

General

Candidates are required to write about 50 words in French on a topic related to the preceding reading passage. Examiners will not count the words and everything a candidate writes will be assessed. However, it should be stressed that a piece of 50 words will be able to access the full assessment criteria. Candidates should be encouraged to keep to about 50 words.

The 10 marks available for this question are sub-divided into:

5 marks Communication and Content

5 marks Knowledge and Application of Language

The mark grids are printed on page 12 of the Specification (Issue 1).

The grade descriptions for grades A, C and F are printed in the specification on pages 23 – 24. These give a general indication of the required outcomes at the specified grades. The 3rd paragraph in each set of descriptions refers to the writing tasks.

Here the description of the required outcomes in writing at grade C:

They write for different contexts that may be real or imaginary. They communicate information and express points of view. They use a variety of structures and may include different tenses or time frames. The style is basic. They convey a clear message but there may be some errors.

and at grade F:

They write short texts that relate to familiar contexts. They can express simple opinions. They use simple sentences. The main points are usually conveyed but there are mistakes in spelling and grammar.

Commentary

The candidate has written 63 words. This is unnecessarily long for this task. The candidate would have done better to aim for quality rather than quantity. About 50 words is perfectly adequate.

Communication and content

The mark for Communication and content will be awarded first. Examiners will read the essay through and consider to what extent the response

a) is clear (Communication)

b) relies on the preceding reading passage (Content).

The candidate has written nothing irrelevant to the theme of going to the shops. The candidate has clearly been advised not to copy from the stimulus text, even to the extent of replacing *sœur* with *frère*. Unavoidably, the candidate has copied *magasins*. The candidate has also used *choix* and *marché*. This is quite acceptable. No complete phrases have been copied. The candidate's response is therefore "mostly independent", there is "minimal reliance on the supporting passage" (Band 5). The candidate has attempted to express opinions, although this is not a requirement in this task.

On the other hand, the piece of writing lacks clarity: did the candidate go with one friend or several? which tense is the candidate using at the outset? what exactly is meant by *est beaucoup d'achete*? is a native

speaker, however sympathetic, going to be able to understand *expensive*? indeed, is there any meaning in the last 13 unnecessary words?

Communication is therefore limited and there is frequent lack of clarity.

As there are elements of Band 5 and elements of Band 3-4, the mark for the piece of work must be placed at the top of Band 3-4.

Knowledge and application of language

Given the comments above, the candidate cannot be placed in Band 5. Band 3-4 must then be considered.

The range of vocabulary seems very thin. Apart from nouns copied from the text, there is only very basic vocabulary: *frère, centre ville, argents* – none with correct gender. The three French adjectives used are similarly basic. This is not adequate for Band 3-4. The vocabulary fits the Band 1-2 descriptor “a narrow range of vocabulary”.

At this level subordinate clauses are not required. The candidate has used two (*parce que, je pense que*). However, the structure with *parce que* is repeated. This could qualify the piece for the lower end of Band 3-4.

There is very little accuracy in grammar: there are errors in gender and agreement throughout; the spelling of *beaucoup* is inconsistent; the absence of noun / pronoun subjects toward the end of the piece create confusion; *beaucoup d'achete* is completely ungrammatical.

The mark for the piece cannot be in Band 3-4. However, as the candidate has attempted structures and as the accuracy of the grammar and spelling is not anywhere near “No rewardable material”, the piece should be awarded a mark at the top of Band 1-2.

Conclusion

This piece of writing would score 4 +2 =6. The performance does not quite fulfill the grade C criteria since the message is not always clear and the style is very basic rather than “basic”.

Question 3b is designed to enable candidates at Grade C and below to show that they are capable of writing a more extended piece in simple French. Candidates who avoid copying material from the 3a text and who write simply and relevantly are able to reach their potential here.