

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2010

**FRENCH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' performance in the 2010 examination was comparable to that of 2009. Many candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. None the less, there is still much room for improvement.

Teachers are again encouraged to continue exposing their students to authentic samples of language from electronic and paper-based sources to stimulate real-life situations in which students may practise the target language. Teachers are advised to continue their good work in engaging students in language learning by making it relevant, personal and meaningful.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, tested candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The good performance here was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

This section tested candidates' ability to respond in French to ten situations described in English and requiring written responses.

All situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see syllabus) that could be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate.

Points to note

- Candidates must read each situation carefully, paying close attention to what is required by the situation.
- Candidates must try to be concise in their answers as long, convoluted sentences may result in the loss of marks.
- Candidates are reminded to number the situations as on the question paper, even if they answer the situations in random order.
- Candidates should NOT write each situation on a separate page.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTING/TOPIC
1	Describing an item	Lost and found counter
2	Expressing good wishes	Email friend going on vacation
3	Apologising/ Expressing regret	Inability to accept invitation
4	Expressing a request	Reminder to do a task
5	Explaining/Informing	Reason for getting home late
6	Interdiction	Notice in a public place
7	Informing/ Providing news about something	Note on examination results
8	Expressing opinion	Comment on poem
9	Proposing a course of action	Poster at school
10	Giving advice	Doctor's office prescription

Situation 1

This item required candidates to give two descriptive features of a lost bag. Most candidates responded well and were able to provide adequate information. Nonetheless, there was often the problem of the agreement of noun and adjective, the feminine being given instead of the masculine and vice versa.

Situation 2

Expressing two wishes was the key to answering this item. Some responses were too garbled and candidates lost marks for not simply writing "*Bon Voyage*" or "*Bonnes Vacances*" to express their wish for the person's holiday. Candidates also experienced problems in agreement between gender and number, for example, "*Bon *Vacances*" or "**Bonne voyage*". Candidates frequently misused "*espérer*" for "*souhaiter*" with the direct object pronoun. The verb "*s'amuser*" was also not employed correctly and it was obvious that there was a problem with the conjugation when using the reflexive pronoun, for example, "*s'amuses-toi*".

Situation 3

For this item, most candidates knew how to give an apology and give a reason for their absence. However, some candidates misused the phrase "*parce que*" instead of "*mais*" or joined the two words as "**parceque*". Overall, candidates responded well to this question.

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Situation 4

Candidates needed to remind someone about a task which they had to do. However, oftentimes the idea of the reminder was not expressed, only the task. Many candidates lost marks here for not using “*n’oublie pas de*” or “*tu dois...*” to indicate that the person should not forget to do the task.

Situation 5

This item required candidates to give an explanation for their lateness and to inform of a specific arrival time. Many candidates did not use the future tense or, in other cases, the future of only one verb was known. For example “*j’irai*” or “*j’aurai*” was employed instead of “*je serai en retard*”. Nevertheless, most candidates successfully gave a reason for being late, but did not indicate a specific time for their return.

Situation 6

The interdiction was very important in this item and most times it was used correctly. However, the verb “*se promener*” or “*faire une promenade*” was used instead of “*marcher*” and many candidates did not know the word for “lawn” or misspelt it. This question often scored a partial mark because one of the requirements was not met. For example, “*ne marcher pas ici*” received a zero score because there was no interdiction and no specific place or area mentioned.

Situation 7

For this item, the present tense was often used instead of the *passé composé* and the position of the adverb “*bien*” or “*très bien*” was misplaced. Many candidates also did not know the word for “term” and simply added an “e” to make it “*le terme*” instead of using “*trimestre*” or “*semestre*”. In addition, there was often no indication of the future tense when speaking about their plans.

Situation 8

Candidates performed well on this item. They provided the two elements that were requested and expressed their opinion of the poem. There was the occasional use by candidates of “*à mon avis*” or “*je pense que*”. However, most candidates did not know that “*poème*” was masculine and used “*la*” or “*elle*” or “*belle*” in their descriptions.

Situation 9

For this item candidates needed to propose a course of action. The word for “alcohol” was misspelt and the inability of candidates to use the interdiction “*défense de*” or “*il est interdit de*” caused them to lose marks. It was also obvious that many candidates did not know the difference between the adjective “*bon*” and the adverb “*bien*” and these were often misused, for example, “**bien pour la santé*”.

Situation 10

This item required candidates to provide advice and they responded well to it. The indicative or the infinitive was often used to tell the patient to do two things. The main problem encountered was with the word for “medication”. Most times, “*prends le medecin*” or “*medication*” were used, which indicated that the vocabulary was not well known.

The following are examples of responses in a good script.

1. *Mon sac est marron et aussi grand que moi*
2. *Bon voyage et amuse-toi bien.*
3. *Je suis désolé mais je ne peu pas y aller avec toi, je dois garder mon frère.*
4. *N'oublie pas de m'acheter un kilo de pommes.*
5. *J'arriverai *peu après vingt-deux heures car je n'ai plus d'argent, donc je dois venir a *pie.*
6. *Il est interdit de marcher sur le gazon.*
7. *J'ai eu *réussite aux examens, je vais continuer mes études au niveau avance.*
8. *J'aime beaucoup mais c'est trop triste.*
9. *La drogue, ce n'est bon pour la sante.*
10. *Tu dois te reposer et boire beaucoup d'eau.*

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
5. J'arriverai *peu après vingt –deux heures car je n'ai plus d'argent, donc je dois venir a *pie.	Omission of indefinite article <i>un.</i> - Spelling of <i>pie</i> .	J'arriverai un peu après vingt –deux heures car je n'ai plus d'argent, donc je dois venir a pied.
7. J'ai eu *reussite aux examens, je vais continuer mes etudes au niveau avance.	Omission of definite article <i>la.</i>	J'ai eu la reussite aux examens, je vais continuer mes etudes au niveau avance

Section II – Letter/ Composition

This section tested candidates' ability to produce a piece of French of about 130–150 words based on an outline given in English. Candidates had the choice of producing either a letter or a composition.

The answers in this section ranged from excellent to poor. It must be noted that this year, unlike other years, an almost equal number of candidates attempted each option.

In general, the problem of inaccuracy remains a source of concern. The impression is given that few candidates write a rough copy of their essay, revise, correct and improve on it before submission, although the question paper provides blank space for such. Teachers need to encourage their students to practise these and other techniques such as

- Balancing the length of paragraphs. Most candidates write at length in Parts (i) and (ii) and very little in Parts (iii) and (iv).
- Using connectives to improve the flow of the essay and its coherence (*alors, mais cependant...*).

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Refraining from writing their answers in ‘stream of consciousness’ mode, with long lists of nouns, and many sentences which consist only of subject, verb and object.
- Using structures which are rewarded by markers: *inviter* + person + *a* (infinitive), *après avoir visité*, *passer* (time) *a* (infinitive) etc.

There was an improvement in the use of correct format for letter headings and greetings, salutations and closure. There was also evidence that teachers had prepared their students well for opening and closing remarks in the letter, for example, «*Je profite d’un instant de repos pour t’adresser ces quelques mot...*» and «*je dois terminer ma lettre, ma mère m’appelle pour faire la vaisselle*».

The problem of candidates writing too much remains in evidence. Candidates must understand that markers do not score the essay beyond the 150 (170) word limit. Quantity does not replace quality!

Common errors made by candidates in Section II included:

- Incorrect formulation of date
- *Tout le monde* + plural verb
- Position of *prochain-Samedi prochain* and *le prochain concert*
- Use of *dire* and *parler* (*J’écris pour te dire...*)
- Use of *quitter* and *partir*
- Incorrect usage of “to take” (**Nous avons pris mon correspondante a la plage.*)
- Incorrect usage of *d’accord* (*Elle était d’accord* for “She was all right”)
- *Avoir un bien temps* for “to have a good time”

Use of the subjunctive after *espérer* : **J’espère que tu ailles.*

- Omission of the auxiliary verb in the *passé composé* and incorrect agreements for verbs conjugated with *être*.
- Adjectival agreement (very poor as it usually is)
- Omission of letters in certain words (**vaster*, **aniversaire*, **malheureusment*)
- Word by word translation from the English structure..for example, * «*Une album qui faire les journées tourne la vie pour le bon* » ; «* *C’était nén pouvoir plus.* » The latter structure indicates that candidates remember expressions they have found in a dictionary. Teachers need to teach candidates to write an essay using vocabulary and structures known to them.

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Many candidates also have difficulty with respect to the use of

- Logical future : *Quand j'irai a Paris, je visiterai...*
- The pronoun “y” to complete the structure (“You must go”, rendered as *Tu dois aller*)
- Subjunctive after ‘*Vouloir que...*’ and after verbs of emotion for example, *Je suis content que ...* .

Here is an example of a letter submitted this year by a candidate.

Lyons, le treize mai deux mil dix

Chère Sophie,

Comment vas-tu ? J'espère que tout va bien chez toi. Quant a moi, tout va bien. A propos, je te remercie du cadeau que tu m'as envoyé le mois dernier. J'étais très occupée mais, maintenant, j'écris pour te parler au sujet d'un concert. Un concert de Taylor Swift dans la Guyane ! Incroyable. N'est –ce pas ?

*Tu sais bien que j'adore Taylor Swift. Alors, quand J'ai entendu *au sujet du concert, j'ai dit, « il me faut aller a ce concert ! » Il a eu lieu au Stade *dans le ville qui* s'apelle Providence, il y une semaine. Taylor a chanté toutes mes chansons préférées telles que « I'd lie », « The other side of the door”, ”Breathe”et ainsi de suite. Il n'y a pas eu *des places dans le Stade *de s'asseoir. Mais, *hereusement, j'avais acheté le *billete le plus tôt que possible. Comme moi. Les autres jeunes gens ont adore Taylor. En effet, les jeunes *homme ont crie, « Nous *t'adore Taylor ! » Très amusant !*

*Sophie, mon amie, ne t'inquiète pas, Taylor va venir a la Martinique le mois prochain. C'est génial, n'est-ce pas ? *Elle viendra mercredi, le trois juin. Tu dois aller au concert ! Je te promets qu'il sera incroyable ! Taylor Swift, je l'adore !*

*De toute façon, je dois te quitter maintenant car j'ai vraiment sommeil. J'attends *de ta prochaine lettre avec impatience.*

Amitiés,

Sasha

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
* au sujet du...	Wrong vocabulary item	Parler du
* dans le ville	Wrong definite article	Dans la ville
..*qui s'apelle	Incorrect spelling	Qui s'appelle
..*des places	Use of “de” after the negative	De places
*de s'asseoir	Wrong preposition	Pour s'asseoir
*hereusement	Incorrect spelling	heureusement

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*billete	Incorrect spelling	billet
*homme	Wrong number	hommes
*Nous t'adore	Verb and subject agreement	Nous t'adorons
*Elle viendra	Wrong subject pronoun	Il n viendra
*de ta prochaine	Need to omit 'de'	Ta prochaine

Here is an example of a good composition submitted by a candidate.

*Pendant mes vacances de Pâques mon ami, Lui, a *visité ma famille et moi, ici, dans* Trinité et Tobago. Il est arrivé la première semaine de mes vacances dans le* airport. Quand il est arrivé, nous sommes retournés à la maison, pour une boum. C'était super! Après la boum nous nous sommes couchés.*

**Dans le matin, nous sommes allés à la plage, où Lui et moi avons fait la natation. Lundi matin, nous avons vu les monuments historiques. Après nous sommes allés au ciné* pour ver* un film d'épouvante. C'était intéressant! Le prochain jour Lui et moi sommes allés jouer un match du* foot. Lui a joué très bien et il a gagné un * pour l'équipe et il a gagné *des argent de mon *profeseur. C'était amusant parce que* il n'est pas un *miembre de l'équipe.*

*Je voudrais aller en France où Lui habite et quand *j'arrive je voudrais voir la tour *d'Effiel et les monuments. *Je allerai en France pour mes vacances *d'été.*

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
*visite	Wrong verb	rendre visite
*dans	Wrong preposition	à
*le airport	Use of english word	l'aéroport
*dans le matin	No need for "dans"	le matin
*cine	Use of abbreviation	ciné/cinéma
*ver	Use of Spanish word for "see"	voir
*du foot	Wrong use of "du"	De foot
*Il a gagné un	Object pronoun needed	Il l'a gagné
* des argent	Wrong use of partitive pronoun	De l'argent
*profeseur	Incorrect spelling	professeur
*parce que il	Spelling error	Parce qu'il

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

* un membre	Incorrect spelling	Un membre
*j'arrive	Wrong tense	J'y arriverai
*d'Effiel	No need for "de" and incorrect spelling	Eiffel
*Je alleraï	Wrong verb conjugation	J'irai
* d'ète.	Wrong accent	d'été.

Section III – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to respond in French (in about 80–100 words) to either a contextual announcement or a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options. On both options the candidates generally scored in the satisfactory to moderately good range.

Candidates' responses to both options of this item indicated their ease in writing within the scope. There were fewer instances of scripts with no responses and generally most candidates attempted to address all of the various demands of either the announcement or the dialogue. This year, more candidates attempted the announcement than previously. There was parity in the level of difficulty in both items. It is evident that candidates preparing for this examination need a great deal more practice in writing in the target language as there seems to be a general lack of ability to manipulate the written language and produce work that is of superior quality. On a positive note though, most candidates were able to produce pieces within the word limit. This year, there was not the usual plethora of candidates being penalized for either exceeding or falling short of the required word length. In general, it is imperative that candidates pay closer attention to orthography and punctuation, since carelessness in either tends to diminish the standard of work presented. Teachers preparing students should instruct them to desist from using pencil to write their answers, and candidates should also be advised that there is no advantage to using art or colours when producing their announcement.

Contextual Announcement

Most candidates were able to respond to all of the cues, although with varying degrees of mastery. Some candidates did not fully understand the meaning of "extra-curricular activities" as some opted to include the visit of a foreign teacher from France as one of these activities. On the other hand, there was a range of activities mentioned including "*faire du jardinage, jouer à la pétanque, le baby-foot.*" There were very few candidates who produced work in which their ideas and language flowed and developed naturally. This stemmed primarily from candidates' inability to adequately manipulate tenses appropriate to what they wanted to express. Candidates also had problems expressing the future, commonly seen in the inability to produce "*il y aura*", for example. Vocabulary and grammar relevant to the cues which posed difficulty include:

- "Courses" – use of *les courses* in error. However, candidates did opt for *cours, classes, leçon* and even *stage*
- Duration – time expressions (*du ... au ...*), date
- Frequency – spelling of the days of the week and months of the year

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Target group – giving an age limit, those expressing an interest
- Deadline for registration – the verb *s'inscrire* was not very widely known or used appropriately; *date limite* was rarely produced although the more able candidates produced a date *avant le ...etc.*

Contextual Dialogue

This continued to be the more popular option for candidates who, this year, showed that they experienced less difficulty in the comprehension of the cues. This dialogue expected the candidate to successfully manipulate the Passé Composé, Imperfect, Present and Future/ Future *Proche* verb forms. By and large, candidates maintained and developed a logical conversation between M. Martin and the officer while managing, fortunately, to keep Monsieur Martin's gender intact, and addressed the officer formally. The cue that most candidates were able to express (albeit with varying degrees of accuracy) was the description of the burglar. Inability to use tenses appropriate for descriptions in the past (Imperfect) as well as agreement and position of adjectives played a major role in the accurate rendering of this cue. Nonetheless, some candidates used such expressions as *trapu, avait un tatouage*. Candidates also listed a wide and varied quantity of missing items, but again basic gender and number issues distinguished the good candidate from the one of limited ability. Some, however, did not comprehend the ensuing question, “*Et quoi d'autres?*” In response to the last question, most candidates opted to buy one or several dogs to deal with preventing future theft.

Here is an example of an excellent announcement.

*Voulez –vous apprendre le français? Voulez –vous un emploi aux pays francophones ? Les mecs, voulez–vous une petite amie française ? Alors, Monsieur Letrac offrira *les cours de français a partir du 09 au 30 aout au bas prix de dix euros. Les cours sont pour les personnes qui veulent apprendre *parler le français. Ils auront lieu *dedans la bibliothèque de 9h a 12h. En plus, avec les cours, les participants iront au cinéma français, au restaurant français et nous voyagerons a la Martinique pour une journée. Toutes les personnes qui intéressent aux cours doivent s'inscrire avant le 30 juin.*

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
*les cours	Use of definite instead of indefinite article	Des cours
*apprendre parler	Need for “à” after apprendre	Apprendre à parler
*dedans	Wrong vocabulary item	A or dans

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Here is an example of a good dialogue.

L'Agent: Calmez-vous Monsieur! Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?

M. Martin: J'ai vu quelqu'un qui vient de partir* chez moi. C'est un homme.

L'Agent: Et qu'est-ce que vous avez fait?

M. Martin: Après, j'ai vérifié pour mes choses dans ma maison, et *quelque choses ont manqué.

L'Agent: Décrivez cette personne?

M. Martin: Il est grand et gros.

L'Agent: Et qu'est-ce qui manquait chez-vous?

M. Martin: Cet homme a pris ma télévision et mon portable.

L'Agent: Et quoi d'autres?

M. Martin: Aussi, il a pris mon ordinateur portable.

L'Agent: Pensez-vous savoir qui c'est?

M. Martin: Mon amie qui habite près de chez moi. Je pense *qu'il sait. Elle s'appelle Madame Dupont.

L'Agent: Et elle a vu le voleur?

M. Martin: Oui, c'est parce que j'ai vu Madame Dupont quand je suis rentré chez moi.

L'Agent: Alors qu'est-ce que vous allez faire pour éviter une telle chose?

M. Martin: Je vais acheter trois chiens.

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

INCORRECT RESPONSES

CANDIDATE ANSWER	CORRECTIONS	CORRECT RESPONSE
*partir chez moi	Need for “de” between verb and chez	Partir de chez moi
*quelque choses ont manqué.	Wrong vocabulary and tense	Des choses qui manquaient
*qu’il sait	Wrong subject pronoun	Qu’elle sait

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section tested candidates’ ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and the candidates’ answers were in English.

The passage, “The Lure of Advertising” centred on a very familiar topic for most candidates. However, they seemed to have attempted to draw on their general knowledge of the topic instead of sticking to the information provided in the text.

Teachers must emphasize to students that they must read the passage thoroughly, more than once, and that they should refer to the material presented in the passage to respond to the questions being asked.

The passages used for testing comprehension are very concise texts that are generally between 100 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. In classroom practice, students should be encouraged to identify the key words or elements in the questions as a preliminary strategy, before attempting to answer the questions. This might help them to read critically and arrive at a sound understanding of the text.

Comments on Individual Questions

1. What are we told that young people know?

This was generally well handled. Incorrect responses included Young people know everything; Young people know nothing; Young people know that they are beautiful. The correct response was *Young people know what they want.*

2. State two views that young people have of advertisements.

This was also responded to satisfactorily by candidates. Occasionally, some candidates digressed and indicated that the people presenting the products must be beautiful or that advertisements themselves are good ideas for marketing. A correct response should have indicated that *young people think that advertisements are nice, accurate and give a good idea of the products.*

An asterisk (*) indicates incorrect form, spelling or structure.

3. What effect does advertising have on young people?

While many responses were on target, quite a number of candidates left out the key “to buy” the product. Many candidates suggested that young persons may be influenced to steal.

4. What are merchants hoping to achieve by spending a lot on advertising?

This question was partially answered by many candidates. Most had the idea of “satisfying” someone; some suggested the merchants; others, the public in general. Quite a number were able to include the element of “dreams and desires of young people”.

5. What statement is made about the importance of being alert?

This question was not well handled. Candidates went into writing the response in French straight from the text. However, many were able to formulate correct responses having read the passage carefully. A correct response would have asserted that *one may think that all is well in the world but this is not the case*.

6. What is described as ‘extravagant’ in the passage?

This question stirred up a variety of ideas and responses including “fashion”, “spending”, “drinking”, “greed” and “prices”. Although many candidates were able to state “young people’s taste”, a great number failed to add that it was for advertisements.

7. State two other sources of influence over young people.

For this question, many candidates were able to identify the key elements of friends and fashion, but far too many went beyond the text to include “music”, “singers” and “movies”.

8. How can these sources actually influence young people?

This question was among the most challenging for candidates. Many answered based on their own experiences by indicating peer pressure but failed to indicate exactly what was stated in the passage, that is, these sources cause them to change (drinks/clothes/accessories) as quickly as they had accepted them.

9. Why would designers of commercials spend a lot of time devising advertisements?

Many candidates were able to get only the first part of the answer. A few did not zero in on “young people” and the majority missed the latter part of the answer, “those who are not easily fooled”. While quite a number of candidates seemed to have the general idea, “*trompees*” was rarely correctly interpreted. Some suggested “attracted”, “caught” or “influenced”.

10. In what way is the title of the passage appropriate?

This question was generally not well handled. Most candidates left out the last part of the response, “to buy things that they do not want or need”.

An excellent script should have included the following:

1. We are told that young people know what they want.

2. Two views that young people have of advertisements are that they are beautiful and give good ideas about the products.
3. Advertisements give young people the urge to buy the products.
4. The merchants are hoping to satisfy the dreams and desires of young people.
5. The statement made about being alert is that if we are not careful we could think that everything is all right in the world but it is not so.
6. In the passage, young peoples' taste for advertisements is described as extravagant.
7. Fashion and friends are two sources of influence over young people.
8. These sources influence young people by having them give up drinks, clothes and accessories as fast as they had picked them up.
9. Designers of commercials spend a lot of time devising advertisements because they want to find messages that would better seduce the young ones who are not easily fooled.
10. The title of the passage is appropriate because it shows how young people are influenced into buying things they do not need.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper tested candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of situations; (ii) read aloud a short passage in the target language; and (iii) respond in the target language to general questions based on four out of six topics indicated in the syllabus. An attempt was made to link the theme of the reading passage with the general questions in order to create a more natural flow from one task to another.

Performance in the oral examination ranged from excellent to poor, with a number of candidates scoring full marks on this paper. Again, the comments made by oral examiners suggested that candidates' performance was a reflection of their ease and familiarity with the target language and an indication of their level of readiness for the examination. Nonetheless, there is cause for concern when oral examiners state that there are many candidates who are unable to perform even the simplest of tasks in the foreign language. Any candidate, who has been taught using the communicative approach, should not be hesitant to say his/her name, give basic personal information and observe common courtesies in French.

Responses to Situations

Although candidates performed extremely well on this part of the paper, candidates must pay attention to the use of the formal and informal situations since they seem to mix up the two. There were the common mistakes of "*librairie*" for "*bibliothèque*", misinterpretation as to when to use "*avoir*" and "*être*" in the *passé composé*, and confusion with the interrogative words "*qui, que, où*". There was also evidence of difficulty in constructing situations grammatically and the appropriate placement of verbs in questions.

Reading Passage

Many candidates demonstrated a high level of comfort and familiarity with the target language. However, oral examiners found that while some candidates read fluently, with mostly correct pronunciation, good expression and suitable intonation, there were many of them who did not seem to understand what they were reading. Additionally, examiners commented on (a) the mispronunciation of the ending of verb forms in the third person plural, (b) the lack of liaisons in places where necessary and (c) the anglicization of certain French words.

Teachers must make a concerted effort to familiarize students with the French alphabet, supply them with the basic pronunciation rules and teach them to use their dictionaries as a resource for pronunciation.

Conversation

As in previous years, the performance of candidates ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. Some candidates were able to answer questions with a great degree of spontaneity and correctness of expression, while for others repetition was required in order for them to grasp some form of understanding of the questions. One was able to identify weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary. Some candidates experienced difficulty in understanding certain questions, for example, «*Où se trouve...; Parle-moi...; Décris...; Combien coûte...* ». These are basic forms of questions and should not have posed problems at this level. There is therefore need for much training of students on the part of teachers.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON ORAL EXAMINATION

Students must understand that their participation in the oral examination is a natural progression from the kind of oral activities in which they had engaged since Form 1. Candidates could be trained to expand on their responses to make the conversation as normal or natural as possible. The candidate who answers: “*Ma mère s’appelle Marie mais nous l’appelons Josephine à la maison. C’est un nom qui lui était donné par ma petite sœur*” in response to the question “*Comment s’appelle ta mère?*” obviously shows more ease and familiarity in the language than the one who simply responds «*Marie* ».

Examiners are also asked to demonstrate a level of flexibility in their examination techniques to ensure that the question[s] asked take into consideration any unique or special situation that is being faced by the candidate.