

Examiners' Report / Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE French (4365) Paper 02 Reading and Writing

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General comments

Many candidates had been extremely well prepared for this examination. It is a tribute to their teachers that scripts were neatly presented and that the candidates managed their time well.

Candidates should be discouraged from writing a draft in pencil and then overwriting.

Question 1 (Topic Area B - Childhood)

Grade C candidates found this question universally accessible. Further down the grade range, performance was very patchy, with the biggest weakness in (v) *lapin*.

Question 2 (Topic Area A - Everyday life, traditions and communities)

This question covered a less frequently targeted topic but was generally successfully completed by C Grade candidates and above, questions (i) and (iv) which occasionally caused difficulty.

Question 3 (Topic Area C - Self, Family and Friends)

This question was accessible to C Grade candidates and above. Below that level, candidates were inclined to confuse the answers for (iv) and (v). It was pleasing to note that the vast majority of candidates were able to identify that *Didier* was the distractor

Question 4 (Topic Area C - Self, Family and Friends)

There were many excellent short, simple pieces. It is clear that many Centres have prepared well their weaker candidates to do well in this exercise and to glean as many marks as possible with minimum language.

The following essay does what the rubric asks and so gains 5 for Communication. Even for C/D level, the language is a little simple and not always accurate and so gains 4 for Knowledge and Application of Language

J'ai une petite sœur. Elle s'appelle XXX. Elle a 14 ans. Elle les cheveux noirs (mi-longs) et les yeux noirs. Elle est courte. Elle est sympa, patiente et sensible. Pour ses passé-temps, elle aime la lecture, la danse et regarder la télé et les films

5+4

The main cause of low marks for Communication was candidates' inattention to the rubric which stated that they should write about un membre de votre famille. A substantial minority tried to introduce the whole family. In the following example, the candidate has not followed the rubric correctly. This has lead the candidate into using very repetitious language which cannot be rewarded above a mark of 3 for Knowledge and Application.

Il y a cinq membres dans ma famille. Mon père, ma mère et ma petite sœur, mon frère et moi. Ma père s'appelle XXX. Il est très gentil. Il a quarante-

cinq ans. Ma mère s'appelle XXX . Elle est les cheveux longes. Ma petite soeur, XXX est très méchante. Elle adore le dessin animé. Mon frère est plus âgé que moi. Il a dix-huite ans, et il adore le cricket et le basket.
2 + 3

Teachers had done well to remind candidates not to lift direct quotations from Question 3. The following essay is somewhat difficult to follow (it is “mostly completed”) and so achieves only 4 marks for Communication. The error *Je vais parler à mon grand-père* was an error of Communication and was not, therefore, taken into account for Knowledge and Application of Language. There is a small section lifted from the text and there are some minor errors. There some attempt at variety, and so the K+A mark is 4.

Je vais parler à mon grand-père. Il s'appelle XXX. Il a 66 ans. Il habite dans une petite maison au (ville). Il est petit. Il est gros. Il a les yeux bleu et il a les cheveux blancs. Il aime beaucoup regarder la télé. J'adore mon grand-père. Il est très gentil.
4+4

Question 5 (Topic Area E - Sports and Exercise)

This question was more challenging as the text was complex and candidates had to think most carefully. The majority, of but not all, A Grade candidates were able to reach full marks. Grade C candidates generally managed to achieve 3 marks out of 5, but there was no consistent pattern to the way the question was answered. It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates crossed all five boxes as required.

Question 6 (Topic Area D - Information and Communication Technology)

The number of lines allowed was adequate for answers expressed as full sentences. Those candidates who found themselves writing below the designated lines were writing too much. The main reason for this was that many of them were, in effect, repeating the question: for example many candidates started question (e) *on sait dans quel quartier elle habite parce que ...* . This was unnecessarily long. A better reply would start *Elle (le) sait parce que ...* . The use of the neutral pronoun would distinguish a more able candidate. In question (f) candidates should have resisted the temptation go to beyond *Parce qu'elle avait posté une photo d'elle meme*. The addition of *qui montrait qu'elle a seulement 15 ans* should have been recognised by candidates as just another way of repeating the question.

For questions (a) - (e) and question (g) the masculine pronoun has been accepted for comprehension . In question (f) this was not possible (see below).

(i) Comprehension:

For the Comprehension element of Question 6, candidates must have “perspective” - they must imagine that whoever is reading the answers does not have access to the original text. It is up to the candidate to “explain” the answer to a person who had no knowledge of the original.

(a) *Ses (parents)* rather than *les parent de Nelly* was adequate as “Nelly” was mentioned in the text. This answer was very accessible to weaker candidates who

would not have gained a high mark for Knowledge of Language but would have gleaned as many marks as possible for Comprehension without making too many grammatical mistakes.

Les parents de Nelly ont invité la policière à rendre visite à Nelly was too long. The underlined section was unnecessary.

(b) The policewoman has come to Nelly's home. The question refers only to some unspecified "details". Candidates were required to add two important details: firstly that these details were to be found on Nelly's blog / website and secondly, that these details were the sensitive details which gave "information about her identity" or which were "personal" to her alone.

The answer *ce qu'elle avait déjà mis* might have appeared to candidates to be a sound adaptation of the text from the first to the third person, but again, candidates should have imagined the police woman trawling through the pages and pages of blog/chat that Nelly may have written. The remit of the police woman was to show **the dangers** of using the Internet. The answer therefore required a much more specific answer.

La policière a examiné avec Nelly les détails personnels de Nelly sur le blog should have been shortened to *Elle a examiné les détails personnels de Nelly sur son blog*.

(c) Many candidates correctly referred to "le logo de l'école" and suggested that this logo could be "looked up". But candidates should have thought twice about the answer: *On pourrait rechercher le logo de son école*. The facts are quite correct, but how does the reader of Nelly's blog know what the logo is. It is because *Nelly avait recopié le logo de son école*. How according to the text the reader is going to look for that logo? The text tells them that it is *sur Internet*.

On pourrait apprendre dans quelle ville se trouve l'école de Nelly en faisant une recherche sur Internet pour retrouver le logo de l'école car le logo était visible sur le blog quand elle avait publié son blog au sujet de ses devoirs. Candidates should have asked themselves what information required by the answer is conveyed by the underlined text. They should have realised that none of the underlined information was necessary. An even more succinct answer would have been: *En faisant une recherche sur Internet pour retrouver le logo de l'école que Nelly avait recopié sur son blog*.

(d) The vast majority of candidates failed to understand that the whole of the phrase in inverted commas and bold must be expressed in their own words. Whilst most attempted *ayant de mauvaises intentions*, very, very few attempted to convey *un adolescent*, thus instantly sacrificing one mark.

Candidates should be dissuaded from starting their answers with expressions such as: *Je pense que l'expression "un adolescent ayant de mauvaises intentions" veut dire*. At the very most, all that is needed is the expression: *cela veut dire*, but a candidate may just as readily start: *(c'est) une jeune personne qui ...*

(f) The examiners make every attempt to be fair to all candidates and so adopt the persona of the sympathetic native speaker of French. From this perspective, the examiners were happy to accept *Une photo de sa-même* which was simply a grammatical error. Unfortunately, *une photo de sa* (followed by a full stop) changed

the meaning and was unacceptable, as was *une photo de lui* as in this question, the feminine was required as the feminine pronoun is given in the question.

(g) Candidates who found their own way of expressing the first part of the answer *Elle fait plus attention* by using expressions such as *Elle est plus prudente*; *Elle est plus attentive* often failed to gain the mark for the question as they did not include the essential information which explained what she was more *prudente* about. She was, of course, more careful about what she was writing on her blog.

Similarly, *Elle connaît les dangers d'Internet* was an excellent start to the answer, but did not indicate a change in attitude and so, if that was the completed answer, it could not be awarded the Comprehension mark. Such an answer was, however, be fully credited for Knowledge of Language.

(ii) Knowledge and Application of Language

Q6 For questions (a) - (e) the masculine pronoun has been accepted as grammatically correct as the text has only one very small indication (a past participle agreement) that Nelly is female. However, across these five questions, candidates were expected to be consistent. In question (f) the feminine was required. This gave candidates a considerable amount of leeway for question (g).

(a) *Ses parents* answered the question and contributed minimally to the Knowledge and Application of Language (K+A) mark.

Ses parent ont invite la policière showed well that the candidate was able to transfer from the singular verb form of the question and had thought to use the plural from the original text. Grammatically, this was a sound answer and should be within the range of a C Grade candidate. However, more able candidates could have written more complex sentences: *Ses parents l'ont invité* (sic) / *Ce sont les parent de Nelly qui l'ont invitée* (A* level).

(b) More able candidates will have known that the final *-s* of *examinés* must be removed in the answer *elle a examiné*. However, the lingering presence of the *-s* was considered a very minor grammatical error.

Candidates who included both the pronoun *y* and the information *sur son blog* (*Les details personnels qu'elle y avait mis sur son blog*) were rarely those who scored well for K+A.

(c) Many of the more able candidates missed the opportunity of using the construction *en faisant* in answer to this question which starts *Comment?*

(f) Weaker candidates did well to copy the format of the question *Il y avait une photo de Nelly / d'elle(meme)*. More able candidates who were attempting to gain a high K+A mark should have considered changing both the verb used in the original text (*poster*) and the verb used in the question (*il y avait*). The answer *Elle (y) a mis sa photo* is very short but has shown a considerable amount of manipulation of language by the candidate.

(g) Many candidates quite correctly transposed several pronouns to arrive at a very correct answer: *Elle fait plus attention aux details qu'elle laisse sur son blog* only to fall at the relatively simple hurdle of the verb *faire*: *Elle fais plus attention ... sur sa blog*.

Question 7

Candidates are strongly discouraged from writing much in excess of the 150 words required by the rubric. Essays running to 200 words and more are generally vague in content, often missing one or several bullet points. The longer an essay becomes, the more the rate of grammatical error increases. For those Centres who will be preparing their candidates for the A-Level examinations, the IGCSE essays are an ideal ground for training candidates to write concisely, accurately and to the point.

If candidates respect the word limit of 150 words, they should have ample space to write a rough draft on the question paper.

Teachers are asked to remind candidates to fill in the Box at the top of the essay to indicate which essay they have chosen. One candidate in 20 forgot to do this.

Question 7a (Topic Area A - Holidays and tourist information)

This was by far the most popular essay. It was attempted by just under half the candidates in the cohort.

This is a good example of an essay in which bullet points may be dealt with at lesser or greater length. The preparations (bullet point 1) and the memorable event (bullet point 3) gave candidates ample opportunity to narrate events. The other three bullet points could well be dealt with *en passant*. However, some candidates decided that the last bullet point (*si vous allez répéter l'expérience et pourquoi*) justified a digression on their ideal holidays. This was accepted as a reasonable interpretation.

Question 7b (Topic Area E - Special occasions / Topic Area C - Helping around the house)

This question was attempted by just over one third of all candidates.

The examiners accepted that *une fête* could be a party to celebrate a private event; a ceremony to celebrate an event (*Holî* or *Noël*); or even the very British *garden* or *village fête*. Some young ladies in the cohort were rather too much interested in describing what they and their friends were wearing. They included the information about dress to cover both how they prepared for the event and what happened during the event, thus sacrificing valuable Communication marks.

The main difficulty lay in the interpretation of the word *nettoyer*. It was evident that several weaker candidates did not know the meaning of the word and so omitted that section of the rubric. The examiners did not expect the candidates to give extensive details of what cleaning they carried out personally. Several young people refreshingly admitted that they left the cleaning to their parents or their siblings.

Question 7c (Topic Area E - Accident, injuries etc)

This question, as expected, was attempted by a minority of candidates (less than 20%).

The rubric deliberately included the qualifier *un petit accident with the best intentions of not upsetting candidates' sensibilities*. However many candidates chose to write about quite horrendous accidents involving death, often multiple deaths. It is clear that some of these events were not fictional.

In all cases, candidates are advised to write using the structures and vocabulary with which they are most familiar and secure. The examiners were quite happy to accept a simple tale of cycling in the road and falling off the cycle. There is never any requirement in Q7 for the candidates to adhere slavishly to the truth.

Candidates did well to identify the five bullets embedded in the e-mail stimulus. The majority of candidates wrote, not always clearly, about when the accident happened and how. Injuries were described. Candidates were not always sure about what *conséquences* might refer to, so the examiners were happy to accept consequences to the injured person, to the car or even to the fact that the motor car/bike insurance bill was going to increase.

Candidates correctly realised that, if they had given a full information for the first four bullet points, they need say only that they were *triste, choqué(e)* or that they cried to have covered fully the requirements of the question.

Grade Boundaries

Paper 02

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	60	53	47	41	35	30	25	21	17	0

Overall (Papers 01 & 02)

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	90	88	78	68	59	50	42	34	26	0

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