

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
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE[®] EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2012

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2012 examination was comparable to that of 2011. Many candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. Nonetheless, there is still much room for improvement.

Teachers are again encouraged to continue exposing 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 must 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, assessed 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 with that of previous years.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section I (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This section assessed candidates' ability to respond in French to ten situations described in English which required 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.

The performance of candidates this year in this section of the exam was generally quite strong. There was a close relationship between the functions/notions of the syllabus, the settings, and the wording/requirements of each item. Teachers should, as a first exercise, focus their students on identifying the *essential* elements (usually two) of each response. (What, for example, is the *function* being tested, what *vocabulary/idiom* does the setting require?) This is a crucial skill, since several candidates lost valuable marks this year either by adding non-essential information or by omitting the essential.

While a fair number of candidates were able to demonstrate excellent mastery and control of grammatical structures, there were still too many candidates who demonstrated weaknesses in basic areas such as agreement of subject and verb and nouns and adjectives, verb forms in the present tenses and particularly, tense formation and usage.

It is noteworthy this year that many candidates opted to answer some questions using short phrases instead of complete sentences. These phrases were very often inadequate and incomplete.

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SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTINGS AND TOPICS
(a)	Describing a person	Description of a person
(b)	Completing an application form	Stating hobbies and interests
(c)	Issuing an invitation	Expressing event, time and place
(d)	Describing clothing	Description of things
(e)	Expressing an apology/stating a task	Apologizing
(f)	Stating an absence	Stating location and reason
(g)	Listing future plans	Future plans/Weekend projects
(h)	Expressing a wish/desire	Wishes and desires
(i)	Expressing sadness	Expressing feelings, giving reasons
(j)	Expressing prohibition	Forbidding someone from doing something

Specific comments on individual questions

- (a) The challenge for many candidates here was the use of the words *positive characteristics*. Many candidates provided physical descriptions as *il est noir*. Quite a number of candidates also ignored or misinterpreted the word *positive*. An example of an excellent response was: *Ma meilleure amie est très sympa et on peut compter sur elle*. In many instances the word *meilleur* was misspelt.
- (b) This question tested a basic function in the syllabus. However, it proved to be quite problematic for many candidates who lacked mastery of basic rules of agreement (subject/verb). The function/notion here was to complete an application form asking that two hobbies be stated. Many candidates responded by simply stating two hobbies such as *le foot et la natation*. Candidates who answered in a full sentence were often challenged by subject/verb agreement and the misspelling of key elements like *passetemps*. Many candidates simply and correctly answered *J'adore lire et danser*.
- (c) This question required candidates to issue an invitation to an event giving the time and place. This proved to be quite challenging for many candidates who merely informed about the event and completely ignored the element of issuing an invitation. For those who did attempt to issue an invitation, this was very often incorrectly done. The use of object pronouns was a challenge as candidates used the subject pronoun *tu* instead of the object pronoun *te*. In some cases, *vous* was also used. An example of a good response was: *Je t'invite à ma fête d'anniversaire chez moi à 8h*.
- (d) This question required candidates to provide two features of an outfit they will be wearing to a wedding. While most candidates provided complete responses, a fair number indicated the outfit (*une chemise et un pantalon*) and failed to provide features. Problems encountered here included incorrect articles, agreement and position of adjectives and incorrect tense usage. It is noteworthy that although the setting for the question was a wedding, many candidates opted for 'jeans' and

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'sandals'. An excellent response was: *Je mettrai une chemise à manches longues et un pantalon blanc.*

- (e) The majority of candidates responded correctly to the first part of this question, that is, apologizing. Conversely, the second element, the completion of a given task, was quite challenging for many candidates. The use of the Perfect Infinitive: 'de ne pas avoir/être + past participle' was rarely used correctly. Far too many candidates included the word 'task' as in 'complete le task' in their response instead of specifying the task. Many candidates also unnecessarily provided a reason instead of a task. A good response was: *Je suis désolé que je n'ai pas pu faire tes devoirs hier.*
- (f) This question was quite well done. The majority of candidates responded fully by addressing all elements of the question. However, correct formation and usage of tenses proved very problematic for some candidates and there was also frequent misspelling of words that should have been quite simple for candidates at this level.
- (g) Candidates were required to list two things that they would do over the weekend. However, many of them could not correctly use the future tense. They used the present tense which, in many cases, did not convey the correct message for the question posed.
- (h) Candidates were asked to suggest two improvements to their school. In as much as examiners may have understood what candidates may have wanted to convey, candidates had a lot of difficulty making the required suggestions. Responses such as *je voudrais voir les escaliers et une cantine avec beaucoup de chaises*, or, *les cantines et les toilettes*, which did not convey much, were seen.
- (i) This question required candidates to give two reasons for their being sad. It was reasonably well handled. Nevertheless, some candidates wrote short answers which did not say anything about their being sad but which still conveyed meaning, for example, *J'ai la grippe et j'ai mal à la tête.*
- (j) This question was well handled. Candidates had to write about prohibiting someone from doing something. Many candidates used the negative imperative which worked quite well when they could not find a phrase showing interdiction — *Ne regardes pas la télé!*

The following are examples contained in a good script.

- a) *Marie est très gentille et aimable.*
- b) *J'aime jouer au foot et sortir avec mes amis.*
- c) *Peux-tu aller au théâtre samedi soir à huit heures avec moi?*
- d) *Je porterai une chemise blanche et une jupe noire.*
- e) *Je regrette mais je ne peux pas laver les vêtements aujourd'hui.*
- f) *Je suis allée à l'hôpital parce que ton père a eu un accident.*
- g) *Je vais au cinéma avec ma famille et je vais aller à la plage aussi.*
- h) *Nous devons nettoyer l'école tous les jours et nous devons avoir une télévision dans toutes les classes.*
- i) *Je suis triste parce que ma mère est très malade et je ne peux pas trouver mon livre favori.*
- j) *Tu ne peux pas regarder la télé ce soir.*

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) — Letter/ Composition

This section assessed candidates' ability to produce a piece of French of about 130–150 words based on given cues. As is usually the case, the answers here ranged from excellent to poor.

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A significant number of candidates chose to do Question 2 (Letter) over Question 3 (Composition). The topic/setting of the composition, however, seemed to hold universal appeal, and seemed also to be within the experience of candidates.

The topic of the letter also gave candidates the opportunity to draw on their experience of exchange visits to French Caribbean islands and to indulge their hopes of gaining a scholarship or some other possibility of spending an extended period of time in a French-speaking country.

Question 2: The Letter

- i) Rubric: Too many candidates did not read the rubric carefully enough or did not adhere to the requirements outlined therein — for example, not writing a full address (a city/island name would suffice), omitting the date in French, writing at length (over 150 words), or the converse, not writing the minimum number of words (130). Both of these latter scenarios, usually meant that the candidate was also unable to address and develop all of the four cues within the given word limit. A penalty is exacted for failure to observe all of the above. The performance of some of these candidates would seem to suggest that they need more practice in reproducing the letter format: candidates wrote out the French numbers in the date, instead of using the numeral, and interference from Spanish was evident from the addition of ‘*de*’ before the name of the month. Some candidates addressed their letter to a friend and not to a teacher, as required, and inappropriately used the familiar form of address, or mixed the polite and familiar forms indiscriminately throughout the letter. * *J’espère que vous êtes bien...* **Écris-moi vite.*
- ii) Range of vocabulary and idiom: The functions/notions aspects of the syllabus which candidates were asked to address in the letter included the description of a school, locating the school, making comparisons between one school and another, using *passé composé* to describe a completed event in the past, and using the future tense to describe benefits to be derived from an activity. Many candidates used the verb *attendre* to express the idea of ‘going to school’ instead of verbs such as *assister* or *aller*. Candidates could have scored more marks if they had mastered the use of connectives such as *as tandis que*, *par contre*, *cependant*, *qui* and *que*, *au contraire*, *ainsi que*, *en revanche*, *d’abord*. Instead, most candidates juxtaposed sentences by means of repetition of nouns and abuse of *et*. Most candidates had a wide range of vocabulary and idioms related to description of their schools (first cue), but were limited and less proficient when expressing benefits (fourth cue). These benefits were limited to ‘speaking French better’, ‘knowing another culture’, and ‘making friends’. A wide range of erroneous expressions was used to express ‘location of their school’, for example, **locaté*, **on se trouve l’école*, **est trouvé* instead of structures such as *l’école se trouve*, *est située*, or *l’école est*.
- iii) Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar: The very good candidates showed a wide range and mastery of essential grammar such as correct usage with the expression *manquer à*, for example, *vous me manquez*, and *après avoir/être* + the past participle to express ‘after having done something’. However, the replacement of nouns by pronouns was badly handled — *Le collègue est situé au centre-ville. Elle est grande.*

Many candidates failed to realize that *c’est* is a subject and verb structure and that no agreement is required with that structure, or that it should not be used in the same sentence with another subject, for example, *l’école est à Paris, *c’est bleue et grande*. The use of preposition with geographical locations also posed a challenge to most candidates. The general rule of *à* with the names of cities was neglected, so *à Paris* became *en Paris*, *dans Paris*. Candidates omitted the *de* in prepositional phrases such as *à côté de*, or *près de*. Some candidates also used *avant* and *devant* interchangeably. A general weakness was demonstrated in candidates’ use of *mieux*, *meilleur* and *bien* and *bon*. The adverb *mieux* was used to qualify nouns such as *l’école à Paris*

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est mieux as well as *maintenant je parle français meilleur*. The same was observed with the adjective *bon* and adverb *bien*. The use of double determinants with nouns was very common, for instance, **cette l'école*, *mon l'école* and *le l'école*.

Candidates also failed to use comparative and superlative structures such as *plus grand que*, *moins grand que...* Instead, candidates repeated the nouns concerned — *L'école à Paris école est grande. L'école dans mon pays est petite*. The general tendency among candidates was to use the present tense where the *passé composé* was required. The auxiliary was often omitted when using the *passé composé*. Although past participles were used fairly well, some candidates had difficulty with the past participle of *apprendre* in their responses.

The use and placement of pronouns with the modals *vouloir*, *pouvoir*, and *aimer* posed a challenge. For example, **je le veux manger*, was observed frequently among weak candidates. However, strong candidates handled such usage correctly — *je veux le trouver*.

Subject/verb agreement, feminization and pluralization of adjective were a major cause for concern. Candidates frequently used plural nouns with singular verbs such as *les filles* porte un uniforme*; *les étudiants *est marrant*.

Quand requires the use of the future tense. An English interference was clearly observed as many candidates used the present after *quand*. *Quand* demands the present tense when it means *whenever*.

Below is an example of a good letter submitted by a candidate.

Port d'Espagne, le 14 mai, 2012

Chère Madame James,

Comment ça va? Bien, je l'espère. Moi, je vais très bien en France. Je voudrais vous parler un peu de l'école ici.

*D'abord, elle est située dans la ville près de la Tour Eiffel. Il y a environ six cents élèves et c'est bien *équipée avec *un bon ambiance. Elle a quatre laboratoires de sciences tandis que notre école a seulement deux laboratoires. Toutefois, nous avons de la chance car il y a *plein de professeurs alors que l'école ici a vingt professeurs. C'est dommage!*

La semaine dernière, j'ai gagné un concours de tennis à l'école et j'ai eu l'occasion de faire la connaissance de Jean-Paul Mattrajean! C'était très formidable! En plus, ce séjour en France est assez utile car maintenant je suis forte en français et je l'adore!

J'attends avec impatience de vous lire. A bientôt!

Votre étudiante

Alexa Morales

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CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
<i>Equipée</i>	Should be masculine	Équipé
<i>Un bon</i>	Ambiance is feminine	Une bonne
<i>plein</i>	Need an adverb here	beaucoup

Question 3: The Composition

- i) **Rubric:** While most candidates adhered to the demands of the rubric, there were those who lost marks because they failed to comply with the first element of the rubric, that is, setting at school. Stronger candidates managed to maintain a coherent flow of events in the composition. Weaker candidates' stories lacked a clear structure and became mere juxtaposed ideas.
- ii) **Range of vocabulary and idiom:** In general, there was a paucity of idiomatic expressions. Good candidates used *être déprimé et dépité; c'était casse-pieds*. Stronger candidates showed a clear distinction between the use of *laisser* and *quitter* or *chercher* and *trouver*. Most candidates used *laisser* and *quitter* interchangeably when expressing the idea of leaving an object. Likewise, *regarder* was used erroneously in lieu of *chercher* and in most cases, *chercher* was followed by *pour*. For the fourth cue in the rubric, it was observed that many candidates copied the last line of the reading comprehension. Candidates used many expressions incorrectly to express 'next time'. These included **la prochaine heure, *le prochain temps* and **l'autre temps*.
- iii) **Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar:** The composition required the use of a wide range and proper sequencing of tenses. For description in the past and habitual actions, candidates used the *passé composé* instead of the imperfect tense. In attempting to explain how items were acquired, candidates used structures which required the pluperfect tense. However this was poorly done. The English structure of use of a modal and infinitive such as 'will keep' or 'will take care of' was clearly apparent in candidates' work in attempting to express future actions to avoid a similar occurrence. For example, the use of *je serai laisser ma montre à la maison*.

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

Ma tante favorite m'a donnée mon premier roman d'horreur. Il était écrit par le superbe Stephen King. C'était très petit, cependant il y avait beaucoup de pages intéressants. Elle me l'a donnée parce que j'avais réussi à mon grand examen de la chimie.*

*L'année dernière, je suis allée chez ma sœur et j'ai apporté le roman avec moi. Ma sœur a décidé de sortir avec ses amis et je suis allée avec eux. J'ai quitté le roman sur la fenêtre dans la chambre de ma sœur. Quand je suis rentrée chez elle et je suis allée dans sa chambre, le roman n'était pas là ! J'ai commencé à pleurer car j'étais choquée. Mon cœur a commencé à battre comme un tambour. J'ai commencé à crier « secours ! » et ma sœur *est dépêchée à sa chambre pour me demander si j'allais bien. J'étais déprimée et dépitée.*

Je ne quitterai jamais mes romans sur une fenêtre *encore. Je les apporterai toujours avec moi, ou peut-être je les laisserai chez moi.*

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CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
<i>De la chimie Est dépêchée Quitterai</i>	No need for partitive article. Reflexive pronoun required Wrong verb	De chimie S'est dépêche laisserai

***Please note as well that this candidate has used the wrong setting for the essay. The setting is the school and not her sister's house.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) — Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

The topics allowed candidates to show their ability in French. Less able and less prepared candidates appeared to find the questions quite challenging. A few candidates combined the announcement and the dialogue into one, others lacked the ability to organize their responses coherently, tried to translate instead of interpret certain words in the cues (for example, fund-raising activity; French-speaking country) or did not have a strong grammatical or lexical base.

Contextual Announcement

A high percentage of candidates attempted the announcement this year. Most of them completed it within the word limit. The major obstacles to the effective handling of this question were poor organization of responses and the lack of relevant vocabulary. Expressions such as *car sale*, *car wash*, *fund-raiser*, *beach or pool party*, *admission* proved to be problematic. Anglicisms were also used in some instances. *French-speaking* was often rendered as *français parlé/parler*, and few candidates seemed to know *francophone*.

Some relevant comments are listed below

- Candidates mentioned many activities but failed to specify how funds for the trip could be generated.
- Several candidates forgot to mention the sum to be raised.
- Many candidates seemed unaware of the value of the euro (for example, a cake for €100). Still others quoted prices in pounds/francs.
- Several candidates did not follow the required rubric — fund-raising activities were in aid of persons who were ill or for someone who had lost a relative.
- Scripts from countries with a creole background were problematic. In some scripts there were hardly any recognizable words from standard French.

Candidates are advised to plan their responses before beginning to write. Circumlocution is a skill candidates would do well to apply here (for example, many used the name of an actual French-speaking country instead of trying to translate the words). Candidates must also revise how to express the date, the spelling of numbers and how to express time/time span (*de 8h jusqu'à midi*).

Below is an example of a good announcement submitted by a candidate.

*Le club de français ira *au Guadeloupe *pour *un semaine. Ainsi, nous aurons deux concerts, mais, tous les jours, nous vendrons les bonbons et les gâteaux ! C'est super ! Le *première concert *est le six *de juin a la Grande Salle William Webb. Le deuxième concert *est le deux*de juin et il sera incroyable avec beaucoup *d'amusant ! Nous vendrons *le gâteaux tous les jours *a la récréation sur l'arbre jacaranda. Les gâteaux seront tres délicieux ainsi *prenez beaucoup d'argent ! Nous avons besoin de deux milles dollars ainsi achetez, achetez, achetez et aidez-*vous le club, et venez *a les concerts. Ne le manquez pas!*

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CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
<i>Au</i>	Guadeloupe is feminine	A la
<i>Pour</i>	Duration here is pendant	Pendant
<i>Un</i>	Semaine is feminine	Une
<i>Première</i>	Masculine needed here	Premier
<i>Est</i>	Future needed	Sera
<i>six de juin</i>	No need for « de »	Le six juin
<i>Est</i>	As above	Sera
<i>Deux de juin</i>	As above	Le deux juin
<i>D'amusant</i>	Amusements	Amusements
<i>Le</i>	Plural needed	Des
<i>A</i>	Accent needed	à
<i>Prennez</i>	Wrong verb	apportez
<i>Vous</i>	No need for reflexive	drop vous
<i>A les</i>	Plural of a les is aux	aux

Contextual Dialogue

The dialogue was the more popular choice with candidates. Again, candidates' work suggested that they did not read the cues properly before they began to write their responses.

Other relevant findings include:

- Many candidates spoke about attractions in France as opposed to their own country.
- Some good candidates would switch from *vous* to *tu* when addressing the male caller.
- Some very good candidates lost marks for not including all the cues and for exceeding the word limit.
- Weaker candidates tended to simply repeat the words in the cues showing a lack of comprehension of written French.
- In a few instances, the appearance of the work presented was untidy: the space provided was not used properly.

Examples of poor language use:

- Incorrect use of negative constructions (**Ce ne problème pas*)
- The position of adjectives (**nationale festival*)
- The construction: *Il est* vs *C'est* (**Il est une grande festival*)
- The spelling of *intéressant*, *musée* (and gender) was often incorrect
- The future tense, particularly after *quand/espérer*
- The use of the infinitive after verbs of perception – a point not known by many candidates
- The use of prepositions in expressions like *aider à* + infinitive, *beaucoup de...*
- The formation of questions (**Qu'est-ce que voudrais –vous savoir?*)
- *Amener*: to bring (people), *Apporter*: to bring (things)
- *Attendre* often used to mean 'to attend'.

Here is an example of a good dialogue:

Client: Bonjour Mademoiselle/Monsieur. Je téléphone de la Martinique, je pense passer deux semaines dans votre pays et j'aurai bien aimé avoir quelques renseignements.

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- Vous:** *Bonjour Monsieur. D'accord, je peux vous *aider avec ca.*
- Client:** Que me conseillez-vous pour visiter la capitale de votre pays?
- Vous:** *Vous pouvez prendre l'autobus.*
- Client:** C'est cher l'autobus?
- Vous:** *L'autobus n'est pas cher. *Généralement l'autobus est trois dollars.*
- Client:** Et qu'est-ce qu'il y a voir dans votre pays?
- Vous:** *Il y a beaucoup a voir a Ste Lucie. Il y a les pitons et des cascades a Soufrière. Aussi, vous pouvez voir les sites archéologiques a Morne Fortune.*
- Client:** Et comment est-ce que je fais pour visiter ces endroits?
- Vous:** *Vous pouvez prendre un taxi.*
- Client:** Et quelles sont les activités culturelles?
- Vous:** *Il y a *un journée *creole en *Octobre et il y a *du Carnaval.*
- Client :** Parlez-moi un peu du Carnaval?
- Vous:** *Le carnaval est une grande boum *sur les rues et il est en juillet pour deux jours.*
- Client:** Avez – vous un dernier conseil?
- Vous:** *Non, je n'ai pas *un dernier conseil*

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Aidez	After 'pouvoir' one used the infinitive	aider
Généralement	Accents missing	Généralement
Un journée	Journée is feminine	Une
Creole	Accent missing	Créole
Octobre	Small letter	octobre
Du	Use of the definite masculine article here	le
Sur les rues	One says 'dans les rues'	dans
Un	After the negative, use « de »	de

Section IV – Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and comprehend a short passage in the target language. The questions on the passage and candidates' responses were in English.

Although the reading passage was appropriate for the level of the examination and the topic was one with which candidates were familiar, it still proved to be a bit challenging. Generally, candidates' responses were below average. Many candidates showed poor comprehension skills, contrary to what are required to successfully negotiate the questions asked.

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Specific comments on individual questions

- (a) What is Marie-Louise's job and for how long has she been employed?

Candidates generally understood the protagonist's job, and how many years she had been working. However, there were variations such as 'female host', 'host in the air', 'hostess on air'. A few candidates had difficulty identifying *deux* as *two*, translating it as 'ten' or 'twelve'. Additionally, some candidates did not understand the term *depuis* and interpreted it as 'less than' or 'more than two years' or 'from since two years'.

- (b) Where does she work?

Most candidates understood that the protagonist worked at a new Caribbean airline. However, the literal translations and the interpretation of *la nouvelle ligne aérienne caribéenne* as the name of the airline were prevalent — for example, 'the new Caribbean Airline', 'Caribbean Airlines', 'the New Caribbean Airline' were a few common incorrect responses received. Other responses were far too vague — 'she worked on a plane'; 'she worked on an airport'; 'she worked on a Caribbean airliner'.

- (c) State TWO reasons why she likes her job.

Although most candidates were able to respond correctly, their English expression contained careless errors. For example, candidates used the term 'to contact with clients', to mean *to interact with clients*.

- (d) Give ONE added benefit of her job.

Most candidates were able to gain the mark allocated to this question but many of their responses were not precise enough, either being too wordy and thus being distorted, or too vague — 'She gets to visit the Caribbean at a reduced rate'; 'She gets profits on discounts to Europe' or 'She gets to visit Europe'.

- (e) State Marie-Louise's plans for this year.

This question was generally well answered. In cases where it was not, *Jeux Olympiques* was interpreted as 'Youth Olympics' and 'Women's Olympics'. Candidates also stated that the protagonist was going to play/compete in the Olympics. A few candidates also misspelt 'London' and 'Olympics'.

- (f) What is Marie-Louise's predicament?

This question was generally misunderstood. The majority of candidates provided incorrect responses. Candidates interpreted *predicament* to mean *predict* and gave responses such as 'Marie Louise thinks she will forget her flight/presentation', which naturally affected the responses for the questions which followed. Many candidates also thought that *distracte* meant 'distracted', 'distraught' or 'stressed'.

- (g) Identify TWO consequences of Marie-Louise's predicament.

Candidates' use of the future tense and past tense distorted their responses. For example, 'Marie Louise will forget flight numbers', '...forgot flight numbers', as opposed to the correct answer *...forgets flight numbers*. Other variations which distorted candidates' responses included 'number of flight' instead of *flight numbers*, interpreting *même* as 'same' or 'at the same time'.

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- (h) Explain how Marie-Louise was affected a few months ago.
Most candidates were able to obtain at least one of the two marks allotted to this question. However, poor English expressions such as ‘...had to do a presentation’ and ‘A flight around/in Martinique’ distorted candidates’ responses.
- (i) Describe Marie-Louise’s most embarrassing situation to date.
Many candidates were unable to give the points or responses necessary to obtain full marks for this question. Most candidates did not comprehend the meaning of the term *consignes de sécurité*, interpreting it as ‘seat belts’, ‘security pass’ or ‘security guard’. Candidates also had difficulty identifying at what point in the presentation the protagonist forgot the security instructions.
- (j) Why was this situation so embarrassing for her?
Most candidates were able to obtain at least two of the three marks for this question. However, many candidates did not include the reliance aspect of this response. Others merely inserted their personal experiences with air travel (which were unrelated to the passage), when explaining the reason for the protagonist’s embarrassment.

Recommendations

- Candidates need to pay close attention to the use of prepositions, tenses and moods used in the passage, and be mindful of these when responding to questions as an incorrect tense or preposition can often alter the meaning of a sentence.
- Candidates should avoid direct translations and reproducing French vocabulary from the passage in their responses.
- Teachers in the classroom must insist that their students read the passage and all the questions before attempting to respond.
- Candidates must note the marks allotted to a question and be guided as to the number of necessary elements required in their response.
- Teachers must constantly remind students to follow the instructions to answer in English and refrain from translating directly from the passage. Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and that they are not distorted.
- Teachers should continue to emphasize/drill students in analytical skills and expose students to a wide and varied vocabulary.
- Students should be warned to respond more concisely in order to avoid distorting their response.
- Candidates should refrain from offering a choice of responses as this will be detrimental to their performance. For example, ‘Marie Louise has been working for two years/months’.
- Teachers must encourage students to present work that is as neat and legible as possible.

Here is an example of a good response submitted by a candidate:

- (a) Marie-Louise’s job is an air hostess and she has been employed for two years.
- (b) Marie-Louise works at the new Caribbean airline.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

- (c) Two reasons why she likes her job are because she likes interacting (the contact) with the clients and she also likes the trips that she gets to go on.
- (d) One added benefit of her job is that she can receive discounts on all flights to Europe.
- (e) Marie-Louise's plans for this year, *is going to London for the Olympic games.
- (f) Marie-Louise's predicament is that she is very forgetful.
- (g) Two consequences of Marie-Louise's predicament are that she never remembers her flight numbers or where the plane is going (destination).
- (h) Marie-Louise was affected a few months ago by making a beautiful presentation of Guadeloupe on a flight that was going to Martinique.
- (i) Marie-Louise's most embarrassing situation was last month when she had forgotten some of the security measures in the middle of her presentation on a flight to Martinique.
- (j) This situation was so embarrassing for her because it is her job to present the security measures to the passengers but instead some of the frequent passengers had to assist her at the end of her presentation since she had forgotten them.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

This paper assessed 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. Every effort must be made by teachers to ensure that students are adequately prepared to perform the simplest of tasks in the oral component of the language.

Section I — Responses to Situations

As would be expected, performance ranged from excellent to poor depending on the quality of candidate and their level of preparation. Comments this year focused on specific problems which seemed to occur across institutions and territories. These included:

- Differentiation between *tu* and *vous*
- Disagreement between nouns and adjectives
- Unfamiliarity with gender of nouns
- Tenses – candidates being comfortable only with the present tense

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Section II — Reading Passage

Nearly all comments about the reading were positive. Examiners were for the most part pleased with pronunciation, liaisons and intonation. Where concerns were expressed, they tended to be with regard to specific problems with pronunciation and with specific words.

The following words were mentioned as being problematic:

Représentante

Caraïbes

Xavier

S'entraînant

Clientèle

Joueurs internationaux

Bureau

Emploi

Concern was expressed with the pronunciation of *é* as *e* and vice versa, *e* as *é*. The problem with the pronunciation of *qu* as *qw* persists.

Section III — Guided Conversation

Performance by candidates ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. While some examiners were pleased with the candidates' responses, others were quite unhappy with their performance, especially with the section on shopping. Another area which seemed to have presented some challenges was the section on travel.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language to simulate real-life situations in order to practise the target language.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*