benefits, the most usually mentioned were improvements in short term memory, hand-eye coordination, the ability to multi-task, powers of observation, problem resolution and quick decision making. Dangers such as cutting yourself off from society and family and damage to health were perhaps the most common, but many included violence and addiction.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts and therefore no mark could be awarded. Others latched onto one or two points and simply repeated them in different words.

The personal response gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some candidates did with some imagination and originality – assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. They were able to give some simple and helpful advice about how to tackle the problem. Most felt they should get them out of the house, playing sports, meeting other people, going to the cinema, getting the parents involved.

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs (even regular ones) as usual being far the most common sources of error: particularly concerning again was the wide-spread notion that the plural of *il encourage* is *ils encourages*. There was a tendency to spell words as they sound: *le servo (cerveau)*; *un notre bienfait (un autre bienfait)*; *saint et sauf*; *tuent les jours (tous les jours)*; *cestait*; *ils leurs aient difficile de ...*; and even *éceque sais mauvé ? (est-ce que c'est mauvais ?)* New words were also much in evidence: *interacter*, *réacter*, *relationner*.

That said, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and accurate French which was a pleasure to read.

# FRENCH

Paper 9716/23  
Reading and Writing

## General comments

This was felt to be a fair test, similar in level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced a wide variety of marks. There were some first-rate scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic (video games) was relevant to the experience of the candidates and one to which they appeared able to relate.

The majority of candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of questions, revealing a good level of familiarity with the required tasks. Where candidates had problems, it was often because they copied whole sentences or phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**, or because they preferred to give their own (often lengthy) opinions of what they thought the text ought to have said, rather than what it actually did say, or because they wrote general essays in answer to the first task in **Question 5**. Another cause of lost marks this year was a tendency to over-complicate things in an apparent desire to impress linguistically: candidates sometimes passed up the relatively easy marks which could be obtained by straightforward re-wording or re-phrasing in **Questions 3 and 4** in particular, launching themselves instead into convoluted and impressive-sounding but ultimately unintelligible language when a few simple words could have gained them all the marks.

Most candidates managed to attempt all questions, and there were few signs of undue time pressures. That said, **the practice of copying out the question in Questions 3 and 4 as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker**, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. The most pointless and frustrating examples consist of simply copying out the entire question before proceeding to the answer. **It would help both candidates and Examiners if this habit could be discouraged.** There were also significant numbers of other candidates who insisted on trying to incorporate the words of the question as an introduction to every answer. For example, the answer to **Question 3(d)** does not need to start: *Les différences entre passer des heures devant un écran de télévision et passer des heures devant une console vidéo sont que ...* The three available marks are scored simply by: *Les joueurs doivent réagir et réfléchir. Les téléspectateurs peuvent rester passifs.*

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text remains a common feature amongst some candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' sections directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. The rubric clearly states that candidates should answer **sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte**. Candidates should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. Even quite small changes or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

**Question 2**, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake.

In **Question 1**, candidates appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing, but some marks are still lost on this - see **Comments on specific questions** below.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the question: 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original text and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary section automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** A large number of candidates wrote answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin. Too often, good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

If, on the other hand, the responses to **Question 5** are significantly below the word limit, the overall quality of language mark is reduced accordingly.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that there is an ingrained fear (perhaps from the requirements of other subjects) of not introducing the topic, but it is easy to waste 20% of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points, and from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay (which is quite likely to score no marks).

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *Qu'est-ce que c'est?*

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

The performance on this question was uneven. *Avouer* was correctly found by many for **(a)**, although *agir* and *réalisés* were not uncommon offerings. *Avouer* also appeared not infrequently as an answer to **(b)**, which was nevertheless the most successfully handled item here. Most identified *éprouvent* for **(c)** although some lost the mark by writing *éprouver* or *éprouvent-ils*. There were occasional spelling problems with *davantage* in **(d)**, where *mieux* was quite often offered instead. *Tout de même* was offered for **(e)** almost as frequently as the correct answer *totalement*.

#### Question 2

There were some very good answers to this question from strong candidates, but as usual, the task proved very demanding for candidates with a less-than-secure command of grammatical structures.

Item **2(a)** was not very well done. The use of *ne* was arbitrary, and the tense of *prouver* caused problems. *Personne (n')a prouvée* was frequent, as was the addition of *pas*.

Item **2(b)** was generally well answered, although a minority lost the mark by omitting *dans nos recherches*, or by mangling *découvert* even though it appeared in the original.

Item **2(c)**: The basic transition to the passive was often successfully handled, but a good number lost the mark by failing to provide the agreement in *remplacée*.

Item **2(d)**: The need for the subjunctive was recognised by a lot of candidates, but the correct form of *fassiez* was not always found.

Item **2(e)** proved difficult, partly no doubt because of the number of operations to be performed. It was relatively rare to find *sont obligés de*, and even then there was a tendency to omit the agreement or to provide *dans* or *avec* instead of *par*.

### Question 3

Item **3(a)** was well answered by those candidates who recognised the need to re-phrase by using verbs rather than nouns, although *craindre* proved predictably difficult to handle for those who refused the *avoir peur*.

Item **3(b)**: The question asks *que font*, but responses frequently involved the simple 'lifting' of *sens de l'observation attentive* and *temps de réaction réduit*. The who understood the idea behind *multitâches* often managed to transmit it using phrases such as *plusieurs choses/tâches en même temps/à la fois*.

Item **3(c)**: A lot of candidates scored at least two of the three marks on this question, although a surprising number settled for *Ils ont eu des difficultés à trouver des joueurs avec des capacités mentales*. *Anecdote* confused some who tried to include it in their answer without knowing what it meant. *Résolver* and *résoluer* appeared quite frequently.

Item **3(d)**: The majority of candidates successfully made the contrast between active and passive occupations for the first two marks, but were less successful in expressing the idea of *réflexion*, for which *réfléchir* sometimes appeared.

Item **3(e)**: This question caused some difficulty for candidates who did not understand what *cinéphiles ou lecteurs passionnés* enjoy doing. Some were more successful in salvaging the third mark on offer here with *divertissement/évasion* etc.

### Question 4

Marks on this question were generally slightly lower than on **Question 3**.

Item **4(a)**: The first mark was frequently earned by candidates who were able to make the point about time spent in front of the screen or living in a virtual world, although there was some lifting of *aspirés dans un espace-temps virtuel*. The sense of *coupure* was transmitted more successfully than that of *repli*. Attempts to make the obvious change of *confusion* to a verb sometimes resulted in *confuser*.

Item **4(b)** proved quite challenging. Relatively few candidates understood or expressed the idea of creating games *deliberately* to cause addiction. Despite what one would have imagined to be easy alternatives - *veut arrêter mais ne peut pas* – many of candidates lost the second and/or third mark by lifting.

Item **4(c)**: The first point was not very well handled, with many not making the link between excess in all three areas and the effect on health. The second and third marks were gained by those candidates who resisted the 'lifts' of *amaigrissement* and *prise de poids*. *Prise des pois* gave an interesting new slant, as did *Si on ne mange pas, on devient auberge*.

Item **4(d)** This question was well done, although some candidates seemed to be under the impression that if they simply preceded the noun with a pronoun they would earn the mark, e.g. *ils abandon de toute vie sociale*.

Item **4(e)** was generally well answered by candidates who avoided lifting *augmentation ... addictions* and *diffusion ... connexions*.

### Question 5

This Question asks the candidates to summarise the main issues of the two passages and then to reflect on them, giving their own views. Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. "*Dans le premier texte on nous raconte les effets positives qui sont présentées par les joueurs de jeux vidéos qu'on ne trouve pas chez ceux qui ne fait pas de ces jeux*" scores no marks but uses up over 20% of the word allocation.

Candidates were required to summarise '*les bienfaits et les dangers des jeux vidéo tels qu'ils sont présentés dans les deux textes*'. The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points of which a good number of candidates managed 8, 9 or 10. Of the benefits, the most usually mentioned were improvements in short term memory, hand-eye coordination, the ability to multi-task, powers of observation, problem resolution and quick decision making. Dangers such as cutting yourself off from society and family and damage to health were perhaps the most common, but many included violence and addiction.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts and therefore no mark could be awarded. Others latched onto one or two points and simply repeated them in different words.

The personal response gives the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some candidates did with some imagination and originality – assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. They were able to give some simple and helpful advice about how to tackle the problem. Most felt they should get them out of the house, playing sports, meeting other people, going to the cinema, getting the parents involved.

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs (even regular ones) as usual being far the most common sources of error: particularly concerning again was the wide-spread notion that the plural of *il encourage* is *ils encourages*. There was a tendency to spell words as they sound: *le servo (cerveau)*; *un notre bienfait (un autre bienfait)*; *saint et sauf*; *tuent les jours (tous les jours)*; *cestait*; *ils leurs aient difficile de ...*; and even *éceque sais mauvé ? (est-ce que c'est mauvais ?)* New words were also much in evidence: *interacter*, *réacter*, *relationner*.

That said, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and accurate French which was a pleasure to read.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/31

Essay

## General comments

In this paper candidates were given a choice of 5 questions, one on each of the following topics; *La Famille*, *L'Ordre public*, *Le Sport*, *Le Travail et le chômage* and *L'Innovation technologique*.

The essays were marked out of 40, with a maximum of 24 for language and of 16 for Content. It was felt that the overall standard of performance of candidates was very similar to that of the previous year, both for Language and Content, marks ranging from a relatively small number of single-figure essays to a satisfactory number in the lower to mid thirties.

The Language work of weaker candidates was characterised by persistent errors in verb and tense forms, incorrect use of prepositions, simple sentence patterns with little use of subordinate clauses and a limited range of vocabulary.

The essays of candidates in the middle of the ability range revealed a fair level of grammatical accuracy. Common tenses and regular verbs were mostly correctly formed, though there was some difficulty with irregular verbs. There was more varied vocabulary and a smaller incidence of inaccurate spelling of common words which candidates need to have in their armoury at this level.

Stronger candidates demonstrated a generally sound grasp of grammar and the ability to handle more complex structures. Their essays read easily and displayed a greater breadth and depth of vocabulary.

Content marks were awarded according to the information supplied by candidates, to their focus on the question set and the relevance of their answer. Also important were the organisation and structure of the essay and candidates' development of ideas and their ability to draw conclusions from their argument.

The work of weaker candidates was characterised by generalisation with little specific exemplification. Arguments were often naïve and simplistic. There was a tendency to write loosely on the topic, with little concern for the question set. Paragraphing tended to be weak. There was little build-up of an argument leading to a conclusion.

Essays in the middle of the range displayed more focus on the question set, though the material presented was not consistently relevant. Candidates' work was generally quite well structured, paragraphing was more satisfactory, and arguments more clearly developed. Candidates showed greater ability to draw a conclusion from the material presented.

Towards the top of the range, candidates displayed a sound knowledge of their chosen topic and a clearer understanding of the issues involved. Relevance to the specific question was maintained. There was a coherent structure to the answer, with a logical progression of ideas leading to a conclusion or conclusions.

The majority of candidates observed the rubric concerning the number of words to be written and most appear to have had sufficient time to complete the task. The standard of presentation was generally satisfactory, though the handwriting of a number of candidates was almost illegible. Candidates finishing with time to spare would be well advised to carry out a careful and systematic revision of their work in order to eradicate avoidable errors which may well have cost them marks. Aspects of language that should be checked if time allows include adjectival agreements, verb endings and the gender and spelling of common nouns.



Examples of common language errors follow.

Misspellings of common words such as *mariage, progrès, développement, gouvernement, responsabilité, respect, quelquefois, après, raison, problème, beaucoup, technologie, exemple, il y a, autorité, chacun, société, professeur, personnel, personnalité.*

Gender of common nouns such as *gouvernement, problème, domaine, crime, type, mesure, façon, développement, acte, téléphone, divorce, exemple, groupe, rôle, manque, chômage, environnement, coopération, innovation, communication.*

Confusion between / misuse of *ces/ses, des/les, parce que/à cause de, puisque/car, notre/nôtre, ce qui/ceux qui, c'est que/ ce que, ou/où, a/à, place/endroit, leur/leurs* (as adjectives or pronouns, as in *...ils leurs parlent*), *bon/bien, mauvais/mal, mieux/meilleur.*

Inclusion of *y* and *en* when not required.

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Constructions, as in *Les enfants sont donnés trop de liberté, Ceci est un exemple de ne respectant pas l'autorité parentale, Des difficultés qu'on fait face à.*

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

This was the second most popular question, in spite of a number of candidates having difficulty with the phrase *L'évolution de l'institution de la famille*, a fact which considerably restricted the scope of their answer. Such candidates tended to limit their response to a generalised definition of what constitutes a 'traditional' family and to describe its advantages and disadvantages without much analysis. Candidates who had no difficulty with '*évolution*' looked at the increasing rate of divorce and its effect on children, at single-parent families, at the effect on family life of the increasing need, for economic reasons, for both parents to go out to work. Also considered were the increase in cohabitation as opposed to marriage, the increase in the number of teenage mothers, same-sex marriages. The general consensus was that the movement away from the concept of 'traditional' families has considerably more negative than positive consequences.

#### **Question 2**

Few candidates opted for this question and answers tended to be ineffectual, with little specific reference to back up what tended to be rather vague generalisations. Consequently, essays lacked structure and argument. This type of question needed exemplification in order for answers to be considered adequate.

#### **Question 3**

This was by far the most popular question and attracted candidates from across the ability range. However, a number of answers took the wrong line of reasoning, due to *trop d'importance* being interpreted as *beaucoup d'importance*. Consequently many candidates wrote essays which attempted to explain why sport is so popular, with references to the worldwide popularity of *Association Football*, for example. Others concentrated on the amount of sport on television in order to demonstrate how much importance society attaches to it, in addition to referring to the amount of space given to sport in newspapers. Candidates who understood *trop d'importance* tended to agree with the statement, many arguing that the vast sums of money involved in sport would be better spent on helping the poor and hungry in less fortunate parts of the world. Those who disagreed with the statement tended to do so by referring to the important role played by sport in their own lives rather than to the general attitude of society towards it.

**Question 4**

This proved to be the third most popular question. Very few disagreed with the statement, most made some reference to unemployment figures and examining such effects on the individual of becoming unemployed as stress, depression and lack of self-esteem. Reference was also made to the effects of unemployment on family life and relationships. Answers tended to be quite heartfelt and passionate.

**Question 5**

There were too few answers on this question to make comment appropriate.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/32

Essay

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### **Report on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

This was by far the most popular question, and was well answered on the whole. Candidates pointed out that the relationship between a child and its parents is a very special one. Reference was made to the bond between mother and child in the early years. Many candidates then referred to adolescence as the time when the relationship can be severely tested and other relationships, particularly those with friends, come into play. Other key relationships examined were those between a child and its siblings and also with its teacher. The siblings taught the child tolerance, cooperation and the personal negotiation skills that would serve it later in life. The relationship with the teacher encourages respect for authority and provides the opportunity to discover more about the wider world. Some candidates developed this argument to describe the child's relationship with society, learning, for example to become a good citizen.

#### **Question 2**

This was not a popular question, and generally was not handled very well. Candidates often merely described examples of police brutality, but failed to reach any conclusions as to how governments or society might be able to make any improvements. Stronger candidates mentioned better and clearer laws governing the behaviour of the police force, with human rights clearly to the fore. Others felt that little could be done in countries where the police back a corrupt government. This was a topic close to the heart of some candidates and it seemed impossible for them to see any real solution.

#### **Question 3**

A popular question but was not always well answered. This was a question where the link between sport and religion needed exploring. Candidates often considered the two elements separately and made no clear link between them, thereby not taking into account the idea of sport replacing religion in people's lives. Weak candidates made no reference to religion, simply writing about whether sport is a positive or negative force in society. Answers were often quite simplistic, little more than a description of people watching a football match on a Sunday instead of going to church. A few candidates looked for parallels between sport and religion and wrote about rules and regulations, the notion of fair play and the creation of a community with a shared purpose with a meeting place that is the stadium. Overall, candidates felt that sport is a good thing in that it creates a healthy body and a healthy mind.

#### Question 4

There were some very good answers to this question which explained clearly the function of work in human life. Regardless of ability, candidates understood that work is not merely about money but that it has many key roles to play in human life. The importance of keeping occupied, of having an important function in society, of developing a sense of self-worth, of working with others and of creating a team spirit were discussed. Some candidates referred to the sense of despair among the unemployed who feel useless and isolated. Candidates did not discount the fact that money is a key motivator, however, being aware of the fact that people obviously need it in order to survive and to ensure that their families are provided for.

#### Question 5

This was also a popular question which attracted candidates across the ability range. Weaker candidates tended not to answer the question set but to write a general essay on the topic title, describing the new technologies without providing evidence of negatives and positives. However most candidates discussed the advantages and disadvantages of telecommunications in the modern world, referring to mobile phones and the Internet, and, while seeing the possible downsides, were generally in favour. Many could see that whilst society cannot do without these relatively new technologies, they are not without side-effects both from a health and social point of view. It was widely recognised that addiction is a problem, with many young people, in particular, unable to tear themselves away from Facebook or online games, with consequent effects on their health and sociability.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/33

Essay

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#### Question 4

There were some very good answers to this question which explained clearly the function of work in human life. Regardless of ability, candidates understood that work is not merely about money but that it has many key roles to play in human life. The importance of keeping occupied, of having an important function in society, of developing a sense of self-worth, of working with others and of creating a team spirit were discussed. Some candidates referred to the sense of despair among the unemployed who feel useless and isolated. Candidates did not discount the fact that money is a key motivator, however, being aware of the fact that people obviously need it in order to survive and to ensure that their families are provided for.

#### Question 5

This was also a popular question which attracted candidates across the ability range. Weaker candidates tended not to answer the question set but to write a general essay on the topic title, describing the new technologies without providing evidence of negatives and positives. However most candidates discussed the advantages and disadvantages of telecommunications in the modern world, referring to mobile phones and the Internet, and, while seeing the possible downsides, were generally in favour. Many could see that whilst society cannot do without these relatively new technologies, they are not without side-effects both from a health and social point of view. It was widely recognised that addiction is a problem, with many young people, in particular, unable to tear themselves away from Facebook or online games, with consequent effects on their health and sociability.



# FRENCH

Paper 9716/41

Texts

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## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1**

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- (a)** Candidates coped well with **Question 1(a)**. They understood well that after a period of successful retaliation against the occupying Prussian forces, *le père Milon* sustained an injury and was found out. During questioning by the Prussians, he explained at the beginning of the extract that he had killed eight Prussians in return for his father's death and another eight in revenge for his son. Not all candidates showed that they understood the patois ('fieu' was not always identified as 'fils' and was sometimes rendered 'frère'), or included that *le père Milon* explained that he had no quarrel with the Prussians, people he did not even know, but he objected to their presence on his home territory, which they were commanding as though it were their own, which was a contributing factor for his actions. In part **(ii)**, the Prussians' attitude in the middle of the extract was better understood than that at the end, and opportunities to contrast the two were rarely taken. By discussing quietly among themselves for a long time, their indecision was made manifest. A captain empathetically defended Milon and the colonel spoke in low tones so as not to be heard except by Milon as he tried to set out a way in which the patriot could be spared. After Milon spat in his face twice, a scene of confusion followed, with all the officers shouting orders at the same time. Candidates who did not understand about the spitting found it impossible to explain or justify the subsequent violent reaction of the soldiers, and there was a tendency for candidates not to restrict their answers to the extract, as requested in the question, but to refer to the rest of the story and to other *contes* in their answers. *Le père Milon* had no intention of striking a deal with the Prussians. Patriotism and vengeance had been more important to him than his own life. He made it clear that he did not repent of his action, and crossed his arms defiantly '*dans une pose d'humble héros*'. The first part of **(iii)** was usually quite well answered provided that the candidate did not suggest that Milon was ready to die because he had achieved his aim. Candidates should also have given their opinion of Milon's conduct in the second half of the extract, including his spitting and finally death, smiling at his son and family. Many did not, and of those who did, some did not understand that this was the simple peasant's only way of expressing the vehemence of his utter contempt, a few finding it inappropriate, if not disgusting.
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Anouilh: *Antigone*

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#### Section 2

#### Question 5

Ionesco: *Le Roi se meurt*

- (a) At the outset, the guard presented each character and went on to comment on the action, including announcing the king’s death too soon. Juliette brought the level of conversation down from its elevated heights when she declared ‘C’est quand même pompeux’ and contributed to the comedy, ‘apparaissant puis disparaissant tandis que le Roi se relève’ in the ‘scène... jouée en guignol tragique’. In the main, the responses to this question were fairly short and lacked detail. While candidates were quick to emphasise the importance of these two roles, few could satisfactorily explain why, beyond commenting on incongruity and comedy.

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- (a) There were more answers to this question than to (b), and generally candidates showed fair understanding of the text. Having been family friends since birth, Phil and Vinca were now passing through adolescence, and the simplicity of their past trust of each other had been replaced with the complexity of redefining their positions in relation to each other. Their confidence in themselves was also shaken at this period of their lives and both experienced sadness during their transition from childhood to adulthood. Vinca had good reason to suspect Phil when she saw him sloping off to Mme Dalleray at night. And, although Phil finally got what he thought he wanted from Vinca, he still found himself struggling with sadness. Vinca, by contrast, made that transition more cheerfully than Phil, so that suspicion and sadness were not the overriding feelings at the end of the book. The weakest answers concentrated on the Phil/Mme Dalleray episode and were narrative. There were some sensitive answers, but those who managed to analyse competently often overlooked the necessity of justifying their assertions with solid detail from the text.
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### Question 7

Lainé: *La Dentellière*

- (a) General understanding of Pomme's 'absence' and inability to communicate was evident in candidate's responses.
- (b) This question was not often selected and answers were usually highly narrative, but sensitive, coherent and well supported arguments were seen.

### Question 8

Camus: *Caligula*

- (a) There was a tendency for candidates to agree with the statement in the question in its entirety, and for answers to lack detail and reveal superficial knowledge of plot and character.
- (b) This question was less popular than (a). Candidates generally managed to convey Caesonia's love for and loyalty to Caligula, but few were able to develop the theme fully or to support their ideas with much evidence from the text.

# FRENCH

Paper 9716/42

Texts

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### Question 7

Lainé: *La Dentellière*

- (a) General understanding of Pomme's 'absence' and inability to communicate was evident in candidate's responses.
- (b) This question was not often selected and answers were usually highly narrative, but sensitive, coherent and well supported arguments were seen.

### Question 8

Camus: *Caligula*

- (a) There was a tendency for candidates to agree with the statement in the question in its entirety, and for answers to lack detail and reveal superficial knowledge of plot and character.
- (b) This question was less popular than (a). Candidates generally managed to convey Caesonia's love for and loyalty to Caligula, but few were able to develop the theme fully or to support their ideas with much evidence from the text.



# FRENCH

Paper 9716/43

Texts

## General Comments

Centres are reminded that candidates should answer one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and one other. For every question, **either (a) or (b)** is chosen. In the **(a)** questions in **Section 1**, all three parts, **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** should be completed, and it is not necessary to copy or quote long sections of the passage. Please note from the mark scheme that if the candidate uses the set passage 'as a springboard for storytelling' then this can only be awarded 10-11 marks. If they 'can extract one or two relevant points from a set passage' then this qualifies for 12-13 marks.

There was evidence that past papers had been used by candidates in preparation for sitting this paper. While this can be good practice, candidates should beware that it is not relevant or appropriate to emphasise the same themes as previous years when the questions are different. Thus credit could not be given for knowledge, which was detailed but not used relevantly, of other recent extracts in **Section 1 Question (a)**.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1**

Maupassant: *Boule de Suif et autres contes de la guerre*

- (a)** Candidates coped well with **Question 1(a)**. They understood well that after a period of successful retaliation against the occupying Prussian forces, *le père Milon* sustained an injury and was found out. During questioning by the Prussians, he explained at the beginning of the extract that he had killed eight Prussians in return for his father's death and another eight in revenge for his son. Not all candidates showed that they understood the patois ('fieu' was not always identified as 'fils' and was sometimes rendered 'frère'), or included that *le père Milon* explained that he had no quarrel with the Prussians, people he did not even know, but he objected to their presence on his home territory, which they were commanding as though it were their own, which was a contributing factor for his actions. In part **(ii)**, the Prussians' attitude in the middle of the extract was better understood than that at the end, and opportunities to contrast the two were rarely taken. By discussing quietly among themselves for a long time, their indecision was made manifest. A captain empathetically defended Milon and the colonel spoke in low tones so as not to be heard except by Milon as he tried to set out a way in which the patriot could be spared. After Milon spat in his face twice, a scene of confusion followed, with all the officers shouting orders at the same time. Candidates who did not understand about the spitting found it impossible to explain or justify the subsequent violent reaction of the soldiers, and there was a tendency for candidates not to restrict their answers to the extract, as requested in the question, but to refer to the rest of the story and to other *contes* in their answers. *Le père Milon* had no intention of striking a deal with the Prussians. Patriotism and vengeance had been more important to him than his own life. He made it clear that he did not repent of his action, and crossed his arms defiantly '*dans une pose d'humble héros*'. The first part of **(iii)** was usually quite well answered provided that the candidate did not suggest that Milon was ready to die because he had achieved his aim. Candidates should also have given their opinion of Milon's conduct in the second half of the extract, including his spitting and finally death, smiling at his son and family. Many did not, and of those who did, some did not understand that this was the simple peasant's only way of expressing the vehemence of his utter contempt, a few finding it inappropriate, if not disgusting.
- (b)** This was the more popular of the two questions on this book. The best answers were quite well balanced and covered a wide range of texts. Some candidates argued that the characters in *Boule de Suif*, despite their initial outrage at the proposition made to *Boule de Suif*, ultimately pursued

self-interest, and that this supported the statement in the question. The most successful candidates, however, noted Rachel's success in *Mademoiselle Fifi* and the unwavering loyalty in *Les Deux Amis*, *Le Père Milon* and *La Mère Sauvage*, even though it cost all of them their lives. In *Le Lit 29*, Irma suffered a slower, even more painful death, but had the satisfaction of knowing the damage she had inflicted on Prussian soldiers. The weakest responses saw nothing positive about either the Prussian or French side in any of the stories, or else contained much generalisation about violent, cruel assassins (the Prussians) oppressing the defenceless, innocent people (the French). One or two answers simply provided diatribes against war, with no reference or visible relevance to question or text.

## Question 2

Anouilh: *Antigone*

- (a) This was the more popular of the two questions on this new play to the paper this session. The best answers to part (i) pointed out Antigone's need to explain and justify her actions and decisions as she anticipated her imminent death as punishment for having tried to bury her brother, as well as her wish to bid a final farewell to Hémon. Answers to part (ii) were very mixed. A few candidates saw the guard's role in enabling Antigone to express her true feelings of fear, doubt and regret. He had initially been reluctant to transcribe the letter as Antigone dictated it, but agreed in return for Antigone's gold ring. Several of the more perceptive responses understood the comic touches added by the guard's actions and the stage directions: the guard's 'grosse voix', repetition, 'peine', protestations, sucking the pencil lead and double checking, all lightened the tension of the scene. Answers to part (iii) were generally fair. Antigone rejected life as desperately meaningless and insisted that she wanted to die, and to do so alone (when her sister, Ismène, declared her desire to die with her). *Le Chœur*, at the end of the play, agreed with her sentiments in the final line of this extract, however, she sought to uphold individual freedom against infringement to perform a personal obligation (to bury her brother) so had reason to win the reader's support and have her claim 'Sans la petite Antigone, vous auriez tous été bien tranquilles' rejected.
- (b) It was important for candidates to focus on 'ce que dit le Chœur au sujet de la tragédie', and unfortunately some offered more general material on what *le Chœur* said, while others also put great emphasis on *Le Prologue*. *Le Chœur* first entered as Créon was mystified about the 'enfant' who had attempted to bury Polynice. That was a decisive moment, and *Le Chœur* marked a turning point in the action: 'Cela n'a plus qu'à se dérouler tout seul. C'est cela qui est commode dans la tragédie. On donne le petit coup de pouce pour que cela démarre...'. Just as *Le Prologue* had outlined what would happen at the outset, *Le Chœur* helped to understand the play in as much as it gave certainty about the dreadful outcome and did not attempt to escape it. 'La mort, la trahison, le désespoir sont là, tout prêts...' Through *Le Chœur*, Anouilh defined tragedy: 'C'est propre, la tragédie. C'est reposant, c'est sûr... Dans la tragédie on est tranquille... parce qu'on sait qu'il n'y a plus d'espoir...' and contrasted, 'Dans le drame... On aurait peut-être pu se sauver'. Antigone, however, would not lie about trying to bury Polynice, nor attempt to escape, nor betray fear in the face of death.

## Question 3

Molière: *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*

- (a) There were a few very capable responses to **Question 3(a)** which did not succumb to the temptation to launch into narrative, give too much explanatory detail or become engrossed in the plot to the detriment of the question. Candidates pointed out that M. Jourdain's first reply in the passage was rude but typical of the way in which M. Jourdain spoke to his wife among others. His accusation of 'extravagances' was ironic given his own actions, as was his allegation that Mme Jourdain could not be made 'raisonnable'. There were a wide range of answers to (ii) as some candidates appeared not to understand that the word 'truchement' or interpreter referred to Covielle, Cleonte's valet, in disguise. Cleonte, having been refused Lucile in III, xii for not being a Gentilhomme (by M. Jourdain), reappeared in the guise of 'le fils du Grand Turc... un Seigneur d'importance'. Covielle, in complementary disguise, prepared the way for Cleonte's arrival, 'teaching' some of their 'language' (really eastern sounding gobbledegook). In this scene, M. Jourdain invited his wife to greet 'le fils du Grand Turc' using the *truchement*. Shortly after, Covielle was able privately to reveal to her his true identity and Cleonte's, completing the circle of people whose understanding was needed. Some responses merely explained the purpose of the masquerade, occasionally without reference to Covielle or his specific role. Others seemed to think

it referred to “trickery”, and this often led to narrative about the gullibility of Monsieur Jourdain and those who took advantage of this weakness. M. Jourdain had revealed in III, vi that he had arranged for his wife to have dinner with her sister so that Dorante could introduce Dorimène ‘en pleine liberté’. Mme Jourdain discovered his plan when she returned in IV, ii and was not pleased with Dorante and Dorimène’s part in the plot nor impressed at their social standing. This was the next time that she encountered them, and her continuing annoyance caused her to speak to them this way. Explanations of her attitude to Dorante were fairly good. Much less detail was given in the case of Dorimène.

- (b) As for **Question (a)**, there were occasional good and relevant responses. Candidates needed to identify Nicole and Covielle as the main ‘domestiques’ and to comment on their contribution to the comedy and plot, whether in simple ways such as Nicole’s giggling, or Covielle and Cleonte’s discussion in III, ix trying to find fault with Lucile, the symmetry in III, x with Nicole and Lucile, too, or Covielle’s role in the Turkish disguise. There was also mention of the *Laquais*, whom M. Jourdain used amusingly to show his ‘authority’ in I, ii.

#### Question 4

Devi: *Le Voile de Draupadi*

- (a) Fewer candidates answered on this text than on other texts. Of the existing answers some were admirably detailed, identifying Faisal as a ‘vendeur de drogue et meurtrier’ who managed to live in opulence ‘par la grâce d’Allah et l’intelligence de (Dev)’. The case Dev won for him, ‘son premier cas d’Assises’, was outlined in chapter IV and had made Dev ‘cet homme obsédé’. Faisal’s various illegal pursuits were no secret, but ‘de petites enveloppes bien garnies’ to police, lawyers, public and government officials assured that he remained “immune” to the justice system. His fatal blow to his octogenarian father-in-law almost brought his downfall had it not been for Dev’s having him acquitted by compromising justice. Anjali says that through this, she was ‘abandonnée en route’. Dev, Anjali and ‘plusieurs personnalités’ whom Dev would benefit from meeting, are invited to dinner with Faisal and, although Anjali had tried to excuse herself and to encourage Dev to attend alone, he had insisted that she join him, for herself (‘cela te distraira’), and for his sake – which was why she went. Candidates could explain to varying degrees that Anjali was distracted because of her son’s illness, resentful of the ease with which her husband could set that aside and attend a dinner with business associates and disturbed by images in her mind of suffering, particularly that inflicted by Faisal. She had little respect for the host, lost patience and wanted to leave, thinking, ‘J’en ai assez...de singer la civilisation occidentale comme de bons petits colonisés que nous sommes’. It is finally an Urdu poem that Faisal sings to Anjali, despite her request to be spared Urdu poetry (to which his response is, ‘Oui, oui, bien sûr, je comprends, fait-il, me serrant la main avec une déplaisante insistance’) that upset Anjali and caused her to want to leave before the end of the meal. The other guests were surprised, Dev was angry and offered an apology for Anjali, which she resisted. Candidates understood clearly the main events of the book, and knew that relations between Anjali and Dev had become strained during Wynn’s illness. Anjali had been preoccupied about their son and privately critical of Dev’s ability to resume his daily work. A breach had been forming and was now widening.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

#### Section 2

#### Question 5

Ionesco: *Le Roi se meurt*

- (a) At the outset, the guard presented each character and went on to comment on the action, including announcing the king’s death too soon. Juliette brought the level of conversation down from its elevated heights when she declared ‘C’est quand même pompeux’ and contributed to the comedy, ‘apparaissant puis disparaissant tandis que le Roi se relève’ in the ‘scène... jouée en guignol tragique’. In the main, the responses to this question were fairly short and lacked detail. While candidates were quick to emphasise the importance of these two roles, few could satisfactorily explain why, beyond commenting on incongruity and comedy.

- (b) This was by far the more popular of the two questions and the better answered overall. Most candidates were able to identify the stages leading up to the King's acceptance of the situation and the roles played in his decline by Marguerite and Marie. A few answers also discussed symbolism and parallelism between the disintegration of the palace, the King's waning authority, the gradual disappearance of the characters and Bérenger's deteriorating physical condition. The question invited the candidate to give their opinion of the way in which Bérenger accepted death and a few candidates also addressed this element of the question.

### Question 6

Colette: *Le Blé en herbe*

- (a) There were more answers to this question than to (b), and generally candidates showed fair understanding of the text. Having been family friends since birth, Phil and Vinca were now passing through adolescence, and the simplicity of their past trust of each other had been replaced with the complexity of redefining their positions in relation to each other. Their confidence in themselves was also shaken at this period of their lives and both experienced sadness during their transition from childhood to adulthood. Vinca had good reason to suspect Phil when she saw him sloping off to Mme Dalleray at night. And, although Phil finally got what he thought he wanted from Vinca, he still found himself struggling with sadness. Vinca, by contrast, made that transition more cheerfully than Phil, so that suspicion and sadness were not the overriding feelings at the end of the book. The weakest answers concentrated on the Phil/Mme Dalleray episode and were narrative. There were some sensitive answers, but those who managed to analyse competently often overlooked the necessity of justifying their assertions with solid detail from the text.
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