
GCSE FRENCH

Unit 2 Reading
Report on the Examination

4655
June 2014

Version: 1.0

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Foundation Tier

General comments

There was a decrease in the number of students taking this paper compared to 2013, with significantly fewer gaining high marks. It would appear that many schools and colleges have preferred to enter students of medium ability for the Higher Tier paper. The main advice to teachers is unchanged. Many students do not read the rubric properly. This results in letters other than the given range being written in answer boxes and multiple cases of overwriting answers or untidily inserted alternatives being written in or around the box. Such responses cause severe difficulties for examiners and can lead to marks not being awarded if the answer is not clear. Teachers should encourage the good habit of making a neat crossing out and writing the newly chosen letter alongside the box. At this tier, the systematic learning and testing of vocabulary is valuable.

Question 1

The first question was, as expected, answered well by the majority of students. The exception was Part (b), where a surprising number did not recognise *mères*, so that less than half gained the mark.

Question 2

More than half of students gained all three marks, and almost everyone gained at least one mark. Students were comfortable with vocabulary used to describe people.

Question 3

This item tested individual words for classroom and stationery items. Only Part (a) was well answered. In Parts (c) and (d), *bandes dessinées* and *cahiers* were not well known. Less than half of students gained the mark in each case.

Question 4

Students are well versed in the words and phrases used in connection with healthy and unhealthy lifestyles. Consequently scoring was very high in all four parts.

Question 5

This question featured a longer text, but still tested individual words and simple notions. It targeted grade E, and the responses were disappointing overall. Part (a) was generally well answered, though a significant minority found support in the text for the message being about Belgium. Very few gained the mark for Part (b), as *rire* was not well known. In Part (c), the majority chose answer A, 'visiting the cathedral'. They simply did not read far enough, and also ignored the wording of the rubric. In part (d), as so often, the negative was not recognised.

Question 6

This question about house and home was well answered, with the vast majority of students gaining at least two of the three marks. The text was similar in length and demand to that of the previous question. Students were familiar with this topic.

Question 7

This first overlap question targeted both C and D grades. Students did well on the first three parts but less well on the last two. In all parts there were distractors.

For example, in Part (a) the mention of *planche à voile* led about a quarter of students to think that the person was a sailor, ignoring his early rising time, his long walk and his problem with dogs. Similarly the mention of *circulation* and *vacances* caused many to opt for 'taxi driver' and 'travel agent' in Parts (b) and (c) respectively, though most gained these marks. However, in Part (d) the

majority chose 'roadsweeper' and did not seem to know *poubelles*. In Part (e) there were several clues to the answer 'chef' (*repas, produits frais, plats*), yet fewer than half of students gained the mark. As stated already, the regular learning and testing of vocabulary is the most important mode of preparation for this paper.

Question 8

This overlap question, targeting grade D, was generally well answered. Students appeared to be aware of the world's water situation through their study of environmental issues. Only Part (d) caused some challenges. Teachers should advise students that, especially in this sort of question, it is essential to read all of the information before selecting an answer.

Question 9

As usual, the inclusion of an overlap question requiring basic grammatical awareness proved demanding for most students, and was a good discriminator. However, an appreciation of simple concepts of gender and number would secure these marks. In addition, students must realise that the linked sentence must make sense. The commonest answer for Part 9(c) was B, which left a verb without a subject. Many chose answer B for Part 9(b), which created a sentence with the verb *est* used twice consecutively. In all four parts there were examples of students choosing answer C, the example. Teachers are recommended to remind students that in cases where an answer in the grid is shaded in (because it is the example), it cannot also be an answer.

Higher Tier

General comments

The number of students sitting this paper rose again this year. The demands of the paper were similar to those in previous years, with students doing particularly well on questions targeted at grade B, also picking up marks on A/A* questions, but sometimes failing to gain marks elsewhere. This suggests a tendency to rush through the earlier questions and make careless errors. As there was very little evidence of students failing to complete the paper, teachers need to stress that there is plenty of time to answer everything, and that the early questions should provide the foundation for a high mark, if answered carefully. Examiners are finding it increasingly difficult to mark answers where students do not adhere to the requirement to write in black ink. In too many cases the pages where students have to answer in English remain difficult to decipher, with obliterations, arrows and insertions. Teachers are advised to remind students to consider their answers carefully before writing, to read the text fully, and to present their work legibly.

Overlap Questions 1, 2 and 6 followed the patterns described in the Foundation Tier section, with the expected increase in successful responses.

Question 3

This question provided extra marks at grades D and C, and all four parts were well answered by the vast majority of students, who showed good ability to identify messages where there is good context.

Question 4

Students scored highly here. Although the question was targeted at grade B, it is clear that students of all levels of ability can make correct deductions where there is much more context. The idea of a gap year provided the opportunity to test language across various topics and none of the six parts was answered poorly.

Question 5

Although the length of the texts was similar to that of Question 3, the language was much more demanding. However, only Part (a) caused any real problems. Because the word 'animal' was included in both the text and the question prompt, the majority opted for answer A, having failed to read the whole of this text and then not considering other possibilities. Students must read the whole text before answering. The other parts were well answered, and proved very accessible for a grade A question.

Question 7

A lengthy text and the requirement to answer in English proved challenging for some students. Some students ignore the example and the length of space provided for answers, which indicate that a brief but precise response is required. Many continue to superimpose their own experience rather than use the information contained in the text. Most base their response on a particular word they recognise and do not read around this information to produce a more credible answer. However, most students gained marks here, with the mark for Part (a) particularly accessible.

7(a) The majority recognised that Mathieu had made a mistake in advertising his party online, without applying limitations on who could see it. Some referred to the fact that his parents had left the house to him, or had gone away for the weekend, but this did not answer the question.

7(b) Even at this level, students need a strong knowledge of the vocabulary list in the specification. In this case the failure to recognise *rouge à lèvres* and *murs* meant that the mark was rarely achieved, as both elements were required. Only about a quarter of students scored here.

7(c) Most students scored one mark here, as they understood that the police made everyone leave the house or stopped the party, but the second mark proved challenging, as the vast majority ignored the pronouns used and wrote that the police called his parents.

7(d) A surprising number of students failed to recognise that Mathieu was afraid that his father might have a heart attack. Incorrect answers were split between wrong tenses and references to the state of the house.

7(e) Again the pronouns were ignored. Answers needed to refer to his parents, not to either one of them. Where a mark was gained it was usually for stating that his parents helped him to clean up. Some correctly inferred that the parents did not overreact, expressed in a variety of acceptable ways.

Question 8

Students again scored well on this question about being happy, largely targeting grade B. Only part (b) caused problems, with about half of students gaining the mark. The choice of the incorrect answer B perhaps reflected the presence of *heureuse* in the text and 'happiness' in the question prompt. Parts (a) and (c) proved very accessible.

Question 9

The topic was very student-friendly, as most young people these days are familiar with smart phones, tablets and the internet. Herein lies the problem for many, because, as in Question 7, they tended to overlay their own experience instead of seeking clues in the text. Some simply did not read the question and confused answers for Parts (a) and (b).

9(a) This proved to be the more demanding of the two parts. With three marks available, less than half of students managed just one, with few scoring two. The reference to the speed of information becoming available was the most common successful response, although many mistakenly used this response in Part (b). A similar number identified the fact that debates helped with the

understanding of events. Very few recognised that the regular scheduling of programmes underpins a routine, instead wrongly referring to the use of media on the journey (*journée*) home.

9(b) Although more than half of students gained at least one of the three marks, less than a quarter went on to gain further marks. This was often because of a lack of precision or the omission of an important detail. For example, those who attempted to use the information about the role of governments either omitted to mention their aversion to images of protests being disseminated, or that media could be used to expose crimes committed by the government against the people. Where students wrote in this item that television is repetitious and boring, they were not answering the question, unless they then contextualised their response. The commonest correct answer was that new media allows you to see uncensored material which you cannot see on television. However the reference to (funny) films could not be credited if they were clearly about commercial films rather than film clips.

It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of students completed the paper. Unfortunately, a few students continue to answer in French.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion