

OCR Report to Centres

January 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Advanced GCE French (H475)

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F701 French Speaking

Introduction

In common with previous January series, there were fewer performances at the very top and at the bottom of the mark range and virtually all candidates were appropriately entered for the examination. Snowfall caused problems for a minority of Centres, but almost all candidate material was submitted on time.

Role-plays

Use of Stimulus

This element of the role play had fewer top level performances than in the summer. Teacher/examiners who prepared the role plays carefully and who were familiar with their content were able to challenge incorrect information and, crucially, to spot omissions by the candidate. When teachers stray significantly from the phrasing of the questions given in the examiner booklet, this sometimes results in the candidate being given an item of vocabulary that is part of the test. It is important that this does not happen as candidates cannot be credited if they are given the word. It is not necessary to ask all the questions if a candidate has already supplied the information. There were several instances of candidates being asked for information they had already given, leading to confusion and the wasting of time.

Task A

Most candidates were able to convey the introductory details without difficulty. For most of the key points, it was omission of detail rather than mis-communicated ideas that led to the loss of marks. The word 'entertainment' in key point 7 provided a challenge, but a number of ways were found to express the idea of gourmet food in key point 11.

Task B

Teachers and candidates seemed familiar with the format of competitive reality TV shows, and the concept was readily understood. Around half of candidates did not find a suitable word for celebrities, using the adjective *célèbres* without a noun. Most candidates were able to give the figure in key point 9, although *livres* gave more difficulty, despite its frequency as a word. Most candidates knew *télécharger* or were able to offer a suitable alternative expression for key point 14, but many did not know how to say 'application form'. Some candidates chose an inappropriate word for 'contestants' despite it being glossed.

Task C

Most candidates were able to give the basic details about the house, although 'available' gave some difficulties. 'Lounge' was frequently unknown, but there were some imaginative ways found to express key point 8 referring to the terrace. It is important that candidates are trained to give detail, as some missed out that the local schools were good. Specific wording is rarely required, and candidates found a number of ways to express the idea of an Olympic-sized swimming pool, including giving the length of such a pool. As with previous role plays, the word for 'furniture' caused difficulty, and it was disappointing to hear 'provider' for provide. Nevertheless, there were some good attempts at key point 15 where candidates did not know the word for 'appointment', such as the idea of telephoning in advance.

Response to Examiner

Most candidates provided a good link between the questions and the main transactional part, and most teachers prompted for this rather than leaving a silence.

There were virtually no monologues by candidates this series and most interacted very well with their teachers. Although the role play can be completed in any order, in reality, the most successful candidates tend to follow it through in the order of the bullet points. In this way, it is also easier for the teacher to tell if any ideas from the text have been missed out. Some high scoring candidates showed initiative and imagination throughout the role play, expressing opinions and giving additional information.

Both extension questions must be asked by teachers. Sometimes the role play was allowed to go on beyond six minutes, sometimes to nine minutes. The six minute time limit is strictly adhered to, and candidates are not credited for anything said after that time.

Candidates responded well to the extension questions and gave interesting and relevant ideas.

Quality of Language

The range of language used by candidates was, not as wide as in the summer and there were errors similar to those in previous series. The manipulation of *son fils* provided problems (again), and it was almost universally mispronounced as *fille*. The initial questions remain one of the less successful elements for candidates and are an area to work on. The most common mistakes are missed agreements and incorrect verb endings.

Topic discussion

Choice of Topics

It is a requirement of the examination that candidates choose their topics from the list of AS sub-topics given in the specification. This series there was a small number of candidates who offered topics from the A2 list, or topics that were not related to France or a French-speaking country and this put them at a disadvantage.

Many candidates are able to find original slants for the topics, and many successful candidates sound very enthusiastic about their chosen topic.

Ideas, Opinions and Relevance

Candidates who were less successful in this grid almost always have too much factual information and not enough ideas and opinions rather than the other way round. It is important that candidates show evidence of research, but it should be used to support their ideas. Teachers can help their candidates by asking a range of questions that require a developed response rather than questions which only require a factual answer.

Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness

The over use of pre-learnt material was heard less frequently than in the past, and most candidates were able to use their prepared material in a flexible manner. There were a small number of almost scripted orals where there was no spontaneity at all, even when expressing opinions. Teacher/examiners have a responsibility to make sure that they ask some unexpected questions, however familiar they are with the topics.

Candidates generally understood their teacher well and only occasionally was it necessary for teachers to rephrase questions. Teachers seemed to recognise the importance of candidates

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being as audible as possible, and it was rare to hear teachers who were overly wordy. Sometimes teachers missed an opportunity to explore an area which the candidate was indicating was of interest. It is helpful if the next question relates to the last thing said by the candidate.

Language

A higher standard of complexity is expected in this section than in the role play because of its prepared nature and it is important that candidates understand the necessity to demonstrate that they have learnt a variety of structures. There was some good topic-specific vocabulary, and the most successful candidates used a full range of structures including subjunctives, passives and a range of tenses.

Genders and agreements tend to cause problems, but most candidates made sure that these were correct for vocabulary pertinent to the topic.

Pronunciation

The difficulties encountered tended to be the same as for previous series. Nasals proved testing, especially in words such as 'principal' and 'important', and few candidates managed to distinguish successfully between –an and –on. Pronunciation was not good from those who had pre-learned long passages; silent endings were incorrectly pronounced, and intonation was often anglicised. However, it is recognised that it can be difficult to achieve a convincing French accent, and candidates are always credited where there is a clear attempt to sound French.

Examining

The standard of examining has improved over the life of the specification. Many teachers are highly prepared and prevent their candidates from losing marks through their attention to detail and intervention, but there are still instances where students are disadvantaged because, teachers are unfamiliar with the detail of the role plays, or do not take account of what a candidate has already said. There were a number of timing issues, particularly with the topic discussion. Discussions should last between 9 and 10 minutes, and assessment stops at 10 minutes.

Administrative matters

Many centres managed the administrative requirements extremely well, and this aspect was fulfilled better than in any previous series. Most envelopes contained all the paperwork required, including candidate topic sheets and working mark sheets.

Where recording quality was not good, it tended to relate to the volume not being high enough, or the microphone being too near to the teacher, rather than a distortion of the sound. It is important to label CDs and CD sleeves accurately; if the candidate order on the sleeve does not match the recording order, this could lead to candidates being awarded the wrong mark.

Users of the Repository need to send the working mark sheets and candidate topic sheets to the OCR examiner through the post. Alternatively, these can be uploaded at the same time as the recordings.

F702 French Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General comments

Fewer candidates were entered than in January 2012, but their overall standard was higher, particularly in the range of language that they used. Most of them were well-prepared and familiar with the format and requirements of the assessment. A few candidates seemed unfamiliar with Task 7(a) and lost valuable marks because they did not give enough information about the text or because what they wrote was too vague. Rubric infringements were rare (the occasional answer in the wrong language in Task 3) and time allocated to complete the paper did not seem to be an issue. In Task 6 there were fewer gaps than last June, although candidates continue to find this the most challenging task.

Task 1

The first task proved accessible to most candidates. The more challenging questions at the end of the exercise ensured good differentiation.

- (a) Well answered with a few opting for option C, possibly because they heard *en visite scolaire*.
- (b) Generally correctly answered with occasional 4 or 14. A few answered 41, possibly because they misheard *quarantaine*, but this was allowed.
- (c) This question was usually well answered as candidates could link *heureusement tout s'est bien terminé* and *conséquences minimes*.
- (d) Usually well answered because the text gave two clues to lead to option B: ... *avançait à deux à l'heure ... comme un escargot*; those who guessed thought the driver was going too fast and chose option A.
- (e) Many answered this question correctly showing they knew the word *virage*; some opted for *ralentir* or *s'arrêter* especially if they had guessed and chosen *vite* in Q(d).
- (f) This was a more challenging question requiring understanding of *par mesure de sécurité*; a number of candidates erroneously chose *patience*.
- (g) This question was very successfully answered, with a minority of candidates writing 5, the number they heard after *virgule*.
- (h) Some did not listen to the whole sentence and having heard *qui voulait un boulot* looked no further and opted for *au chômage*. Those who listened to the full sentence correctly picked option C.
- (i) Understanding of the full sentence led candidates to the correct answer. Some latched onto the words they heard in the recording (*pour lui rendre service*), without understanding them and chose option C.
- (j) This question required detailed understanding. Those who knew *la veille* correctly selected option C; the others usually went for option A.

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Task 2

This task challenged candidates and differentiated very well. It made them display understanding and knowledge of the language. The better candidates also used strategies to eliminate distractors.

- (a) Most candidates realised a verb was required. Most were able to link *sont d'accord* and *s'entendre*. Some chose *s'accroît*, the answer to Q(b).
- (b) This was usually well answered; occasionally candidates gave the answer to Q(a) here. Not all candidates could link *explosion du nombre* and *s'accroît*.
- (c) An accessible question, mostly correctly answered.
- (d) This was well answered by those who realised an adjective was needed; some candidates did not link *en simplifiant* with *simple* and wrote *rapidement* – the answer to Q(e).
- (e) Generally well answered although there was some confusion with Q(d). When an incorrect answer was given, those who noticed that an adverb was needed wrote *officiellement*.
- (f) This question was generally correctly answered as most candidates realised that *une fois seulement* matched *une unique rencontre* in the text.
- (g) *Financièrement* in the question was a good clue guiding candidates to two possible words only. The majority understood the text and chose correctly.
- (h) Some candidates answered *se dispute*, possibly because they thought this question referred to the parents, rather than to their relationship. Here *conflit* and *désaccord* were the key linked words.
- (i) This was one of the best answered questions.
- (j) This was also very successfully attempted with only a few opting for *variable* – the opposite of the correct answer *égale*.

Task 3

Overall, candidates showed a sound understanding of the listening text associated with this task. Understanding of detail proved more of a challenge than gist understanding, possibly because of lexical deficiencies or because of lack of attention during the listening process.

- (a) The first point was very accessible and nearly all candidates managed to state either that La Rochelle was a pioneer or the year when the “*bicyclettes jaunes*” were introduced. The second point proved far more elusive: the majority incorrectly thought that *libre-service* meant the scheme was free.
- (b) With three possible answers, most candidates scored two marks here. A small number latched onto the word *naturel* at the start of the sentence and assumed it referred to the port.
- (c) An accessible question requiring a lot of practical information. The majority of candidates scored at least two of the three available marks. Marks were lost through carelessness when candidates used the wrong currency or the wrong language (eg *heures* for hours) or because important details were omitted (eg the sea as opposed to the seashore).

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- (d) Nearly all candidates could say that prospective guides needed to be able to speak English. The second part of the question was more challenging: they generally understood *disponibles*, but *festival* was less familiar; *pendant la prochaine saison estivale* was frequently rendered as “during the next season” or “during the next festival”. A few misheard *saison* and said the guides had to be available for 16 years.
- (e) In the first part of the answer, many candidates wrote about “visitors”, showing limited understanding of the guides’ work, as described in the listening passage. In the latter part, the mark scheme allowed as wide an interpretation as possible of the idiomatic phrase *travailler à l'accueil* but few gained this mark because answers were too vague or simply inaccurate.
- (f) This was successfully answered by most candidates.
- (g) This question carried three marks. Nearly every candidate managed to give a reason for visiting the website and most could say who would wish to do so; a few could not distinguish between “story” and “history” and others added invalidating information (eg the history of the town). The third mark proved more elusive, mostly because candidates thought the text referred to tours people could join as opposed to tours they could guide.

Task 4 – Communication – Grid H1

As in previous sessions, this task proved quite successful. Most candidates could devise strategies to communicate at least half the message clearly. Gaps in vocabulary were occasionally plugged with English words but quite frequently candidates found a way of expressing the right ideas in their own way. Some made good use of words they had heard in Task 3.

- Part 1 This was generally well done with a few candidates giving the wrong message and writing that they were going to a French university – possibly because they had not read the task carefully enough.
- Part 2 Another successful element; the idea of “preparation” was occasionally missing.
- Part 3 “although” proved accessible to most; the difficulty here was finding a way of expressing “requirements”. Some found ingenious ways of getting around this (eg *nécessaire, une nécessité, ce que vous demandez*), others simply used the English word.
- Part 4 In one way or another, this was generally conveyed, even if not always grammatically.
- Part 5 Many candidates struggled with this part, but usually it made enough sense to gain credit. Some went beyond the text (eg *renseignements*) or were too vague (eg *détails*).
- Part 6 This was accessible to most. The omission of “throughout” was frequent.
- Part 7 Most successfully conveyed this element. The French for region was not always known. Instead *la ville* or *La Rochelle* was used as an alternative, too narrow in this instance. Some candidates used *pas* or *rien* instead of *jamais*.
- Part 8 This section was very well attempted, the most frequent problem being the omission of the intensifier.

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- Part 9 In this section, candidates had to find a way of expressing the idea of providing. The verb *fournir* did not always communicate, especially when conjugated as an irregular –ir verb. The use of “accommodation” was also quite common.
- Part 10 A few candidates linked the length of time with the accommodation instead of the job, but generally this element was well conveyed.

Task 4 - Quality of Language – Grid C2

The outcome here was satisfactory. Few candidates scored less than 5 out of 10. At the upper end of the range, the marks were not quite as high as for Grid H2.

Areas that were well done include:

- Use of tenses
- Use of conditional and subjunctive – as appropriate
- Agreements of adjectives
- Use of *dont* with *avoir besoin* – better candidates only

Areas giving scope for improvement include:

- Phrasing questions
- The negative form
- Possessive adjectives
- Rendering of the English continuous present – only for some candidates
- Use of *avoir besoin de*
- Use of relative pronoun *que*

Task 5

This task proved more successful than in previous series. Candidates showed a good understanding of the text, possibly because *Le gaspillage alimentaire* had recently been in the news.

- 5A** Nearly all candidates scored at least two marks, the most accessible being Q(a) – although a few chose option C - and Q(b). Although *particuliers* and *pratiques* were used idiomatically in the text, more than half the candidates could find the correct equivalent because they had understood the context. A small minority successfully linked *dans le fond du* and *à l'intérieur*.
- 5B** Most candidates were able to get 4 or 5 correct answers. Sometimes, (i) was given instead of (j) and occasionally (m) was not selected.

Task 6

This task provided a number of challenges and was a good discriminator. Evidence showed that many candidates did not identify question words properly. They should therefore read the questions carefully. They should also remember that, even if questions can be answered with one or two words, quality of language is also assessed in this task. Single word answers are unlikely to help them reach the higher language marks. Many were aware of this and made every effort to manipulate language, with a good measure of success.

- (a)** Many managed to convey the idea of number of animals even if some expressed themselves very clumsily. Some misread the question (*pour qui...*) and started their answer with *parce que*,

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- (b) A fairly well-answered question. Although the wording clearly indicated that a verb was required (*que fait l'animal...*), some candidates used nouns (*compagnon, gardien*) as in the text, which did not answer the set question.
- (c) This question was phrased to provide an opportunity for language manipulation – the subject of the verb being the object in the text. Most understood and managed to get the comprehension mark, but few seized the opportunity to demonstrate their linguistic skills. Many added a subject pronoun but kept *réduire* in the infinitive, as in the text.
- (d) This was a challenging question, but as there were several ways of getting the two marks available, about half the candidates achieved full marks. Most frequently candidates wrote about increased longevity and changes in the structure of the family. A number of candidates merely lifted phrases from the text; this strategy seldom led to success.
- (e) This question tested detailed understanding of the text. Few candidates spotted *ne...que* and the change of verb, so many added *l'amour inconditionnel* which showed that the nature of the relationship between the pet and its owner had not been grasped.
- (f) The first part of this question was usually correctly answered; some forgot to mention *du/de leur budget*, thus making their answer meaningless. The second part proved more challenging: f(i) was clumsily expressed but showed some understanding of the passage; f(ii) often made no sense – or was completely wrong - probably because candidates were not familiar with *grandes surfaces* and/or *rayons*.
- (g) A few candidates were able to convey the idea of increase; most only mentioned that there were costs for health and grooming.
- (h) Nearly all candidates answered that this was what the French spent on their pets but only half of them got the mark because they did not state that the expenditure was on an annual basis. Had they read the full sentence, rather than merely what followed the figure, they would have seen *chaque année* – an essential part of the answer. A few candidates guessed, possibly because they did not know *gâter* and went beyond the text, stating that money was spent either to buy pets or to feed them.
- (i) This was usually correctly answered, often with a sentence about spending more on their pets than on themselves. There were several cases of misreading of the question (*pour qui* read as *pourquoi*).
- (j) Many answered with a perfect tense or a past participle or copied the text; this was not acceptable. There were also many correct answers, but with inconsistent grammar.

Task 6 – Quality of Language – Grid C2

By the very nature of the tasks, the linguistics demands of Task 6 are not as great as those of Task 4. However, candidates tend to perform better in the latter than in the former. To improve their overall performance, candidates should therefore be advised to allocate time to refine language and to check basic accuracy when they answer the Task 6 questions. There is much scope for improvement here, throughout the ability range.

In this task, several questions allowed candidates to get an accurate answer fairly easily (eg questions (b), (d)(i), (e), (f)(i), (g) and (i), as long as they didn't misinterpret this as *pourquoi*). It is important to take up such opportunities. This task also provided a chance for better candidates to use high level language (eg questions (c), (f)(ii), (j) where language manipulation was required)

Verbs in this task were not as successfully used as in Task 4. For example, in Q(c), providing a correct verb proved difficult for many and answers such as *ils réduire*, or *elles sentent moins seules* frequently occurred. In Q(f)(i), few produced a correct imperfect tense, and in Q(j) the use of the present tense was rare or, if it was used, was not always correct (eg *ils abandonnes...*)

Task 7(a) – Comprehension of text

Generally this task produced a good outcome. A minority of candidates seemed unaware of the aim of this task (ie providing a relevant summary of a specific section of the text) and wrote vaguely about the subject matter of the article. Others were very well-prepared and managed to include most – if not all of the relevant points.

The most successful points were: 3 (well expressed by most candidates), 4 (understandably expressed by most), 6 (with a range of acceptable descriptions), 7 (usually giving one of the examples), 8 (most candidates were able to find another suitable example) and 11 (easy to convey but occasionally omitted).

Less successful points were: 1, 2 (nearly all candidates mentioned the website; most omitted to add it was a specialised one), 5 (frequently mentioned though not necessarily clearly conveyed), 9 (some wrote about taking a new insurance policy), 10 (many mentioned the need for space without saying where or for whom) and 12 (keys were often mentioned but the idea of organising their exchange was sometimes missing).

Task 7(b) – Response to text

Candidates had plenty to say on the theme of *l'échange de maison* and on the whole they seemed to grasp both the advantages and disadvantages of this type of holiday very well. Some concentrated on the points made in the text; others displayed originality, for example developing the idea of invasion of one's privacy when strangers take residence in their own property. Some candidates moved away from the personal element and wrote about the impact such a scheme would have on the local economy and the travel industry in general, whilst others discussed the role the internet site would play in determining the level of security available to participants.

The most successful pieces were well-structured with a proper assessment of the various advantages and disadvantages and led to a thoughtful conclusion.

A minority, who had shown understanding of the concept of *l'échange de maison* in 7a, ignored the text and gave their views on school exchanges or about living in another house to see if they liked it enough to buy it. Others, believing the exchange would be a permanent one, wrote about the benefits and problems such a move would have on employment and schooling for the children. Candidates should remember that the stimulus text in Task 7 acts as a springboard for expressing their views on the set theme.

Task 7 – Quality of Language – Grids C2 and F2

The language in Task 7 was frequently better than in tasks 4 and 6; it was at times very impressive for candidates who had studied French for only one term beyond GCSE, so one assumes some may have been one year and a term year beyond GCSE. In this section, candidates seemed more adventurous and more willing to display their ability to manipulate language.

It was not unusual to note a marked difference in the quality of language between 7(a) and 7(b). At times, the support of the stimulus text helped candidates in 7(a), at other times it created constraints, especially when candidates went out of their way to put all the points entirely in their own words. In 7(b) the best had planned what they wanted to say and chose language to suit their ideas and purpose; others just wanted to express their views and language occasionally got in the way.

Apart from some all-purpose introductions, aiming to impress the reader, there was little use of pre-learned phrases. Varied vocabulary and ambitious structures appeared in most scripts, occasionally used by candidates who had not quite mastered them, perhaps because they were thinking in English and trying to translate too literally. A few candidates had limited knowledge of the language and were unable to express themselves clearly enough to make their answer understandable.

What candidates did well included:

- Use of the subjunctive (*quoiqu'il y ait beaucoup d'avantages...*)
- Use of the conditional (*j'aurais peur pour ma maison si....*)
- Use of imperfect after *si* (*si je faisais un échange, je pourrais...*)
- Use of a range of tenses
- Link words (*en revanche, cependant, néanmoins, par contre...*)

Areas where improvement is needed

- Verb ending (*je crois, mon père voudrais habite ; ...*)
- Leaving verbs in the infinitive (*si les personnes rester ; vous choisir une maison...*)
- Use of *avoir besoin de* (*les gens qui besoin un vacance [sic]*)
- Use of *qui* and *que* (*une personne qui je ne connais pas...*)
- Agreements of adjectives (*de la nourriture locale et spéciaux ; des activités illégal...*)
- Invented words and anglicisms (eg *uncomfortable, le space; provider; le resulte*)

F704 French Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General comments

The overall standard of candidates' work was generally pleasing. Most candidates appeared to have studied appropriate topics and were able to tackle the various question types in a suitable way, suggesting that they had been well trained in examination technique. There was little evidence of candidates having run out of time; on the contrary some Section C responses were significantly longer than the recommended word count. There were few omissions in Sections A and B and, where omissions occurred, they were usually in the most demanding questions, suggesting that shortage of time was not the issue. Rubric infringements were rare. Legibility was occasionally a problem, especially with regard to verb endings.

SECTION A

Task 1

This first listening item with questions and answers in English was fairly well tackled. Most candidates grasped the gist, even if they did not understand all the detail.

- (a) This item was often well answered, but some candidates did not recognise the phrase *au coin de*.
- (b) There were some good answers, but not all candidates understood the phrase *prêt à (se déplacer autrement)*.
- (c) This item was fairly well answered. The main pitfall was the possible misinterpretation of *propre* as 'own' rather than 'clean'.
- (d) The word *foule* was surprisingly unfamiliar to a number of candidates, who wrote 'fools' or referred in some other way to madness.
- (e) Most candidates coped well with this item. There was occasional confusion between the two percentages mentioned – 70 and 10.
- (f) This was a difficult item. Some candidates correctly specified 'social success' but then invalidated their answer by writing 'social responsibility' as well.
- (g) This was another difficult item. A mere reference to clean driving was not sufficient; candidates needed to show that they had understood the phrase *plus polluant qu'on ne le croit* in order to get the second mark.

Task 2

This item on the French charity *Les Restos du Cœur* proved to be fairly accessible to most candidates. In a few instances candidates did not take sufficient account of the wording of the question, eg in part (c) the question word was *Qui?* and therefore answers that began with *le chômage* were inappropriate. As has been seen in previous series, those candidates who tried to transcribe word for word from the recording often struggled to convey the meaning accurately, either because they transcribed key words wrongly or because they included extraneous material. Candidates are not expected to express every idea in their own words; it is fine to use key vocabulary items from the recording.

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- (a) This question was well answered, either by inserting *il y a* in front of *(plus de) vingt-cinq ans* or by doing the maths, ie *en/avant 1988*.
- (b) There were many correct answers. Again candidates had a choice: they could either refer to *la même raison d'être* or they could give a more detailed explanation based on the phrase *apporter une assistance bénévole...*
- (c) This item discriminated well between candidates across the attainment range. It was good to see some candidates manipulating the French from the recording and grasping the opportunity to use complex language, eg *ceux qui ont un emploi saisonnier*. It was not necessary for candidates to find synonyms for words such as *saisonnier* and *vieillesse*. A few candidates seemed not to recognise the phrase *mères seules* and it was not uncommon to find incorrect versions such as *maires* and *soles* (sic).
- (d) This was a challenging item, but was successfully tackled by a number of candidates. The key to success was to realise that the organisation *Les Restos du Cœur* did not provide its clients with jobs or housing; rather it offered them assistance in finding these things. The word *apprentissage* (*du français*) seemed unfamiliar to many candidates.
- (e) Most candidates gave all the correct information. Only a few misspelt *coût* as *coup* or *cou*, neither of which was acceptable because it changed the meaning.
- (f) This question was generally well answered.
- (g) This question was fairly well answered, but *vaisselle* was not universally known despite being a common word at GCSE level.
- (h) There were some good answers here, but a number of candidates found it difficult to express the required idea in acceptable French, perhaps because they did not realise that *savoir* in the recording was being used as a noun.
- (i) This was a difficult item, requiring candidates to distinguish between what Maurice had done previously for the benefit of his (paying) clients and what he does now on a voluntary basis. The response *Il voulait se lancer dans le bénévolat* did not answer the question set and was therefore unacceptable.
- (j) This question was fairly well answered. It was a pity that some candidates correctly referred to the pleasure of giving but then mentioned the pleasure of receiving as well, which invalidated their response.
- (k) There were some good answers here, with many candidates showing a clear understanding of the word *misère*.
- (l) Most candidates appeared to have understood the relevant section of the recording, but some gave answers such as *Elle espère avoir un appartement* which, although true, did not answer the question set and therefore could not be credited.

Quality of Language Section A

Many candidates showed a reasonable grasp of French grammar and syntax through their answers to the questions set. However some did not pay enough attention to basic accuracy, such as adjectival agreements. Common grammatical errors included the omission of *à* between *aider* and its dependent infinitive and the misuse of the present participle, eg *donnant* for '(the pleasure of) giving'.

SECTION B**Task 3**

This question, the only non-verbal question on the paper and which required candidates to select appropriate words from a list, produced a wide spread of marks. The commonest errors were confusion between *accordent* and *estiment* in (b) and (f) and the wrong use of *respect* in (e).

Task 4

Almost all candidates understood the requirements of this sentence completion task and made a genuine effort to provide an appropriate answer.

- (a) Many students gave the correct answer, but some wrote *dans* instead of *près de*.
- (b) The use of the verb *s'établir* in the text caused confusion here. While the intended correct answer was something on the lines of *s'être installé à Colombey-les-deux-Églises*, the much shorter answer *1934* was equally acceptable as it made good sense in the context.
- (c) This question was well answered for communication, although many candidates did not know the gender of *mort*. A few candidates did not realise that a noun was needed to complete the sentence and they wrote, for example, *il mourut*.
- (d) This was a fairly challenging item. Some candidates did not understand that the cross was erected a long time before the accompanying *Mémorial*. The misuse of *est dominé* was quite common here.
- (e) This question was quite difficult. It provided candidates with an opportunity to show their knowledge of the grammatical pattern *depuis* + present tense. However, the use of a past tense was acceptable in terms of communication.
- (f) Most candidates correctly mentioned the lack of pictures of the General. Another acceptable answer was *la voix du général*, since the point was made in the text that there were no authentic recordings.
- (g) Many candidates struggled with this question, perhaps because they had not fully understood the wording of the question *Tout en regardant les images...*

Task 5

On the whole this task was well handled. Questions (d) and (e) were the main discriminators.

- (a) Most candidates gave the correct information for both marking points. The best answers included verb constructions such as *en regardant* and *en entendant*, but the simpler construction *il y a* was acceptable for communication.
- (b) Some candidates found it hard to express the two ideas required, namely the aim to create emotion contrasted with the importance of historical accuracy.
- (c) Most candidates got at least two out of the available three marks. Sometimes candidates did not make their answer clear enough: for example in the sentence *Cela n'aurait pas été authentique* the word *cela* only made sense if it came after some reference to a (hypothetical) recent recording.

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- (d) Almost all candidates correctly mentioned *personnalité*, but many omitted the important detail *historique*.
- (e) This was the hardest item in Task 5, perhaps because the reference to May 1968 came after the required answer in the text. Among those candidates who identified the correct answer, there was sometimes confusion between active and passive forms of the verbs *affaiblir* and *assombrir*. It was not necessary for candidates to find synonyms for these two verbs.

Task 6

This task proved to be less accessible than Task 5, perhaps because of the difficult nature of some sections of the stimulus text. Nevertheless, high marks were achieved by some candidates.

- (a) A number of candidates based their answer on the word *interrogations* from the text, which rarely produced an acceptable answer. Any wording that conveyed the idea of uncertainty or a lack of agreement was fine.
- (b) This question was well answered. Acceptable responses ranged from the summative *D'une façon négative* to the more detailed explanation *Les OGM sont plus offensifs que les autres organismes*.
- (c) This question proved to be quite challenging. Often the inclusion of *si* rather than *que* was a good indicator of an acceptable response. Another possibility was simply to use the noun *la toxicité*, although candidates who did this were not making the most of the opportunity to show their knowledge of French syntax.
- (d) Very few candidates realised that the first part of this question required a reference to allergies. The second part was quite well answered.
- (e) This question was quite demanding as the relevant sentence in the stimulus text included the double negative concept *Je ne voudrais pas nier...* and even then it was not possible to lift that sentence in order to answer the question successfully. There were, however, some good answers where candidates used their own words, such as *Les risques ne sont pas clairs*.
- (f) Most candidates got at least two out of the available three marks, showing at least partial understanding of the last part of paragraph 2 in the stimulus text. The phrase *prend du retard* seemed to be unfamiliar to many.

Task 7

Overall, many candidates found this task difficult. Some lost potential credit because they gave alternative answers, eg *pourtant/donc* in (c). Under these circumstances a mark is only awarded if both versions are correct; it is therefore better for the candidate to give only one answer.

- (a) This was the most difficult item on the question paper. Most candidates misinterpreted *tranchés* as meaning *différents* whereas in fact it conveyed the idea of *marqués*. A few candidates linked the word wrongly with *les tranchées* in the previous stimulus text.
- (b) This question was quite well answered. Some candidates were brave enough to write the single word *normal*, which was acceptable even though it did not fit into the grammatical context of the original statement.

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- (c) There were many correct answers, but also a significant number of wrong responses on the lines of *en même temps*.
- (d) Many candidates produced a French word or phrase conveying the meaning of the English word 'pretend', which was unacceptable.

Task 8

This transfer of meaning task turned out to be more demanding than the equivalent task in recent papers. Nevertheless, most candidates scored a reasonable number of marks for sections 3, 4 and 5 combined. A common error was the wrong insertion of 'the' in front of 'protection', 'advances' and/or 'diabetics'. It was pleasing to see that most candidates understood *dont*. Many candidates conveyed the meaning of the different verb tenses appropriately, although it was not uncommon to find *vient* mistranslated as 'came'. The main vocabulary errors were:

- *culture* ('culture', 'growth')
- *tant que* ('as')
- *protections* (plural 'protections')
- *sanitaires* ('sanitary')
- *trop* ('more', 'very')

It is important to note that the accuracy of English is taken into account in this question. The words 'insulin' and 'environmental' were sometimes misspelt.

Task 9

Many candidates must have finished Section B with a feeling of satisfaction because the marks in this task were often high. It also provided an opportunity for candidates to show their grasp of French grammar, eg by providing an infinitive in the second gap in part (a) and, less straightforwardly, a feminine agreement in the first part of sentence (b).

Quality of Language, Section B

Candidates' responses varied widely in terms of accuracy and complexity. Among the most useful indicators were:

- the correct use of the passive voice if candidates chose to use it in Q4(d)
- the correct use of an infinitive construction in Q4(g)
- the appropriate choice of verb tenses in Q5(c)(ii)
- the manipulation of *ont affaibli* and *ont assombri* in Q5(e)
- the appropriate choice of verb tenses in Q6(f)
- grammar in general in Q9

SECTION C

On the whole, candidates made a good effort to focus on the question asked, rather than writing generally on the broad topic area. Many also made a creditable effort to structure their essay logically, writing a coherent series of paragraphs which led up to a clear and concise conclusion. A number of the titles lent themselves to the 'for and against' approach and this approach was generally successful. However some candidates introduced confusion by stating, for example, that there were many negative points but finishing with a conclusion that was entirely positive. Just occasionally candidates began with an opening sentence that read more like a conclusion, eg *Je suis pour cette idée...*. The use of fixed phrases and idioms continues to be worthy of comment: it was fine to use idioms when they were genuinely appropriate for the context, but some candidates used phrases such as *autant que je sache*, *je ne peux pas m'empêcher de penser* and *il faut souligner l'importance* more or less indiscriminately, which added nothing to the quality of their response. Most candidates managed to include meaningful references to

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French-speaking society in their essay, a necessary hurdle to cross in order to score more than 4/10 for Relevance and Points of View.

In terms of language, better candidates often wrote smoothly and naturally, and their use of French allowed them to express a suitable range of ideas without ambiguity, even if there were grammatical errors. Some candidates used tenses and complex structures to good effect. Markers do not have a 'tick list' of specific structures to look out for, but it was pleasing to see examples of:

- contrasting verb tenses, eg perfect combined with imperfect in the same sentence
- correct tense sequences with *si*
- structures involving prepositions with an infinitive
- *en* + present participle
- *ce qui*, *ce que*
- *dont*
- object pronouns
- agreements of past participles
- moderate use of the subjunctive

Perfection is not expected even for full marks, but some otherwise strong candidates let themselves down by apparently not checking their writing for basic verb endings and adjectival agreements. In terms of vocabulary, it was good to see many candidates making a positive attempt to introduce variety, avoiding the over-use of common words such as *choses* and *faire*. Anglicisms were a pitfall for some candidates; notable examples in this paper were *amenable* (sic), *véritable* misused in the sense of 'correct' and *massif* misused in the sense of 'enormous'.

Question 10

This question on the pros and cons of surveillance cameras was quite a popular choice. Many candidates were able to provide suitable factual evidence, both regarding the cameras themselves and regarding trends in crime over time. An approach that worked well was to begin with a short introduction focused on the question, followed by some background evidence to support the use of cameras, then continuing with some discussion of objections to cameras, and ending with a concise conclusion which came back to the question on the examination paper. A few candidates digressed into other aspects of the privacy question, such as the internet, which was not relevant to this question. There was also a tendency among candidates to write lengthy sections of text about crime without any reference to cameras, which again resulted in a reduced mark for Relevance and Points of View.

Question 11

This question on integration and exclusion was another popular choice. The best answers began with a description of the problem, expressed dissatisfaction with the situation, giving reasons, and then challenged the *député* to see that something was done. For almost all candidates the focus was on race, rather than age, gender or any other issue. While there were a pleasing number of good responses, some candidates struggled to remain focused on the question; they wrote what amounted to a discursive essay on integration and exclusion, and often included statistics and other facts that seemed out of place in this particular context. A few went as far as re-writing the essay on 'Whose responsibility is integration?' which was set in June 2012.

Question 12

A good number of candidates opted for this question, which focused on the relative importance of individual behaviour in protecting the environment. Good answers gave plausible examples of *petits gestes*, pointed out that if we all performed them we could make a difference, then went on

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to discuss bigger solutions, eg energy policy, before deciding on a verdict and summing up their ideas appropriately. Most candidates who chose this question managed to include plenty of relevant information from French-speaking society. Some were able to incorporate information that has appeared in previous F704 papers, such as the *taxe carbone*, the *pastille verte* and the fact that France is heavily reliant on nuclear power. Less strong responses often failed to remain focused on the title: they may have included potentially relevant information, but veered too far towards other aspects of the topic such as whether French society as a whole is doing enough to save the planet.

Question 13

A few candidates chose this question on the topic of wind farms. On the whole their responses were relevant and well argued, with suitable examples that showed genuine geographical as well as technical knowledge. It was pleasing to find persuasive language being used in response to a title such as this.

Question 14

This question on the future of medicine in France was chosen by a small number of candidates. While the question focused on the future, it was appropriate to include evidence from the past, especially recent developments. Candidates were able to take both a scientific and a social perspective on the question.

Question 15

No candidates chose this question.

Question 16

A small number of candidates chose this question, which focused on the positive aspects of *la francophonie*. The attainment range was broad, ranging from a response that showed an impressively detailed appreciation of *la francophonie* to one which did little more than scratch the surface. It was certainly not a question to be tackled on the basis of general knowledge; indeed in Section C all candidates are meant to choose only a question on a topic which they have studied in depth during their A2 course.

Question 17

No candidates chose this question.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Facsimile: 01223 552553

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