

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2011

FRENCH

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The overall performance of candidates in both Units was satisfactory. Although there was excellent performance by some candidates in various papers, the evidence of limited mastery of grammar and vocabulary in other cases was cause for concern. Detailed comments highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of candidates are to be found below.

DETAILED COMMENTS

UNIT 1

Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

Candidates were required to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections (Section A) and one extended interview (Section B). The selections were in French, but questions and responses were in English. Performance ranged from poor to excellent, with some questions faring better than others. Most candidates were able to complete the examination within the time allotted.

The topics of the selections 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

This selection, which dealt with how teenagers and their parents deal with getting older, posed many challenges for the candidates.

Part (a) was well answered with the majority of candidates being awarded full marks for identifying teenagers (or young people) and their parents (or adults) as the two groups discussed in the selection.

Part (b), on the crisis faced by each group, was also well answered. However, many candidates failed to understand the key words *instabilité* and *vieillesse*. In some cases, candidates misinterpreted *période d'instabilité*, and wrote 'disability', 'stability' or '*disstability'. In other cases, candidates simply used the word 'crisis' to mention areas of concern to teenagers and parents, for example, 'Parents worry about employment' and 'Teens dress* different from their parents'. Some answers were difficult to understand — 'Adolescents go through a period* inverse of their parents and parents searched for a way to end this crisis'. Candidates who gave the correct answer were often succinct: *Parents – getting old (old age); adolescents – a period of instability*.

Candidates responded satisfactorily to Part (c). While some candidates were able to write the concern, linked to physical appearance, that affected each group ('pimples' for teenagers and 'wrinkles' for adults), others managed to write only one. The word *rides* was often misinterpreted. There were also candidates who wrote about concerns pertaining to social aspects instead of physical appearance, for example, the relationships between parents and children.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

While some candidates were unable to respond to Part (d), of those who did, most were awarded two out of four marks for noting the idea that adolescents looked forward to the future and its possibilities. However, many were unable to decipher the meaning of *se raréfient* and *années écoulées*. There were therefore many references to school days. Candidates are urged to pay attention to the way in which they express ideas. An example of a good response is *Adolescents dream of the future and the possibilities it offers them, whilst their parents begin to think of years that have gone by and of opportunities that become even more scarce.*

Just as occurred with Part (d), many candidates were also unable to respond to Part (e). The majority of those who responded did not understand the word *aplomb* (self-assurance), and so wrote about plans for the future. The answer required candidates to refer to the adolescents, but some candidates wrote about the parents and personal limits. There were candidates who noted correctly that teenagers' power had become more evident.

Selection 2

Candidate performance on this selection which dealt with lifestyles and holiday travel was generally good.

The majority of candidates were able to score full marks for Part (a) on the percentage of persons going on vacation and the nationality of those persons.

However, candidates encountered difficulties with Part (b), on the general tendencies of vacationers, for various reasons. (i) Some candidates thought that *une proportion constante depuis plus de dix ans* was relevant information, and also did not understand it (persons of ten years and over). Candidates were unable to decipher the meaning of *raccourcir la durée de leurs séjours*; in fact, a number of them wrote the opposite — to *lengthen* their stay. (iii) They did not recognize the important role played by the direct object pronoun in being able to get the correct response to the second part of the answer — [*ils ont tendance*] à *les multiplier*, with *les* referring to *leurs séjours*, or the number of visits. (iv) Candidates understood *multiplier*, but thought that it was the number of visitors that was increasing. An example of a correct answer is *They have a tendency to shorten their vacations and travel more often.*

Part (c) was well answered, with *children* and *adolescents* being correctly identified. Candidates should note that *enfant* is not the same as 'infant' in English.

Most candidates correctly responded to Part (d) which asked about the popular options for the majority of vacationers. They responded *mountains (in winter) and the sea (in summer)*, although there were the occasional green mountains, or Mount Everest, with the latter not being awarded a mark. Although the reference to winter was not necessary to earn the mark, it is clear that some candidates were confused by the word *l'hiver*, even though it was balanced with *l'été*.

Almost everyone received full marks for Part (e), on the countries visited during the summer.

Selection 3

This selection looked at water pollution and its effects on turtles. Performance was generally good.

For Part (a), most candidates were able to state that (water) pollution was the problem, but in answering where it had taken place, quite a few reported that it was in the sea, rather than indicating the country, Australia.

With respect to Part (b), which asked about what was thrown into the water and how the turtles reacted to them, most candidates were unfamiliar with the word *méduses* (jellyfish). Some identified plastic bags as the problem, but thought that the turtles were trapped inside them. The following response received full marks: *Plastic bags. The turtles mistake them for food and then eat them.*

Part (c) was fairly well answered. Most candidates understood what happened to turtles as a result of their reaction to what was thrown in the water, but did not include all the points. Clarity of expression is important. One could compare *The turtles cannot regain their buoyancy or ability to float, and then die or are eaten by predators*, with this response which is less clear: Turtles consume the plastic bags which go to their stomach which cannot float above the water which causes them to be consumed by their predators.

Selection 4

This selection was based on the disposal of untreated sewage and chemical waste. Overall, performance was satisfactory.

Most candidates scored one out of the two marks allocated to Part (a). They understood the phrase ‘vicious circle’ to mean that there was a repetitive cycle. They did not realize, however, that there was a reciprocal relationship between the quality and the use of water. The following response gained full marks: *The quality of the water influences its usage and the reverse is true in this vicious cycle.*

Part (b) required candidates to indicate the pollutants that were mentioned on the selection. This question was well answered, especially since marks were awarded for a variety of answers. Most candidates were able to say chemical waste, but had problems expressing *les eaux dégout non-traitées* — untreated sewage or wastewater.

Most candidates identified at least one of the two areas or places where pollutants were dumped, Part (c). Many candidates did have the answer *lake*, but seemed not to understand what *estuaires* meant, and so wrote ‘dams’, ‘reservoirs’, ‘the sea’, ‘water’ (too vague) and even, ‘on land’.

Part (d) was well answered by candidates although there were some candidates who wrote ‘technique’ instead of *technical* in response to two perspectives from which the dumping of pollutants could be considered.

Selection 5

Conservation of the environment was the topic of this selection. Candidate performance was generally good in response to the questions asked on this selection.

Part (a), on the challenge now faced by mankind, was apparently the most difficult question on this selection. Candidates made mention of the words ‘economy’ and ‘preserving the environment’. They were unable, however, to figure out the meaning of *croissance*, a word that should be familiar at this level, or *tout en* + the present participle. Candidates needed to use clear language. The challenge being faced was ensuring that there was economic growth, while preserving the environment.

Most candidates extracted the general idea of what response was required for Part (b), on one way in which mankind behaved in the past. They wrote of disregard for our resources or acting as if our resources were endless.

Part (c), which asked for two factors that directly depended on our environment was also well answered. Most candidates were able to provide the required answers—*health* and *prosperity*.

Part (d) was also well done. Candidates were clear as to why attention must be paid to changes in the ecosystems.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

The sixth selection was an interview of an African intellectual, Georges Senghor, on race relations. Candidate performance was generally good.

Part 1

Part (a), on a description of racism by the interviewer, was satisfactorily answered by candidates. While almost every candidate understood *controversé*, on the other hand, *inquiétant* was difficult for several candidates who either omitted it or used some other term.

Part (b) was not as well answered by candidates. The question was on the suggestion put forward by Senghor to deal effectively with the scourge of racism. Candidates apparently did not listen carefully to the interview. The word *et*, for example, makes a difference because it gives the idea that another point is to come. Senghor stated *l'analyser et essayer de le détailler*, thus there were two separate points.

In response to Part (c), most candidates were able to hear the first part of the equation used with respect to black identity, which is *black equals slave*, but they were unable to give the second part — *therefore black equals sub-human*.

Candidates generally were unable to earn full marks on Part (d). While most candidates earned the mark for *thinkers*, or variations thereof, they had difficulty with *hommes de lettres* (men of letters/writers), which is related to a lack of vocabulary in English. ‘Men who write letters’ and ‘lettermen’ were two of the terms used to translate this expression.

Part (e) was mostly well answered. Many candidates wrote *objectivity* and *education* as the two elements to help people reflect on the reality of racism. It was disappointing that some candidates wrote ‘objectives’ instead of ‘objectivity’, a cognate in French.

Part 2

Responses to Part (f) were satisfactory. About half of the candidates correctly identified one of the two types of sportsmen mentioned — footballers, but not runners. The word *coureurs* was found to be challenging. Some candidates named other sports—basketball players, cricketers. Others thought that specific sportsmen were being named — M. Balonoir and M. Coro.

Most candidates responded correctly to Part (g), three European countries in which blacks are victims of racism, and Part (h), areas in which blacks are seen as being in the minority.

Most candidates were able to earn at least one or two of the total of three marks allocated to Part (i). The word *bruits*, unfortunately, was a challenge to candidates. Also difficult was *gestes*, interpreted as ‘jesting’ or ‘joking’. Candidates needed to read questions more carefully. The question asked for *methods* used to offend blacks. Giving the response ‘Blacks feel that they are just as superior’ does not indicate a method.

Part (j) was well answered. Most candidates responded that the methods originated *From colonial times and the times of slavery*.

Recommendations

- Candidates should remember that it is better to write an answer than to leave a blank space. They should also pay attention to meaning. Sentences should be coherent, and candidates should avoid coining words.
- Students should take advantage of the many sources of spoken French available — their teacher, the Internet, the radio, movies, songs, the CDs accompanying textbooks — to practise listening to French.
- Teachers are encouraged to provide a wider range of listening material and include questions which require higher-order thinking and some degree of analysis. They should also give practice with questions that require students to show understanding of two or more ideas.

- Candidates should learn vocabulary relating to each module. It is also important to increase general vocabulary, the names of countries, for example, or word families (*court, raccourcir*)
- Candidates should make sure they understand what the questions require, and practise pinpointing the spot at which the answer is to be found. It is also useful to understand word groups — *des footballeurs noirs; la montagne l'hiver*, are examples of expressions which were misinterpreted.
- Candidates should practise pronouncing discrete sounds. Words such as *instabilité* and *inquiétant* were problematic in the selections.
- Candidates should bear grammar in mind: direct object pronouns and the gerund were important elements in some selections.

Paper 02 – Reading and Writing

Section A – Reading Comprehension

In this section of Paper 02, candidates were required to read two passages in French. Passage 1 was based on Module 1 (*L'Individu, la famille et la vie journalière*), and candidates were required to respond in English to questions asked in English. Questions on this passage also included an exercise in which synonyms were to be found in the passage for various words and expressions in French. Passage 2 was based on Module 3 (*L'environnement*), and candidates were required to respond in French to questions posed in French.

Passage 1 – *Un quart des élèves de CE1 ne sont pas au niveau*

This passage was in keeping with candidates' expected level of mastery of the language. The vocabulary and interest factor were also favourable and the content was in keeping with the stipulated module. The questions for comprehension were within the capabilities of the candidates, facilitating their interpretation of the information given in the passage and allowing them to respond effectively.

Performance was very good overall with less than 6 per cent of the candidates scoring less than 11 marks. There were some areas that posed difficulty to the candidates. In a few instances, sections of the question were omitted.

Part (a) was well handled by almost all candidates and the majority of them received full marks for their response that the education authorities noted that a quarter of the students had difficulty in French and Mathematics.

For Part (b), few candidates obtained full marks. It was felt that many candidates fell short on this question because of their lack of comprehension of the word *atteinte*, which they translated as 'attention'. Many candidates spoke about the degree of attention paid to the objectives rather than *the level of achievement of the objectives of the new programmes*. In actuality, some candidates seemed to have attempted to translate that section of the passage, resulting in a distorted version of the correct response. An example of a complete response would have been: *The evaluations are expected to determine the degree to which the objectives of the new French and Mathematics syllabuses are met.*

Part (c) was well handled. Most candidates received full marks for correctly indicating how the evaluations would help teachers.

For Part (d), few candidates attained a perfect score. The majority of candidates thought that *calcul* was calculus and many stated that *orthographe* referred to 'writing' or 'penmanship'.

Similarly, very few candidates were able to score full marks for Part (e). Most candidates were unable to provide a plausible explanation of the author's view of the reform. Many of them failed to indicate the specific areas in

which there was a drop in students' performance, for example, Grammar, Spelling and Mathematics. In other instances, candidates transposed the information for one subject onto another.

Part (f) was handled reasonably well, and most candidates received full marks. Many candidates had difficulty understanding that *construction d'informations* referred to construction of information.

For Part (g), many candidates were able to show that the author was not optimistic about the reforms. However, they failed to understand fully the author's comments. Quite a few candidates misinterpreted the word *guère* as *guerre*, and so stated that there was not a 'war of optimism'. An example of a full and correct response is as follows: *The author's overall view is that, based on these evaluations, one can barely be optimistic, even if the reforms were added to the school programs.*

Parts (h)–(l), the sections on synonyms, were generally well handled and most candidates received at least three out of five marks. Many candidates scored full marks.

Comments and Recommendations

- Although prior knowledge of a topic may be helpful in interpreting a passage, candidates should restrict their answers to the information given in the passage.
- Candidates should be aware of *faux amis*. A large number of candidates interpreted *calcul* as 'calculus', *atteinte* as 'attention' and *objectifs* as 'objections'.
- A lack of vocabulary on the part of many candidates affected their ability to receive a higher score than they actually attained. Teachers should continue to encourage their students to research these topics, as well as provide opportunities for them to engage in activities that will help to build their vocabulary levels.
- It was evident that most candidates have some difficulty responding correctly to the higher order questions. Many candidates were unable to explain or give their opinion based on facts presented. Therefore, teachers should provide additional opportunities for practice of these types of questions, so that students would not view them as challenging, but would have learnt a strategy for dealing with them, thereby producing more correct responses.
- With regard to the synonyms, although most candidates performed well in this section, it should be noted that some candidates fell short due to their lack of vocabulary and their lack of recognition that synonyms in the passage *generally* have the same form (inclusive of tense, gender and number) as those given in the question. Candidates should pay particular attention to parts of speech when answering this section of the paper. They should also note that the paragraph in which the synonym may be found is indicated. Precision is extremely important. Candidates should note that it is not necessary to write out an entire phrase as the synonym for one word, for example, *cette baisse s'observe* as the synonym for *est évident*.
- Candidates should skip lines between responses to allow for ease of reading and marking.
- Candidates should be careful to label correctly the sections of the question being attempted and should avoid omitting sections of the question.

Passage 2 – Agir contre la pollution et le réchauffement

This passage was also in keeping with the content of the syllabus. It proved to be more challenging for candidates than Passage 1, although 71 per cent of the candidates scored within the satisfactory and excellent ranges. There was evidence of overall comprehension of the passage, as it was noted that many more candidates attempted to answer in their own words than in previous years. In most cases where sections were copied from the passage,

quotation marks were used or candidates changed a few words throughout. It must be noted, however, that candidates will be penalized for writing answers verbatim from the passage.

Part (a) posed the least amount of difficulty for candidates and most of them received at least two of the three allocated marks. Not enough attention was paid to ...*liés à l'activité humaine* and it followed that some candidates included *les éruptions volcaniques* as part of their response. Candidates incorrectly referred to *la circulation de l'agriculture* and *les incendies par les installations industrielles* as part of their response in a few instances. Most candidates, however, were able to identify three areas of human activity that contributed to pollution. An example of a full answer is as follows: *Trois secteurs qui contribuent sont : (1) les installations industrielles, (2) la circulation routière et (3) l'agriculture.*

Part (b) required a more profound response and many candidates were unable to write all the aspects of the information necessary to receive full marks. Many candidates did not understand nor did they state the factors involved in the *influences réciproques*, namely, *les gaz à effet de serre* and *les polluants atmosphériques*. It was also unclear to candidates that the fact that one had not previously integrated these two aspects was the reason why the targeted objectives of the policies had not been met.

Many candidates were not able to state the two sides of the paradox that were required for Part (c). Many of them received only partial marks, having identified only one side of the issue. It was also noted that many candidates used the examples required for Part (d) as their answer rather than indicate what was the environmental paradox that was mentioned. It was obvious from some of the answers given that the word 'paradox' might not have been understood. Nevertheless, a few candidates acquitted themselves well for this section of the question and were able to state that activities that could have a positive effect on the climate could have negative consequences with regard to atmospheric pollution.

Part (d) also posed difficulty for candidates given that many of them, not knowing what a paradox was in the first instance, again gave one-sided examples. Some candidates felt that the paradox was that cars emitted CO₂ (carbon dioxide) but did not accept or take in atmospheric pollutants. Candidates had options here, including the two examples outlined in the last section of the second paragraph.

Part (e) was generally well handled by many candidates. It was found, however, that many candidates did not say that devices were installed on the *cheminées* (chimneys) of the factories in order to filter the smoke emitted. For this section of the question, it was noted that many candidates copied their responses directly from the passage with little or no attempt to write in their own words.

Part (f) proved to be challenging to most candidates. Few candidates were able to state that the length of time needed for greenhouse gases to dissipate was longer than that of atmospheric pollutants. A few candidates referred to *temps* as the 'weather' in their response and thereby gave distorted responses.

Comments and Recommendations

- The main challenges with this section included the need to analyse the information provided and apply meaningful and clear answers to the questions. It is useful for teachers to provide opportunities for students to develop their skills of synthesis and analysis in order to perform well on questions that require these skills.
- This question dealt primarily with comprehension and it was evident that a lack of vocabulary on the part of candidates marred their ability to garner a full score on many sections of the question.
- Grammar was also cause for concern. Teachers should ensure that more practice is undertaken to develop students' grammar usage and competence, paying particular attention to subject-verb agreement, verb conjugation and tense.

- It is also useful to note the allocation of marks for each section of the question. This can be used as a guide with regard to how much information is required for each response. It is useful to be concise while providing all the necessary information.
- Candidates should skip lines between responses to allow for ease of reading and marking.
- Candidates should be careful to label correctly the sections of the questions attempted and should avoid omitting sections of the question.

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 from Module 2 of the syllabus — *La société et les affaires sociales*. Marks (maximum of 24) were awarded for content and presentation (organization and coverage of the topic, relevance and inclusion of facts, ideas and opinions) and correctness of expression (range of vocabulary and idioms as well as accuracy of grammatical structures). Candidates were expected to write essays with a proper introduction and conclusion and to present at least three clear points in their discussion of the topic.

Candidates' performance ranged from poor to excellent. There were excellent scripts where candidates manipulated the language well and were able to present tangible and well-argued points. However, far too many candidates demonstrated a limited grasp of essential grammatical structures and a lack of relevant vocabulary at this level.

Although no candidate exhibited a misinterpretation of the questions, many of them treated the topics superficially and presented points without the development of ideas. It was evident that there were some candidates who had prepared general essays and who memorized and reproduced them during the examination without taking into consideration the requirements of the topic chosen for discussion.

Question 3

«La contribution de l'église à la résolution des problèmes sociaux est souvent sous-estimée.» Commentez cette opinion.

Although very good responses were noted, this question was not one of the more popular questions selected by candidates. Most candidates agreed with the statement that the contribution of the Church to the resolution of social problems was often underestimated. They then discussed the role of the Church in providing some method of guidance as well as the way in which the Church gave people hope and helped them to live harmoniously.

Candidates who produced poorly developed responses either included in their essays an entire discussion based on the criminal activities or elements in society or numerous general statements rather than the arguments of a point of view.

On the other hand, candidates who produced good responses presented arguments that included the following:

- the role the Church played in society, in particular, with regard to enhancing moral and spiritual values;
- the assistance the Church provided through outreach programmes;
- ways in which the Church helped to maintain order in society.

Question 4

«Le système éducatif ne tient pas suffisamment compte des besoins des handicapés physiques.» Donnez votre opinion.

This proved to be the least popular choice among candidates. It required candidates to indicate if they agreed that the education system did not take into account the needs of the physically disabled. Although overall performance was satisfactory, in many instances, candidates merely stated a few points without any form of development or supporting details for their arguments.

Question 5

«Trop d'enfants de la région des Caraïbes sont obligés de jouer le rôle d'adultes.» Commentez.

This was one of the most popular questions selected by candidates. It required candidates to state why so many children in the Caribbean region are forced to assume the role of adults. Many points for discussion were highlighted and included death, poverty, teenage pregnancy, long working hours of parents, illness and drug addiction (on the part of adults).

Candidates argued that, as a result of the aforementioned, children were forced to care for their younger siblings themselves, cook, clean and make adult decisions. Some candidates also argued that assuming the role of an adult was voluntary, and highlighted the fact that some children did so because they simply wanted to do as they pleased.

It was found that many candidates gave examples of various ways in which children played the role of adults, without adequate development of the points, and without showing the negative impact first on the children themselves, then families and then finally, on society.

One well-developed essay highlighted the circumstances under which children were forced to play the role of an adult, but stated beforehand that this was not the case in all families; that many parents were struggling to make ends meet and provide as much as they could for their children, though times may have been tough. In conclusion, the candidate indicated that it was necessary for parents to ensure that they provided the care, love and security that children required.

Question 6

«Les problèmes sociaux s'accroissent quand il y a trop d'illettrés.» Discutez ce point de vue.

This question was quite popular among candidates and received the best performance. Candidates were required to discuss whether or not social problems were accentuated because of illiterate individuals in society. Many candidates identified poverty, violence, crime, unemployment and homelessness as possibly being linked to illiteracy. Others argued that while illiteracy could be linked to many social issues, illiterate persons were not necessarily to be blamed for all the social ills in society. They went on to discuss other factors that could be the root of social problems and some even discussed how social ills had impacted on illiteracy.

Poor responses included instances where candidates merely listed a series of points without development of the ideas. One candidate wrote one page and a half of idioms and phrases that were very general and which could have been applied to any question. Examples of these expressions include: **C'est un soucis primordial et la tendance se prolonge.* / ** C'est un problème foncier qui peut être maîtrisé s'il faut.* This candidate made no attempt either to discuss or to develop any ideas related to the topic chosen.

Question 7

«*Malheureusement, l'homme n'est plus le chef de famille.*» *Discutez.*

This was, by far, the most popular question selected by candidates. The question required candidates to discuss whether or not they felt that the man was no longer the head of the home, and to indicate why or why not. Generally, candidates were able to give examples of the man being the head of the household. Most candidates, however, agreed with the statement and presented arguments to support the view that more and more women were now assuming the role of head of the family. One candidate stated that the abdication of duties by men as head of the household had its roots in slavery when men were used for breeding purposes and had no further responsibility in terms of assuming headship of the home.

Many candidates spoke of single parent families; some indicated that men were also sometimes the only parent in the family. A few presented arguments to suggest that having women as the head of the home, after years of suppression, should be a cause for celebration.

There were quite a few essays where candidates simply launched an attack on men in general and provided feminist views without adequately discussing the topic. Others presented arguments on the changing roles of men and women without providing a link or an explanation as to how or why the man was no longer the head of the household.

Comments and Recommendations

The general performance of candidates in this section was satisfactory. The following are some of the main challenges noted by examiners:

- The introductions presented by candidates were too general and vague. There was no mention of ideas/points to be developed.
- Where points were stated, they were not adequately developed. In some instances, statements were too brief. There was inadequate coverage of the topic.
- There were not many examples (stories, illustrations, facts, statistics) used to support points.
- There were too many errors of grammar which included:
 - Incorrect spelling (inclusive of omission of accents) **beacoup, *famaille, * education*
 - Lack of agreement: **lenfants des familles *pauvre ; Ses parents *devient très *fâché *Luns qui *gagner*
 - Faulty/clumsy structures: **Ne plus a le problem; *les familles ont besoin chaque personne pour aide; *Est les choix mal; *Les enfants sonnt jouer;*
 - Misuse and misrepresentation of the Passé Composé **la femme a s'émancipé*
 - Misuse of expressions / incorrect expressions:
 - *parce que* used instead of *à cause de*; *beaucoup de fois, *je ne pense pas alors, le seul chemin; *dans le chez* instead of *à la maison*

**An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure*

- Inappropriate use of negative structures: Use of ‘ne’ to mean ‘non’
- Confusion between: *mal* and *mauvais*/no agreement between adjective and noun : **Les mal influences*
- Inappropriate use of demonstrative adjectives: **Je ne pense pas ce*; **À cause de ce*
* *Cettes*
- Incorrect conjugation of irregular verbs *faire, devoir, pouvoir*
*Ils *faisent; Elles *faites*
- Use of English structures to recreate phrases in French:
**Faire quoi il plaire* **En ordre par* **Il y a difficult temps*
**Comme long comme les hommes* (= **as long as men...*)
* *voir après le petit frère* (= **to look after the little brother*); **usualment* (= **usually*)

Conversely, there were several examples of candidates’ attempts to use idiomatic expressions and other linguistic expressions that demonstrated their mastery of the language. These included:

- The appropriate use of the subjunctive –
 - *Il est nécessaire qu’ on puisse acquérir l’éducation pour être qualifié*
 - *Pour que ce fléau cesse de s’entendre*
 - *Bien que des mesures soient prises*
- Appropriate phrases
 - *Sur le plan social ou financier*
 - *On ne peut pas culpabiliser les illettrés*
 - *Cette dissertation a pour but d’aborder les causes de ce problème*
 - *Un problème brûlant de l’actualité/un thème brûlant*
 - *... qui touche toutes les couches sociales*
 - *Le plus frappant*
 - **Un autre difficulté vient s’ajouter”*
 - *La famille monoparentale*
 - *La démission parentale*
 - *Les responsabilités affectives*
 - *Une prise de conscience*
 - *L’évolution de l’image de la femme a bouleversé considérablement*
 - *La vie du vingt et unième siècle*
 - *La principale victoire, sans doute, c’est celle de la contraception*
 - *Le problème est beaucoup plus sérieux qu’on ne se l’imagine..*
 - *Il faut bien reconnaître que ...*
 - *Sans doute, ayant trop d’illettrés dans la société provoque la criminalité...*
 - *Toutes choses considérées...*
 - *pour que ce fléau cesse de [s’étendre] ...*

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

- Teachers should encourage their students to read a wide variety of literature as it is felt that the more students are exposed to various writing styles, the better their written expression will be, resulting in improved performance on the essay question of the examination.
- Greater emphasis also needs to be placed on grammar. Teachers should encourage their students to write more grammatically accurate sentences, paying greater attention to areas of subject-verb agreement, verb conjugation, general agreement and spelling.
- Teachers should also continue to give students the opportunity to practise their essay writing skills, placing great emphasis on the analysis of topics.
- Candidates should observe the word limit. Failure to do so will result in their work not being read after the cut-off point, which will lead to a less desirable mark.
- Candidates should avoid using Spanish words to coin French words.

Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literary Analysis

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

The majority of the candidates, approximately 50 per cent, opted to respond to Question 1 which focused on the text *L'enfant noir*. The other popular choice was Question 3, with approximately 32 per cent of the candidates choosing to answer this question which was based on *L'étranger*. The other candidates chose *L'odeur du café* (ten per cent), and *Une si longue lettre* (eight per cent).

Question 1: *L'enfant noir*

Generally, this question was well done. Over 85 per cent of the candidates earned scores ranging from satisfactory to excellent.

For Part (a), although some candidates were able to effectively convey the idea that the narrator was captivated by the sea from the time he discovered it, and that his friend Marie would spend long periods of time just gazing at it, other candidates had difficulty in capturing both ideas and, as a result, were awarded partial marks.

In order to obtain full marks for Part (b), candidates were expected to respond by indicating that the sea, *la plaine liquide*, reminded them of another plain which, in the extract, was identified as that of Haute Guinée. The question was well done, but a few candidates who failed to mention that the sea brought back memories of Haute Guinée, the narrator's home, were unable to score full marks.

For Part (c), some candidates wrote that descriptive words were used to depict the landscape from a painter's point of view. However, candidates were expected to be able to make direct, relevant quotes from the second paragraph to substantiate their answer.

With regard to Part (d), some candidates failed to draw any conclusions from the dialogue at the end of the passage. Most of those candidates who correctly identified the relevant section were able to describe the narrator's personality, using terms like *aventureux* or *il aime l'aventure*. The description of Marie was more challenging, but adjectives that alluded to her prudence were accepted. In order to score full marks, candidates were expected to provide evidence from the extract to underscore the personality traits identified for both characters.

Question 2: L'odeur du café

Among those candidates who selected this question, over 90 per cent scored marks ranging from satisfactory to excellent.

Part (a) was satisfactorily done. Some candidates misunderstood the meaning of *pleine d'esprit* and interpreted it as sarcastic, insulting or energetic, rather than witty. Candidates were expected to show that the doctor insinuated that at school one only learns [*d*]es *bêtises* and based on his comment, Da was therefore able to humorously conclude that *les bêtises doivent être la formation de base d'un médecin...*

Some candidates rambled a great deal in responding to Part (b), but most were able to provide relevant comments to highlight the costly nature of the preparations for the new school year.

The responses to both Part (c) and Part (d) were generally good. Most candidates responded well to Part (c) and most candidates were able to comment satisfactorily on the narrator's powers of observation in Part (d).

Question 3: L'étranger

Among the candidates who chose this question, approximately 80 per cent received marks ranging from satisfactory to excellent.

While Part (a) was well answered by the majority of candidates, for Part (b) some candidates were unable to make a general opening statement about Meursault's neighbours. However, most candidates were able to produce appropriate comments with regard to the behaviour of Salamano and Raymond.

With regard to Part (c), a large number of candidates answered appropriately, citing both of the required elements, Meursault's refusal to seek assistance from the police for Raymond's girlfriend, and his indifferent response to Marie's question about his feelings for her.

For Part (d), reference to the general concern of the neighbours was not made in some instances, but a number of candidates were able to identify and include relevant citations to illustrate community spirit.

Question 4: Une si longue lettre

For this question, about 70 per cent of the candidates received scores ranging from satisfactory to excellent.

Part (a) proved challenging for many candidates and many were unable to gain full marks. Many candidates could not clearly communicate the narrator's ability to intelligently analyse situations and then draw conclusions from her observations. Appropriate responses examined her comparison of *les princes ... et les autres, les clivages insensés de la société...*, as well as her analysis of love.

For Part (b), although candidates may have had problems in clearly expressing their thoughts in French, most of them were able to produce an appropriate response to this question.

Candidates' performance on Part (c) was fair. Sometimes candidates could not explain succinctly the required characteristics of Aïssatou — she was a woman of principle, as a Moslem woman she was courageous, independent and dignified.

Candidates found Part (d) to be difficult. Few of them alluded to the narrator's respect and admiration for books and then illustrated these traits. Instead, some candidates selected quotations from the passage and simply inserted them into their answers without including any comment or discussion.

Comments

- The performance of candidates ranged from poor to excellent with the majority producing moderate to very good answers. In a number of instances, candidates were able to score high marks. However, only a few displayed sound analytical skills, a high level of vocabulary or were able to communicate very well in French.
- Many candidates demonstrated familiarity with the text chosen, and that was very commendable.
- In their responses, many candidates tended to ramble, thus producing very long responses at times. Candidates should be advised that they need to be more concise and precise.
- Although candidates were allowed to use dictionaries for the examination, there was still evidence of a large number of anglicisms, *faux amis*, and inaccuracies in spelling.
- Candidates must be encouraged to pay more attention to the wording of the questions and to carefully analyse questions before writing their answers.

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 this section were: *La jeunesse – L'enfant noir* and *L'odeur du café* while those for *L'individu et la société* were *L'étranger* and *Une si longue lettre*. Four questions were given, two on each theme. In general, many candidates displayed a sound knowledge of the texts but weaknesses were observed in terms of their analysis and organization of the essays.

The preferred text for the majority of those who selected a text from *La Jeunesse* was *L'enfant noir*. Over 60 per cent of the candidates opted to choose a question based on the theme *L'individu et la société*. The most popular text from this section was *L'étranger*. The least popular text was *L'odeur du café*.

For each question in Section B, over 90 per cent of the candidates were able to obtain marks ranging from satisfactory to excellent. However, the majority of the candidates fell within the categories good and very good.

Question 5

The theme of love is quite evident in this text. Discuss this opinion with reference to the text that you have studied.

The performance of candidates who wrote this question generally ranged between good and very good. The main text used was *L'enfant noir*. Many candidates were able to identify different types of love — parental, fraternal, romantic. Nevertheless, a few candidates limited the theme to parental love and as a result, did not score as high as their counterparts who adequately developed the theme. *L'odeur du café* was not a popular choice, but the few candidates who chose to base their answers on this text made a fair attempt at answering the question.

Question 6

Growing up is simply fun. Comment on this statement with reference to the text that you have studied.

This question was not as popular as Question 5, but again, those who opted for this question preferred to use *L'enfant noir*. Those candidates who scored well not only referred to the fun part of the narrators childhood — for example, his visit to his extended family in Tindican, his playing close to his father's hut and teasing girls on the way to school — but also recognized the unpleasant moments as well (being bullied by older boys, fear linked to circumcision activities, death of a loved one). Many candidates were able to conclude that although growing up is not always fun, all experiences are, nevertheless, valuable.

For the few candidates who chose *L'odeur du café*, the best essays were those which were able to identify areas of fun for the narrator as well as the unpleasant moments. Comments were also included by a few candidates to underscore what the narrator gleaned from his grandmother, Da.

Question 7

All things considered, the narrator merits our admiration and respect. Discuss this point of view with reference to the text you have studied.

Candidates performed best on this question. It was attempted by a fair number of candidates, most of whom preferred to opt for *L'étranger* instead of *Une si longue lettre*. The more analytical candidates who selected *L'étranger* were able to see the dual nature of Meursault's character and justify why he merited or did not merit admiration and respect. They were able to produce evidence from the text to support their perspective. A smaller number of candidates selected *Une si longue lettre*. Performance was comparable with that of those candidates who chose *L'étranger*.

Question 8

Life is an absolute tragedy. Give reasons why you may agree OR disagree with this comment in relation to the text you have studied.

This question was the preferred choice of the majority of candidates who decided to focus on the theme *L'individu et la société*. Most candidates were able to score at least 16 out of the 32 marks possible, which suggested a sound knowledge of the text and a commendable attempt to apply this knowledge to the set text.

The candidates who elected to use *Une si longue lettre*, presented a fairly balanced portrayal of Ramatoulaye and, to a lesser extent, Aïssatou, (only a few examined Jacqueline), and before concluding, explored in an effective manner the reasons why life for these characters could or could not have been considered tragic. It was generally understood that although there were tragic moments in the lives of all the characters, they all survived. This led to the conclusion that the work was not an absolute tragedy.

Candidates who chose *L'étranger* were faced with a more challenging task because, due to the nature of the text itself, it was difficult, if not virtually impossible, to agree that life was an absolute tragedy for the main character, Meursault, on whom most of the emphasis was placed. As a result, only the very analytical candidates who had a good grasp of the underlying philosophy of the work were able to produce work of the highest standard. In general, the performance of a significant number of candidates was deemed to be only satisfactory as they mainly concentrated on some of the perceived tragic events which surrounded Meursault's life. They totally ignored the fact that Meursault had no great expectations of life and, therefore, was never disappointed by anything which transpired. In this indifferent and Godless world he was content to make the most of whatever life offered. Close to the end of his life he was able to declare that he knew that he had been happy before and still was.

Comments

- Candidates need more practice in interpreting questions.
- Candidates should be given much more practice with questions requiring analysis, in order to combat the tendency of merely narrating the story.
- Candidates need to pay more attention to the organization of the essays so that ideas are communicated in a more coherent and clear manner.

- Candidates are reminded that quotations must be in French and not English. No marks are awarded for quotations given in English. Direct quotations used should be taken from the French version of the texts. Students must be taught how to incorporate quotations into their essays.

UNIT 2

Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

Candidates were required to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections (Section A) and one extended interview (Section B). The selections were in French, but questions and responses were in English. The performance this year was varied, ranging from unsatisfactory to excellent. Although there were some questions left unanswered, most candidates were able to complete the examination within the time allotted.

The topics of the selections 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 3 (*L'industrie, le commerce et l'économie*)
 Question 6 – Module 2 (*La science et la technologie*)

Section A – Short Selections

Selection 1

This selection looked at music festivals in Switzerland. Overall, performance was good.

Part (a) was very well done. Most candidates were aware that Switzerland was the focus in the selection. However, there were candidates who wrote 'Sweden' or 'Swiss' instead of *Switzerland*. Although 'Swiss' was accepted, candidates should note what was required — a country, not a nationality. In a few cases, Nepal was given as the answer, no doubt because candidates heard *La Suisse n'est pas le désert ...* and were unable to separate the words logically.

Candidates also performed well on Part (b). A few candidates wrote dessert instead of *desert*, in responding to how Switzerland is often mistakenly called, and references were also made to musical treats. There were several acceptable variations given for this answer.

Part (c) asked candidates to state what the selection said of the many summer festivals. The phrase *deux des plus gros événements musicaux en Europe*, which contained all the elements of the answer, posed quite a challenge to many candidates. Surprisingly, very few candidates seemed to hear or understand *deux*, and some were confused by the reference to *des dizaines de festivals*. Inadequate knowledge of grammar affected candidates in some cases — they did not recognize the superlative or the relative pronoun *dont* (interpreted as *dans*). Some did not understand the verb *fleurissent*, and so referred to festivals of flowers, floral arrangements and florists. Most candidates scored one mark for mentioning 'in Europe'.

Although most candidates were able to correctly name one country where sound engineers seemed to be less competent, Part(d), some need to be reminded that Europe is not a country.

Most candidates gave at least two out of three reasons for festival-goers being attracted to Switzerland, Part (e). There were several answers given for *incendies*, for example, 'fires', 'lights', 'fireworks'. Some candidates did not realize that 'sense of timing' is not the same as telling the time.

Similarly, for Part (f), many candidates succeeded in getting two out of three responses, (the accommodation and the aspect of comfort, food and the ambience) as to why Switzerland's hospitality was said to be the best in the world. Some candidates had difficulty with the word *loges* and interpreted it to mean lounges.

Selection 2

This selection was on music and the social movement in Guadeloupe. Overall, candidate response was relatively good.

Most candidates correctly answered Part (a) which asked them to state when French West Indian artistes began to make their voices heard. While most candidates stated *since the 1940s* there were a few who wrote 'after the 1940s' (which was not accepted). There were various other errors with the date and the time frame, for example, '40 years ago', and 'in the 14th century'.

For Part (b), candidates had to state three things about Kolo Barst. This was generally well answered. However, some candidates thought that *chansons militantes* referred to the military, and because Kolo Barst was interviewed in Guadeloupe, some candidates described him as Guadeloupean instead of Martinican.

Most candidates scored at least one of two marks available for Part (c). There were two acceptable answers to when Barst expressed his views, either *during an interview on Guadeloupean radio*, or *during the protest action in January 2009*.

Part (d) was fairly well answered. While many candidates heard *La fonction de l'artiste, c'est d'anticiper*, and understood that the artiste's role was *to anticipate*, many others, however, thought of *anticipé*, and so wrote that the role was 'anticipated'.

Part (e) proved challenging for candidates. While many of them did not know what the social movement of January 2009 revealed, some leeway was allowed for answers which showed some understanding of the main idea — that the themes that emerged during the period of social unrest were already to be found in the lyrics (texts) and themes that formed a part of the West Indian musical heritage.

For Part (f), most candidates were able to identify at least one of the two themes revealed during the social movement, either *the exploitation of one class by another* or *the feeling of a lack of control of one's destiny*.

Selection 3

Fighting discrimination in the work force was the theme of this selection. Performance was excellent.

For Part (a), most candidates understood that there was discrimination in the work place. However, very few candidates understood *à l'embauche*, and so were unable to write *discrimination in hiring practices*. A more significant number of candidates realized that there was discrimination in *career advancement*.

Most candidates understood that a committee was formed to assess or measure diversity in the work place, Part (b).

Part (c), on the reason for a questionnaire being created, was generally well answered. An example of an excellent response is *They created an anonymous questionnaire to find out if the average wage-earner (worker) was discriminated against, and why*. However, a number of candidates thought that the questionnaire dealt with salaries.

Most candidates correctly answered Part (d) that women felt that they were most discriminated against. Nevertheless, there were a few candidates who mentioned 'families', 'man', 'the hungry' and even 'the visible minority', instead of *women*.

Selection 4

Overall performance on this selection, on audio books in France, was satisfactory.

Part (a), on the percentage of book sales represented by audio books, was poorly done by candidates. The phrase *moins d'un* was problematic on two fronts — first, *moins de* was interpreted as ‘average’; then some candidates interpreted *d'un* to mean *deux*. Candidates also wrote 20 per cent and 80 per cent.

Most candidates were able to name at least two out of the three places where buyers listen to the books. Surprisingly, *chez eux* posed some degree of difficulty for candidates.

For Part (c), candidates were required to indicate for whom the audio books were the sole method of access to literature. The majority of candidates understood at least one of the two groups mentioned — those who were *mal voyants* (the visually impaired) or *âgés* (the elderly). The latter was particularly difficult.

For Part (d), while candidates recognized that audio books were expensive, they failed to compare them to paperback books (*le prix reste élevé par rapport au livre de poche*).

Selection 5

This selection, based on the use of software in business, was satisfactorily done by candidates.

Part (a) proved challenging for most candidates. The response required was that a good company would wish to *reduce costs without compromising its ambitions*. The idea of not compromising ambitions surfaced in a number of scripts, but very few candidates managed to understand *réduire ses coûts*.

For Part (b), exceptional candidates produced answers such as *Companies are obliged to give their workers software that can assist them in their tasks*. It was clear, however, that most candidates did not understand the word *logiciels* or the other ideas contained in *choisis en fonction des besoins de l'entreprise*.

While their responses showed that candidates generally understood that Part (c) required them to indicate the aims to be achieved by the companies' action, very few of them were able to produce the complete response that was needed — *To identify a source of potential savings, but also to detect business opportunities in a difficult economic environment*. The difficulty was with *les sources d'économies potentielles*, which was often rendered as ‘potential economic sources’.

Section B – Extended interview

Selection 6

This selection was based on an interview with Dr Axel Khan, a geneticist, on the limitations of genetics. Candidate performance was satisfactory.

Part 1

The answer to Part (a), on the prediction that could be made through genetic evolution, was to be found in the very first sentence/question in the interview. The required response was *whether genetics could predict the time of one's death*. Unfortunately, candidates were rarely correct.

On the other hand, Part (b) was fairly well done. Candidates were required to state the information given by Dr Khan on the limitation of genes. A good response was *Dr Khan states that one's genes cannot predict the formation of a disease*. Another possible answer was that *genes cannot command one's destiny*.

Similarly, candidates performed well on Part (c). Most candidates earned at least three out of the four allocated marks. The correct answer required candidates to say that genes *could indicate the body's capacity to resist its environment/obesity/hypertension/ and many other infections*. Some candidates were unable to earn marks because they used 'it' or 'they' instead of specifying *genes*. Furthermore, *gènes* was sometimes interpreted as *gens* or *jeunes*. There were also candidates who did not make reference to the body's resistance.

Candidates responded satisfactorily to Part (d) on how genetics helped in the fight against diseases. However, many candidates did not understand *isoler des personnes qui ont une résistance plus faible* (identifying people whose resistance was lower), or *a ouvert de nouvelles pistes* (opened up new ways/avenues).

An excellent response was the following: *By helping persons who have very low resistance to viral illnesses like AIDS, tuberculosis. The capacity of resistance to one's illnesses is very much genetic. Genetics has opened a way to fight diseases*. This response would still have received full marks had the candidate written only *viral illnesses* or *AIDS* or *tuberculosis*.

Part 2

Most candidates were awarded full marks for Part (e) on the negative impacts that a genetic disease can have on a person's life. There were several possible responses such as *ill health, loss of freedom, diminished access to jobs, bank loans, insurance*.

Part (f) was not well done. Candidates were expected to say that with genetic therapy unhealthy genes were exchanged for more viable ones. Some candidates did not identify the correct part of the passage, and gave answers such as 'It is neither scientific nor ethical but rather political'.

Candidates' responses for Part (g) showed that they were aware of the drawbacks of genetic therapy. These responses were generally quite well done. Any combination of the following would have been awarded full marks — *Genetic therapy is complicated/implementation is lengthy/it is difficult to use (for a number of illnesses)*.

For Part (h), most candidates earned at least one of the two marks available. The correct answer to the question on a therapy apart from genetic therapy was *Revolutionary treatments aimed at specific cells*.

Recommendations

- Candidates should remember that it is better to write an answer than to leave a blank space, but they should pay attention to meaning. Sentences should be coherent and candidates should make sure that they understand the questions they are answering.
- Candidates should take advantage of the many sources of spoken French available — their teacher, the Internet, the radio, movies, songs, the CDs accompanying text books — to practise listening to French. They should learn to pronounce (and recognize) words that are fairly close in pronunciation (*gens, gènes, jeunes*).
- Teachers should provide a wider range of listening material and include questions which require higher order thinking and some degree of analysis. They should also give practice with questions that require students to show understanding of two or more ideas.
- Candidates should learn vocabulary relating to each module. It is also important to increase general vocabulary, the names of countries, for example, and numbers. At the same time, candidates should revise basic vocabulary and grammar, for example, adverbs such as *depuis*, or *moins de*, or relative pronouns such as *dont*.

- Candidates should practise pinpointing the spot at which the answer is to be found. It is also useful to understand word groups — *n'est pas le* is an example of a phrase which was misinterpreted.
- Candidates should aim for accuracy and clarity. It is best not to try to rephrase answers, if in doing so, the original idea is distorted.

Paper 02 – Reading and Writing

Section A – Reading Comprehension

Candidates were required to read two passages in French in this section of Paper 02. Passage 1 was based on Module 1 (*L'actualité*), and candidates were required to respond in English to questions asked in English. Questions on this passage also included an exercise in which synonyms were to be found in the passage for various words and expressions in French. Passage 2 was based on Module 3 (*L'industrie, le commerce et l'économie*), and candidates were required to respond in French to questions posed in French.

Passage 1 – *La langue créole : élément mobilisateur du mouvement social*

Performance on this passage was generally good. The passage was suitable for the candidates' level of mastery of the language. Although the passage was not very difficult to comprehend, a few questions seemed to pose difficulty for some candidates.

For Part (a), almost all candidates were able to indicate that there was social unrest in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, as evidence that Guadeloupes history was turbulent during the latter part of the last century. Some candidates, however, had difficulty recognizing that the year 1980 was used in reference to individuals born after that year. Some misinterpreted *à partir de* to mean that many Guadeloupeans wanted to leave because of social troubles. A few candidates were able to state that there was social unrest, but did not indicate the specific years in which it took place.

For Part (b), a significant number of candidates were able to gain full marks. Many of them, however, were unable to say that young Guadeloupeans learnt about their history during the 2009 general strike. Further, candidates spoke of the social-economic aspect of their country during the 2009 general strike.

Although Part (c) was among the sections that posed the least difficulty for candidates, some of them transposed the information regarding the traditional use of creole onto its usage since the social movement of 2009, and vice versa. One candidate stated that creole could not be taught on the road, and other candidates mentioned that creole was used to seek attention or make gestures.

However, Part (d) posed some difficulty for candidates. Although many candidates were able to state that *since the social movement of 2009 creole has been considered to be a language of power, reflection and defiance* as highlighted in the first line of the third paragraph, too many candidates erroneously felt that the answer was in the last sentence of the second paragraph, thereby not earning full marks. Candidates also had difficulty understanding that creole was now seen as a language in its own right. Some candidates felt that the language was 'problematic'. One candidate wrote that 'they used creole to ask important questions as well as to move around faster and to be more mobile'.

Part (e) posed the greatest difficulty for candidates. Many of them did not grasp the relationship between the mastery/knowledge of French and upward social mobility. Some candidates indicated that *la maîtrise du français* referred to 'French teachers' rather than 'mastering French'. There were varying erroneous analyses for this question, inclusive of the following: '...the social ascension for 44 days...'; '...creole was spoken for 44 days...'; 'The French teachers will climb the social ladder'; 'French language permits one to take the social ladder'; 'French language is used for 44 days'; 'The French language has allowed people to take social ascension during the 44 days'; 'a large number of people who were in slavery or under bondage have been freed and better understood'.

One candidate referred to *l'ascenseur* as taking an elevator and that French was like an elevation and creole was like taking the stairs. A fully correct response should have stated that *mastery of French enabled one to climb the social ladder and that knowledge of French indicated that a child was well educated.*

For Part (f), most candidates received only one of the two marks on offer, since they failed to state that educated persons mastered creole. Many candidates were, however, able to point out that educated persons valued creole. Misconceptions included the statement that 'people should master and value the language' (French), that 'It (creole) was used to move people up', and that 'people value French, not creole'.

For Parts (g)–(k), the section on the synonyms, problems of vocabulary surfaced most noticeably in (g) and (j). Incorrect responses for *facettes* included 'cadres' and 'codes' (instead of *pans*). The word *blaguer* was frequently interpreted as 'injurier' instead of *rigoler*, which was the correct response. Also, the word *valorisaient* was frequently substituted for 'transpiraient'.

Comments and Recommendations

- In general, it is recommended that candidates write less vague answers in order to be awarded as many marks as possible for their responses.
- Teachers should place greater emphasis on (i) vocabulary enrichment and (ii), teaching/learning of context clue skills to encourage students to understand the language without translating word for word into their native language.
- Vocabulary enrichment will provide exposure to more and more vocabulary which will ultimately help in mastering comprehension.
- Candidates should also be aware of *faux amis*. Several candidates misinterpreted *le collectif* as a collection of works (of art).
- With regard to the section on synonyms, candidates need to pay attention to the form of the word or expression given. Equivalents for synonyms usually have the same form in the passage under consideration. At the same time, candidates need to give some thought to their choice. For example, the candidate who matched *transpiraient* with *valorisaient* probably knew that the forms are often similar, and had to choose between *three* verbs in the imperfect tense in the paragraph. Unfortunately, *suaient* was not chosen.
- Candidates should avoid writing more than one option as a synonym. For example, for *blaguer*, a candidate wrote *rigoler, injurier*. This is an indication that the candidate was unsure of which one was the actual synonym. Examiners will *not choose* the right answer(s).
- Candidates are also advised to write legibly and ensure that when a question number is crossed out, that it is done in a clear and neat fashion.
- Questions *must* be numbered correctly. It is very unfortunate when candidates write the correct answers but number the responses incorrectly, thereby losing marks.

Passage 2 – Paris s'y refuse

This passage proved to be more challenging than Passage 1. In spite of this, many candidates scored above the satisfactory range. The language used in this passage was of an appropriate level for candidates studying Unit 2 of this programme. It must be stated, however, that the way in which candidates answered the questions suggested that it was difficult for them to recognize the specific areas from which answers were to be drawn.

Although some ideas were difficult to understand because of grammatical errors and faulty expression, it must be noted that almost all candidates made a commendable attempt to respond in French in their own words. One candidate opted to respond in English for almost all sections of this question. This candidate was penalized accordingly and, therefore, gained no marks.

Part (a) was generally well handled by many candidates. Most were able to identify both (opposing) views surrounding the conversion of all of Paris into a tourist zone, thereby allowing Sunday shopping. A few candidates interpreted *Bertrand Delanoë, maire de Paris, a exprimé fermement vendredi, son opposition*, to mean that the mayor wanted all businesses to close on Friday.

For Part (b), most candidates were able to identify the reasons why the mayor was against Sunday business.

Part (c) was equally well handled and many candidates were able to respond correctly that personal time, time of rest, and family time would be affected by the opening of businesses on Sunday.

Part (d) proved to be challenging for many candidates who failed to realize that the communists were against the opening of businesses on Sunday, but supported the opening of cultural and sporting sites.

The responses for Part (d) and Part (e) were often transposed. Candidates were expected to respond *Because areas such as Montmartre and the Marais, considered to be tourist zones, are already open to the public on Sundays* or, equally correct, *Working on Sundays could affect families and working persons*.

Candidates handled Part (f) commendably and most were able to gain full marks. Some candidates, however, only mentioned *les familles* in their response and were only awarded one of the two marks on offer. A few candidates erroneously indicated that the business owners would be among those affected.

Part (g) required analysis of the question and posed the greatest level of difficulty for candidates. Very few of them were able to score full marks. Although many candidates understood that the UMP was in favour of the opening of businesses on Sunday, many were unable to correctly interpret and analyse the excerpt *il s'agit de permettre un développement économique et commercial plus harmonieux dans des zones particulièrement attractives. C'est pourquoi cette extension sera réalisée sur la base du volontariat*. Some candidates also demonstrated a lack of comprehension of the expression *Il faut prendre les choses du bon côté*. As a result, this aspect of the answer was neglected. It must be noted, however, that candidates who received partial or full marks expressed themselves well, many in their own words.

Comments and Recommendations

- Teachers should pay particular attention to improving the grammatical skills of students and should encourage them to write more grammatically accurate responses. Poor expression can mar an answer and make it difficult for examiners to understand the ideas that candidates are trying to convey.

Examples of poor grammar/lack of vocabulary included:

par disant que
les personnes qui propre magasins
nest pas pense
la journée sont organise
Paris et ne Paris pas

- Candidates should try to enrich their vocabulary or use the context to find clues that may help them to understand the passage and the questions. A few candidates seemed not to grasp the meaning of key words and expressions.

Section B – Essays

In this section, candidates were required to write an essay, of 250–300 words, in French on one of five topics from Module 2 of the syllabus (*La science et la technologie*). Marks (maximum of 24) were awarded for content and presentation (organization and coverage of the topic, relevance and inclusion of facts, ideas and opinions) and correctness of expression (range of vocabulary and idioms as well as accuracy of grammatical structures). Candidates were expected to write essays with a proper introduction and conclusion and to present at least three clear points in their discussion of the topic. Candidates' performance ranged from poor to excellent. There were excellent scripts in which candidates manipulated the language well and were able to present tangible, well-argued points. On the other hand, some candidates treated the topics superficially and many of them presented points without adequate development. Overall, performance was good.

Question 3

«*Discutez les avantages et les inconvénients du commerce électronique.*»

This question, the second most popular, required candidates to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of e-commerce. Generally, this question was very well handled. Good points developed included the convenience of e-commerce, the speed and variety of options, as well as discounts available online. The disadvantages that candidates raised included the risk of identity theft and the difference in quality between the product received and the one advertised. Candidates who did not perform well on this question either did not present enough points or failed to develop those presented. One candidate misinterpreted *commerce électronique* as 'le courrier électronique' and scored a low mark as a result.

Question 4

«*Le travail humain deviendra un jour inexistant en raison des avancées technologiques.*» *Commentez cet avis.*

Very few candidates attempted this question. Responses ranged from acceptable to excellent. This question required candidates to show whether or not they agreed that technological advances would reach a point where one day people would no longer work. Arguments were to be supported with examples. Good responses raised the following points: *less manual labour is required from human beings due to the increasing use of machinery in the agricultural sector; more modern appliances reduce the time spent doing household chores; people do less physical work in the form of exercise because of advances in information technology such as the internet; people no longer need to leave home to do their banking or shopping; everything can be done online.* Another argument was that there was one area in which technological advancements have not replaced humans, that is in the area of national security and law enforcement. Poorly developed responses included a greater focus on technological advances without showing how they are replacing human work.

Question 5

«*L'Internet est une grande source de danger pour les jeunes.*» *Discutez.*

This was the most popular question selected by candidates. They were expected to discuss the proposition that the Internet was a major source of danger for young people, indicating whether or not they were in agreement, and presenting arguments for or against the statement. Good responses included both positive and negative aspects of the Internet. Some of the positive aspects were:

- The Internet is used for research and studies
- The Internet is used to remain in contact with loved ones and friends worldwide via Facebook, Skype and other social networks
- The Internet allows for the establishment of new relationships which also leads to appreciation of new cultures

Some of the negative/dangerous aspects noted were:

- The increased exposure to pornography which encourages early sexual behaviour
- The danger of attracting paedophiles
- The threat of identity theft
- The break-up of family life due to addictive behaviour on the Internet
- The influence of violent games and music which negatively impact behaviour

Candidates who did not perform well on this question either did not make and develop sufficient points or elaborated too much on one point.

Question 6

«Il ne connaît d'autre loi que la sienne...il fait ce qu'il veut.» Commentez cet avis du médecin moderne.

Candidates were expected to indicate whether or not they agreed that doctors today were a law unto themselves. This was attempted by one candidate who misinterpreted the word *médecin* to mean medicine and consequently received a low grade.

Question 7

«Le clonage est à condamner.» Discutez.

This question, although not popular, was very well done by almost all candidates. It required candidates to discuss the benefits/dangers (negative aspects) of cloning. Candidates who chose this question seemed to be familiar with the topic of cloning and the arguments surrounding it. They spoke of the risks of cloning such as the possible deformity of clones, that cloning was akin to playing God (religious/moral argument) and that clones might be treated as lab rats and not as humans.

Conversely, candidates wrote of some benefits of cloning which included the fact that it provided a solution for infertile couples, it helped with organ transplants which could save lives and that it could be seen as a good option for the preservation of biodiversity and endangered species.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Examiners identified the following challenges:

- Lack of illustrations/examples to support arguments presented
- Spelling errors (inclusive of common words such as *beaucoup* and *seulement*)
- Grammatical errors
 - Lack of agreement of subject and verb – *les parents devrait, les personnes peut, les avantages qui apporte, les entrepreneurs fait*
- Faulty/clumsy structures
 - *trois temps, peut sembles, ils ne peuvent pas voir leurs, cette manqué, beaucoup des/de les enfants, les jeunes passent plusieurs de heures sur internet..., les mals influences, dainsi*
- Incorrect conjugation of verbs
 - *les jeunes...ils ne connaissent pas...*
- Incorrect tenses

Candidates' Strengths

There were, however, examples of good usage of language/expression by candidates.

*de nos jours..., à légard de..., à cet égard..., dans cette époque de mondialisation..., examinons de plus près..., il est étonnant qu'il y ait...,ce thème brûlant de l'actualité..., en dernière analyse..., réfléchissons d'abord à ..., nous devons chercher un autre point de repère..., en outre..., * l'utilisation de nouvelles technologies devient de plus en plus répandue..., l'internet abonde de dangers..., cela pose un véritable risque à leur développement... , il s'ensuit que..., il faut noter aussi que ..., Réfléchissons au revers de la médaille..., en guise de conclusion..., bien qu'il existe les contrôles pour certains sites, il est évident, d'après ce qui précède, que les inconvénients surpassent les avantages..., il est généralement admis que l'internet a entraîné une kyrielle d'avantages pour le monde aujourd'hui..., les sondages dévoilent que la plupart des jeunes..., il y a la croissance galopante..., ..les jeunes disposent de..., cette contamination érotique contribue à la banalisation du sexe et la chosification de la femme..., regardons maintenant de plus près..., il est nécessaire que nous examinons les risques sans provoquer (du) psychose en ce qui concerne les dangers de l'internet..., on constate que...*

Recommendations

Given that some candidates did not clearly outline their points in the paragraphs presented, examiners, at times, had difficulty identifying the salient points.

- Teachers need to spend more time reviewing grammar. Examiners encountered too many examples of poor grammatical structures, incorrect spelling etc.
- Further, exposure to various forms of literature will help candidates to develop their writing abilities.
- Candidates should be given the opportunity to practise their essay writing skills with great emphasis on analysis of topics and the presentation of arguments/ideas.
- Candidates must adhere to the word limit presented.
- Candidates should avoid using Spanish words to coin French ones.

Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literary Analysis

Candidates were required 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 required to comment on plot, setting, characterization, and simple literary techniques. Overall, candidate performance was good.

The most popular choice among candidates was Question 1, on *La rue cases-nègres*, chosen by 50 per cent of the candidates. The other popular text was *Gouverneurs de la rosée*, the choice of about 32 per cent of the candidates. The other two texts saw a slightly larger percentage of candidates choosing *La tragédie du Roi Christophe* (ten per cent) over *Maria Chapdelaine* (eight per cent).

Question 1: *La rue cases-nègres*

The majority of candidates who opted for this text demonstrated good knowledge of the novel. Over 75 per cent of them were able to score between satisfactory and excellent for this question.

*An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure

Most candidates performed well on Part (a) and were able to support their answers using appropriate citations.

For Part (b), some candidates were unfamiliar with the word *mouvementée* and interpreted it as mere physical movement, full of hardship or even corporal punishment. The word *journée* was at times translated as ‘journey’ instead of ‘day’. Nevertheless, most candidates were able to cite the activities at school.

Many candidates misunderstood the term *sensible* in responding to Part (c) and interpreted it as ‘sensible’ rather than *sensitive*. Consequently, some candidates used examples to illustrate why they thought José was an intelligent boy. Many candidates, however, were able to allude, at least partially, to the humiliation and suffering he felt at the home of Mme Léonce by identifying the appropriate parts of the extract: *il est obligé de déjeuner dans le corridor de Mme Léonce ...* and *on lui y accorde peu d'attention*.

Themes such as *l'amitié, la camaraderie, les rapports entre le narrateur et M'man Tine, la vie scolaire* and *l'enfance* were relatively easy to identify in response to Part (d). However, in a number of cases, candidates did not provide a comment to illustrate the theme and thus were unable to score full marks.

Question 2: Maria Chapdelaine

Seventy-five per cent of candidates who attempted this question were able to score between satisfactory and excellent.

Most candidates were able to identify for Part (a) the elements in the first paragraph which helped to create the atmosphere of a tranquil life.

However, for Part (b), a number of candidates gave a partial response. Examiners were looking for a statement which indicated that for Maria, the ideal life was one spent with the person one loved. What was of significance to her was *la grande force... qui la pousse vers un garçon*. Nonetheless, there are times when this is not possible and thus a compromise may then have to be made.

Part (c) was generally well done. Candidates understood Maria's ability to analyse the situation. A full response should include a comparison of the suitors.

Many candidates correctly identified at least two of the required themes — *l'amour, l'esprit pionnier, la vie familiale*, and *la vie rurale* for Part (d). Candidates, however, did not always provide a comment to illustrate the theme and thus may not have scored full marks.

Question 3: Gouverneurs de la rosée

Over 70 per cent of the candidates who attempted this question were able to achieve scores ranging between satisfactory and excellent.

For Part (a), the phrase *à quelle partie de l'extrait* led many candidates to simply quote the section of the extract which they felt was relevant. In order for candidates to score full marks, examiners were looking for comments in addition to the quotations. For instance, *La partie où Manuel décrit la camaraderie entre lui et ses amis, Pierrilis et les autres...* and *La description de leurs activités indiquent qu'ils s'amusaient bien ensemble*. Relevant quotations here included *partagé leurs jeux/ils avaient mêlé dans les coumbites leurs voix*.

For Part (b), some candidates received partial marks because they failed to show the contrast between Manuel and his old friends. Relevant quotations related to the question were, however, generally identified.

Most candidates were able to do justice to Part (c) as they were able to find examples from the extract to justify describing Manuel as *un visionnaire pratique*.

The majority of candidates performed well on Part (d). Themes such as *les hostilités sociales de la communauté*, *Manuel comme visionnaire*, *la nature*, and *l'unité*, were correctly identified and appropriate comments made to illustrate the chosen themes.

Question 4: *La tragédie du Roi Christophe*

Although candidates who attempted this question seemed to find it challenging, still, approximately 60 per cent of them were able to score marks ranging from satisfactory to very good.

For Part (a), very few candidates were able to comment effectively on the use of figurative language to underscore the idea that the presence of the boat might have negative implications for the Haitian people.

Part (b) presented a challenge for candidates. Although many of them clearly understood the characteristics of a pacifist, difficulty was experienced in explaining why Hugonin was considered a realist. *Selon Hugonin, on ne peut pas éviter des commotions même s'il y a des arrangements, parce que le pays est par nature un pays où il y aura toujours des conflits.*

Although candidates were able to comment on Christophe's role as a protector of his people, Part (c), many of them failed to mention his inflexibility.

For Part (d), candidates were only required to identify the relevant themes and generally were able to do so. Some of the themes included *le conflit entre la France et le peuple haïtien*, *le leadership de Christophe*, and *l'espoir (si l'on fait référence au fait que Piéton est prêt à aboutir à un compromis avec le roi de France)*.

Comments

- Candidates should be encouraged to limit their responses, or their analysis of content, to the extract, except in the case of Part (d) of the questions which, in Unit 2, may require consideration of the themes of the extract which are reflected in the text as a whole.
- Teachers must persist in their efforts to improve the grammar and expression of their students, because errors in these areas continue to distort, to some extent, the students' ability to clearly communicate their ideas.
- More attention must be paid to the use of literary techniques. There was evidence of weakness in this area, especially in the case of candidates who attempted the extract on *La tragédie du Roi Christophe*.

Section B – Themes

Candidates were required to write one essay, of 350–400 words, in English, based on one of two themes: *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 being *Gouverneurs de la rosée* and *La tragédie du Roi Christophe*). The examiners were looking for a comprehensive 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. Candidate performance was satisfactory.

In general, there was a satisfactory balance in the choice of theme. Fifty-two per cent of the candidates selected the theme *Les conflits politiques et sociaux*. Forty-eight per cent of candidates responded to the theme *La vie rurale*.

Question 5

'Ordinary but admirable'. Discuss this view of some of the main characters in the text.

The majority of candidates whose answers were based on the theme *La vie rurale* chose this question. The preferred text was *La rue cases-nègres*. The responses by most of the candidates who opted for this question ranged between average and good. There were a few excellent scripts.

La rue cases-nègres

Many candidates succeeded in providing sound arguments explaining why the main characters were ordinary, yet displayed noble qualities. The main difficulties faced included some candidates limiting themselves to two characters whereas there was scope for them to deal with M'man Tine, the narrator's mother, Délia, the narrator himself, Médouze and to a lesser extent, Jojo. Occasionally, the quotations included in some essays were too long or not relevant to the point being made. There was also too much story telling.

Maria Chapdelaine

A few candidates attempted this essay. Most of them dealt adequately with the question, although there were some who struggled to explain the admirable qualities, limiting themselves to describing characters as hard working or simply trying their best to survive.

Question 6

Discuss the theme of ambition with reference to the text you have studied.

For this question most candidates performed satisfactorily. The majority opted to respond using the work *La rue cases-nègres*.

La rue cases-nègres

This question was handled fairly well. Candidates readily identified a few characters that possessed ambitious traits. The better responses were well supported by evidence from the text and short effective quotes. However, there were a number of candidates who focused on storytelling rather than on good analysis and critical thought.

Maria Chapdelaine

Only a few candidates attempted this question and their analysis was weak as they decided, for the main part, to limit themselves to Maria Chapdelaine and her father Samuel Chapdelaine. However, there was also scope for them to examine characters such as Lorenzo Surprenant, François Paradis, Laura Chapdelaine and the Frenchman and his sons from Paris.

Question 7

Even though there are several tragic elements, the work is an attempt to give hope to people of colour. Discuss this comment with reference to the text that you have studied.

In general, performance on this question ranged from average to very good.

Gouverneurs de la rosée

This question was attempted by a large number of candidates. The better responses were well structured, with candidates displaying the ability to identify the tragic elements in the text without dwelling on them unduly, then demonstrating with sufficient evidence how hope was communicated.

A few candidates interpreted the term the work as the actual physical labour that the characters did. Apparently no distinction was made between *l'oeuvre* — the work (of art) and *le travail*—work in general. As a result of this misinterpretation, discussion was limited to the use of hard physical labour/work as a means of providing hope to people of colour. Examiners were looking for tragic elements such as the mismanagement of the land which led to erosion and drought, lack of a proper water supply, the ongoing hostility and its effects, exploitation of the poor peasants by those in authority. Candidates were then expected to examine in depth Manuel's approach to the existing situation, the vision he had and his perseverance in endeavouring to bring hope to a people who had resigned themselves to their dismal fate.

La tragédie du Roi Christophe

Most candidates were able to identify many tragic elements under Christophe's reign and saw his attempts at ruling as an effort to give hope, even though he was misguided in his approach. A few candidates tended to spend too much time relating the story and giving long discussions about Negritude instead of properly addressing the question itself.

Question 8

To what extent can the text that you have studied be considered a teaching guide for a young political leader?

In general, performance on this question ranged mainly from average to good.

Gouverneurs de la rosée

For many candidates, this question was challenging to attempt in relation to this text. Candidates were expected to be able to discuss and illustrate the traits which could serve as a guide for a potential political leader. Some candidates did this successfully, whereas others, although they were able to provide a good character analysis of the protagonist, Manuel, failed to demonstrate how his positive traits did in fact portray him as someone to emulate if one wanted to be a successful political leader.

La tragédie du Roi Christophe

The question was attempted by only a few candidates who used this text. Some candidates recognized the good qualities of Christophe which were worth emulating. However, they were also able to focus at the same time on the negative traits which led to his downfall and which a leader should endeavour to avoid. The greatest challenge for candidates responding to this question was trying to structure the essay in a logical manner.

Comments

Candidates need more practice in essay writing, especially in those types of essays which require analysis. This would help them to overcome the tendency to merely relate the story.

Although background information on a specific text may be included in the essay, care must be taken to ensure that it relates to the question, and analysis of the question must not be sacrificed for mere narration of background information about the author.

Many essays were mediocre. Teachers are therefore encouraged to continue to pay attention to teaching students how to apply their knowledge and understanding of the text to the question/s asked. More practice should also be provided in terms of the organization of different types of essays.

UNITS 1 and 2

Paper 04 – School-Based Assessment

This paper required candidates to (i) make an oral presentation on their topic of choice within the framework of the three modules, and (ii) engage in conversation with the examiner on the topic as well as on current issues.

It was evident that teachers continued to motivate their students to develop their competence in French. Although the performance in Unit 1 ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent, the general standard in Unit 2 was good, with excellent candidates as well. Those students in both units who did very well showed a high level of competence in use of the language. At the other end of the spectrum, there were students who had difficulty with comprehension, grammar and vocabulary. It is important that these students build on their knowledge to develop their language skills.

The presentations in both units covered a wide range of interesting topics dealing with a variety of issues. Topics in Unit 1 included *L'inégalité entre les sexes: les femmes au Tchad*, *L'écotourisme en Guadeloupe*, *Le décret anti-tabac en France* and *La pauvreté en Côte d'Ivoire*. In Unit 2, students presented topics such as *Le clonage thérapeutique*, *Le déclin de l'agriculture en Martinique* and *Le système politique en France et en Jamaïque*.

Prepared Topic

There was evidence of extensive research in the content of the presentations made. Students chose many francophone countries to study, including Chad, French Guiana, Haiti and Senegal. In some cases, however, there was no reference to a French-speaking country. Teachers and students are reminded that the focus should be on a francophone country, and that the topic presented should also contain ideas and opinions as well as factual material. This part of the examination has an allotted time of three minutes. When candidates spend excessive time (five to nine minutes) on the Prepared Topic, conversation time is reduced, thereby making it difficult for the candidate to be properly examined in the other areas. Most examiners, however, made an effort to respect the time limit.

In cases where attempts were made to memorize the presentation, the speech sounded stilted, hesitant or rehearsed. Greater practice in speaking French is necessary for speech to sound natural and spontaneous.

Topic Conversation

The marking for this section is divided into three categories:

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

There was very good interaction between oral examiners and their students this year. Oral examiners did not dominate the conversation but tried to make the exercise as conversational as possible, while encouraging the candidates. There was a significant number of students who engaged the examiners in conversation, but more candidates needed to do so.

In most cases, the examiners posed questions which were relevant. Students understood what was being asked and were able to respond. One concern which the moderators have is that in some cases, the examination sounded scripted, with students responding as if answers had been memorized or as though they were reading the answers. Students must be encouraged to enrich their vocabulary and improve their grammar. In this way, they would be able to recognize and respond to different kinds of questions using varied expressions and correct grammar in a natural and confident way.

In some cases, students did not seem very familiar with their topics, and had difficulty responding to some questions. For other students, although their prepared topic was well researched, the vocabulary needed to sustain the subsequent conversation was lacking. Examiners should ask questions which aim to elicit opinions rather than facts which could create problems for the student if he or she does not know the answer. It is more useful, therefore, to ask questions such as *Croyez-vous que la télévision entraîne la violence dans la société?* or *A votre avis, quelle est la cause de la criminalité dans la société?*

General Conversation

The marking for this section is divided into the same three categories as those of the Topic Conversation.

There was some disparity in the level of difficulty of questions posed in various centres across the region. The syllabus recommends that examiners begin with simpler questions such as *Quelles sont vos matières préférées? Pourquoi avez-vous choisi d'étudier les langues? Quels sont vos passe-temps préférés?* The General Conversation should not be limited, however, to this type of question. Warm-up questions should serve, rather, as a springboard to other questions which fall within the scope of topics studied in Modules 1, 2 and 3. If the student were to respond to *Quels sont vos passe-temps préférés?* by mentioning sports, an example of a follow-up question could be *Que pensez-vous du dopage dans le sport?* If the student mentions other sedentary activities, a possible follow-up question could be *A votre avis, pourquoi est-il important de garder la forme?* Teachers are also reminded that this section of the examination requires a range of questions on several topics, and not a series of questions on **one** topic.

Some candidates struggled to produce fluent French or had difficulty understanding, with many pauses between question and response, and several requests for the examiner to repeat questions.

Areas of Difficulty in Topic and General Conversation

(i) Correctness of expression/Range of vocabulary

Errors were made primarily in the following areas:

- The use of incorrect articles (**le violence, *un personne*)
- Use of the infinitive instead of a conjugated verb
- Subject and verb agreement (**Tout le monde doive*)
- The use of negatives (**Je n'ai aimé pas la cuisine*)
- The position/gender of adjectives (**les malheureux personnes*)
- Syntax (*une maison à vivre en*)
- Idioms (**Je suis dix-huit ans*)

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

(ii) Pronunciation

Errors were made in

- the pronunciation of the third person plural of verbs in the present indicative that is, sounding the *-ent*)
- anglicizing the pronunciation of the nasals *in*, *an* and *en* at the beginning of words
- omitting liaisons
- making a liaison with *et*
- sounding the final consonant (*beaucoup*, *enfant*)
- anglicizing the pronunciation of cognates (*éducation*, *société*)
- omitting the *é* sound in the perfect tense (**des études ont montre que*)

Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers ensure that

- students improve their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and idiomatic expressions
- time is managed for the Prepared Topic, Topic Conversation and General Conversation in accordance with guidelines for this assessment
- the volume (on cassettes and CDs) is appropriately adjusted before the commencement of the exam

Overall Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to develop strategies which will ensure that students become more competent in the areas of French grammar and vocabulary, thereby improving the quality of their written and oral performance

- There is need for more practice in the close reading of texts. This will encourage students to read questions more carefully and therefore respond with greater accuracy.
- There is need for more listening comprehension practice. Pronunciation exercises on words that have similar pronunciation would be helpful.