

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCE

GCE French (8FR01)

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Unit 1 (6FR01): Spoken Expression and Response in French

The test is divided into two sections.

SECTION A

This requires students to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the student's chosen general topic area. The teacher/examiner will first ask two questions about the general content of the stimulus and will then follow on with two other questions that invite students to express their opinions on, or give reactions to, the stimulus (Specification September 2007, p 9)

The most popular topic area chosen by candidates was Lifestyle: Health and Fitness, closely followed by Youth Culture and Concerns. Then, a long way behind came The World Around Us and Education and Employment. Most centres had candidates who had chosen at least two topic areas, and many had candidates who had chosen three or even four. Unfortunately, a few large centres had candidates who had all chosen to be tested on the same one (usually Lifestyle: Health and Fitness). This made the whole experience very repetitive for both examiners and markers.

As a rule, the Edexcel-set questions were read verbatim (as is required) by examiners. Repetitions are allowed when requested by the candidate, but multiple unrequested repetitions, rephrasing (apart from "vous" to "tu" forms), explaining, highlighting, splitting questions or asking extra questions are not permitted in this section of the test. Answers which are given by the candidates as a result of any of these infringements to the rules are discounted for assessment purposes.

Questions 1 and 2

These always relate to the direct content of the stimulus and normally require relatively short answers. A partial lift or lifts with a small amount of manipulation and/or paraphrasing are usually sufficient to provide acceptable answers. Many candidates produced accurate answers. Some simply read what they thought was a relevant section of the stimulus, hoping for a lucky score. A very small number read big chunks of the text, thus hoping that something would be relevant. These kinds of answers cannot be rewarded by the mark scheme. Some candidates had obviously been told that they should develop their answers and, often after having produced an adequate answer, chose to develop this with long and at times irrelevant additions, occasionally pre-empting the next one or two questions. Others lost sight of the fact that the answers to the first two questions are to be found in the stimulus and went into long speeches expressing personal opinions. This is only required when answering the next two questions

Questions 3 and 4

These two questions are open-ended as candidates are required to give reactions to and opinions about the general content and issues raised by the stimulus.

Candidates are expected to give developed and detailed answers, demonstrating that they have done some research and some thinking about the issues stemming from the stimulus. Some students produced excellent answers which amounted to mini-speeches or mini-debates with themselves, during which they considered different aspects of the issues, comparing and contrasting viewpoints, expressing a considered opinion and justifying their standpoint. This is a demanding part of the test and requires students to have been trained into giving this kind of answer and also to anticipate, during the 15 minute preparation time, what they might be asked to express. Short, undeveloped one-line answers are not sufficient.

ASSESSMENT

Understanding (Stimulus Specific)

Answers to all four questions are marked globally. There is no detailed mark scheme for each question. Indeed, there are many different acceptable ways to answer these questions, even the first two. Some obviously good candidates did not always obtain a high mark because they did not answer the specific questions or gave short, throw-away answers in questions 3 and 4.

Three cards were provided for each topic area. One card (and one card only) relevant to the candidate's choice of general topic area is allocated to each candidate. In order to avoid duplication and to increase security, the cards must be allocated to candidates according to the sequence specified on page 3 of the Teacher/Examiner version of the papers. This order was not always followed by centres.

Great care was taken to produce stimulus cards which would be easily understood by most candidates at this level and to devise questions which would allow candidates to display their command of the language as well as their knowledge of the topic of their choice.

Topic area: Youth Culture And Concerns

Stimulus 1: This was well understood by many of the candidates. The only element that caused some confusion was the phrase "le plus pratiqué" often thought to mean "the most practical". Full answers to Q1 were relatively rare. The plural in the question was often missed and candidates either did not properly understand "quelles sont leurs fonctions ?" or forgot to answer this part of the question. Q2: the word "objectif" was not always understood and it was disappointing to hear so few candidates starting their answer with "de comparer..." which was expected. Q3 produced many good answers, though only the better candidates considered the negative aspects. Q4: although many good answers were heard, many candidates did not develop the idea of what life could be like (or used to be like) without the internet. The word "sans" was not always understood or picked up.

Stimulus 2: Jean-Pierre was occasionally taken to be a girl's name which caused a few problems with Q2. Q1: in order to answer this question, a small amount of manipulation was required ("on a du mal à exprimer ses opinions..."). The majority of candidates chose to restrict their answer to Jean-Pierre ("il a du mal à...") which was acceptable. Q2: this often had to be repeated in order to be understood, presumably because of the unusual occurrence of the interro-negative form. Nevertheless, many candidates managed to provide acceptable answers, but only the very best attempted to or were able to cope with the required changes of pronouns and possessive adjectives ("les trois filles qui lui ont proposé de sortir avec elles lui ont dit que c'était sa timidité qui les avait attirées"). Q3: very few candidates went beyond repeating the points made in the stimulus. Q4: candidates usually produced developed answers but many were content to talk about the advantages of being part of a group of friends without considering the negative aspects of peer pressure and even gang mentality.

Stimulus 3: this was seemingly well understood by most candidates who seemed at ease with this kind of material. Q1: once again, the word “objectif” was not well understood and hardly any candidates used the word “publicité”, though there were many instances of “avertissement” or even “advertisement”. Q2: a straightforward question, often answered correctly and in full, occasionally in the course of answering Q1. Q3: this produced a certain amount of repetition of elements of answers to Q1 and Q2. Q4: Many candidates restricted their answers to the gadget under review without expanding them to others.

Topic Area: Lifestyle: Health And Fitness

Stimulus 1: This stimulus seemed to be well understood by the majority of candidates. Q1: this was often answered adequately as all the elements of the required answer were present in the first two sentences of the text. Q2: weaker candidates tended to read the bullet points verbatim. Better candidates added “il faut” or “on recommande de”. Q3: it was disappointing that the word “conseils” often caused difficulty. This question did not always produce developed answers, as candidates found it difficult to go beyond saying that the advice was good and why. Q4: many candidates talked generally about the advantages and disadvantages of technology and lost the focus on health. Some imaginative and well-developed answers even mentioned the benefits of modern technology in medicine (X Rays, cancer treatment, scanners etc.)

Stimulus 2: This stimulus seemed to catch some candidates by surprise. The themes of domestic accidents and first aid had obviously not always been part of the teaching received. More than just a few took the stimulus to be about domestic violence, which created some difficulties. Q1: candidates found this question surprisingly difficult to understand, perhaps because the information required to answer it was contained in the last paragraph of the text. Q2: this was best answered by a summary of paragraphs one and two of the stimulus. Few managed it. Many produced either a general answer or a partial one. Q3: many candidates found this question difficult to understand and produced no answer. Many who understood it, found it difficult to provide a good, developed answer. Nevertheless, good candidates were able to explain why or why not they would be able to act in an emergency. Some had been on a first aid course and were able to give very detailed answers. Q4: again this question caused problems. The concept of priority was not easily grasped. Answers often degenerated into pre-learnt speeches about obesity and/or anorexia.

Stimulus 3: This seemed to be well understood by the majority of candidates. Q1: a disappointingly low number of candidates seemed to be able to use the future in their answer. Q2: many candidates provided partial answers, only the better ones managed to thread all the various elements together. Q3: this produced many relevant and suitably developed answers about the benefits of encouraging young people to participate in sport. Q4: the word “professionnel” was often missed by candidates who produced well rehearsed answers about the general benefits of sport (often repeating points made in their previous answer). Better candidates spoke about the role of money and drugs in professional sport, as well as the impact of famous sportsmen as rôle models.

Topic Area: The World Around Us

Stimulus 1: There were no particular recurring problems with the understanding of this stimulus. Q1: this was often answered correctly. Q2: many candidates mentioned some of the dangers. Q3: this sometimes led to some repetition of answers to Q2, but candidates were well prepared for this question. Q4: this took some candidates by surprise while others produced detailed answers. The key was understanding the word "l'individu", which was not always the case.

Stimulus 2: no particular problems were reported about the understanding of this stimulus. Q1: usually answered adequately. Q2: mostly adequate answers provided, if not always complete. Q3: this caused a degree of repetition of points made in Q1 and Q2. Fully developed answers were relatively rare. Q4: this question was not well understood by many. The crucial adjective "urbains" was often disregarded. Weaker candidates often relied on reciting pre-learnt material about transport in general, so their answer lacked the necessary focus on urban transport in the future.

Stimulus 3: no particular problems reported with the understanding of this stimulus. Q1: usually answered adequately. Q2: usually answered adequately (if partially at times) and often anticipated in Q1. Q3: this produced many good answers. Q4: the focus on the environmental impact of tourism was often missed. Answers tended to concentrate on the benefits of tourism to local economies. Transport was often mentioned, but few considered the problems linked to use of scarce water resources or the problems associated with rampant development of coastlines, for example.

Topic Area: Education And Employment

Stimulus 1: this was normally well understood. Q1: usually produced an acceptable answer. Q2: some candidates missed the slightly negative aspect. Q3: this question produced many good answers, including both positive and negative aspects. Q4: answers were often disappointing. There was a lot of repetition of what had already been said in answers to Q2 and Q3. Very few candidates talked about the place of languages in the school curriculum for example.

Stimulus 2: a few candidates misunderstood "cours" for "courses" and thought the stimulus was about shopping. Q1: the answer could not be lifted even partially from the text, so many candidates had problems with answering this question adequately. Q2: "à l'unanimité" was not always understood but many candidates got there in the end, although the reading of percentages often proved problematic. Q3: some good answers produced, although the focus on primary schoolchildren was often forgotten about. Q4: this produced many good, well-rehearsed answers.

Stimulus 3: no particular problems reported with the understanding of this stimulus. Q1: once again, the word "objectif" caused some confusion. Few candidates started their answer with the obvious "de recruter". Q2: many candidates chose to answer this question imaginatively when the answer was in the text. Q3: answers to this question were often negative and rather limited. Q4: many candidates struggled with this question. The future tense was often missed or caused problems. The world of work of tomorrow did not seem to engage our candidates!

EXAMPLE OF ANSWERS AND MARKS AWARDED

Topic Area: Lifestyle; Health and Fitness, Stimulus 1 (L'ordinateur est-il mauvais pour la santé ?)

Candidate A (main language mistakes have been corrected)

Q1: Mal au dos, mal aux yeux et mal au poignet

Q2 : Assurer que l'écran est bien à la hauteur de vos yeux. Eloigner le moniteur de la lumière directe. Reposer vos yeux en vous détournant régulièrement de l'écran. Utiliser un écran à fond clair.

Q3 :Ils sont bons et ils sont très importants pour notre santé

Q4 : En général elles sont mauvaises pour la santé parce qu' on n'est pas très actif et elles encouragent l'obésité.

This performance was awarded 2 out of 4: satisfactory answers, but no more.

Candidate B (main language errors have been corrected)

Q1: Les dangers causés par l'utilisation des ordinateurs comme le mal au dos, le mal aux yeux et le mal au poignet

Q2: Dans le texte on dit qu'il faut s'assurer que l'écran est bien à la hauteur de ses yeux, qu'on doit éloigner le moniteur de la lumière directe, qu'il est important de reposer ses yeux régulièrement et utiliser un écran à fond clair et bien réglé

Q3: Ils sont très bons parce que de nos jours nous utilisons beaucoup l'ordinateur pour communiquer avec nos amis, pour écouter de la musique et pour le travail scolaire. C'est facile de prendre des mauvaises habitudes. Souvent j'ai mal aux yeux ou au dos quand j'ai passé trop de temps devant mon ordinateur, alors oui, ils sont excellents et nécessaires.

Q4: En général elles sont mauvaises pour la santé, comme j'ai déjà dit avec l'ordinateur. On passe trop de temps assis, sans faire de l'exercice. On dit aussi que les portables sont mauvais pour la santé à cause des radiations, alors il ne faut pas utiliser trop les portables. Les jeunes qui jouent beaucoup avec leurs jeux vidéo ne font pas assez de sport mais il y a un nouveau jeu vidéo qui s'appelle Wii et on fait beaucoup d'exercice avec, alors les nouvelles technologies ne sont pas toujours mauvaises pour la santé, mais oui, il faut faire attention.

This performance was awarded 4 out of 4, because the answers were correct, detailed and developed adequately. There were examples of much more developed answers, but the above constitutes a minimum for full marks in this part of the test

SECTION B

The second part requires the teacher/examiner to engage the student in a discussion that, although still relating to the same general topic area and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus. (Specification September 2007, p 9)

As an illustration, let us consider Stimulus 1 of the topic area Youth Culture and Concerns. The topic of the stimulus is social networks and the internet. In Section B therefore, these topics should not be revisited. The discussion led by the teacher/examiner should be about different sub-topics within the same general topic area (Youth Culture and Concerns) as listed on page 30 of the Specifications, i.e. music and/or fashion, other aspects of technology, or relationships etc... It is elegant and useful if the first question in this section can be a transitional one. It would be quite acceptable to introduce the topic of music by asking a question about the access to music via the internet (example: "vous avez dit que vous ne pourriez pas vous passer de l'internet. Est-ce que vous téléchargez de la musique alors? Quelle sorte de musique?) and then to develop the topic of music further. From music, it is quite easy to go on to the topic of fashion or going out with friends. Some good teacher/examiners used this technique very effectively this session. The conversation does not have to cover every single listed sub-topic: one or two may be sufficient if there is depth in the discussion. A few teacher/examiner found it difficult to relinquish the topic of the stimulus and kept revisiting it. It was not always obvious when Section A ended and Section B started. It is very useful if this can be made clear on the recording by saying something like: "bon, alors maintenant on va passer à autre chose". A small number introduced discussions about sub-topics from a different topic area. Having a conversation that does not move on from the topic of the stimulus or that strays into the wrong areas means that the candidate is unable to express relevant ideas and opinions or to demonstrate good understanding of his or her chosen general topic area, and is therefore penalised. Some overlap between topic areas is possible and acceptable, as long as the main focus of the discussion remains firmly embedded in the relevant topic area. For example, several conversations about Lifestyle: Health and Fitness included references to the use of alcohol or drugs (which strictly speaking are sub-topics of the Youth Culture and Concerns topic area). This was not penalised as it seemed logical to consider these matters within a discussion on health. Similarly, candidates often referred to their experiences in school (topic area Education and Employment) when talking about food or sport or friends (topic areas Lifestyle: Health and Fitness and Youth Culture and Concerns). This made sense and again was accepted as completely relevant.

ASSESSMENT

Understanding (General Topic Area)

This relates exclusively to Section B

Ideas and opinions are rewarded. A long list of facts embedded in a francophone context is not required, although some facts, figures and dates display understanding of the topic area and help to formulate and justify opinions. Personal questions and answers are acceptable to a certain extent but should be used very sparingly in order to avoid possible embarrassment and to make sure that the conversation goes beyond a GCSE style of discourse. It helps if issues are considered from a more general point of view and involve a degree of analysis. In order to achieve the higher marks in this part of the assessment, one needed to hear more than basic statements of opinion such as "Je pense que c'est bon/mauvais... ". Unfortunately, some centres kept the discussion (when it was a discussion) at a level which was more appropriate for GCSE than for AS.

Quality of language (Accuracy)

This relates to the whole test.

Both pronunciation and accuracy are rewarded in this part of the assessment.

The standard in both this session varied from utterances barely recognisable as French, up to beautifully accurate and authentic language. Many candidates achieved at least the 4-5 box in the grid. In terms of accuracy, the main problems concerned gender, agreements and conjugation. The weakest candidates seemed to use the infinitive form of the verb for all persons in all tenses. Better candidates displayed reasonable control of regular and irregular verbs in several tenses. A maximum mark of 8 was often awarded for performances which were not faultless, but showed good control of complex language.

Quality of language (Range of Lexis)

This relates to the whole test.

The quality and variety of vocabulary is considered, as well as the range of structures used. Again, the standard in this part of the assessment varied enormously. The adjective "bon" was probably the most over-used item of lexis. On the other hand, some candidates had learned an enormous amount of topic-specific lexis. As for structures, there is no definitive list of structures that need to be heard in order for candidates to have access to the higher boxes of the grid. The structures used need to be appropriate to the kind of discourse taking place between candidate and examiner. The level of complexity which involves a range of sentence structures, tenses and moods, and enables functions such as describing, agreeing, disagreeing, contrasting, conceding, questioning, explaining, exemplifying, justifying, surmising etc... was what determined the quality of the mark awarded. There was often a marked contrast between the range of language used in Sections A and B.

Response

This relates to the whole test.

There are five elements in this section of the assessment that come into play: comprehension, fluency, spontaneity, development and initiative. Some performances were spontaneous, but not very fluent. Many were very fluent but totally lacking in spontaneity. Comprehension was much less of a problem in Section B (well rehearsed questions) than in Section A (totally unrehearsed questions). Development of discourse only took place in largely unrehearsed exchanges. Unfortunately, too many centres had obviously prepared a list of questions and asked their students to learn answers by heart. Whilst it is understandable that areas of discussions will have been prepared, it goes totally against the spirit of the examination exclusively to recite pre-learnt answers in what is supposed to be a discussion and not a dry question and answer exercise. There is no opportunity in this case for displaying initiative. This was particularly evident in large centres where all candidates prepared the same topic, were asked the same questions and thus produced a series of pre-learnt recitations. When this happened, the maximum mark available was 8 out of 20 and was often less. Tests where a genuine discussion took place (often starting with a measure of learnt material, but going beyond) and which were reasonably fluent (but included all the hesitations and false starts that normal conversation entails) were rewarded.

CONDUCT OF TESTS BY TEACHER EXAMINERS

A good number of tests were conducted accurately and in the right spirit. There were many tests where a genuine conversation took place, sometimes at a very high level reminiscent of the best A2 (old Unit 4) debates. In most cases, timings (8-10 minutes) were adhered to. There were however, quite a few tests that went on much beyond 10 minutes (markers are asked to stop listening, much after 10 minutes) and too many that were significantly short. The latter are penalised by a downgrading of marks for Quality of Language (Accuracy and Range), as well as Response. The average time taken to deal with Section A was around 3 minutes. There were some instances of incorrect examining technique used by teacher/examiners: prompting, correcting, repeating questions in Section A when the candidate had not requested it, repeating the same question until the candidate gave the right answer, splitting questions, asking extra questions and offering comments in Section A, not making clear when Section A ended and Section B started, asking the candidate what they wanted to talk about, and jumping from sub-topic to sub-topic without any obvious link. The key to good examining is to listen to what the candidate says and to base the next question on something they have said, by asking them to explain, justify or expand their point(s). Only in this way can a degree of spontaneity be achieved

ADMINISTRATION

Most centres recorded their tests on audio cassettes. A few used audio and data CDs. Audio CDs which can be played on an ordinary CD player are preferred.

The quality of recording on the whole was fair, but examiners are asked to make sure that the candidates' voices can be heard clearly. A few problems were experienced: blank tapes, unmarked tapes, failing to state at the beginning of the recording the topic area and the stimulus about to be used. There were many missing oral forms (some centres were under the impression that these are no longer needed) and attendance lists. Centres are reminded that oral forms (OR1) can be downloaded from the Edexcel website and that the completed oral forms (which are used for marking and feedback by examiners) and two copies of the attendance registers should be sent to the examiner along with the recordings.

ADVICE TO TEACHER/EXAMINERS

- Encourage your students to choose the full range of topic areas
- Train them to give full and developed answers
- Teach them how to express and justify opinions
- Be aware of the different kinds of questions in Section A
- Read the questions in Section A exactly as they are
- Do not ask extra questions in Section A or offer comments
- Make it clear when you are moving from Section A to Section B
- Do not prepare and rehearse a list of questions
- Do not allow your candidates to recite pre-learnt material
- Make sure Section B is a discussion, not a series of recitations
- Do not revisit the stimulus topic in Section B
- Make sure the sub-topics you raise in Section B are relevant
- Keep to the specified timings
- Do not correct or prompt your candidates during the test as this will effect the marks they achieve for the different assessment grids.

Unit 2 (6FR02): Understanding and Written Response in French

This paper was set in accordance with the Specification guidance, and closely emulated the style of the sample Unit 2 paper. Centres received compact discs, which contained four passages, whose total running time was a little less than six minutes. The total time allocated to candidates was 2 hours 30 minutes, with candidates having access to the compact disc for the first 45 minutes only. All questions were compulsory, and the vast majority of candidates attempted all questions, including Q8, with widely varying outcomes. The excellent performances at the upper end of the candidature were, if it may be said, an especial credit to teachers and candidates alike in this first session for 6FR02. The passages sought to encompass topics of current interest from a variety of French-speaking cultures and contexts. The first four passages were spoken, the latter four were written.

Passage 1, relating to Q1, was a multiple choice exercise worth 4 marks, concerning the health risks of swimming off the Belgian coast, seeking straightforward, factual information from the passage. In response to passage 2, about the pricing policy of Swiss train fares, candidates selected the four correct statements from eight which were presented, worth 4 marks in total. Q3, based on Passage 3 about potential changes to the driver's licence, was a cloze exercise worth 4 marks, where candidates selected from a pool of eight items. Q4, where 8 marks were available, requiring responses in French, was based on Passage 4, concerning vending machines in French schools. From Passage 5, where young people auditioned to become celebrities, each of five statements had to be correctly attributed to one of four people, for a total of 5 marks. Passage 6 compared mixed and single sex education, and required no inference, but transfer of meaning into English. Five questions worth 1 mark each, were answered in English. Passage 7 concerned the donation of second hand spectacles and optometrists' expertise to help those in developing countries. Questions in French, amounting to 10 marks, required short responses in French. Passage 8 provided the stimulus for the written response of up to 220 words on young people's attitudes towards their bedroom, and, more generally, relationships with their parents. Up to 15 marks were on offer for both Content and Language, making Q8 worth 30 marks. 70 marks in total are available for 6FR02.

ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

In Q1, only 0 or 1 was scored for each part. In Q2, four crosses were required to denote the four correct statements. One mark was withheld for each cross offered in excess of four: for example, six crosses, including four correct ones, would attract 2 marks in total. In Q3, if the response selected was not wholly correctly transcribed, but could clearly not be confused with another item in the pool, it earned the mark. Thus *reduire* or *success* gained 1 mark. In Q5, 1 mark was scored for each statement correctly attributed to a young person. If two or more crosses were proffered in response to a given statement, credit was withheld: thus, in Q5a, for instance, crosses for both Xavier and Jessica would not score. Examiners assessed responses in Q4, Q6, and Q7 in the order that elements was presented by the candidates, and considered no more elements than the number of marks available. For instance, in a 2 mark question, only the first two elements scored. Repeating or re-working the question, or preambles to an acceptable response, did not count as elements in the response. While harmless additions do not cause credit to be withheld, vitiation through incorrect additions did. In Q8, candidates needed to gain at least 1 mark for Content to access any marks at all for Language, and *vice versa*. An opinion was essential in the first three bullet points for the bullet point to score fully, even if voiced in the most implicit and tangential fashion. The practice of enforcing the word limit in Q8 is consistent with the legacy Specification: Examiners read no further

than to the end of the sense group after 220 words, where *il y a* and its variants and proper nouns, if any, counted as a single word.

CANDIDATES' RESPONSES

Question 1

This question, sought simple, factual information in a non-verbal exercise. It proved an especially accessible multiple choice question with which to encourage candidates at the start of the paper. Many candidates scored 3 or 4 marks. Q1a was a heartening start for nearly all candidates, and proved to be the most successful part of the whole paper: over 99% of candidates gained the 1 mark on offer. Almost 70% of candidates scored in Q1b, with most of the others opting for *(iii) la mer*, as reference was made to not swimming in the sea. Q1c and Q1d were both highly successful for candidates, with over 83% and 93% in each case gaining 1 mark. In Q1c, fear of arrest was the most frequently proffered error.

Question 2

This question type was new to the listening comprehension questions, and was well-handled by most candidates. Only a very few placed too many crosses. Statement (c) attracted very few candidates, but statements (b) and (e) were commonly chosen, perhaps due to confusion between *simplicité* and *aller simple*; and misunderstanding of *que ceux* respectively. Statements (a) and (g) were especially often successfully chosen. Many candidates were adept at taking information from the passage, and applying it to statements, which were re-formulated from the passage.

Question 3

As in similar legacy Specification questions, a knowledge of grammar and of parts of speech helps to narrow the possibilities for each gap. Q3a, therefore, must only be filled by verb in the infinitive form. Q3d must be a masculine singular noun, as the adjective *fréquent* agrees with it. Full marks in Q3 were not uncommon, and low scores were rare. Q3b was the most discriminating part, where around half the responses did not score, most commonly due to *plus* being offered. The other three parts were all successful for over 87% of candidates, or more. Q3c, perhaps with influence from personal experience, attracted *continuent* quite frequently, or the grammatically incorrect *augmenter*. Q3d gave 1 mark to over 92% of candidates. The remaining 8% tended to write *l'échec*. This question proved to be easily accessible to much of the candidature, with Q3b as a discriminating part.

Question 4

All question parts are worth 1 or 2 marks, and, in this session, though not necessarily in future sessions, where 2 marks are on offer, they were awarded discretely. This holds true in Q7 later. It is worth repeating that targeted, not oblique lifts from the passage can score in Q4 and Q7. Some candidates gained credit steadily through the parts of this question, while others struggled, often 'carpet bombing' or attempting rather incomprehensibly to transcribe the passage. Some candidates gained no credit. It was expected to be the most challenging listening question. Communication only, not Language, was considered, in line with the general marking principles above.

Q4a

The discrete notions sought were (1) removal and (2) of vending machines. There was no ban on sweets or fizzy drinks *per se*, but the notion of *enlèvement* proved challenging. It was accepted in other formulations which, given the difficulty of the notion, were sufficiently close: *interdire, abandonner, pas permettre les distributeurs. qu'il ne vendent pas de boissons et les confiseries* gained the second mark only, as there was no sense of a change in situation as conveyed by *qu'il ne vendent plus de...* References to *la loi santé publique (t.c.)* could not score, as they did not target the question. Mention of the fight against obesity was taken as a preamble. A logical continuation of the question, with or without the necessary subjunctive, gained 2 marks: *qu'il n'y a(it) pas de distributeurs*.

Q4b

The formulation of this question discriminated between those who paid close attention to the question, and those who lifted inattentively. *ils mangent quand ils ont faim* was very common, as was *quand ils sont faim*. *faim* scored as part of a correct response only spelt right. It was often not correct: *femme, faime, feim, fin*. *ils ne mangent pas constamment* implies that pupils never eat, rather than from a vending machine, so was not rewarded. *ils ne grignotent pas* seemed a logical inference which earned 1 mark. The response needed to be introduced by *quand, si* or similar, otherwise *ils n'ont pas faim* was meaningless.

Q4c

Many candidates succeeded in gaining 1 discrete mark. There was much allusion to *ils vont se fâcher*, which was treated as a preamble. Two marks were not very frequent: the majority understood the idea of *habitude* but many fewer conveyed the first element, *sans préavis*. Those who did often referred to the *surprise* of the removal. For the second mark, there had to be the sense of regularity: *tous les jours, souvent*. Thus *ils aiment les distributeurs* was too vague to score. *ils avaient pris l'habitude* was ambiguous, and did not score. A lift was accepted, provided that the direct object was explicit in an earlier part: *il y a les jeunes qui ont pris l'habitude de les utiliser*.

Q4d

As with Q4b, candidates needed to read the part carefully, and the notion of *profitable*, cognate with English, was key. Poor expression and the incorrect idea or tense abounded. *charger des prix plus chers* was a rejected anglicism. The conditional tense of the question precluded responses in the past tense, or even in the present tense if formulated with *avoir*: *ils ont les prix plus chers*. Frequently, candidates suggested that lower cafeteria prices or employing more staff would aid profitability. In contrast to Q4c, *pris* was unsuccessfully offered for *prix*: *il faut augmenter les pris*. *augmenter* was rendered in a number of rewardable ways: *rendre les prix plus chers; les prix montent*. An alternative approach also scored: *il faut vendre les produits malsains*. Lack of credit in this part seemed often due to the question not being read attentively, since many responses contained correct information, but no direct answer to this part.

Q4e

grignoter and *cartable* engendered an array of answers, and 0, 1 and 2 marks were accessed in fairly even measure. The key notions were that pupils had (1) to bring in (2) a plausible and edible morning snack into school. Bringing food in could be rendered by various verbs: *apporter, mettre, prévoir*. *porter* and *prendre* did not emphasise that this snack was brought in from outside of school, so were rejected. The idea that the school would provide the food was incorrect, as was the suggestion that a whole meal be packed, that the satchel become a table from which to eat, and that the satchel was a tuck shop

of some kind from which food would be sold. Some misunderstandings provided illogical or incomprehensible responses: *ils grignotent (sur) le cartable* ; *ils mangent* or *acheter des grignotes* ; *les établissements installent quelque chose dans le cartable*. *cartable* was not well understood, and *carte table* often invalidated 1 mark.

Question 5

The information required here is straightforward and factual, as the candidate enters the reading section of the paper. Candidates scored very well in this question, with all five parts attracting a strong majority of correct answers. As in Q3, there were some parts accessed by almost all of the candidature: over 95% gained the 1 mark available in Q5a; and there was a more testing part in Q5b, where around a third of candidates did not score. It was important to place one cross, and one cross only on each line, and some candidates squandered marks by offering two responses or no response to a given utterance. In Q5a, *...se montre un peu plus sympa* was widely understood for poor treatment of contestants. Q5b tested the correlation between *tôt* and being among the first to perform, having arrived at 8 o'clock. Understanding of *tôt* seemed not to have been universal. Q5c required an understanding of *ne...jamais*, to link it to the first time of auditioning, and around a fifth of candidates did not score. The cognate *improviser* and lack of preparation eluded some 10% of candidates in Q5d. In Q5e, around 20% of candidates did not relate hopes of becoming a professional musician to *carrière*, suggesting their not spotting the cognate of the English noun, career. A good number of candidates gained 4 or even 5 marks for this question.

Question 6

Full sentences were not required in this transfer of meaning question. There was no inference here, so 5 marks, 1 for each part, were on offer for accurate and comprehensible retrieval of information from the passage. A large number of candidates managed to score full marks, and on average, some 3 marks were gained. There was evidence of 'carpet bombing', or English which conveyed incomplete information. Thankfully few candidates invalidated their response by writing in French. A small number inadvertently switched to French for individual parts.

Q6a

The vast majority of candidates gained 1 mark in this part. References to French were treated as harmless additions, but mention of mathematics, where girls did not outperform boys, vitiated the response: *in reading and maths*. Girls' superiority in reading was acceptably rendered: *girls read more easily, girls like to read more than boys*. *making notes* was a faulty understanding of *meilleures notes* and was rejected.

Q6b

As in Q6a, many candidates earned the 1 mark allocated, the essential information being that performance is not identical, but similar. Implications of precisely the same achievement between the genders were rejected: *the same, equally balanced, similar (t.c.)* was accepted, as it does not imply quite the same parity. Adverbs often helped to gain the mark: *about equal, equally well, pretty much equal, about the same, roughly equal, more equal* was just tolerated for 1 mark; *stable* was rejected as a translation of *plus équilibré*.

Q6c

This was perhaps the most challenging part of Q6. One mark was gained if three notions were all present: one gender affecting the school work of the other negatively. Infelicitous English expression impacted upon scoring: *defavorising the other gender* is not English, *affect* does not convey the negative sense of *affecter*. Either gender detrimentally affecting the other was acceptable, but needed to be stated explicitly: *girls affect boys' academic performance negatively; boys affect girls' academic performance negatively*. Candidates did not score if the school's success, rather than success of individual pupils was mentioned: *boys negatively affect girls in school league tables*.

Q6d

The idea of boys as aggressors of girls was well understood by many, but responses which did not mention girls were rejected: *boys are disrespectful. girls are intimidated by boys* scored. Examiners accepted a wide variety of renditions for *embêtées*: *vexed, annoyed, put off, distracted. aggressive shouting* was not accepted, though this may well occur in some classrooms. Misunderstandings involved girls having to earn the respect of boys, and girls not respecting each other. Information pertaining to Q6c and Q6e was sometimes offered.

Q6e

The idea of reciprocity was well understood by many candidates, and a translated lift, if accurate, scored, including tolerance of infelicitous pronouns: *if we respect one another, we can learn to live together perfectly well; if we respect one another, you can learn to live together perfectly well*. The reciprocal notion was essential. *self-respect* was the most frequent misunderstanding. Similarly, *respect is necessary (t.c.)* did not score, as there was no reciprocal sense. Some candidates reversed the information unproductively: *if we live together, we will learn to respect one another*.

Question 7

This question is of the same type as in 6442 of the legacy Specification. In the same way as Q4 for spoken language, Q7 seeks responses in French to the written word. No question part is worth more than 2 marks. Targeted lifts were accepted. There were 10 marks on offer, and the mean score was 6 marks. Discrete marking in the 2 mark questions allowed candidates who had partially understood to access some credit.

Q7a

Many candidates were guided by the question to the correct part of the passage, but did not focus on the question, where the point of view of the recipient was needed: *ils reçoivent des paires de lunettes. obtenir and gagner* were acceptable alternatives for *recevoir*, but non-existent forms of *recevoir* were rejected, as the verb was essential: *recevoient*. The inferred impact on recipients' lives was accepted: *ils reçoivent une seconde vie, leur vue est améliorée*. Candidates who remained with the angle expressed in the text did not score: *les Parisiens donnent les paires de lunettes*. The anglicism was incomprehensible: *ils sont donnés des lunettes. paire* was often present but without *lunettes*. *auprès de* seemed to confuse some candidates.

Q7b

This part produced polarised results, with candidates who noted the future tense of the question focusing correctly on the impact of the new spectacles to aid Maika's vision, in contrast to those who recounted Maika's position before their arrival. The two notions sought were improved ability to read what is written. *déchiffrer* and *distinguer* captured the first element precisely, and *voir* was accepted with a suitable adverb: *mieux, plus facilement*, as she could already see, albeit it poorly. *comprendre* was rejected, as emphasis on the sight, not comprehension, was needed. *la mauvaise vue gâchait la vie de*

cette fille was selected by many candidate, who then related how Maika did not use to be able see what was on the board. Even the second mark could not be gained in this case, as the response showed misunderstanding. However, this same lift was an acceptable preamble if it led into Maika's new situation.

Q7c

One mark could be gained laconically: *mauvaise (t.c.)* refers back to *situation, pauvreté (t.c.)* communicated. *mal (t.c.)* was rejected, as an oblique response. *la famille est pauvre* was sufficient. The idea of *pauvre* was well understood, but there was ambiguity which led to lost credit, especially where possessives were vague: *la famille n'a pas les moyens de faire corriger sa vue. la famille n'a pas les moyens pour aider Maika* was more explicit, and succeeded. *moyennes* for *moyens* was ambiguous, so did not score.

Q7d

Many candidates offered a lift of the last sentence in the second paragraph to score 1 mark. This was accepted, provided that *lunettes* had been mentioned explicitly in an earlier part of Q7, since the pronoun object would otherwise have no meaning. This part sought the transportation idea, and was vitiated by carpet bombing, beginning with *récupèrent, nettoient, trient les paires...apporter* could be rendered: *livrer, distribuer, porter aux gens, transporter aux gens. envoyer, donner, prendre, porter, fournir* were all rejected, as they did not make clear that the members of Avisia personally transported the spectacles. Responses beginning with *se chargent...* were untargeted and therefore rejected. *charger* without its reflexive was ambiguous, and also did not score.

Q7e

Many candidates gained the 1 mark available, as *les villages (t.c.)* or *Sénégal (t.c.)* both scored. Senegal (t.c.) without at least one accent was regarded as English, and did not score. However, this is not as draconian as it may seem, and references to *villages* often saved the mark: *au Sénégal. Ils vont aux villages.* The preposition was tolerated, so as long as it did not vitiate: *en Sénégal, dans Sénégal*, but not *loin de Sénégal*. A number of candidates lifted the first sentence from the third paragraph *in toto*, and this was considered to be carpet bombing. A more targeted lift of the same sentence scored: *quatre membres d'Avisia passent un mois au Sénégal.*

Q7f

Two discrete marks were on offer, and, with tolerance for ambiguity involving who was or was not paying, many gained 1 mark, and a good number both marks. It was possible to score either from the surgeon's point of view: *il peut les soigner sans payer*; or the angle of the patient: *ils peuvent se faire soigner sans payer.* *soigner, traiter* and *opérer* were all acceptable verbs in the first element, and could be acceptably rendered as nouns: *soignement, traitement, opération.* *correction de la vue* was a very good, specific response. *opération* in English did not score. *sans payer* could be conveyed by *gratuitement, sans argent, pour rien* but *pour gratuit* was an anglicism too far, and *libre* was incomprehensible, and forfeited the mark. *se faire opérer* was acceptable, only when from the patient's viewpoint, and invalidated 1 mark if it implied that the surgeon treated himself, or if the response was from the surgeon's angle: *il peut se faire opérer sans payer.* One mark was withheld if the past tense was used, as the potential benefit is discussed here, not the track record. Faulty verb formation and confused singular and plural verbs and pronouns rendered some otherwise decent responses to this part incomprehensible.

Q7g

An attempt at the past tense was desirable here, as 2002 is being discussed. Therefore, future tense usage forfeited the 1 mark offered. As the perfect passive is not in the AS programme of study, defective attempts which communicated, were tolerated: *elle a était créer, elle était crée. créer* understandably caused some difficulties for candidates, but under the marking principle that existent verb forms score, only *cré* had to be rejected, and the double or triple letter were accepted, as was the sometimes erroneous subject pronoun: *il a été créé, elle a été créée. fonder* rather than *fondre* and *établir* were acceptable alternatives, but implications of a physical structure were not: *construit*. The first line of the fourth paragraph was creditworthy if lifted. *foundation* in English was unsuccessful. The most common error involved attempts referring to treating the six thousandth patient, perhaps due to misunderstanding of *venir de*.

Q7h

This part was intended to be a straightforward and positive conclusion to the comprehension sections, and many candidates gained 1 mark in a very succinct fashion: *sur Internet, sur la toile, en ligne, son site*. It tended to be the very weak candidates who had performed less well throughout who lifted the final sentence of the passage ineffectively: *son site mérite un clic*, even though this does not target the question; or who spoiled their response by appending meaninglessly to the correct information, hence invalidating their mark: *il y a un site d'internet mérite un clic les yeux et le cœur*. Stray references to opening eyes and hearts did not answer how more information can be found. This part was overall one of the most successful for candidates.

Question 8

This question was found to be accessible to the vast majority of candidates. It is clearly a theme which touched all candidates, including adult candidates whose viewpoint was often refreshing, and was simple while stimulating a full range of achievement. Almost all attempted the task, using the stimulus more or less effectively. The word count of 220 words proved generally adequate, and candidates who exceeded the limit often did so because much of their early answer was introductory, general, irrelevant or over-developed. Full marks were achieved within the word limit. Many successful candidates planned their responses, possibly saving time and wasted words in the long run. Credit was not withheld from short length work, but it was often self-penalising, as the necessary development was possibly not achieved. The most successful responses tended to deal with the bullet points in the order in which they were presented, often dividing the response into one paragraph per bullet point. The paragraph frequently began with a simple but direct response to this prompt, and further sentences then developed or nuanced the response. As an article was required, a title was well seen, and counted in favour of the Content score, while a letter format invalidated 1 mark for Content. A sentence of contextualisation or introduction, and one to round off the response were often successful. Candidates were able to draw on the stimulus, and are advised to do so. However, over-reliance, repetition, and disregard were all relatively frequent but less effective treatments of the stimulus. Furthermore, each of the first three bullet points required an opinion for it to score fully, and a source of conflict was needed in the fourth bullet point.

Grammatical accuracy naturally varied greatly, from the almost incomprehensible to the near faultless. Pre-learnt phrases abounded, and although often inappropriate, were on other occasions put to telling and suitable use. Tense usage and agreements of nouns and adjectives were especially discriminating features. Incorrect pronouns and possessive adjectives often led to ambiguity, while anglicisms crept in where the *mot juste* eluded the candidate. It is well worth checking Q8 carefully, and ensuring that basic grammar from GCSE level or earlier is correct. Accuracy at a basic level is as impressive, if not

more so, than sophisticated constructions which are not always wholly convincing. Some common errors may be helpful to suggest areas which could be improved:

Les parents devez entré vos chambre ; le parents entres dans ses chambre ; vous peuve oublie ; les parent parle à ses enfants ; leur enfants ; Ça mère ; Il son dans le salon ; Sont père ; Il y a beaucoup des vêtements sur le lit ; Tous les temps which was very common; *Les jeunes' espace ; Leur ado's chambre.*

Some candidates, however, produced excellent work, and are to be commended on their precision and sophistication, both in terms of Content and Language, after the relatively brief AS course.

Bullet point 1:

This bullet point was fully gained by many candidates. Most frequently, candidates said that the bedroom represented themselves, and exemplified ways in which this was so, such as choice of décor, music which was played in the bedroom or choice of layout. Also frequent were responses which described the bedroom as an oasis, either of calm or of personal space, with homework and relaxation cited as key activities. A significant minority, often apparently from boarding schools, did not feel that it represented more than a place to sleep, either as the bedroom was shared, or was in the parental home, where they did not sleep during termtime. All the routes mentioned above could score fully. Responses which did not, included those which described the bedroom, but not how this description related to the significance of the bedroom to the candidate; nor those which relied too much on the text, stating simply that the bedroom is not decorated in a gothic style.

Bullet point 2:

Examiners took a very tolerant view of responses to this bullet point, and accepted that *ce qui vous encouragerait...* was a challenging formulation. *garder* was not dealt with felicitously by all, and reduced credit if there was no mention of tidiness. Therefore, candidates who identified who tidied the bedroom, and who responded in tenses even other than the conditional tense, gained the bullet point fully. More able candidates dealt with the prompt well, and suggested that self-respect, parental pressure and financial incentives would all play a part. More basic, but acceptable responses, involvrf having a tidy room for friends to visit, the annoyance caused my mislaying items in an untidy room, and of course, dirty laundry. For some, legitimately, nothing would encourage them, as being a teenager *per se* meant being untidy.

Bullet point 3:

Nearly all candidates mustered some response to this bullet point, and gained partial or full credit. The prompt invited a simple negative or affirmative, which was fully acceptable. *ils doivent* with no dependent infinitive was not uncommon, and rendered the response only partially successful. Credit was most commonly lost where candidates evaluated the pros and cons of parents having the right to enter, without stating their view. Many couched their opinion in nuanced terms: generally parents have no right to enter, but gain that right in an emergency. Views ranged from the bedroom as sacrosanct, through it needing to be checked in case of illicit activity within, to full access, as the whole house belongs to the parents and there is nothing to hide in the bedroom. Those who shared a bedroom or were boarders were distinctly less territorial towards their bedroom.

Bullet point 4:

Quite a number of candidates had answered verbosely earlier, and now fell beyond the word count. Without the fourth bullet point, 9 marks for Content is a maximum. Many candidates who wrote excessively managed to get their response to the fourth bullet

point credited, but none of its development. As in the third bullet point, there was a good deal of partial success, this time due to problems being stated, but not linked to parental disagreements. Perhaps taken from 6FR01 preparation, or general AS work, tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs featured prominently. Other favourite themes were the right to go out when and with whom the teenager chose, vetting of girlfriends or boyfriends and ICT use, be it mobile telephones, the computer or the television. Some candidates unfortunately referred back to the bedroom as source of conflict, and this did not score. Others erroneously discussed solutions to conflicts, such as tougher laws on binge drinking. Solutions were only creditworthy when linked to the problem: more discussion would prevent misunderstanding, which was a source of discord in some families. This prompt elicited a pleased array of responses from candidates of all abilities.

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

1. In this new Specification, basic grammatical knowledge remains essential, especially correct use of the various parts of speech. Verbs without an ending of any kind are obviously non-existent forms which cannot score. Grammatical inaccuracy and knowledge deprives candidates of credit where responses to comprehension questions are rendered incomprehensible. Up to 15 marks for language are awarded explicitly in Q8.
2. Candidates should familiarise themselves with the various marking principles mentioned in this report, such as the order of elements rule and acceptance of targeted lifts. Such awareness helps to maximise performance.
3. Practice of non-verbal and non-productive question types in both listening (Q1, Q2 and Q3) and reading (Q5) is important, as such questions account for 17 marks.
4. A few moments spent gaining an awareness of the overall context of each passage helps to avoid illogical responses. This assists especially in Q4 and Q7.
5. In Q6, it is important to transfer meaning into English fully, accurately and felicitously.
6. Q8 must be accorded sufficient time in which to respond directly and fully to each bullet point using varied French. 30 of the total of 70 marks are available in Q8 alone. Pre-learnt phrases may be far less apt than simple, but accurately targeted responses. In this first session, bullet point 2 was credited very generously, including responses in tenses other than the conditional, the tense which the prompt sought, and where *ce qui* was not understood. Candidates should pay close attention to the specific requirements of each bullet point.
7. Allowing checking time within the 2 hours 30 minutes, especially for Q8, is strongly recommended.
8. For practice, make judicious use of legacy paper questions whose type is similar to that used in this paper.
9. Tidy presentation is important: illegible work cannot be credited.
10. Rough work is discouraged and supplementary sheets should not act as rough paper. A draft, as distinct from a plan, in Q8 sometimes led to time running short, and thus a less effective final response. Planning might well be an efficient use of time.

Statistics

Unit 1 (6FR01) Spoken Expression and Response in French

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	38	33	29	25	21
Uniform boundary mark	60	48	42	36	30	24

Unit 2 (6FR02) Understanding and Written Response in French

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	70	53	48	43	38	33
Uniform boundary mark	140	112	98	84	70	56

Please note that although the modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across MFL specifications are comparable at specification level.

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