

A-level **FRENCH**

Paper 1 Listening, Reading and Writing
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The paper proved accessible and the vast majority of students scored consistently over the paper as a whole. The questions which discriminated most effectively, as one would expect, were the two summaries (Questions 3 and 8) and the translation tasks (Questions 9.8 and 10). Examiners were generally pleased with the standard of work they saw and students seemed to have ample time to complete the paper.

Section A

Question 1

This question was well answered with the vast majority of students scoring at least 3 of the 5 marks available.

Question 2

Students also coped well on this multiple choice question, with many pleasing answers to the six questions. There were many who scored maximum marks here.

Question 3

The instruction in the rubric to write 90 words is strictly enforced by examiners, with marking stopping at the first natural break after the word limit has been reached, and 100 words as the absolute deadline. Many students lost content marks by writing too much, with the result that many did not score the two marks for drug-taking and suicide in the third bullet point, even though students had clearly understood the recording.

Despite this, many students did score well for content. More than half of all students scored at least 5 marks for answering the bullet points successfully. Some marks were lost since some suggested that the prisoners' cells were cold (or occasionally hot) rather than the key idea of them not having access to hot water. There was some confusion caused by the expression *repas tièdes*, which was not well known. The third point here about the condition of the showers was often present, though often in inaccurate French. The second bullet point was often answered very well, and most were given credit for violence caused by the slightest provocation and the lack of prison officers, though the spelling of *gardien* was often inaccurate and some answers about a lack of security in general were too vague. The third bullet point was also well understood and gave students the opportunity to manipulate the language used in the original transcript. For example, the French phrase *les détenus se tournent vers les drogues dures* was often manipulated to give an answer such as *les prisonniers deviennent accros aux drogues dures*. In a similar way, *le taux de suicide ne cesse d'augmenter*, was rendered by a phrase such as *il y a de plus en plus de suicides parmi les détenus*. Needless to say such answers score well for both AO1 and AO3.

The full five marks for AO3 were hard to achieve, however, requiring a level of manipulation of the grammar as well as a good degree of accuracy. Some students manipulated well but their spelling and grammatical accuracy also had to be taken into account. Though most did gain at least 3 marks, there were many basic errors which prevented the award of marks in the two higher bands, though, pleasingly, more than half of all students did achieve this. Common errors which prevented the awarding of high marks for AO3 were the use of incorrect adjectival agreements (*les drogues dur*), inaccurate or invented verb forms (*ils ont prit des drogues*) and poor spelling

(*gardiens de prison*). Note that English spellings are accepted for content (for example *guardians de prison*) provided that it would be clear to a sympathetic native speaker. On the whole, despite the problems identified above, it should be added that students coped well with the task, scoring good marks for comprehension, and there were very few poor summaries.

Question 4

This section required answers in French to a listening stimulus and students should be reminded that there is no need to manipulate the language here and that full sentences are not always needed, depending on the context of the question. Part 4.1 was very well answered. The other sections were worth two marks each, and though most students scored at least one of these marks, a lack of attention to detail often led to the loss of a mark. In 4.2, for instance, the influence of the media was often present, though some failed to write about the opportunity provided for African musicians in America. The spelling of *ateliers* caused some problems in 4.3 and in 4.4 *concerts gratuits* was often well conveyed but a mark was lost for not clearly stating *un nouveau prix pour la Francophonie* since many confused the use of the word *prix* and took it to mean price rather than prize.

Section B

Question 5

Most students scored quite well on this gap-fill task, with more than half of students gaining at least six of the marks. The most frequent errors resulted from the second and third gaps, where *hospitalières* and *médicaux* were used with a noun of the wrong gender. Indeed, most errors occurred due to failure to notice the gender of the adjectives.

Question 6

This multiple choice task was also well answered, with the main stumbling block being part 6.4, where confusion over the phrase *examen de leur dossier* led to a misunderstanding in which many chose the incorrect answer A. At the same time *Plus d'hébergement* was often misunderstood, with students not observing the phrase which follows (*ils*) *seront placés dans des centres dédiés* and so choosing answer C.

Question 7

This task was based on an adaptation of a literary text and was well done on the whole, with most parts being answered successfully by at least two thirds of students. Parts 7.1 and 7.4 were particularly well answered. However, as in 7.4, it was often lack of attention to detail which led to the failure to gain maximum marks for each section. In 7.2, for example, most gained one mark but failed to give an additional detail such as not being able to speak. The second mark in 7.3 was for the fields being covered in insects and this was often absent. In 7.5, there was some confusion as to the consequences following the departure of the insects, with some giving the impression that there were still flowers and grass, and some failed to convey the idea of the workers trying to kill the eggs.

Question 8

This was another summary task. Here the word limit was respected more frequently than in Question 3. Moreover, the marks were pleasing both for content and for quality of language (AO3). Students gained marks for Sarkozy being the victim of a theft and what he did about it, though some said he did not notice the fraud at first or took no action. The second bullet point, about how thieves manage to steal from people's accounts, was well answered. The third bullet point was the least successfully answered part. Most gained credit for the dangers of on-line shopping but then wrote quite lengthy answers about the problems with identity theft rather than specific points from the text such as losing documents or not taking adequate security precautions. The AO3 marks were affected adversely by the amount of copying seen in answers. Some who scored highly for AO2 did little to manipulate the text and relied on copying whole sentences from the original. An answer such as *l'essor du e-commerce* scored for content, but many did not take the opportunity to use phrases such as *il y a des risques si on fait des achats en ligne*, where both AO2 and AO3 are addressed in quite a simple manner. Other neat ways of manipulating the original text were sentences such as *Les internautes ne prennent pas assez de précautions* or *Il y a des dangers si on consulte son compte en ligne et on peut recevoir un faux e-mail*. Generally, however, examiners were impressed by the level of comprehension shown here and the way in which students were able to convey the key ideas successfully.

Question 9

The first part of this task was to find synonyms in the original text and this was mostly very successfully done. The main problem occurred in 9.5, where *fanatique* was not always linked to *mordu*.

Question 9.8 was the translation from English into French, and there was a wide range of marks apparent here. Very few students scored full marks but more than half of all students did manage to gain at least 5 marks. The main issues were as follows:

- more and more was often translated as *plus en plus*
- agreements were often missing on *les sujets importants* and *bien traités*
- the correct word for scripts was often missing
- the agreement of the preceding direct object was nearly always omitted in *qu'ils ont méritée*
- the use of tenses (imperfect and conditional) was often incorrect in the next sentence
- the future tense was missed in when the next festival takes place
- the sentence beginning 'A publicity campaign' was well answered apart from the lack of agreement on *lancée*
- the word masterpiece was often absent and *dans dix ans* was frequently seen.

Question 10

Half of students scored more than half the available marks on this French to English translation. The first part of the text was better done than the second. Each section has to be rendered completely accurately for a mark to be given. Precision is vital with attention to each detail in the text necessary for the awarding of each mark. Here is a summary of the main problems encountered:

- *ne parvient pas* was not always translated accurately
- *ne ... guère* was omitted by many
- *commerçants* was not translated accurately, with many using words such as merchants, and *habitants* was often left unchanged in English
- *s'entraident* proved challenging, as did the verb *se croiser*
- *24 services gratuits* was often transformed into 24 hour services and *dont* was often omitted
- *à leur tour* was not well known and *mensuellement* was omitted.

Summary questions: Advice to students

Students should first read the task on the question paper carefully so they know what the item is about. They should listen to or read the stimulus material in its entirety, identifying which sections of the stimulus material correspond to each of the three bullet points. They should then listen to or read the stimulus material a second time, pausing as necessary to make notes on each bullet point. Students should look at the number of marks available for each bullet point and ensure they identify sufficient pieces of information.

Once they have noted the key information, students should look again at the wording of the bullet points and write their answer on the question paper in such a way as to answer the bullet points directly. This will normally require some manipulation of linguistic structures, such as changing from direct to indirect speech or changing from a subordinate clause to a main clause. However it is not necessary to find synonyms for individual words or phrases.

Students should count their words and ensure that they stay within the word limit. Anything they write after the first natural break between 70 and 80 words (AS) or 90 and 100 words (A-level) will not be marked. Students should therefore avoid writing an introductory sentence or paragraph, as this is likely to use up words without scoring marks. They should omit points of detail or examples unless these are specifically targeted by the bullet points.

The two marks available for the summary tasks - Content and Quality of Language - are awarded independently. For Content students will receive one mark for conveying each of the seven required pieces of information unambiguously. For Quality of Language students will receive a global mark out of five for the successful manipulation of the language. Anything that is lifted directly from the stimulus material cannot earn credit for Quality of Language. While students should try to use as wide a variety of structures as suits the task, they should also bear in mind the need to maintain accuracy.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.