

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION  
MAY/JUNE 2010**

**FRENCH**

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## GENERAL COMMENTS

The overall performance of candidates in both units was once again satisfactory. There were 301 candidates who wrote the Unit 1 examination and 215 who wrote Unit 2. Though the performance of several candidates was very heartening, it must again be noted that two of the main areas of concern continue to be Listening Comprehension and Conversation. Some candidates continue to find it challenging to grasp concepts and ideas spoken in French. Others have similar difficulties with regard to expressing themselves. More time needs to be devoted to the improvement of these skills, both at the group and individual levels. The excellent performance of some candidates is evidence that mastery in these areas can be achieved.

## DETAILED COMMENTS

### UNIT 1

#### Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

There were 301 candidates who wrote the Listening Comprehension component of the Unit 1 examination. Performance of candidates in Unit 1 ranged from very weak to excellent. Although some questions were quite well done, it is clear that candidates still find listening comprehension to be a very challenging exercise. Therefore, more time needs to be devoted to the development of aural skills in an effort to achieve proficiency in this area. Candidates must understand that some accountability on their part is also necessary if they are to be successful and they, therefore, must use all resources available to them to develop the competence in listening since the contact time at school is limited.

Paper 01 required candidates to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections (Section A) and one extended interview (Section B). The questions were set in English and candidates were required to respond in English. The topics were set in line with the three modules of the syllabus:

Questions 1 and 2	-	Module 1 ( <i>L'individu, la famille et la vie journalière</i> )
Questions 3, 4 and 5	-	Module 3 ( <i>L'environnement</i> )
Question 6	-	Module 2 ( <i>La société et les affaires sociales</i> )

#### Section A – Short Selections

##### Selection 1 - *The Annual French Music Festival*

This was a topic which was fairly well understood by the majority of candidates and the questions on it were generally well answered. At least 90 per cent of the candidates were able to score marks between the middle and upper ranges of the bands, with most candidates scoring at least 10 marks out of a possible 12 marks for this selection.

For Part (a) some candidates omitted the idea that music was a 'way', 'means' or 'vehicle' of communication and that it was international. Most of them understood that music was used for communication.

Part (b) was also well done with the majority of candidates recognizing that it was a musical festival. There were a few candidates who re-wrote *fête de la musique*. Candidates must be mindful that answers are to be in English and though musical fête was accepted, they should avoid using the same word.

In Part (c) candidates easily understood the words *populaire* and *grande*. However, *gratuite* posed some difficulty.

For Part (d) most candidates identified the month of June as the time when the annual event occurs. The date, '21st', presented a challenge to some and there were those candidates who thought '*juin*' meant May, July or even January. This serves as a reminder to candidates of the importance of listening carefully for particular details.

In Part (e) most candidates were able to understand 'classical', 'contemporary' and 'hip-hop' as the types of music to be identified. However, *indigène* was not well understood by some candidates. Answers such as 'contemporal' and 'zendigen' were given as translations for *indigène*.

For Part (f) candidates seemed not to have known what *mondialisée* meant. This is surprising as this word often appears in articles and should be a high-frequency word at this stage. Variations such as 'spread across many cultures', 'diffused all over the world', 'globalized' were accepted. Again, the number '110' was rarely seen.

### Selection 2 - Europe's Ageing Population

This selection seemed to have presented a challenge to many candidates. Approximately 54 per cent scored two or fewer marks on this question and still there were quite a few who did not attempt to answer the selection at all.

Approximately 16 per cent of the candidates were able to gain full marks on Part (a) of the question. Very few candidates understood the phrase '*à une allure vertigineuse*'. However, marks were awarded if the candidates responded that the population of Europe was ageing.

Part (b) of the question was also poorly done. Many candidates were unable to effectively make the comparison between Europe and the rest of the world. However, most of them were able to deduce that 20 per cent of the Europeans were over 60 years of age, though many did not understand that this 20 per cent was compared with 10 per cent for the rest of the world.

For Part (c) a number of candidates did not pay sufficient attention to the message and its content and only understood individual words. The final answer was often incorrect. This question required candidates to state that the number of senior citizens will increase **by** 15 per cent, not **to** 15 per cent as some wrote. Specifics were required so if a candidate wrote 'It will fall by 15 per cent', 'Will fall' or 'decrease', these were incorrect. The answer must also make sense. Writing answers such as 'The senior citizen will be till 15 persons' is incomprehensible or 'In ten years Europe is expected to increase by 15 persons' is clearly illogical.

Part (c) of the question seemed to have caused the greatest challenge. Many candidates found it difficult to express themselves adequately and it was necessary to **search** for the correct answer among the words.

For example, candidates wrote responses such as

'People are living longer. Youth is lowered, therefore many people will be on pension and less to work.'

OR

'The active population is lowering. There is a great challenge to fix this or find a solution for the treatment.'

OR

'... As well as giving concern that the entire population is retarding.'

The fact that pensions needed to be financed was understood but *la population active en baisse* was not always understood.

### Selection 3 - The Trois Gorges Dam in China

Most candidates were able to score satisfactory marks on this section. Approximately 66 per cent scored at least four out of a possible eight marks.

For Part (a) a large number of candidates were able to state that the dam was located in China, but many did not mention that it was located on the largest river. In some cases, candidates stated the size of the dam as opposed to its location or wrote that the dam was located near a **big flower**. Obviously, they misinterpreted '*fleuve*'.

Generally, Part (b) was fairly well answered. Many candidates did not include the number '26' in their answers but were able to state correctly that the turbines transform the energy of the water into electricity. Unfortunately, a simple word can distort the entire answer. For instance, 'It transforms energy for water and electricity'. At the same time, some of the better candidates were able to capture the essence of the response very effectively by saying 'It turns hydro-energy into electricity' or 'The 26 turbines were able to generate hydro-electric energy.' There were instances where some candidates did not understand that it was the **energy** of the water that was turned into electricity. One instance where the candidate had all the elements of the answer, but expressed it poorly, is as follows:

'It transformation of ener[g]y using water for electricity'.

Generally, candidates responded well to Part (c). With respect to the part regarding the negative impact on humans, most candidates understood that one million persons were displaced, which earned them full marks. Nevertheless, there were quite a number of candidates who wrote 'millions' instead and they were, therefore, only partially correct. A few, however, also realized that numerous or many workers died. Fortunately, either one or the other of the two responses was correct. 'Millions of persons died/ were displaced' could not obtain full marks. A few candidates did not understand that the disaster had already taken place and answered generally that it was something that **could** happen.

Part (d) was satisfactorily answered. In answer to the part regarding the impact on nature, it was correct to state that water pollution or risks of flooding were the negative consequences. Some candidates, however, stated that one of the consequences was 'pollution' and this was accepted. No mark was earned for using 'denudation' as one of the points in the response.

### Selection 4 - A new species of bat discovered in Madagascar

Performance on this question was fairly good. Approximately 85 per cent of the candidates received at least four out of a possible eight marks.

For Part (a), most candidates received two out of the maximum three marks, for recognizing that the bats were small with large organs. There were candidates, however, who did not seem to understand that the **organs** were large, flat and sticky. The weight of the bat was generally omitted. Some answers regarding the weight were a bit ludicrous or unrealistic: 'one fifteenth of a gram' or 'one-fifth of a gram'. Furthermore, the bats were described by many candidates as having fur. Some candidates said the bats had feathers, claws, antlers, fingers or even clothes. The bats were also described as a type of Haitian bat and a 'highly sexual species'.

Part (b) was generally well done. Most candidates identified the fact that the bats' habitat was in the forests of (West) Madagascar. Some candidates did not understand that the 'forests' and 'Madagascar' were both elements required in this answer. One example of a partial answer is 'The preferred habitat of the bat is the dry bat from Madagascar'. Madagascar was sometimes misspelt, giving rise to strange forms such as 'Madagaster'.

Generally, candidates performed well on Part (c). Most candidates understood that the bats 'adapted well to their/an environment' but omitted 'where the forests have been destroyed'. Sometimes the word 'adapted' was carelessly substituted for 'adopted'. Some candidates mixed up 'endangered' and 'dangerous' and stated that the bats were a dangerous species.

#### Selection 5 - Campaign in France to reduce waste

Approximately 67 per cent of the candidates received at least four out of a possible eight marks on this question.

Part (a) was well done, with the majority of candidates obtaining full marks for 'launched a national campaign to reduce waste'.

Part (b) was also generally well understood. Candidates, however, must be careful with their expressions in English as 'polluting less' does not connote 'throwing away less' as one of the two elements required by this question.

Candidates rarely received full marks for Part (c). Many of them were able to give as one of the correct answers, 'limited printed material' and that the French are urged to drink natural or tap water. Many candidates understood that drinking water was being encouraged but failed to add that water should be drunk from the tap. Some candidates interpreted *l'eau du robinet* to mean various things such as 'fresh water', 'urban water', 'purified water', 'bottled water', or 'filtered water'.

'Avoiding disposable products' was not a popular response for Part (d) and when given as an answer it was phrased in a way that required interpretation, for example, 'buying products which does (sic) not have to be thrown away'. Some candidates did not seem to understand that disposable products were to be avoided, and gave the opposite answer instead.

### **Section B – Extended Interview**

#### Selection 6 - Interview between a journalist and Gilles Bertrand, psychologist, on certain behaviours in children

##### Part 1

Approximately 61 per cent of the candidates scored marks ranging from 11 to 24 out of a possible 24 marks. Most candidates were able to give adequate responses to Parts (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (h).

For Part (a) the majority of scripts had the correct answer: 'children's lies' or 'children lie'. 'Children's stories' was also an acceptable answer.

Most candidates were able to give the answer required for Part (b): that there was an inability to distinguish between reality and desires. The importance of proper sentence construction must again be re-emphasised as meaning can be radically altered if sentences are poorly constructed: For instance, the following answers appeared and could not be awarded full marks: 'because they cannot tell the difference between realistic stories' and 'inability to tell the difference between reality and science fiction is absent from the child before

birth'. Also the answer, 'because they differentiate between reality and fiction', could not be awarded any of the four possible marks for this question.

Again, some candidates understood only certain elements of the text but did not grasp the message or content in its entirety, thus, putting full comprehension of this question at risk. Answers must also make sense. "The stories show their creativity, their imaginative skills, they show that the children have personality" gained no mark.

Part (c) was generally well done. Candidates were able to understand 'maturity of the brain' as the answer or expressed the idea 'the maturity of the cerebral zone is absent'. 'Maturity' alone as the answer could only gain partial marks. An answer such as 'they don't know the difference between reality and fiction' gained no mark.

Part (d) was also generally well done. Candidates, however, must remember to read the question(s) properly. The question asked, 'What do children's tales represent?' and so responses such as 'Children's tales do not affect children development' could not be awarded marks.

## Part 2

Part (e) was satisfactorily done. Candidates could have easily received full marks on this question as there were five points/elements to the answer. Many candidates were able to get at least one of those five parts. Variations were also accepted.

Part (f) was poorly done by many candidates. Candidates seemed not to have understood the word *valorisée* and thought it meant 'validised' (?) or 'validated'. The response required was 'to be valued by their parents' or 'out of a desire to please them (their parents)'.

Part (g) proved to be quite challenging to many candidates. Only the exceptional candidates answered correctly. Some candidates understood the boy's fear of being sent to another school but did not include 'if his grades did not improve' and were, therefore, only awarded partial marks.

More attention should be paid to the actual information given. Some candidates stated 'his fear of being sent to another school but it was because his grades had not improved,' which again, could not receive full marks.

Part (h) was satisfactorily done. There were many variations in the answers but many candidates obtained at least three out of four possible marks. Candidates, however, must try to be less ambiguous in their responses. The question asked for candidates to state four things adults should do. A response received stated 'Quickly intervene when a child lies and then never overreact.' Examiners are often left to do much deciphering of candidates' responses when these are ambiguously stated.

## **Recommendations**

- More time (whether in school or at home) should be devoted to listening practice in order for candidates to develop good to excellent aural competence. More practice in speaking should also be very helpful.
- The vocabulary and specific expressions for each module should be well known. Teachers should ensure that students are well acquainted with and learn new vocabulary from related topics and articles.
- Constant revision of the basics, for example, numbers, including the suffix *-aine*, as well as the names of internal organs is essential.

- Candidates are encouraged not to write ‘either/or’ answers. Examiners should not be forced to decipher the right answer. They are also encouraged to express themselves and their ideas more effectively in English so that examiners would not have to spend much time trying to understand or decode answers given.
- Candidates are encouraged to improve their spelling in English and to refrain from coining words. They should also re-read their answers as sometimes what is written is either ambiguous or does not make much sense.
- Much practice is needed in pinpointing the actual information needed for a particular answer. Answers must come strictly from the text heard and use of previous or general knowledge should be discouraged, especially if it is completely irrelevant.
- Attention should be paid to penmanship and tidy presentation of work.
- Candidates should give some consideration to the number of marks awarded for a question as this usually indicates the depth of an answer required.
- Literal translations are sometimes incorrect and should be avoided. Cognates can be useful but beware of ‘*faux amis*’ (‘false friends’).
- Time management is essential. Candidates should aim to complete the listening test in order to get a good score.

## **Paper 02 – Reading and Writing**

### **Section A – Reading Comprehension**

There were two passages in French in this section of Paper 02. Passage 1 was based on Module 1 (*L’individu, la famille et la vie journalière*), and required candidates to respond in English to questions asked in English. There was also an exercise in which synonyms were to be found in the passage for a number of words and expressions in French. Passage 2 was based on Module 3 (*L’environnement*), with questions and answers in French.

#### Passage 1 - *Mieux connaître la maladie d’Alzheimer*

Performance was very good overall, with most candidates scoring over 60 per cent. Although there were problem areas, candidates showed comprehension of the passage. There were a few cases of questions being omitted.

For Part (a), most candidates were able to discern that there were few specialists available. Some candidates, however, did not understand that there was a lack of training at the university, or that most family doctors saw only two or three cases of Alzheimer’s disease per year and so were unable to develop enough expertise to make a diagnosis. A few candidates did not understand the concept of *médecins généralistes* - general practitioners.

Part (b) was well handled, but some candidates were confused as to who had to repeat information several times—the patient, or, correctly, family members.

Part (c) was understood by many candidates, but some referred, erroneously, to difficulty pronouncing words, instead of problems finding a word. Expression was sometimes awkward—patients had trouble

‘keeping attention’ or had ‘a trouble of attention’. Most candidates included the third point—difficulty organizing thoughts/a sentence/a task.

Part (d) was well done, although some of the vocabulary such as *fixer*, *l’encodage*, and *la restitution* presented problems. One very well expressed response was ‘These people may not be able to store new information in their memory, or they may not be able to recall information that they have already stored in their memory.’

One of the most challenging questions was Part (e). Many candidates understood that people suffering from Alzheimer’s may not have been aware that symptoms had been present for years. Candidates, however, either failed to mention that the patient learned to adapt, or mistakenly said that the disease had adapted.

Many candidates were confused about the ideas in the final paragraph, and this led to ambiguity in the responses to Part (f). Quite a few candidates experienced difficulty identifying the nature of the study conducted (‘a specialized geriatric consultation’) and by whom it was conducted (‘general practitioners/family doctors’). As a result, there were responses such as ‘Doctors will answer questions and do tests,’ and ‘Specialized geriatrics will consult.’ There was misinterpretation of *en fonction de*, and so some candidates did not realize that based on the results, patients would be sent to specialists.

Parts (g) – (k), the section on synonyms, was generally well handled, with many candidates scoring full marks.

### Recommendations

- Prior knowledge of a topic may be helpful in interpreting a passage. Ultimately, though, candidates should base their answers on information given in the passage.
- Candidates are to be commended for using cognates properly in many cases. They should try always to use simple, idiomatic English and avoid using literal translations in their answers. *Très peu de médecins* was very often expressed as ‘Very little doctors’.
- Candidates should be on the lookout for *faux amis*. A surprising number of candidates interpreted *médecins* as medicine, *formation*, *formé* as ‘formation’ and ‘formed’ instead of ‘training’, ‘trained’, while *la prise en charge* was translated as ‘a (specific) price on the treatment’.
- Synonyms. Candidates should pay attention to parts of speech when answering this section of the paper. A look at some of the synonyms given for (k) *développement—orienteront*, *progressive*, *systématiquement*, *évaluation*—shows that it is necessary to bear the meaning of the word in mind and also to identify the part of speech. Many candidates acquitted themselves well in this section, but it is worth bearing in mind that synonyms in the passage generally have the same tense, gender or number as the words in the questions. It is also useful to note the paragraph in which the synonym is to be found. Finally, candidates should note that the synonym is often one word, and that there is no need to write an entire phrase such as *car l’évolution est très progressive* as the synonym for *développement*’.

### Passage 2- Des eaux usées pour irriguer: une pratique courante

This passage proved to be more challenging than Passage 1. Nevertheless, the majority of candidates scored over 11 marks out of 24. Many candidates made a pleasing attempt to answer in their own words, but it is still a difficult task. A number of candidates were penalized for writing their answers verbatim.

Part (a) was quite well done as candidates made good use of the many cognates in the first paragraph. An example of a full answer was ‘[...] *il y a*

*\*une risque d’abîmer les produits agricoles à cause de la contamination avec les engrais et  
\*des autres substances chimiques et biologiques [...]. L’eau qui est disponible  
\*à eu est non traitée ou partiellement traitée.*

Many candidates lost marks for omitting the last section of this answer, and for not referring to the possible effects of the water on agricultural products.

Most candidates scored full marks on Part (b) although some did not realize that the study was made public on Monday, the first day of the *semaine de l’eau*. A few candidates interpreted *journée* as *journal* and that connection was reinforced by the word *édition*.

With respect to Part (c), candidates had difficulty expressing in their own words that IWMI helped developing countries by encouraging research on the use of sustainable resources (water and land). There was often confusion between Part (c) and Part (d), because the word *but* appeared in Part (d) and in the paragraph containing the answer for this section.

Part (d) was the most challenging. It was often omitted or taken directly from the passage. Many candidates were misled by the phrase *à but non lucratif* in paragraph 3, as stated before. The result was that there was confusion between the purpose of the *IWMI* itself and the purpose of the *study*. Some candidates gave answers which incorporated *à but non lucratif basé à Colombo (Sri Lanka)*. Most candidates did not grasp the meaning of the word *constat*. An example which shows full comprehension follows: *L’objectif de l’étude est d’adresser le problème et pas d’humilier les \*cultivatures.*

For Part (e), many candidates answered in their own words rather than quoting directly from the text. This part of the question was well handled by most but a significant number omitted the third point, that the amount of food produced would be reduced without the water.

There were quite a few cases of direct quotes used for Part (f), and several candidates thought that they should give their own opinion. Some of the vocabulary was difficult to rephrase, for example *irrigation parcimonieuse*. Nonetheless, there were excellent versions, for example, *peu onéreuses* to replace *peu coûteuses*, or the simple *si tu laves les légumes, [...] \*traite les eaux usées*. A number of candidates did not realize that *des interventions peu coûteuses* formed part of the answer.

## Comments and Recommendations

Although this question tests comprehension, teachers should continue to have their students express themselves in French that is as accurate as possible, and do exercises on synonyms. Many words were invented, for example, *\*avaliabilité*, *\*sustainable*, *\*importantement*, *\*végétales*. Although some of these examples show some knowledge of how French words are formed, they indicate first and foremost a lack of vocabulary. Also important for the exercise of using one’s own words is knowing what could be replaced: ‘2 500’, for example, and certain scientific words may not need to be replaced or be readily replaced.

Correct grammar is also important, since poor expression can affect comprehension. Some examples of mistakes include *\*là est*, *\*est vais être*. Candidates should remember to conjugate verbs correctly and to use the right pronouns. They should avoid beginning answers with subject/verb inversion, for example, *\*Offre-t-on...*

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

Teachers could also advise their students to take into consideration the number of marks allotted to a question. It is useful to be concise while giving all the information required.

Finally, if it is necessary to quote from the passage, the quotation should be written in full, without suspension marks.

## **Section B – Essays**

In this section of the paper, candidates were required to write an essay of 250–300 words in French, on one of five topics taken from Module 2 of the syllabus—*La société et les affaires sociales*. Marks are awarded for the organization and presentation of ideas, as well as the use of coherent, grammatically correct language, and a range of vocabulary and idioms. Candidates are expected to write essays with a proper introduction and conclusion, and to present at least three clear points in their discussion of the topic.

Performance this year ranged from poor to very good, with the majority of essays scoring between 11 and 16 marks out of 24 on almost every topic. Although there were some excellent scripts in which candidates showed real mastery of the language and presented well argued points, there were too many examples of basic grammatical errors that are surprising at this level, and superficial treatment of the topics. A number of candidates wrote essays that seemed to have been written on the same general theme in class, memorized and then reproduced without much regard for what the examination question required. Teachers should continue practising essay writing with their students with an emphasis on analysing topics and improving grammar. It is useful to note that the syllabus aims in part to ‘give students a deeper understanding, first of themselves as members of a wider Caribbean community [...] and secondly, of their place in a global setting’. Essays usually refer to issues from this perspective. Finally, candidates should observe the word limit.

### Question 3

*« Les sociétés caribéennes doivent trouver les moyens pour inciter les garçons à travailler dur à l'école. »  
Discutez.*

Although many candidates attempted this question, many of them did not score very highly. Some candidates focused on why it was necessary to receive an education (for example, to avoid poverty, to get a job), but did not discuss why boys in particular, needed to be encouraged to work hard at school. Many candidates also failed to consider the matter from the perspective of Caribbean societies. However, some did discuss the ways that could be found, and also who was responsible for encouraging boys—parents, teachers or the society in general.

### Question 4

*« Certaines professions qui étaient autrefois la chasse-gardée des hommes sont aujourd'hui peuplées par les femmes à l'échelle régionale. » Commentez cette opinion.*

This question was not very popular, and the marks covered the full range from excellent to poor, with the majority of candidates scoring between 11 and 18 marks. Candidates wrote about the changing role of women in general without considering the question from a regional perspective. However, some candidates were able to focus on professions that had been male dominated, explained why there had been a change and gave examples of Caribbean women in politics, in particular.

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

Question 5

« *Les gouvernements de la région doivent adopter une approche régionale face au problème du crime et de la violence.* » *Discutez.*

This was the most popular question, with performance ranging from excellent to very poor. Some candidates seemed unsure of what the question required as a response. Some wrote on the causes of crime, others on the effects of crime and violence. The more thoughtful essays dealt with the issue of *une approche régionale*, either giving reasons to support it (a common interest in tourism, the value of sharing strategies, similarities in the population, financial help for poorer countries, strength in unity) or disagreeing (levels and types of crime vary), and arguing for a national approach: « ... *une approche régionale n'est pas nécessaire, avec de bonnes politiques, l'établissement de programmes...* ».

Question 6

« *Les médias ont tendance à créer la sensation autour des informations négatives, au détriment des informations plus positives.* » *Commentez cette opinion.*

This was the second most popular essay. Grades were, for the most part, average or below average. The word *informations* was not fully understood. Many candidates did not answer the question adequately, choosing to focus on the negative aspects of media such as pornography on the Internet. The better scripts discussed the types of news features in various types of media with some candidates providing arguments that looked at both sides of the question.

Question 7

« *Donnez votre avis sur le rapport entre l'ethnicité et la réussite commerciale dans certains pays de la Caraïbe.* »

A mere handful of candidates chose this question. The performance was varied. One or two candidates did very well. The others either performed satisfactorily or minimally. There was discussion of the legacy of colonialism and the history and current situation of specific countries in the region. Candidates seemed unsure of what *la réussite commerciale* meant and wrote about racism in the society in general.

**Comments on Grammar**

Candidates often depended heavily on English structures and vocabulary and seemed unaware of how French syntax differs from English. An example is the sentence « *La famille encourage leur allé à l'école.* »

Errors which need to be addressed include

- the agreement of nouns and adjectives in number and gender—*les bonne effets*
- the conjugation of verbs, in particular *faire, pouvoir, devoir* and other common irregular verbs
- the use of pronouns of all types—*nous n'ils utilisent pas, 'lles femmes qu'ont ces travaux*
- the negative—*il y a ne crime pas*
- the demonstrative adjective, often used also as a pronoun—*cet comportement, cette garcon, cette est, cettes*
- the gender of nouns—*la commencement, la role, le race, la crime* (in spite of 'du crime' in the topic)
- prepositions—*sur la télé, partir la maison et entrer le monde du travail*
- the use of *aussi* to start a sentence

- inappropriate vocabulary—*les issus*, *les values*, and many anglicisms
- spelling: the omission of accents, of elision
- the use of abbreviations (*qch*) and inappropriate register (*la Fac*, *ça*). There were few examples of this but these should be avoided.

Although many candidates had difficulty using correct language, there was very good work by some. It is encouraging to see the word *actuellement* used accurately and there were examples of idiomatic language that added to the fluency of the essay without seeming to have been taken at random from a list of expressions. Some examples include *les jeunes hommes se sont tournés vers les drogues et les délits/ une situation difficilement maîtrisable pour les femmes / il est possible que ce problème soit la responsabilité* *On doit supprimer les barrières d'insularité, provoquent l'affaiblissement de la société.*

Many essays were well structured with good use of *mots de liaison*: *premièrement*, *en revanche*, *'regardons le revers de la médaille*, *de surcroît*, *en outre*, *or*, *pour conclure*.

### Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

#### Section A – Literary Analysis

In this section, candidates were required to answer questions on one of four extracts taken from the prescribed texts: *L'enfant noir*, *L'odeur du café*, *L'étranger* and *Une si longue lettre*. Candidates were required to comment on chapter, plot setting and simple literary techniques.

#### Question 1

*Le travail d'un père (L'enfant noir)*

Most candidates attempted this question. In general, the level of performance was very high.

Part (a) was generally well done with most candidates able to identify the examples required. Some, however, quoted large excerpts from the first paragraph where the answer could be found without clearly indicating the link between the question and the information presented.

Part (b) was misinterpreted by some candidates. They commented on the goldsmith's life rather than on the life of the lady who was featured in the extract. Some candidates were nevertheless able to comment aptly on the two aspects highlighted in the question.

The response to Part (c) was satisfactory. However, there were some candidates whose answers suggested that they did not have a full appreciation or understanding of the context from which the extract was taken. Hence, they characterized the lady as being *faible* thus failing to recognize that the presence of the *griot* indicated that she was instead a rather astute individual.

Most candidates gained full marks for Part (d) because they were able to pinpoint the important elements of reference to culture in the extract, for example, *La fête du Ramadan* and *Le Tabaski*. However, some candidates did not understand the significance of the *griot*.

Question 2*Le bain de camelo (L'odeur du café)*

For this question responses ranged from satisfactory to very good. However, the extract was not a popular choice among candidates. For Part (a), the tendency was for some candidates to allude to information not directly given in the first paragraph. Some candidates erroneously explained that Camelo's ability in football meant that he was not *mal dans son corps*.

Many candidates responded well to Part (b) although occasionally there were some partial responses. For Part (c), most candidates were able to link the references made by Naréus and Willy Bony to Gisèle as *une femme libre* to the idea that men like to gossip. The illegitimacy of Gisèle's daughter and her ugliness were at times omitted. The most common response received for Part (d) was that Vieux Os criticized Gisèle's actions. A few candidates indicated the criticism of her lifestyle while many overlooked the fact that Vieux Os returned to spy on Gisèle and Camelo.

Question 3*Le procès (L'étranger)*

This was also a popular choice and candidates responded fairly well to most sections of the question.

Most candidates were able to identify the relevant aspects for Parts (a)–(c). The academic activity to be evaluated was a challenging concept to understand for Part (d). Nevertheless, many candidates were able to answer adequately.

Question 4*Réflexions (Une si longue lettre)*

A large number of candidates opted not to choose this book. For the majority of those who selected this extract, responses ranged from satisfactory to excellent. For Part (a), some candidates were able to justify the opinion expressed in the quotation, whereas others simply extracted portions from the passage without attempting to provide explanations.

The tendency by candidates to rewrite chunks of the extract when requested to find examples was once again apparent in a number of responses to Part (b). For Part (c) many candidates were able to find four reasons which suggested that Daouda Dieng would be a good match for Ramatoulaye. The fact that he was still a bachelor was not accepted. Part (d) was generally well done.

**Section B – Themes**

Candidates were required to write one essay, of 350–400 words, in English, from the thematic areas: *La Jeunesse* and *L'individu et la société*. The prescribed texts for *La Jeunesse* are *L'enfant noir* and *L'odeur du café* while those for *L'individu et la société* are *L'étranger* and *Une si longue lettre*. There were four

questions, two on each theme. Overall, candidates' performance was satisfactory. However, there were a number of excellent/very good responses especially for Questions 5 and 7.

The examiners were looking for global understanding of the texts and their themes, application of knowledge and organization of the essays. Candidates were rewarded based on the extent to which their work reflected these areas.

### Question 5

*Discuss the theme of 'male bonding' in the text that you have studied.*

The majority of candidates who chose this question selected *L'enfant noir*. Only one candidate opted to use *L'odeur du café* and the essay produced was of a satisfactory level. There were just *two* examples of 'male bonding' mentioned: that of Frantz and their escapades and Frantz's father. More consideration was given to the narrator's relationship with his grandmother, Da.

With regard to *L'enfant noir*, candidates generally understood the theme of male bonding and were able to relate it to Laye and his father, relatives, friends and companions. A number of candidates misinterpreted the question and focused some attention on the aspect of female-male bonding.

### Question 6

*'Exotic and exciting...' said the European school boy, 'yet at times strangely familiar.' Suggest reasons why the speaker might make these comments in relation to the text that you have studied.*

Although there were not many responses to this question, most of the candidates who attempted it were able to present balanced and well-structured essays and were well rewarded for their efforts. Points from these essays included, on the one hand, the relationship between the narrator's father and the serpent, the father's work as a goldsmith and the griot, Kondén Diara activities, circumcision, and on the other hand, universal similarities like parent-child relationships, school life, adolescent relationships and leaving home.

### Question 7

*'The narrator is a social rebel at heart.' Discuss this perspective of the narrator in the text that you have studied.*

This question was the most popular choice for the essay. Candidates were evidently comfortable with both texts, *L'étranger* and *Une si longue lettre*, this was reflected by the numerous responses which referred to one or the other of the texts.

With regard to *L'étranger* candidates sought to justify the narrator's embodiment of social rebellion rather than discuss it as mentioned in the rubric. Consequently, instead of providing a balanced, multifaceted approach to the question, some candidates sought confirmation from the text that he was a social rebel. Candidates in the good-excellent categories were able to mention some of Mersault's redeeming qualities including honesty and appreciation of nature. They also mentioned the reasons why he was the hero of the

‘Absurd’. This was an essential point to grasp. Also of note was the fact that he unwittingly, rather than deliberately, espoused this philosophy. This point was not always directly mentioned.

In the case of *Une si longue lettre*, the good candidate was able to suggest that Ramatoulaye was not so much a social rebel but rather a traditional Muslim woman in the process of becoming cautiously more and more liberal. For example, when she received the news that her husband had taken another wife she was at first bitter but submissive. However, when her brother-in-law assumes that she will marry him after her husband’s death, she rebels in no uncertain terms. This dual nature had to be developed and supported. The average response focused mainly on Ramatoulaye’s decision after her husband’s death, to undertake tasks normally carried out by men.

### Question 8

*Discuss the writer’s portrayal of the prominent male characters in the work that you have studied.*

A number of candidates selected this question. Again, there was a balance in terms of the texts chosen for the exercise. There was a variety of answers but generally responses ranged between satisfactory and good. In terms of *L’Étranger*, the outstanding candidates gave a multifaceted portrayal of male characterization in the text, especially Mersault. They highlighted, among other points, his apparent indifference at his mother’s funeral and subsequent actions which did not suggest a typical mourner, his frankness and honesty, his embodiment of the philosophy of the Absurd. At times, the other significant characters, for example Raymond and the Aumonier, were not mentioned.

With respect to *Une si longue lettre*, more balance could have been evident in the essays. The men in the book presented an interesting blend of good and bad qualities. For example, the relationship between the males and the females (Modou Fall and Ramatoulaye, Mawdo Bâ and Aïssatou) was good at the start, but it gradually deteriorated, and the treatment of the wives was disappointing. Apart from considering these aspects, the portrayal of men like Ibrahima Sall and Daba’s husband was positive and should have been reflected in the essays as well.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Literary Analysis**

- Although a few candidates demonstrated an acceptable use of language in answering the extracts, there is still much room for improvement in this area. More attention needs to be given to improving the writing skills of candidates. Teachers must place more focus on exposure to literary vocabulary; they should also increase practice of grammar to raise the level of grammatical accuracy.
- Careful reading of both the extracts and questions must be encouraged. Students should be reminded frequently of how to interpret and respond to terms such as *identify*, *describe*, *comment on*, and *justify*.

- In preparation for responding to the literary extracts, students should be exposed to the entire text. This will enable them to better appreciate the context from which the extract is taken and therefore give a more informed answer.
- Teachers should provide students with as much practice as possible, using a variety of questions. This would help them to begin to think more critically and in depth.
- Answers to extracts should be concise.

### **Thematic Essays**

- Some candidates have excellent language skills and this was evident in the outstanding essays. However, students should be encouraged, generally, to read widely. This would assist in overall improvement of the language skills, especially of the weaker students.
- Students must be encouraged to adhere to the word limit. Quantity is not always a good indicator of quality.
- The importance of the structure of the essay must be emphasized. A brief introduction, followed by three to four well-developed points, and an apt conclusion are hallmarks of a good essay.

Some of the quotations used in the essays were too lengthy. Although candidates are allowed to use their texts in the examination, there is no need for the selection of large chunks of material. Short, apt quotations are more effective. Accuracy of quotations is also vital.

## **UNIT 2**

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

There were 212 candidates who wrote the Listening Comprehension component of the Unit 2 examination. Performance of candidates in this unit ranged from very poor to excellent. Again, as for Unit 1, candidates at this level find the listening exercise a very daunting one. It is hoped that, having gone through Unit 1, candidates would work harder at acquiring better aural skills in order to achieve a good grade in Unit 2. Listening to Radio France international (RFI) and watching international French television would be excellent ways of acquiring better listening skills in French.

There were fewer cases, however, in Unit 2 where candidates left out entire parts of questions. Some unfinished answers did indicate, nevertheless, that time management might have been a problem. The listening examination lasts only one hour and until there is a change in the length of the examination, candidates will have to make every effort to organize and manage their time properly in order to complete the listening test in time.

Students are being urged not to write their notes in pencil in the spaces provided and then re-write their answers over the pencil writing. Not only is this extremely untidy for examiners, it makes it very difficult for examiners to read the finished script.

## DETAILED COMMENTS

### Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

Paper 01 required candidates to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections (Section A) and one extended interview (Section B).

The questions, as for Unit 1, were set in English and candidates were required to respond in English. The topics were set in line with the three modules of the syllabus:

- Questions 1 and 2 - Module 1 - (*L'actualité*)
- Questions 3, 4 and 5 - Module 2 - (*L'industrie, le commerce et l'économie*)
- Question 6 - Module 3 - (*La science et la technologie*)

#### Section A – Short Selections

##### Selection 1 – *Abbi Patrix, French storyteller, visiting Martinique*

Approximately 62 per cent of the candidates achieved satisfactory to excellent scores. Very few, however, were able to achieve full marks on this question. The level of this selection, with respect to vocabulary and text chosen, was simple enough for more candidates to have scored excellent marks.

Most candidates understood Part (a) quite well and were able to state both the nationality of Abbi Patrix and his occupation. There were a few candidates who misinterpreted *conteur* to mean ‘financial controller’, ‘accountant’, ‘author’ or ‘writer’.

For Part (b), some candidates scored the full marks. Some did not understand the phrase *l'immense trésor oral*, most were able to grasp ‘oral’ and ‘childhood’ but not the idea of ‘wealth’ from the word *trésor*. Some wrote ‘treasure’ and this rendering was acceptable. It was noted that many candidates still scored partial marks even though they were unable to put the words together to make good sense of the text – that Abbi Patrix had been told a vast number of stories by his mother when he was a child.

There was satisfactory performance on Part (c). Very few scripts had the point that the stories were far-reaching but included the points that the stories of Abbi Patrix had a repertoire of 300 stories that crossed many cultures. An answer such as ‘It is said to display culture’ gained only partial marks.

There was fairly good performance on Part (d). Some candidates understood that the storyteller was able to tell a story on any subject because of this vast repertoire. In fact, candidates seemed to have found an overlap in their answers for Part (c) and Part (d) that was accepted. Although candidates wrote answers that were appropriate, it was evident that the words ‘scope’ [Part (c)] and ‘versatility’ [Part d] in the questions, were not clear in their minds.

Most candidates were able to score one to two marks out of a possible two marks for this question. One or both points were made regarding the fact that the stories were for people’s education and that they combat the loss of values in the society.

### Selection 2 – The Guantanamo Bay Prison in Cuba

Approximately 77 per cent of the candidates performed fairly well on this selection. Full marks were not always obtained, but many candidates captured the essence of the selection.

Not many candidates scored the maximum mark for Part (a). Many generally understood that three prisoners committed suicide but omitted to say how they killed themselves. Part (b) was generally well understood and many candidates scored the full marks, having realized that there were many protests against the United States of America.

Part (c) was well done. Many candidates either gave the year when the prison was constructed or stated the time period within which the construction took place. Either answer gained the maximum mark. Part (d) was generally well answered by many candidates who included all the details to gain the marks allotted to the question. It was good to see that candidates understood the details concerning the capture of prisoners launched by Washington in the bid to combat terrorism, following the notorious act on September 11, 2001.

Candidates were rarely awarded full marks for their response to Part (e). Most understood that arbitrary detention and bad treatment of prisoners were the criticisms levelled against the prison centre but most were challenged by *mise en place de tribunaux d'exception*. Acquisition of vocabulary on the topics of terrorism, justice and the law, would be useful for candidates doing Unit 2.

### Selection 3 – Effects of the Internet on Research and Shopping

Candidates' performance was commendable. Most of them were able to receive scores between the middle and upper ranges of the bands for this selection.

Part (a) was generally well understood. Most candidates understood that the Internet brought changes that affected people's research habits and shopping behaviour and were therefore able to score full marks.

Many candidates were only able to score half the marks allotted to Part (b). There were those who took buying and selling to mean 'shopping' and missed the point that persons are able to use the Internet to do interactive distance shopping. Some candidates failed to mention that online services are also provided.

Part (c) was generally well answered with most candidates understanding that French e-commerce has begun to take place on an international scale.

Most candidates responded to Part (d) fairly well as they understood that traders have begun to sell their products in other countries other than France. Some candidates interpreted the verb *commercialiser* to mean 'buy' and therefore, an answer such as 'They buy products from other countries' gained no mark.

### Selection 4 – France as a major tourist destination

Candidates performed very well on this selection. Most of them gained four out of a possible eight marks.

For Part (a), the majority of candidates understood that France continues to be a major tourist destination compared to other countries.

Part (b) was generally well answered by most candidates as they understood that Léon Bertrand was the French Minister whose portfolio was tourism.

Again, Part (c) was quite straightforward and candidates had no major problems understanding the three entities responsible for the creation of jobs, namely, tourism, services in the business sector and construction.

#### Selection 5 – Bombshell in the World Trade System

This selection proved very challenging to many candidates as only approximately 30 per cent were able to gain marks between the middle and upper ranges of the bands. Parts (a) and (c) performed quite well. The other two parts accounted for five marks all of which were often lost because of miscomprehension.

Part (a) was fairly well answered by many candidates. Answers such as ‘worldwide commerce’ were accepted.

The French word *subventions* seemed to have been unknown to many candidates who attempted Part (b). This was surprising as the word should be a high-frequency lexical item at this level. Most candidates understood ‘American’ but this was not enough to gain any marks as the answer required was ‘American subsidies’.

Part (c) was generally understood by most candidates. However, there were those candidates who misunderstood and wrote answers such as ‘plantain’, and ‘a Brazilian plant’ instead of ‘cotton’ as the product under consideration. Part (d) was not well understood by many candidates. Many did not realize that producers were being urged to increase their output of cotton.

### **Section B – Extended Interview**

#### Selection 6 – Interview between a journalist and Dr. Claude Cousin on the implications of medical malpractice

It was surprising that this question was poorly done by many candidates. Few candidates were able to score marks in the outstanding band. Although many candidates understood most words in this interview, many of them failed to understand the whole context of the message. Needless to say, there were many versions and some answers were illogical.

Approximately 38.2 per cent of the candidates received marks between the middle and upper ranges of the bands.

Candidates should spend some time (if time is managed properly) re-reading their answers in order to check their spelling in English, and to ensure proper sentence construction in order to avoid ambiguity and answers that are incoherent. Parts (a), (b), (d), (g), (h) and (i) proved challenging while Parts (c), (e), and (f) seemed manageable for most candidates.

#### Part 1

For Part (a), many candidates were able to gain at least half of the marks allocated for this question. Most candidates did not understand *tribunaux* and *comités de conciliation*. Some either left the question unanswered or wrote that doctors were appearing before ‘dead bodies’. Candidates who simply said ‘courts’ gained only partial marks.

Part (b) was apparently difficult for many candidates. A number of them used the introductory sentence which mentioned malpractice as their answer to this question without mentioning the fact that some doctors’ patients were demanding compensation because of the cases that involved unsuccessful or careless

procedures. An answer such as ‘They are appearing before these bodies for complications in operations’ received no mark.

Part (c) was generally well answered as most candidates understood that the medical mishaps mentioned were complications, contracted infections and failed operations. Candidates must be careful not to include material in their answers that seems plausible to them, but which is not in the original text, or provide answers which are totally inappropriate. The following answer could gain no marks: ‘Three examples of medical mishaps are the formation of diseases, some *\*medecins* can cause side-effects and patients can also become homesick and ill with these certain *\*medecins*’.

Many candidates found Part (d) to be difficult to answer. It seemed that neither the question nor the message in the text was understood. The full three marks were not always obtained. It was expected that candidates would have understood that, in the case of a medical accident caused by a doctor, a patient can seek and obtain justice/redress and receive some form of compensation.

Part (e) was generally a good question for the majority of candidates who understood ‘2007’. Only a few candidates wrote an incorrect answer.

## Part 2

Most candidates understood that Matéo was a little four-year-old boy born with some kind of deficiency. This answer to Part (f) was only partial and candidates should have included that he was born with a defective left kidney. There were candidates who took *rein* to mean ‘lung’. There were also the odd answers where Matéo was deemed to be a hospital or a type of operation.

Candidates are being advised to review the vocabulary on internal organs of the body.

Part (g) was not very well answered as many candidates could not identify the internal organ that was removed by mistake during the operation. Candidates must be careful in their choice of words for answers as they risk losing marks if ideas are not well expressed. Answers such as ‘He was killed by mistake’ gained no marks while ‘The right kidney was amputated accidentally’ only gained partial marks.

Only a few candidates received maximum marks for Part (h). Most candidates understood that the man in the last legal appeal had a very serious accident and some realized that he had died. Some candidates did not include that he died on the operating table. Simply stating that he had a serious accident could only receive one mark. Candidates must pay attention to the number of marks as this will give a good indication as to the number of points to be written down for the answer.

Part (i) was, by far, the most problematic part for the majority of candidates who did not at all understand that a policy (*la politique*), not ‘politics’, existed whereby lawyers are prevented from canvassing for patients upon their discharge from the hospital in an effort to get patients’ cooperation in lawsuits against doctors. An answer such as ‘Doctors in France are considered lucky because there is a policy which prevents the lawyers from fully suing or tarnishing their character and career’ received only two out of three marks, as it did not mention that it was upon the patients’ exit from the hospital – at the hospital door – that the lawyers were trying to canvass for patients.

## Recommendations

- More time (whether in school or at home) should be devoted to listening practice in order for candidates to develop good to excellent aural competence. More practice in speaking should also be very helpful.
- The vocabulary and specific expressions for each module should be well known. Teachers should ensure that students are well acquainted with and learn new vocabulary from related topics and articles.
- Constant revision of the basics, for example, numbers, including the suffix *-aine*, as well as the names of internal organs is essential.
- Candidates are encouraged not to write ‘either/or’ answers. Examiners should not be forced to decipher the right answer. They are also encouraged to express themselves and their ideas more effectively in English so that examiners would not have to spend much time trying to understand or decode answers given.
- Candidates are encouraged to improve their spelling in English and to refrain from coining words. They should also re-read their answers as sometimes what is written is either ambiguous or does not make much sense.
- Much practice is needed in pinpointing the actual information needed for a particular answer. Answers must come strictly from the text heard and use of previous or general knowledge should be discouraged, especially if it is completely irrelevant.
- Attention should be paid to penmanship and tidy presentation of work.
- Candidates should give some consideration to the number of marks awarded for a question as this usually indicates the depth of an answer required.
- Literal translations are sometimes incorrect and should be avoided. Cognates can be useful but beware of *faux amis* (‘false friends’).
- Time management is essential. Candidates should aim to complete the listening test in order to get a good score.

## Paper 02 – Reading and Writing

### Section A – Reading Comprehension

There were two passages in French in this section of Paper 02. Passage 1 was based on Module 1 (*L’actualité*), and required candidates to respond in English to questions asked in English. There was also an exercise in which synonyms were to be found in the passage for a number of words and expressions in French. Passage 2 was based on Module 3 (*L’industrie, le commerce et l’économie*), with questions and answers in French.

Passage 1 – L’interactivité transforme la démocratie

The performance was good on the whole with the majority of candidates (58 per cent) gaining at least 12 out of a maximum 24 marks.

For Part (a), many candidates were able to say that the traditional role of the written and audiovisual media — shaping public opinion — was diminishing. Fewer candidates, however, included the point that the pedagogical and political role of television was being eroded.

In many cases, Part (b) was answered only in part. Some candidates mentioned the political and educational role that television played, but some thought that it was part of the new trend instead of the traditional role. Many candidates had difficulty understanding *des chaînes thématiques payantes*, opting for a literal translation instead of ‘subscription/paid cable channels’.

Part (c) was fairly well done. Many candidates understood that the success of blogs was due to cheap or even free Internet access. As for the problems of the written press, whereas many candidates were able to identify a decline in the number of readers, few added the point that there was a fall in advertising revenue: *des recettes publicitaires* proved too challenging. Again, there was mistranslation with *lecteurs* being interpreted as ‘lectures’.

Nearly all candidates were awarded full marks for Part (d).

For Part (e), most candidates scored one mark for saying that people were able to express themselves, but some lost the other mark for not mentioning that this was because of the new technologies.

Part (f) was very well answered.

Parts (g) – (k) was extremely well handled. The main challenge was the synonym for (i) *liens (rapports)*, which was either omitted or answered incorrectly. The others — *majeur, en concurrence avec, succès, débat* — presented little difficulty.

Passage 2 – Le web: outil du développement

The topic was one with which candidates were familiar. The overall performance was satisfactory, with a mean score of 11.71 out of a possible 24. In some cases, answers were too long and candidates had difficulty recognizing what section of the passage was relevant to the various questions. Although there were cases of some candidates being penalized for writing their answers verbatim, there was a commendable effort by candidates to respond in their own words.

For Part (a), most candidates were able to identify *le marketing sur Internet* as the correct answer.

Though many candidates identified the correct answer — *les salons, les foires et le marketing direct* for Part (b) some had difficulty expressing themselves. Candidates should note that answering in their own words does **not** mean having to find a synonym for **every** word.

Part (c) was worth seven marks and so required a fairly detailed answer. Many candidates conveyed the notion of an increase in the number of new clients by using *une augmentation du nombre de clients*, or *international* to refer to the foreign companies that get in touch with French companies after searching online or consulting professional directories on the Internet. In a number of cases, the answer for Part (d) was given instead.

Part (d) required candidates to refer to three types of companies — those with over 200 employees; those which expected to increase their sales abroad, and finally, firms located in the north-west of France. Most candidates earned at least three marks. Although *siège social* was difficult for some candidates, others were able to produce *les sociétés qui sont dans le nord-ouest de la France*.

Most candidates scored three to six marks for Part (e) as this was a straightforward question for which the answer could be found easily. However, a number of candidates omitted *leur site Web*.

### Recommendations

Teachers should encourage students to answer **only** what is asked. They could also suggest that students look at what is asked in the question that follows the one that they are answering so that they get an idea of the boundaries of each question.

More practice in learning how to paraphrase passages in French would also help. One possible approach is using short extracts from key passages in the literature books. This would help with language as well as get students to become more familiar with the set books.

It is also important for candidates to acquire as wide a vocabulary as possible, and to practice changing verbs to nouns and vice versa, so that the wording of an answer can be changed.

### Section B – Essays

In this section, candidates were required to write an essay in French, using 250 to 300 words, on one of five topics from Module 2, *La science et la technologie*. They were expected to show that they could organize their ideas clearly and present relevant arguments in a convincing manner. Essays which were properly structured with an introduction, a conclusion and at least three well-developed and illustrated points often scored high marks for content.

#### Question 3

« *Le telephone portable contribue de plus en plus aux malheurs de la sociétés.* » *Discutez.*

This was not only the most popular question, but also the best answered, with performance ranging from moderate to excellent. Candidates identified a number of ills associated with cell phones such as the risk of getting brain cancer from the radiation they emit, or having an accident while on the phone. Cell phones were also blamed for a breakdown in morals due to accessibility to pornography on the Internet, and for people neglecting their family, friends and studies. Arguments presented on the positive aspects of mobile phones included the ease of communicating with people, having access to the Internet to do research and playing games.

#### Question 4

« *L'automobile joue un role important dans la vie sociale de l'adolescent.* » *Discutez.*

This was among the least popular questions and was the worst answered. Candidates who responded to this question should have placed greater emphasis on the role a car plays in a teenager's social life, rather than on the general benefits of having a car. Arguments in support of the statement included the idea that owning a car made young people more independent and more responsible.

Question 5

« *L'ordinateur remplacera tôt ou tard le téléviseur et le poste de radio.* » *Commentez cet avis.*

This was the second most popular essay, and was fairly well handled by most candidates, with a few excellent scripts. Some candidates did not seem to understand the difference between *la radio* and *le poste de radio* or *la télévision* and *le téléviseur*. Many merely explained the many uses of the computer but did not show how it could replace the TV set and a radio. However, some candidates did explore the topic thoroughly, concluding that the computer could find itself replaced by the cell phone.

Question 6

« *La religion et la technologie se marient de plus en plus* » *Discutez.*

Very few candidates attempted this question. Performance ranged from satisfactory to very good. Points mentioned by candidates included having the Bible, the Koran and other religious books on line.

Question 7

« *La possibilité d'une guérison imminente pour certaines maladies graves serait désastreuse pour le monde du commerce.* » *Commentez cet avis.*

Only one or two candidates attempted this question. Performance was good.

**Comments**

The use of language for Unit 2 was better than for Unit 1. Nevertheless, there were still many basic errors made including subject/verb agreement, the conjugation of verbs (*ils allaient, ils voullent*), the omission or incorrect use of accents and the agreement of adjectives.

Other areas which need attention include

- comparisons – *les mêmes programmes comme le téléviseur*. Often 'très' was used in place of *plus*.
- the passive – *un portable peut utiliser*
- the use of *aussi* instead of *de plus* at the start of a sentence.
- *parce que* instead of *à cause de* – *parce que l'expériences nouvelle, on manque...*
- pronouns – *communiquer avec leur*
- spelling and the absence of an elision – *parce que ils*

Some of the less competent candidates have little knowledge of grammatical categories - *Les jeunes choix cet; les temps sont changement.*

There was a Spanish influence in some cases, whilst in others, candidates simply put *le* or *la* in front of an English word to make it French *le rate, le relationship*.

There were several well-written essays with excellent use of language, even with minor errors. Examples of expressions drawn from some of the essays include :

- *En dépit de cela, le téléphone portable est une aubaine*
- *toute une gamme de problèmes*
- *cet outil devient de plus en plus populaire à l'échelle mondiale*
- *néanmoins, il faut évaluer le pour et le contre*
- *le téléphone portable peut combler le fossé culturel et peut aider à créer un village planétaire*
- *nous vivons dans un monde rapide qui transforme à un rythme accéléré*
- *l'omniprésence de la technologie est peut-être évident par la prolifération des téléphones portables pour que les entreprises fassent...'*
- *'il faut colmater toutes les brèches.*

### **Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes**

#### **Section A – Literary Analysis**

This section required candidates to answer questions on **one** of four extracts taken from the prescribed texts: *La rue cases-nègres*, *Maria Chapdelaine*, *Gouverneurs de la rosée* and *La tragédie du Roi Christophe*. Candidates were expected to comment on character, plot, setting and simple literary techniques. Performance on this question was generally satisfactory.

#### Question 1

*La vie scolaire (La rue cases-nègres)*

The majority of candidates performed well on Part (a). The narrator's mother was described as *déterminée, travailleuse, pleine d'amour*. Accepted explanations to describe a good mother also included words like *abnégation* and *sacrifice*. Generally, candidates attempted to illustrate their viewpoint by using pertinent references in the extract.

Candidates were able to perform creditably on Part (b). Many understood that school fees were to be paid within a stipulated period of time. Sometimes, the threat of being expelled for the non-payment of fees was overlooked.

In order to receive full marks for Part (c) candidates were expected to find the following expressions: *d'être encagé pendant les classes, d'être captivé aux heures de récréation dans une cour enmurée*. Many candidates erroneously cited the expressions *fourmillant d'élèves, charpenté de professeurs* as evidence of the narrator's sense of being imprisoned. Apparently the expression *n'était qu'une espèce de prison* in the question was misunderstood and interpreted as *ce n'était pas une prison*.

Part (d) required candidates to identify two main themes from the novel which were evident in the passage. Themes identified included family relationships, education, sacrifice and hardship of life.

#### Question 2

*La vie en hiver (Maria Chapdelaine)*

Part (a) was not adequately answered by most candidates. They indicated that Mme. Chapdelaine was sociable but they could not perceive that she was also a realist. For Part (b) candidates easily identified the

physical limitations of the weather but only a few were able to produce answers referring to its mental/psychological effects. Part (c) was generally well done. Candidates understood the idea of *dévots* and related it to religion. They were therefore able to easily extract relevant examples.

For Part (d) most candidates were able to extract relevant themes such as weather, nature, religion, friendship, family and community life.

### Question 3

#### *La mort (Gouverneurs de la rosée)*

Most candidates answered Part (a) adequately, citing appropriate sections of the extract, for example, '*le choeur des pleureuses s'éleva*'; '*les femmes hurlaient*'. A few candidates disregarded the instructional cues and used other sections of the extract to illustrate their answer. For example, with reference to Bienaimé many stated *Ses mains tremblaient dans la poussière* and Bienaimé '*contempla le cadavre*'.

Many candidates did not understand Part (b) and thus were unable to explain adequately. Some candidates focused on Manuel's death and emphasized that only his bones would remain. The inevitable nature of misfortune and its destructive power were overlooked.

Candidates generally responded satisfactorily to Part (c). A number of possible themes were identified for Part (d) – death, nature and misfortune. Most candidates were able to identify two themes but many added lengthy and unnecessary explanations.

### Question 4

#### *L'insulte (La tragédie du Roi Christophe)*

Candidates provided adequate answers for Part (a). However, a few indicated that Christophe stammered and therefore Vastey had to provide the word. What should have been highlighted was that Christophe was looking for the term to describe the error on the part of the secretariat, and Vastey came to his aid.

Both Parts (b) and (c) were generally well done while for Part (d) candidates had some difficulty identifying the main themes of the novel which were evident in the extract. Examiners were looking for *le leadership/la direction*, *le conflit* and *la lutte pour le respect de soi*.

## **Section B – Themes**

Candidates were required to answer one essay, of 350 to 400 words, based on the thematic areas *La vie rurale* (for which the prescribed texts were *La rue cases-nègres* and *Maria Chapdelaine*); and *Les conflits politiques et sociaux* (with prescribed texts *Gouverneurs de la rosée* and *La tragédie du Roi Christophe*). There were four questions, two on each theme.

Candidates' performance on this section was generally satisfactory.

With regard to the questions based on the theme *La Vie Rurale*, over 80 per cent of the candidates selected the text *La rue cases-nègres*. The most popular text used in discussion of the theme *Les conflits politiques et sociaux* was *Gouverneurs de la rosée*, with over 80 per cent of candidates opting to use that text.

Examiners were looking for global understanding of the texts and their themes, application of knowledge, and organization of the essays. Candidates were rewarded based on the extent to which their work reflected these areas.

This year, candidates followed the rubric and referred to the texts specified for each thematic area in their discussions.

### Question 5

*Discuss the theme of dependence with reference to the text that you have studied.*

The majority of candidates who chose this question selected *La rue cases-nègres*. Most candidates were very familiar with the events in the novel. The difficulty arose when they had to identify areas of dependence for discussion. Many limited themselves to the dependence of the narrator on his grandmother. The excellent candidate was, however, able to identify other points such as the cultural dimension added to his childhood by Médouze, the impact of his primary school teachers on his life, the overall importance of family and friends in one's progress and well being.

The candidates who chose *Maria Chapdelaine* as their text of reference were generally able to pinpoint and discuss the following areas: dependence on family and friends, dependence on nature and dependence on religion. The excellent candidate was able to support ideas with adequate textual references to specific events/circumstances.

### Question 6

*'The novel deals with the issue of survival.'* Discuss this opinion of the text that you have studied.

This question was satisfactorily handled by candidates who used *La rue cases-nègres* as well as those who opted for *Maria Chapdelaine*. With respect to the first text, candidates were able to identify the hardship of life in the novel and the struggle for survival. Candidates mentioned the fight to provide an education for Jose despite financial difficulties, the abject poverty of M'man Tine and her quest for social mobility for her offspring etc. Candidates' knowledge of the text often caused them to be too lengthy in their responses.

For the second text, *Maria Chapdelaine*, candidates mainly discussed the harsh conditions of life in Québec and the ability to survive in spite of hardships, for example, rugged terrain, bad weather and the death of loved ones.

### Question 7

*'A work of contrasts.'* Discuss this view of the text you have studied.

This question was reasonably well done by candidates who opted to use *Gouverneurs de la rosée*. They identified the many contrasts in the novel: death and drought versus life and fertility; religious fatalism versus practical responsibility; the contrast between Manuel and Gervilien and what they represented, among other things.

Candidates who chose to respond with reference to *La tragédie du Roi Christophe* struggled to find and illustrate contrasts. The main contrast identified was the ideals of Christophe for his people and the tyranny he exercised in trying to achieve these. The contrast between his view of leadership and that of his wife was hardly mentioned nor was the contrast between Christophe's court and that of France.

Question 8

*'Most unfortunate.'* Discuss the extent to which this would be a fair assessment of the text you have studied.

The essay on *Gouverneurs de la rosée* was generally well done. Some candidates identified the unfortunate aspect and concluded that the statement characterized the book as a whole. Many, however, recognized that the book ended on a positive note, with the death of Manuel being significant to the reconciliation between the feuding parties.

The unfortunate aspects of *La tragédie du Roi Christophe* seemed to be more dominant. Consequently, candidates tended to focus on unfortunate elements such as Christophe's harshness and his oppression of his people. There was hardly any reference to Christophe's lofty vision for his country and his desire to give his people a sense of dignity as well as recognition and respectability in the eyes of the world.

**Recommendations**

- It was evident from some scripts that candidates had depended heavily on a translation of the set text. In some cases it was sensed that the English version of the text may have been taken into the examination as lengthy quotations in English were occasionally used. The original French text should be the one used in the examination.
- Some essays were very untidy and this detracted from the overall presentation of candidates' work. Although candidates were not penalized, it must still be stressed that it is unnecessary to seek to completely blot out statements they wish to omit/revise. One line neatly drawn through the section to be excluded will suffice.
- Some essays were too long. Candidates should be encouraged to stick to the word limit.
- Quotations from the text should not be too lengthy. Short, apt quotations are more effective.
- Some answers to the questions based on the extract were too verbose. Candidates should note the number of marks allotted for each question and attempt to be more concise.
- Although some candidates demonstrated an acceptable use of language in responding to the extracts, there is still room for improvement in this area. Teachers must place more focus on exposure to literary vocabulary. In addition, they should increase practice of grammar to raise the level of grammatical accuracy.

**UNITS 1 AND 2****Paper 04 – Internal Assessment**

The performance of candidates on this paper ranged from excellent to poor. Indeed, the panel of moderators was impressed by the level of research undertaken by the candidates in the excellent band as well as their level of fluency. In Unit 1, candidates presented a myriad of topics ranging from sports, health and family life, music, to environmental issues such as water and air pollution. In Unit 2, topics included education, abortion, drugs, poverty and tourism. Teachers must be commended for the guidance they provide to their students, for their endorsement of a student-centred approach to learning, and finally their commitment to ensuring that the students develop exceptionally well, academically and personally, from their experience.

However, a main concern is for candidates in the average to poor categories. In the case of these candidates, the use of grammatically incorrect constructions made it clear that there is need for more emphasis to be placed on the mastery of grammatical structures. Candidates continually use infinitives after a subject without conjugating the verb. Direct and indirect object pronouns are placed after the verb even when a positive command is not expressed. Examples of some of these errors are *ils se marier*, *les femmes est considérées*, *la mère vont*, *les jeunes peut*, *les membres a donné*, *ces sujets aident moi se développer*, *la famille est ne soutien pas and ne peut fonctionner pas*.

### **Prepared Topic**

The content of the presentations, for the most part, was very good. It was evident that extensive research was done on the topics by the candidates. Haiti was the country of choice for many candidates but other countries such as Tunisia, Senegal, Guadeloupe, Martinique, France, Canada, Rwanda and Mali were also among the list of countries researched.

It was clear that candidates had made every effort to memorize their presentations and so, for several, the flow of the language appeared quite unnatural. Candidates do not generally fail this section, but do lose marks as a result of faulty grammar, insufficient facts and ideas, as well as a high level of hesitancy during their delivery.

Both teachers and students are reminded that the allotted time for this section is three minutes.

### **Topic Conversation**

The marking for this section is divided into three categories:

- Comprehension
- Correctness of expression/Range of vocabulary
- Pronunciation/Intonation/Fluency

The two final categories were the greatest challenge for candidates. As a result, a few candidates were unable to score a passing grade in these two sections, whilst others scored borderline grades.

In the majority of cases, the questions posed to candidates were relevant and allowed them to expand on the information provided in their presentations. Some candidates seemed enthusiastic to also pose some questions to their examiners and this facilitated an enjoyable rapport between the examiner and the candidate.

However, examiners are reminded of the stipulated time for this section which is five to six minutes. In several cases, examiners went beyond this time. Also, some examiners, in responding to candidates' questions, provided lengthy responses that took away from the time granted for this section. In addition, the types of questions should be reviewed so as to ensure that the questions asked are to elicit an opinion rather than being too factual in nature. An example of this is *En quelle année est-ce que la Tour Eiffel a été construite?* The question should instead be *Que penses-tu de la Tour Eiffel?* or *As-tu déjà visité la Tour Eiffel?*

## General Conversation

The marking for this section is divided into three categories:

- Comprehension
- Correctness of expression/Range of vocabulary
- Pronunciation/Intonation/Fluency

As suggested in the syllabus, examiners' questions should start at a personal level with questions such as *Que fais-tu comme matières à présent?* or *Pourquoi étudies-tu les langues étrangères?* and should then advance to questions that should capture the essence of the topics coming from the three modules of the unit that the candidate has studied. Examples of Unit 1 questions are *Quelles sont les causes du crime dans ton pays?* or *Que peut-on faire pour protéger l'environnement?* Though for the most part this was done, some examiners did not pose sufficient questions on the topics from the modules which led to disparities in the range of questions and levels of difficulty.

Also, it was evident that insufficient practice in speaking in the target language was a factor as some candidates had long pauses before responding and even struggled to compose grammatically correct sentences. For some candidates, accurate pronunciation was a problem as final consonants in words such as *beaucoup*, *trop*, *fruits* and *corps* were sounded. Words such as *personne* and *tout le monde* posed problems as well.

In spite of these problems, some candidates performed quite well in this category by providing interesting responses.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers ensure that:

- students have a solid knowledge of grammar and have a wide enough vocabulary to speak with relative ease on relevant topics
- students are familiar with the various aspects of the topics to be discussed
- the equipment used is in good working condition before recording conversations
- at the end of the recordings tapes are replayed to confirm that they have been properly recorded.

**OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE EXAMINATION**

- Teachers must ensure that students have mastered both the basic and finer points of French grammar in order to enhance their performance.
- Students must be encouraged to study questions carefully and to plan their responses so as to ensure that they obtain maximum marks.
- Students must be encouraged to understand the importance of individual effort, (outside the classroom) if they are to master a foreign language (looking at French TV, interacting with native speakers etc).
- Teachers are encouraged to plan their classes so that they will cover all aspects of the syllabus before the exam.