

FRENCH

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| <p>Paper 9716/01 Speaking</p> |
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Key messages

For Teachers/Examiners:

- Keep to the timings prescribed for the examination (see below) and, if necessary and appropriate, interrupt the Topic Presentation if it overruns significantly.
- Prompt candidates to ask questions during/at the end of each conversation section – but answer briefly. More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks and Examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- In the Topic Conversation do not go back over questions already answered or material already covered in the Topic Presentation.
- In the General Conversation do not return to the topic of the Topic Presentation.
- Cover a range of topics (not a single topic) in the General Conversation, some in depth, vary questions and topics from one candidate to another, be prepared to identify and follow the interests and passions of the candidate (not your own), and keep your own contributions to a minimum.
- Create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit a one-word or purely factual answer.

For candidates:

- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation
- Ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to qualify for the full range of marks. Questions should be relevant to the topic under discussion.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society: *The presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken. This must be more than a passing reference, and candidates who live in a francophone country and who speak about an aspect of their own culture must make it clear beyond doubt to which country they are referring.*

General comments

It is important for Examiners to remember that this examination is an opportunity for candidates to show what they have learnt and a chance for them to express and develop their own ideas and opinions. Examiners should see their role as providing and facilitating this opportunity.

The way in which an Examiner asks a question can make a huge difference to how a candidate is able to respond – Examiners need to be aware that very long, complex questions or closed questions often prompt short answers, sometimes just 'yes' or 'no', whereas open questions such as *Comment?* or *Pourquoi?* may allow a candidate the freedom to answer at much greater length and in greater depth.

The examination should be a conversation, which can only be achieved by engaging with and responding to what the candidate says, not by asking a series of entirely unrelated questions with no follow-up. Going through a list of pre-prepared questions rarely results in a natural conversation.

Administration

Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still a surprisingly high number of examples of faulty recording equipment and of the microphone favouring the Examiner rather than the candidate. There

were a number of cases where recorded material was unplayable or where the recording had not been transferred correctly or where the original recording was inaudible or blank or where the CD was damaged in transit or faulty. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner's own contribution.

Where Centres use digital recording software, each candidate's file must be saved individually, as .mp3, and finalised correctly, so that each candidate's examination can be accessed for moderation. Files should be identified using precise candidate details (see the paragraph below) rather than just "number 1, 2" etc.

Please ensure that all recording material (including any CD cases) is labelled with details of the Centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their full names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a Centre has candidates at both A and AS, they should be recorded on separate CDs.

Centres are reminded that the sample of recordings they send should represent candidates throughout the range of the entry, from highest to lowest. There were one or two cases where there were significant gaps in the range, which impaired the moderation process.

Care should also be taken with the packaging of recorded material – CDs are not unbreakable and there have been a few cases of inadequately packaged CDs so damaged in transit that it has been impossible to listen to the candidates. Please also avoid sticky tape or labels coming into contact with the recording side of CDs, as this makes them unplayable and runs the risk of damaging the equipment on which they are played.

There were a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transcribing them to the MS1 – this should be checked carefully before submission and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings. For the size of sample needed, please see the details on the CIE website.

There were also irregularities in the application of the Mark Scheme. Several Centres awarded marks out of 10 for *Providing* and/or *Seeking Opinions*, when the maximum is 5; others awarded marks for *Seeking Opinions*, even when the candidate had not asked any questions.

Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to send the Working Mark Sheet, a copy of the MS1 (computer mark sheet or equivalent), and any other relevant paperwork.

Format of the examination

There are 3 distinct parts to the speaking test:

- Presentation – to last 3 to 3½ minutes;
- Topic Conversation – to last 7 to 8 minutes;
- General Conversation – to last 8 to 9 minutes.

In order to be fair to all candidates across the world, these timings should be observed – where examinations are too short, candidates are not given opportunities to show what they can do, and where conversations are over-extended, an element of fatigue creeps in and candidates often struggle to maintain their level of language. Examiners must also remember that the longer their own contributions, the less time candidates have to develop their ideas. Responses to questions asked by candidates should be kept brief.

Presentation (3 to 3½ minutes)

In this part of the examination, the candidate gives a **single** presentation, lasting about three minutes, on a specific topic of his or her choice, taken from one of the topic areas listed in the syllabus booklet. This is the only prepared part of the examination and the only part for which candidates are able to choose what they want to talk about.

The topic list gives candidates a very wide choice – the most popular this year, at both A and AS Levels, remained *L'Internet*, *La Technologie*, *L'égalité des sexes*, *Les Médias Sociaux*, *Le Sport*, *La Famille*, *La Cuisine Française*, *L'environnement* and *La Pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage, discrimination, racism and immigration, some dealing with culture or politics in a French-speaking country, as well as personal interests such as art or music. Some of the most interesting presentations managed to relate their chosen topic to a whole range of social and political issues.

For the most part, candidates were clearly aware of the need, stated in the syllabus, that the presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country

where the target language is spoken. Where this is not the case, candidates will have their mark for *Content/Presentation* halved (see Speaking Test mark scheme).

Since the topic is chosen beforehand, candidates have usually researched quite widely, and have to select and structure their material to fit into 3 to 3½ minutes – additional material which cannot be included in the actual presentation because of the time constraint may well prove very useful in the topic conversation section. In general, candidates had no problem speaking for the required time and many were able to give full and interesting presentations.

Candidates would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects – the mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and expand their chosen topic. Sport and family, though popular choices, are often the least successful for that reason.

Candidates only present ONE topic and the Topic Conversation which follows will seek to develop that same topic.

Topic Conversation (7 to 8 minutes)

In this section, candidates have the chance to expand on what they have already said and develop ideas and opinions expressed briefly during the presentation. Examiners need to beware of merely asking questions which allow a repetition of the same material already offered – their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily “right” answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed. However, differences of opinion can create lively debate (if handled sensitively and purposefully by the Examiner) and can give candidates the opportunity to defend their point of view.

At both A and AS Level, questions should go beyond the sort of questions appropriate at IGCSE Level. Candidates need to be able to show that they are capable of taking part in a mature conversation. In some cases, candidates were not able to offer much development or sustain the level of language used in their presentation, but many were successful in expressing additional ideas and seeking the opinions of the Examiner.

In each conversation section there are 5 marks available for questions the candidates ask of the Examiner: they should ask more than one question and Examiners must prompt them to do so. Examiners should make sure that they do not spend too long on their own answers to candidates’ questions, thereby depriving candidates of valuable time.

Examiners should note that it is helpful both to candidates and Moderators to signal the end of the Topic Conversation and the beginning of the General Conversation.

General Conversation (8 to 9 minutes)

The General Conversation is the most spontaneous section of the examination. Candidates will have prepared their own choice of topic for the Topic Presentation (to be continued in the Topic Conversation), but here they do not know what the Examiner will choose to discuss (and it is the Examiner who chooses, not the candidate). Clearly the areas of discussion will be those studied during the course, but there seemed to be fewer varied and in-depth discussions this session. In a Centre with a number of candidates, candidates should not all be asked to talk about the same list of subjects – themes should be varied from candidate to candidate and should on no account return to the original subject of the presentation.

This section is intended to be a conversation between Examiner and candidate, so it is not appropriate for the Examiner to ask a series of unrelated questions, to which the candidate responds with a prepared answer, after which the Examiner moves on to the next question on the list! Examiners should display sensitivity in asking questions about topics of a personal nature i.e. religion and personal relationships and should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas.

Examiners should aim to discuss a minimum of 2 to 3 areas in **depth**, giving candidates opportunities to offer their own opinions and defend them in discussion. Although the section may begin with straightforward questions about family, interests or future plans, which can, in themselves, be developed beyond the purely factual (questions asking “Why?” or “How?” are useful here), candidates at both A and AS Level should be

prepared for conversation to move on to current affairs and more abstract topics appropriate to this level of examination.

Candidates should be prompted to ask questions of the Examiner in order to give them the opportunity to score marks for this criterion, though Examiners should once again be wary of answering at too great a length.

Assessment

The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where topics did not relate to a francophone country. A handful of Examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness*, *Accuracy* and *Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.

Where candidates ask questions to elicit clarification or obtain information during the course of conversation, this should clearly be rewarded, but Examiners must remember to prompt candidates in both conversation sections – the mark scheme gives the criteria for awarding marks for this element of the examination and these marks should be awarded regardless of whether questions are spontaneous or prompted, provided that they are relevant to the topic under discussion.

Centres are reminded that, except in extenuating circumstances, they should engage only one Examiner per syllabus, regardless of the size of the entry. In cases where the engagement of two or more Examiners on the same syllabus is unavoidable, the Examiners must co-ordinate with each other to establish an agreed standard. Otherwise, Moderation is extremely difficult. **All** Centres are asked to advise Cambridge, using form NOE (Nomination of Examiner), about the Examiners they intend to employ.

In rare cases, Examiners misapplied the mark scheme, most frequently by awarding marks out of 10 for those categories like *Pronunciation/Intonation* and *Seeking Opinions* which carry a maximum of 5 marks.

Examiners at Centres with a large entry of able candidates should be aware that marks may be bunched and that it may be impossible to differentiate between candidates to a greater degree than the Mark Scheme allows.

In Centres with a number of candidates, Examiners were generally able to establish a logical rank order and appropriate marking pitch, but this is more difficult to achieve where Centres only have one or two candidates. Examiners should be congratulated on their efforts to apply the criteria of the mark scheme so conscientiously.

FRENCH

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| <p>Paper 9716/21 Reading and Writing</p> |
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Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not begin the answer by re-working the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

The fact that scripts are now scanned and marked on-screen has produced many advantages, but has created some issues of which candidates need to be aware: some candidates appear to write a pencil version of their answers which they then write over (more or less accurately) in ink. This should be discouraged as scanning does not distinguish the pencil version from the ink one and can make the script very difficult to mark.

Candidates should be instructed not to use an additional booklet unnecessarily for a few extra words which could easily be included in the space provided in original answer booklet. In extreme cases, this involved only two or three words written in an otherwise blank 8-page additional booklet. Apart from the obvious waste of resources, this significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

For scanned papers, candidates (and invigilators) should be instructed not to submit inserts with the answer booklets. This again significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled the various tasks with fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one which was approachable and of interest to candidates.

Candidates from most Centres generally knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were very few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3** and **4** were unnecessarily lengthy and some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and offer over-complicated ones.

Many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the **Quality of Language** mark – e.g. *Tant de Français ne veulent-ils pas se déconnecter parce que ... (3b)*; *Olivier est-il prêt à ... (3d)*; *Certains estiment-ils ... / Sophie regrette-t-elle ... (3f)*. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

Some of the most successful candidates chose to lay out their answers by numbering the points made: e.g. in **4(a)**:

- (i) *se déconnecter de son travail*
- (ii) *se détendre*
- (iii) *évacuer le stress*
- (iv) *reposer le cerveau*

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to ‘work’ the text to avoid ‘lifting’, but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply ‘lifting’ items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications (see previous paragraph). Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3** and **4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, some candidates still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply wasted well over 20% of the available words on this for no reward: *Après de lire les deux textes, je peut résumé les bienfaits et les*

dangers des nouvelles technologies comme les smartphones, tablettes numériques, Internet, réseaux sociaux etc. Quelques bienfaits des nouvelles technologies sont qui ... The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the points as succinctly as possible. It is a summary/résumé of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

Other candidates made the same point several times or went into unnecessary detail.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of presentation and legibility.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

As usual, this exercise was successfully tackled by many candidates. Where marks were lost, it was sometimes through the inclusion or omission of words which violated the 'precise footprint' principle (see **General comments** above).

In **(a)**, *entourage* was quite often found for *cercle*, but *assurent* was unlikely as a substitute for a singular noun. Candidates can at least narrow down the search by identifying the relevant parts of speech.

In **(b)**, *tout lieu* needed to be preceded by *en* in order to fit the footprint left by *partout*. Identifying the possible part of speech would again have avoided a whole range of other improbable suggestions such as *permettant* and *les trois quarts*.

In **(c)**, *conformer*, *se déconnecter* and *suivre* at least all had the merit of being infinitives in line with *prier*. *Désirs, la loi, piste, modernes* and *récentes* did not.

In **(d)**, *employés* was usually found for *travailleurs*, but *employeur* also proved tempting for some.

In **(e)**, *tout à fait* produced *surtout, même* and *pour la plupart*. Some who identified *100%* failed to include the necessary *à* before it.

Question 2

There were some excellent answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but as usual the task proved demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures.

Item 2(a) required candidates to transform the original into direct speech, altering *se déconnecter* to *nous déconnecter* - *nos* and *se déconnecter* were not uncommon, nor was *nous nous refusons*.

Item 2(b) was well handled by those who recognised the need to change *à* to *de*.

Item 2(c) was recognised by many of the stronger candidates as requiring a subjunctive, but the Perfect *aient perdu* proved difficult for some.

Item 2(d) produced some improbable renderings: *la fin des vacances gâche des tensions*. The necessary agreement in the passive - *la fin des vacances est gâchée* - was very often missed or else made plural - *la fin des vacances sont gâchées*.

In **Item 2(e)** the rephrasing in indirect speech required a number of operations, the most challenging of which proved to be *lui permet* (rather than the very commonly offered *se permet*).

Question 3

Item 3(a): successful candidates pointed out that modern means of communication made it possible to be contacted anywhere and at any time, by saying something like *nous restons accessibles/joignables* or *on peut nous contacter/joindre*, thereby avoiding the lifting of *accessibilité*. The second mark was scored by those who re-phrased *événements actuels* by using phrases such as *l'actualité* or *ce qui se passe dans le monde*. Unsuccessful attempts included: *permettre; conveyer; contactabilité ; accéder; suiv(r)er/suivre; communiquer; rester en touche*.

Item 3(b): Successful candidates here found various ways of expressing the notion that employees felt they had to comply with employers' wishes : *satisfaire ; se plier ; obéir aux demandes/attentes/exigences/voeux/souhaits*. *Satisfaire* and *maintenir* continued the pattern of invented vocabulary. *Les occupants d'un poste à responsabilité* occasionally appeared as *ceux qui travaillent à la Poste*.

In Item 3(c), *les pieds dans l'eau* produced some unexpected interpretations: *sous la douche; pendant un orage; marcher sur l'eau; un métier marin*. Some took *une piste enneigée* to mean an airport runway, a racetrack or a lack of energy. Others suggested that *le climat au travail est froid* or that workers found themselves on a slippery slope as far as their job was concerned.

Item 3(d) saw quite a good proportion of candidates finding *Il est bien payé* and pointing to the fact that being kept up to date with what is happening at work enables Olivier to pick things up again more easily at the end of the holidays, sometimes inventing *la retourne* in the process. Confusion between *ses amis* (i.e. Olivier's) and *leurs amis* (i.e. his children's) often cost the final mark here.

In Item 3(e), attempts to express *manque de confiance* were sometimes impeded by the use of *confiance/confident* or *se confier*, but a good number managed *ils ont peur d'être remplacés au travail* or similar for the second mark. The idea of *renforcer le sentiment de sa propre importance* often appeared to be understood, if not always expressed by *ils sentent leur signification*.

In item 3(f), the problem of the email backlog faced by Sophie when she returned to work was generally well appreciated. *Responder, receiver, solver le problème* and *replier* (for *répondre*) also appeared.

Question 4

Item 4(a) was most easily answered without lifting by replacing the nouns with verbs, as suggested by the question which began *Qu'est-il plus difficile de faire ...?* See example given in **General comments** above.

Item 4(b) followed a similar pattern, with the most successful candidates simply reworking the text to replace the nouns *épuisement, maladies, remise* and *inondation* with *épuisés, maladies, remettre* and *inondés/submergés* etc. *Interrompre, inonder, séparer* and the use of *balancer* instead of *équilibrer* were incorrectly offered.

In Item 4(c), most understood the recommendation to limit the use for professional purposes, but some interpreted it as including banning the use of mobile phones and social media within the workplace, as well as *l'imposition des nouvelles technologies après des heures de travail*, rather than the opposite. *Désactiver, interférer* and *silencier* made occasional appearances.

In Item 4(d), the need to be present/contactable/immediately responsive at all times was generally well understood, but not all candidates understood the sense of *sans que le monde ne s'écroule autour de vous*

Item 4(e). Again, those candidates who took the hint in the question *Qu'est-ce qu'on ne peut pas y faire ?* manipulated *envoi* to *envoyer* to avoid the lift.

Question 5

This Question asked candidates to summarise the benefits and dangers of new technologies mentioned in the texts, and then to suggest what restrictions they would attempt to impose as a parent.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a fair number, with the many reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified benefits included being accessible/contactable, keeping up with what was going on at work and in the world in general, and making the return to work easier after the holidays. They were also seen as part and parcel of earning a good salary.

The most commonly identified dangers included the inability to disconnect/relax and get a proper break leading to exhaustion and illness, and even to addiction.

There is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, but excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to be penalised in a significant reduction of the **Quality of Language** mark.

In the **Personal Response** many candidates stressed the need to restrict use until homework is finished, at meal times, on family occasions and late at night. Some suggested an overall time limit, even if five hours per day seemed somewhat generous. Others argued that the use for researching projects and indeed for keeping in touch with one's social network were important and valid benefits for young people, and argued for persuasion and the provision/encouragement of alternative activities as being preferable to restrictions.

Quality of Language

The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a generally robust control of structure. Some at the other end of the range struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects and even the process of making nouns plural appeared challenging for many candidates, revealing a lack of understanding of the principles involved.

The approach to grammar, syntax and spelling was sometimes at best phonetic: *j'été, j'étié, j'auré, les avantages pour sont travailles, s'est lui décision mais pas toultemp*. As usual, *leur, leurs* and *ses* often appeared interchangeable, as did *ce, se*, and *ceux*; *sa* and *ça*; *ces, ses, c'est* and *s'est*.

Incorrect verb forms appeared often, with some unable to conjugate verbs such as *(per)mettre, prendre, vouloir* and *pouvoir*. Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll, in particular: *permettre, interdire, aider, demander* and *encourager*.

In addition to those indicated in the **Comments on specific question** above, new words or phrases were much in evidence, often influenced by English: *unemployé, tremendement, re(s)ponser, monitorer, restreicter, familie, salarie, rester sur le top de votre travail, savoir plus environ le monde, permanentement, dimunissation*.

Studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be advisable: *diminution/diminuer; obligation/obliger; retour/retourner; crainte/craindre; sentiment/sentir réduction/réduire; interdiction/interdire; envoi/envoyer; repos/reposer; réponse/répondre; utilisation/utiliser; compréhension/comprendre*.

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates enabled them to transmit required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and generally accurate French which made very good reading.

FRENCH

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| <p>Paper 9716/22 Reading and Writing</p> |
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Key messages

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- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not begin the answer by re-working the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
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- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief, relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

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Candidates should be instructed not to use an additional booklet unnecessarily for a few extra words which could easily be included in the space provided in original answer booklet. In extreme cases, this involved only two or three words written in an otherwise blank 8-page additional booklet. Apart from the obvious waste of resources, this significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Candidates (and invigilators) should be instructed not to submit inserts with the answer booklets. This again significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, while there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one which was approachable and of interest to candidates.

Most candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of questions, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were no signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. Some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and offer over-complicated ones.

Too many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language mark – e.g. *L'abaissement de l'âge de la majorité bénéficierait-il aux jeunes ... (3c)* ; *La plupart des Français seraient-ils contre ... (4a)* ; *Les partis pourraient-ils être ... (4d)*. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

Some of the most successful candidates chose to lay out their answers by numbering the points made: e.g. full marks (4/4) were scored in **4(c)** by the following:

- i) *conduire sans être accompagnés*
- ii) *acheter des boissons fortes*
- iii) *entrer en boîte de nuit*
- iv) *pour rater les cours*

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid 'lifting', but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications (see previous paragraph). Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3** and **4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question, i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the 'footprint' of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply wasted over 20 per cent of the available words on this for no reward: *Le droit de vote à 16 ans fait une polémique à travers le monde entier. Comme pour toutes les décisions, il existe des arguments pour et contre. Ceux qui sont pour disent que ...* Some candidates did not get around to start scoring marks for the first 50 words. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the points as succinctly

as possible. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

Other candidates made the same point several times (particularly giving examples of the rights which young people already enjoy) or went into unnecessary detail, for example wasting words by including needless reference to *Le docteur Julien Gaillard, psychologue* or *Sophie, une étudiante de 18 ans*.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of presentation and legibility.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a relatively straightforward first exercise which was quite successfully negotiated by the majority, with a fair number of candidates scoring full marks.

Where marks were lost, it was quite often through the inclusion of extra words which violated the 'precise footprint' principle (see **General comments** above): *tout à fait* in (c); *une* or *de* in (d); *des boissons (fortes)* in (e).

- Item (a) probably produced the largest number of incorrect offerings: *à cet âge-là*, *à partir de* and *récemment*.
- In (b), *majeur* was correctly identified by the vast majority, although *parentale* made more than an occasional appearance.
- In (c), some ventured *peut/possible* or invalidated their answer by the omission of *en*, but *en mesure* was successfully identified by most.
- In (d), the misreading of *gamme* as *gramme* was not uncommon.
- In (e), most found *consommer*.

Question 2

There were some excellent answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but as usual the task proved quite demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or who failed to observe the basic rules of agreement.

Item 2(a) offered many tolerated versions and a good proportion of candidates found one or another of them. Those who did not, sometimes used *moins de* incorrectly or omitted *n'* in *sil tant qu'on n'a pas 21 ans*. Attempts to force *il faut avoir* into the answer were unsuccessful.

Item 2(b) proved the most straightforward for those candidates who saw the need to change *peut* to *peuvent* and *ses* to *leurs* (rather than *leur*). Some candidates also made *prendre* mistakenly plural.

Item 2(c) proved more problematic, partly perhaps because of a misunderstanding of *hâte*, which regularly appeared as *hâtent/hâtes*. Relatively few managed *s'* as the reflexive pronoun before *exprimer* (rather than *les/leur/leurs/elles*). Some candidates didn't notice that the 'prompt' ended in *qu'*, which meant that it could not be followed by *elle* (*Lui* was also quite common).

Item 2(d) required a subjunctive, a need which was spotted by quite a good proportion of the candidates, even if it was not always correctly executed. Having done the difficult bit, some missed to score the point by not making the agreement on *établie*.

Item 2(e) required a number of operations involving the passive and consequent agreement. There was no reason to alter the tense from that of the original or to omit *par le Conseil*, or indeed to change *à* to *de* after *encourager*.

Question 3

Item 3(a): The vast majority of candidates correctly identified 16 as the minimum voting age in Austria, but very few understood the admittedly difficult concept that the age in Uzbekistan was no longer 25, many suggesting that age had changed recently *to 25*. *La majorité électorale* was thought by some to mean *la plupart des électeurs*. Misunderstanding *jusqu'à* led others into error: *Les jeunes ont le droit de voter jusqu'à 16 ans*.

Item 3(b): The most successful candidates here simply re-worked the nouns *engagement*, *emploi*, *direction* and *mariage* as verbs, (as hinted at by the question asking *Que peuvent faire ...*), thereby avoiding 'lifting'. *Intérêts* was misinterpreted to mean hobbies by some, but a good number found acceptable alternatives to *évaluer*: *mesurer*, *peser*, *calculer*, *analyser*, *juger*, *apprécier*, etc. Some either omitted *à plein temps* or changed its meaning to *permanent* or *fixe*. Others wasted effort by saying what under-18s cannot do (drinking alcohol in bars).

Item 3(c) was generally quite successfully handled, although some candidates found it difficult to avoid lifting *s'intéresser à l'actualité* or attempted rather clumsily to replace *citoyens* with *patriotes*, *personnes de la société*, *habitants* or *paysans*.

Item 3(d) proved more difficult, with some thinking that young people would become representatives or that there would be a larger number of elected representatives in general. Others confused *le fonctionnement de la démocratie* with *la fonction de la démocratie*. Stronger candidates found ways of indicating that young people and their interests would be given more weight/importance.

Item 3(e) produced wide-spread condemnation of corrupt politicians and worthless election promises, which went much further than *méfiance*, but *ils se méfient* or *ils sont méfiants* were often successfully offered. The other two marks were scored simply enough by those who avoided lifting *augmentation* and *baisse*, by using either synonyms (not *diminution* or *diminution*) or verbs.

Question 4

Item 4(a) required care at the outset not to cause ambiguity by using an unspecified *ils* as the subject of the verb. Stronger candidates often rephrased *voler de ses propres ailes* by using *indépendance/autonomie*, etc. but *maturité* was unnecessarily lifted by some, while others unsuccessfully offered *Ils ne sont pas compréhensifs/compréhensibles* rather than the obvious *Ils ne comprennent pas ...*

Item 4(b) proved pretty straightforward and was generally well handled. A good range of vocabulary and idiom was displayed by the strongest candidates here: *à la légère*, *frivoles*, *fêtards* etc.

In Item 4(c), the hint was again given in the question (*Qu'est-ce que les jeunes n'ont pas le droit de faire ?*) that using verbs was the best way to answer, and a good number of candidates scored all four marks here. *Conduite* was sometimes thought to refer to behaviour, and *des spiritueux* was thought to mean *des prêtres/religieuses/livres sacrés/choses spirituelles*. The purchase of cigarettes was often incorrectly added to the list.

In Item 4(d), the first mark concerning the perceived likely voting habits of young was scored by most, even if some could not find one of the relatively straightforward ways of expressing *majoritairement* and either overstated (*tous/toujours*) or understated (*souvent/beaucoup*) the case. The second mark proved more difficult, with many candidates struggling to make the point that young people would be likely to back the/any party which first gave them the vote, rather than all parties receiving more votes because more people would be able to vote.

In Item 4(e), candidates who avoided lifting *protection* were successful in scoring the first mark, but some did not appear to understand the point about *consultation*: *consulter les choix de leurs enfants* was not uncommon. Many thought that children should be able to make their own decisions or that they should consult their parents. Only a minority read the text carefully enough to realise that children should not be even allowed to think that they make the decisions. There was some irrelevance here concerning waiting patiently to become an adult or about deciding which way to vote.

Question 5

This Question asked candidates to summarise the arguments for and against lowering the voting age to 16, and then to say who or what influences them personally.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a good number, with the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping randomly to chance upon some point-scoring material.

The most commonly identified arguments in favour included the fact that the young already have important rights, an interest in current affairs and in expressing their opinions, the benefits of allowing young people to feel citizens in their own right and becoming more responsible, and of creating a more representative and balanced electorate. The most frequent arguments against were young people's lack of independence, experience, maturity or interest in politics. A not-infrequently expressed danger of allowing 16 year-olds to vote was that they might vote for the Left!

There is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, but excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to be penalised in a significant reduction of the quality of language mark.

The **Personal response** required candidates to give just that – an indication of who or what influences them personally – rather than a list of the influences on young people in general nowadays. Some candidates did this with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage, but the general level of the response was felt to be somewhat disappointing, often focusing on clothes, hair-styles, technology or friends encouraging them to cut lessons. Others interpreted the question as wanting to know what would influence the way they voted. The best responses often referred to people they looked up to, either famous figures, members of their own family or circle (e.g. an inspiring teacher), and why.

Quality of language

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. Some suffered from a tendency towards verbosity and over-complexity, coupled with the use of impressive-sounding vocabulary whose meaning one sensed they did not always fully understand. The very weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects and even the process of making nouns plural appeared largely random in a large number of scripts. E.g. *ils peuts ce mariée*.

Not uncommonly, when attempts were made to make verbs agree, it was with the object rather than the subject: *cela leur permettraient / le droit les aideraient*.

Incorrect verb forms were legion, with some unable to conjugate verbs such as (*per*)*mettre*, *prendre*, *vouloir* and *pouvoir*. The use of the infinitive (-*er*) ending – or indeed anything else that sounded similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-*é*) in some scripts: e.g. *ils vont voté/votez*. The conditional tense, which was used several times in the questions, was often a source of error – especially where *améliorerait* was concerned.

The approach to spelling was sometimes at best phonetic, even with very common words: *assé/asser/aces*; *tro*; *commen*; *selà*. There were plenty of scripts which would have sounded fine if read aloud – and indeed this was sometimes the only way to understand what was intended: *c'est dernier (ces derniers)*;

apparentières (à part entière); plus de pois; je quoi (crois); se maître (mettre); toulestep; une importance prix mondial.

As usual, *leur, leurs* and *ses* appeared interchangeable in a large number of scripts, as did *ce, se* and *ceux; sa* and *ça; ces, ses, c'est* and *s'est*.

Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll, in particular: *permettre, interdire, aider, demander, encourager, laisser, autoriser, conseiller, empêcher*.

Incomplete negatives (missing *ne*) caused some confusion. The use of *par* instead of *en* + present participle was not uncommon, as was *plus bon/bien*.

That said, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, while the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and generally accurate French which made very good reading.

FRENCH

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| <p>Paper 9716/23 Reading and Writing</p> |
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Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. The inclusion of additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not begin the answer by re-working the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

The fact that scripts are now scanned and marked on-screen has produced many advantages, but has created some issues of which candidates need to be aware: some candidates appear to write a pencil version of their answers which they then write over (more or less accurately) in ink. This should be discouraged as scanning does not distinguish the pencil version from the ink one and can make the script very difficult to mark.

Candidates should be instructed not to use an additional booklet unnecessarily for a few extra words which could easily be included in the space provided in original answer booklet. In extreme cases, this involved only two or three words written in an otherwise blank 8-page additional booklet. Apart from the obvious waste of resources, this significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

For scanned papers, candidates (and invigilators) should be instructed not to submit inserts with the answer booklets. This again significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, comparable in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced the usual wide range of marks. There were some good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled the various tasks with fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one which was approachable and of interest to candidates.

Candidates from most Centres generally knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were very few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unnecessarily lengthy and some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and offer over-complicated ones.

Many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the **Quality of Language** mark – e.g. *Tant de Français ne veulent-ils pas se déconnecter parce que ... (3b)*; *Olivier est-il prêt à ... (3d)*; *Certains estiment-ils ... / Sophie regrette-t-elle ... (3f)*. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

Some of the most successful candidates chose to lay out their answers by numbering the points made: e.g. in **4(a)**:

- (i) *se déconnecter de son travail*
- (ii) *se détendre*
- (iii) *évacuer le stress*
- (iv) *reposer le cerveau*

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to ‘work’ the text to avoid ‘lifting’, but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply ‘lifting’ items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications (see previous paragraph). Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond 150 words overall is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, some candidates still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply wasted well over 20% of the available words on this for no reward: *Après de lire les deux textes, je peut résumé les bienfaits et les*

dangers des nouvelles technologies comme les smartphones, tablettes numériques, Internet, réseaux sociaux etc. Quelques bienfaits des nouvelles technologies sont qui ... The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the points as succinctly as possible. It is a summary/résumé of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

Other candidates made the same point several times or went into unnecessary detail.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of presentation and legibility.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

As usual, this exercise was successfully tackled by many candidates. Where marks were lost, it was sometimes through the inclusion or omission of words which violated the 'precise footprint' principle (see **General comments** above).

In **(a)**, *entourage* was quite often found for *cercle*, but *assurent* was unlikely as a substitute for a singular noun. Candidates can at least narrow down the search by identifying the relevant parts of speech.

In **(b)**, *tout lieu* needed to be preceded by *en* in order to fit the footprint left by *partout*. Identifying the possible part of speech would again have avoided a whole range of other improbable suggestions such as *permettant* and *les trois quarts*.

In **(c)**, *conformer*, *se déconnecter* and *suivre* at least all had the merit of being infinitives in line with *prier*. *Désirs, la loi, piste, modernes* and *récentes* did not.

In **(d)**, *employés* was usually found for *travailleurs*, but *employeur* also proved tempting for some.

In **(e)**, *tout à fait* produced *surtout, même* and *pour la plupart*. Some who identified *100%* failed to include the necessary *à* before it.

Question 2

There were some excellent answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but as usual the task proved demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures.

Item 2(a) required candidates to transform the original into direct speech, altering *se déconnecter* to *nous déconnecter* - *nos* and *se déconnecter* were not uncommon, nor was *nous nous refusons*.

Item 2(b) was well handled by those who recognised the need to change *à* to *de*.

Item 2(c) was recognised by many of the stronger candidates as requiring a subjunctive, but the Perfect *aient perdu* proved difficult for some.

Item 2(d) produced some improbable renderings: *la fin des vacances gâche des tensions*. The necessary agreement in the passive - *la fin des vacances est gâchée* - was very often missed or else made plural - *la fin des vacances sont gâchées*.

In **Item 2(e)** the rephrasing in indirect speech required a number of operations, the most challenging of which proved to be *lui permet* (rather than the very commonly offered *se permet*).

Question 3

Item 3(a): successful candidates pointed out that modern means of communication made it possible to be contacted anywhere and at any time, by saying something like *nous restons accessibles/joignables* or *on peut nous contacter/joindre*, thereby avoiding the lifting of *accessibilité*. The second mark was scored by those who re-phrased *événements actuels* by using phrases such as *l'actualité* or *ce qui se passe dans le monde*. Unsuccessful attempts included: *permettre; conveyer; contactabilité ; accéder; suiv(r)er/suivre; communiquer; rester en touche*.

Item 3(b): Successful candidates here found various ways of expressing the notion that employees felt they had to comply with employers' wishes : *satisfaire ; se plier ; obéir aux demandes/attentes/exigences/voeux/souhaits*. *Satisfaire* and *maintenir* continued the pattern of invented vocabulary. *Les occupants d'un poste à responsabilité* occasionally appeared as *ceux qui travaillent à la Poste*.

In Item 3(c), *les pieds dans l'eau* produced some unexpected interpretations: *sous la douche; pendant un orage; marcher sur l'eau; un métier marin*. Some took *une piste enneigée* to mean an airport runway, a racetrack or a lack of energy. Others suggested that *le climat au travail est froid* or that workers found themselves on a slippery slope as far as their job was concerned.

Item 3(d) saw quite a good proportion of candidates finding *Il est bien payé* and pointing to the fact that being kept up to date with what is happening at work enables Olivier to pick things up again more easily at the end of the holidays, sometimes inventing *la retourne* in the process. Confusion between *ses amis* (i.e. Olivier's) and *leurs amis* (i.e. his children's) often cost the final mark here.

In Item 3(e), attempts to express *manque de confiance* were sometimes impeded by the use of *confiance/confident* or *se confier*, but a good number managed *ils ont peur d'être remplacés au travail* or similar for the second mark. The idea of *renforcer le sentiment de sa propre importance* often appeared to be understood, if not always expressed by *ils sentent leur signification*.

In item 3(f), the problem of the email backlog faced by Sophie when she returned to work was generally well appreciated. *Responder, receiver, solver le problème* and *replier* (for *répondre*) also appeared.

Question 4

Item 4(a) was most easily answered without lifting by replacing the nouns with verbs, as suggested by the question which began *Qu'est-il plus difficile de faire ...?* See example given in **General comments** above.

Item 4(b) followed a similar pattern, with the most successful candidates simply reworking the text to replace the nouns *épuisement, maladies, remise* and *inondation* with *épuisés, maladies, remettre* and *inondés/submergés* etc. *Interrompre, inonder, séparer* and the use of *balancer* instead of *équilibrer* were incorrectly offered.

In Item 4(c), most understood the recommendation to limit the use for professional purposes, but some interpreted it as including banning the use of mobile phones and social media within the workplace, as well as *l'imposition des nouvelles technologies après des heures de travail*, rather than the opposite. *Désactiver, interférer* and *silencier* made occasional appearances.

In Item 4(d), the need to be present/contactable/immediately responsive at all times was generally well understood, but not all candidates understood the sense of *sans que le monde ne s'écroule autour de vous*

Item 4(e). Again, those candidates who took the hint in the question *Qu'est-ce qu'on ne peut pas y faire ?* manipulated *envoi* to *envoyer* to avoid the lift.

Question 5

This Question asked candidates to summarise the benefits and dangers of new technologies mentioned in the texts, and then to suggest what restrictions they would attempt to impose as a parent.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a fair number, with the many reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping to chance upon some rewardable material.

The most commonly identified benefits included being accessible/contactable, keeping up with what was going on at work and in the world in general, and making the return to work easier after the holidays. They were also seen as part and parcel of earning a good salary.

The most commonly identified dangers included the inability to disconnect/relax and get a proper break leading to exhaustion and illness, and even to addiction.

There is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, but excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to be penalised in a significant reduction of the **Quality of Language** mark.

In the **Personal Response** many candidates stressed the need to restrict use until homework is finished, at meal times, on family occasions and late at night. Some suggested an overall time limit, even if five hours per day seemed somewhat generous. Others argued that the use for researching projects and indeed for keeping in touch with one's social network were important and valid benefits for young people, and argued for persuasion and the provision/encouragement of alternative activities as being preferable to restrictions.

Quality of Language

The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a generally robust control of structure. Some at the other end of the range struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects and even the process of making nouns plural appeared challenging for many candidates, revealing a lack of understanding of the principles involved.

The approach to grammar, syntax and spelling was sometimes at best phonetic: *j'été, j'étié, j'auré, les avantages pour sont travailles, s'est lui décision mais pas toultemp*. As usual, *leur, leurs* and *ses* often appeared interchangeable, as did *ce, se*, and *ceux*; *sa* and *ça*; *ces, ses, c'est* and *s'est*.

Incorrect verb forms appeared often, with some unable to conjugate verbs such as *(per)mettre, prendre, vouloir* and *pouvoir*. Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll, in particular: *permettre, interdire, aider, demander* and *encourager*.

In addition to those indicated in the **Comments on specific question** above, new words or phrases were much in evidence, often influenced by English: *unemployé, tremendously, re(s)ponser, monitorer, restreicter, familie, salarie, rester sur le top de votre travail, savoir plus environ le monde, permanentement, diminissation*.

Studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be advisable: *diminution/diminuer; obligation/obliger; retour/retourner; crainte/craindre; sentiment/sentir réduction/réduire; interdiction/interdire; envoi/envoyer; repos/reposer; réponse/répondre; utilisation/utiliser; compréhension/comprendre*.

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates enabled them to transmit required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and generally accurate French which made very good reading.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/31
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to choose an essay title about which they can write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherent. The aim should be to use accurate and idiomatic French which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary. Candidates should plan essays carefully using the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and the conclusion to show their considered final judgment of the issues they have discussed.

General comments

In this paper, candidates are given a choice of 5 questions and are awarded up to 24 marks for quality of language and up to 16 for content. It was clear that most candidates understood the rubric for this paper and essays were generally of the right length. In order to gain good marks for content on this paper, it is essential that the focus of the answer should be on the precise terms of the question set. Regrettably, many candidates chose to ignore certain elements of the question and wrote instead on the general topic area. Planning is clearly an important part of writing a discursive essay. Candidates who define the terms of the question in their own minds and organise the material into a logical order before beginning to write will generally gain higher content marks. Many first paragraphs contained pre-learned and formulaic definitions of the overall topic with spurious quotations which were misquoted, inappropriate or wrongly attributed. Often there was a clear discrepancy between the standard of language in the opening paragraph and the rest of the essay. Some candidates who had not written a plan launched straight into their answer and the result was a kind of interior monologue which drifted first one way then another. There were often multiple alterations which made the essay very hard to follow.

In terms of language, awkward use of idiom and a large number of anglicisms were common along with examples of phonetic spelling. Pre-learned phrases were much in evidence and served only to highlight by comparison the deficiencies in the candidates' own writing. There were some cases where candidates demonstrated so little grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness that essays were rendered incomprehensible. More successful candidates used a range of structures and appropriate vocabulary, were not over-ambitious and managed to express their ideas in accurate and succinct language.

Examples of good use of language include:

Appropriate use of words and phrases to link paragraphs and ideas such as *lorsque, donc, par exemple, ainsi, puisque, cependant, pourtant, d'abord, néanmoins, en revanche, d'ailleurs*.

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read a range of media on subjects as diverse as the education system and politics and the economy.

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive.

Use of a range of verbs and verb forms.

Use of idioms such as *il s'agit de, il convient de, en d'autres mots, étant donné que, tel que*

Common errors:

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *responsable, tendance, manque, travail, monde, gouvernement, environnement, exemple, développement, aspect*

Overuse of *aussi* at start of sentences and paragraphs.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de* and *car* for *pour*.

Overuse of the word *chose/choses* and *cela/ça*. Use of *personnes* for *gens*.

Inconsistency of pronouns (*les personnes* followed by *il, son* etc.).

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Frequent use of *beaucoup des* with plural noun.

Confusion between/misuse of : *ces/ses, les/des, place/endroit, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, c'est que/ceux que, ceux qui/ce qui, ou/où, a/à, mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs*.

Use of *faire* for *rendre*

Use of the past participle after modal verbs, e.g. *elles doivent resté à la maison, on peut allé au gymnase*

Use of the wrong preposition after common verbs followed by an infinitive structure, e.g. *aider de, préférer de*

Use of *avoir besoin de* instead of *devoir*.

Use of anglicisms such as *actuellement, définitivement, tout en tout, dépenser sur, payer l'attention, capabilité, travailler* for *marcher*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a popular question but was often dealt with in a rather superficial manner. Some candidates felt that young people are lazy and irresponsible and should play a greater part in society. Others felt that young people should be allowed to be young, have fun and make mistakes. They noted that young people today are spoilt by their parents and given everything on a plate which encourages an attitude of entitlement and selfishness. This militates against taking life seriously and acting responsibly. Others, whilst recognising that young people do need time and space to develop, felt that there was no excuse for acting irresponsibly and being a problem for society. They pointed out that it was perfectly possible to have a balance between being young and free from worries and being in control of oneself and one's actions. Some mentioned the differences in cultures where, in some countries, it was the duty of the young person to take responsibility within the family for looking after siblings, cooking and cleaning while the parents worked. Overall, the consensus was that young people have a tendency to fall into bad ways but that this is a stage in their evolution into adults.

Question 2

Many candidates struggled to come to terms with the title. Some took it to be merely a discussion of the pros and cons of the media and launched into a well-rehearsed answer. Others listed and defined the types of media in the introduction at great length which added little to the essay. They then proceeded to talk about the advances in TV, internet and smartphones. Very few mentioned newspapers or magazines. A number of candidates were not able to make any insightful remarks about the contribution of the media to society. Essays tended to revolve around the effect of mobile phones and the internet on the young. Many candidates talked about unsuitable content available to young people, the creation of a lazy and obese population obsessed by TV, social media and playing video games. Those who did consider the contribution made by the media talked about the knowledge available to us all on the internet, the ability to keep in touch with the news at all times and to communicate with family and friends via Facebook, email etc.

Question 3

This question attracted a good number of well-argued responses. Candidates recognised the need for educating the whole person and were keen to point out the importance of non-academic subjects in the school curriculum. They mentioned the arts, music and theatre as well as practical social and financial education. They felt that it was too often the case that students in school were forced to follow a strictly

academic programme whether it suited them or not. They could see that qualifications were important for students leaving school and entering university or becoming employed but they were convinced that in all walks of life it was better to be a well-rounded individual than a well-rehearsed robot. All candidates were able to make some pertinent comments about the future development of education and they were keen to show that changes were starting to take place even in countries where all schools have traditionally taught a very academic set of courses.

Question 4

This question was not well answered on the whole. Candidates tended to overlook the part of the question which referred to technological advances improving the economy of a country. They homed in on the idea of technological innovation and described the advantages and disadvantages of TV, the internet and smartphones. Most felt that the most important contribution made by technology to society was to help people to relax by watching TV and playing computer games and to keep in touch with friends and family by using social media and phones. Answers tended to be superficial and to list the types of devices and the use made of them. Those candidates who did attempt to refer to the importance to the economy of a country commented about the importance of innovation within industry, with the use of automation making the production of goods cheaper and more efficient. They also mentioned businesses being able to communicate more freely because of the internet and thus to create more trading opportunities. Mainly though, candidates were happy to disregard the economy and describe the benefits for the individual.

Question 5

This question was attempted by few candidates and was often misunderstood. It was clear that candidates wanted to answer a question on the environment but did not understand the concept of planning and control of transport as being an important factor. Many answers appeared to be merely an assembly of facts about the environment with little or no attempt to link them to the question. Candidates who spoke about towns that were constructed to favour public transport and cycle routes and who mentioned clean air policies, congestion charges and the promotion of electric or hybrid vehicles were highly rewarded for their answers.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/32
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to choose an essay title about which they can write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherent. The aim should be to use accurate and idiomatic French which demonstrates complexity both in structure and vocabulary. Candidates should plan essays carefully using the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and the conclusion to show their considered final judgment of the issues they have discussed.

General comments

Overall it was pleasing that the majority of students managed to communicate ideas on their chosen topics and few candidates fell within the very poor category. Some candidates showed an impressive command of the language and produced mature answers. The candidates' work was generally clearly presented although there were some examples of very poor handwriting and scripts where significant numbers of revisions had been made in the text of the essay which can severely hinder the examiner in following an argument. More able candidates planned their essays carefully, defined the terms of the question in their introduction, wrote a coherent and convincing argument, and arrived at a balanced conclusion. They used a range of structures and idioms and argued their case successfully.

In some cases, however, it was clear that candidates had a poor command of linguistic structures and appropriate vocabulary and register. Their answers were naively expressed in very simple and often inaccurate language and often avoided the question set, concentrating instead on the overall topic heading. Candidates who did not target their essays fully on the question set inevitably did less well since their answers contained much unfocused material. Introductions often contained a spurious quotation of little or no relevance, followed by an unnecessary repetition of the title, often with misspellings. Paragraphing was, at times, weak with poor links and no clear development shown. The conclusion was occasionally disappointing either being composed of bland generalisations or a short repetition of what had preceded. Irrelevant answers were unfortunately quite common. There was too much reliance on pre-learned material on the overarching topic headings which led to some poor marks for Content. Essays that were superficial in tone as well as lacking clear development or exemplification of points made scored lower – many resorted to clichés and quite naïve arguments, particularly in **Question 1** where a number of candidates merely painted a rather superficial and decadent picture of their peers. Overall few statistics or specific examples were included. **Question 5** included a wider range of facts and figures to illustrate the candidates' points. In **Question 2** in particular, candidates seemed to lack the general knowledge as well as the topic specific language to produce a cogent answer. Apart from **Question 5**, answers would have benefited from a wider range of examples, thus enabling them to get into the good band for content. Most candidates included some exemplification, but it was uneven across the essay.

Among a number of common errors, there figured:

Using *ce/la* followed by a plural verb

Incorrect preposition used in verb and infinitive constructions e.g. *préférer* and *aider* followed by *de*

Common words spelt wrongly or given wrong gender, e.g. *recommandé*, *government*, *campagne*, *adults*, *development*, *alcohol*, *recontre*, *meilleur*, *environment*, *exercise*, *example*, *manque*

Y and *en* were over-used as were verbs which were made reflexive

Use of *faire* instead of *rendre*

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions

Anglicisms, e.g. *place* for *endroit*, *balancé* for *équilibré*, *dépendre sur*, *consister de*, *en addition*, *définitivement*

Phonetic spellings e.g. *prix mondial* for *primordial*, *deçu* for *dessus*, *on n'a* for *on a* and *ont* for *on*, *ce* for *se*, *ait* for *est*, *sans passer* for *s'en passer*, *il faux* for *il faut*

Lapses of register, e.g. *ça*, *truc*, *boulot*, *télé*

Use of *qui* in contexts where *ce qui* was required

Use of *personnes* instead of *gens*

Confusion of *donc* and *dont*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a very popular question. All candidates had plenty to say on the topic although many limited themselves to discussing the forms of preoccupations that exist for young people: social media, going out, parties, alcohol and drugs. Some mentioned the time spent on studying and extra tutoring. They often did not reflect on the reasons for lack of interest in religion and politics at all. They made sweeping generalisations about teenagers often with personal anecdotes as illustration. Another approach was to say that young people *are not* interested in politics and religion because of x, y and z and then to counter this with young people *are* interested in politics and religion because of a, b and c. The second half of these essays often completely contradicted the first half. The best scripts offered a range of reasons why young people might feel alienated from politics and religion such as the dominance of older people (men) in politics, not being able to vote until the age of 18, corruption, lack of faith in the system. Religion was equally felt to be old-fashioned and out of touch with the way in which young people live their lives today. Mention was made of strict moral laws about sexual behaviour, lack of understanding about different sexual orientations and the requirement to attend church services regularly. Some also mentioned the hypocrisy within the church and made reference to paedophile priests.

A recurrent language issue in this essay was the swapping between use of *les jeunes* and *la jeunesse* without any change in the person of the verb.

Question 2

This was the least popular question. Many candidates fell into the trap of listing all the forms of media they knew and describing their good and bad points. In some cases, no mention whatsoever was made of censorship. Most candidates included examples of inappropriate programmes on TV or the internet and the need to protect children and young people, which related more to the matter of parental control than to the concept of media censorship. Few had the political awareness or knowledge of current affairs required, and as a result many could not go beyond generalisations even when they mentioned democracy and freedom of speech. Those candidates who could define censorship and understood the significance of its role in the contemporary world and in history wrote very well on this topic and were awarded high marks as a consequence. Weaker candidates seized on the word media and wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of the media. More able candidates realised that the focus of the essay was censorship and made some good relevant points about government censorship of the press during wars and tried to explain the delicate balance between censorship and freedom of expression e.g. Charlie Hebdo.

A recurring language error was the indiscriminate use of *les médias*, *le média* and *la média*.

Question 3

This was a popular topic. It was accessible to the majority, including the weaker candidates and many included heartfelt and personal responses. The question also led to a number of superficial answers, both in terms of content and language. It is clear that school uniform is very important for many candidates as it imparts a sense of equality, pride and belonging which are perceived to lead to better discipline both in and outside the schools. Some candidates were able to weigh the benefits of uniform which masks social differences between the students of a school against the discrimination inherent in a highly streamed school system, where students from the best, and the worst, schools are easily identified by what uniform they wear. The financial benefits for the parents were frequently mentioned, as well as the burden placed on poorer families. Most candidates mentioned the fact that wearing a uniform stifles the creativity and personal development of young people, but overwhelmingly the candidates thought following a strict vestimentary code was a good idea and a good preparation for life at work.

Question 4

This was the most popular question and answered by candidates across the range of ability. Many candidates misinterpreted the question and limited themselves to the benefits and disadvantages of new technologies. Although many included irrelevant sections, few candidates wrote wholly irrelevant answers. Many initially addressed the question and listed a narrow range of examples where young people in particular have become slaves to modern technologies, often digressing into the consequences on people's health (*l'obésité, le diabète, l'hypertension* and *les problèmes cardio-vasculaires* were frequently mentioned). Many failed to make the counterargument, instead merely listing the benefits technology brought to man, sometimes covering a large number of examples. Some students understood the broader remit of the question and were able to show how man also controls technology and uses it to his advantage. They gave examples of medical research, operations done with the help of Skype and advances in agriculture which improved life chances. Many candidates did not appear to have the language skills available to be able to go beyond merely stating the advantages and disadvantages of modern technology. A number of candidates mentioned washing machines as a new technological innovation, and claimed that not everyone was a slave to technology, as some people welcomed the old way of life and preferred to go to the river to wash their clothes and cut down the sugarcane with scythes, rejecting machines. It was felt that women were slaves to household appliances and this was a disadvantage as it made them fat and lazy. References to life before technology were superficial and idealised. Overall, the candidates did not make sufficient reference to the idea of enslavement, preferring to read this as dependence and often only making reference to young people's dependence on smartphones. The best essays also included thoughts about the future and what we can do to ensure that man does not become slave to the machine.

Question 5

Overall this proved a popular question with a wide range of candidates. The factual nature of the question suited even the weaker candidates who had plenty to say on the topic: they were well prepared in terms of content and could use a wide range of topic-specific and scientific vocabulary. Candidates obviously felt strongly about the issue and responses were often heart-felt. However, some candidates gave over more than half the essay to material which was largely irrelevant and designed to answer a question on a broader environment topic. It was clear though that most had knowledge of the damage caused by plastics including pollution in its various forms, the impact on marine life, the impact on the local drainage system with the resulting problem of mosquito infestation and related diseases, and noxious fumes created when they are burnt. Candidates had first-hand experience of the problem and were happy to talk about the problem of plastic bottles and bags littering the streets and beaches and the local initiatives put in place to alleviate the problem.

From a language perspective, there was much repetition with confusions over *le plastique/les plastiques* and singular and plural verbs. Many didn't spell *environnement* correctly even though it was in the question.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/33
Essay

Key messages

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General comments

In this paper, candidates are given a choice of 5 questions and are awarded up to 24 marks for quality of language and up to 16 for content. It was clear that most candidates understood the rubric for this paper and essays were generally of the right length. In order to gain good marks for content on this paper, it is essential that the focus of the answer should be on the precise terms of the question set. Regrettably, many candidates chose to ignore certain elements of the question and wrote instead on the general topic area. Planning is clearly an important part of writing a discursive essay. Candidates who define the terms of the question in their own minds and organise the material into a logical order before beginning to write will generally gain higher content marks. Many first paragraphs contained pre-learned and formulaic definitions of the overall topic with spurious quotations which were misquoted, inappropriate or wrongly attributed. Often there was a clear discrepancy between the standard of language in the opening paragraph and the rest of the essay. Some candidates who had not written a plan launched straight into their answer and the result was a kind of interior monologue which drifted first one way then another. There were often multiple alterations which made the essay very hard to follow.

In terms of language, awkward use of idiom and a large number of anglicisms were common along with examples of phonetic spelling. Pre-learned phrases were much in evidence and served only to highlight by comparison the deficiencies in the candidates' own writing. There were some cases where candidates demonstrated so little grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness that essays were rendered incomprehensible. More successful candidates used a range of structures and appropriate vocabulary, were not over-ambitious and managed to express their ideas in accurate and succinct language.

Examples of good use of language include:

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This was a popular question but was often dealt with in a rather superficial manner. Some candidates felt that young people are lazy and irresponsible and should play a greater part in society. Others felt that young people should be allowed to be young, have fun and make mistakes. They noted that young people today are spoilt by their parents and given everything on a plate which encourages an attitude of entitlement and selfishness. This militates against taking life seriously and acting responsibly. Others, whilst recognising that young people do need time and space to develop, felt that there was no excuse for acting irresponsibly and being a problem for society. They pointed out that it was perfectly possible to have a balance between being young and free from worries and being in control of oneself and one's actions. Some mentioned the differences in cultures where, in some countries, it was the duty of the young person to take responsibility within the family for looking after siblings, cooking and cleaning while the parents worked. Overall, the consensus was that young people have a tendency to fall into bad ways but that this is a stage in their evolution into adults.

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FRENCH

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| <p>Paper 9716/41 Texts</p> |
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Key messages

Teachers should:

- Think carefully about which texts to prepare as some present conceptual problems that are challenging for average and below average candidates.

Teachers should train their students to:

- Check carefully that they manage their time in the examination room well and answer three questions;
- Check carefully that they do not answer two questions on the same text;
- Think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write;
- Refer to the question during the answer, not just at the start and the finish.
- Practise responses to the passage-based exercises, pointing out that one question usually concerns what happened before the extract, another requires detail on the contents of the extract, and the other addresses more general issues, in this case, satire or comedy.

Candidates should:

- Note that the word for character is ‘personnage’ and not ‘caractère’
- Label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If questions have not been labelled, it can look as though **(ii)** and **(iii)** were not attempted at all, when all three of **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** should be answered in the passage-based questions
- Remember that ‘soit ... soit’ means ‘either ... or’ and should not be copied before question numbers
- Choose carefully either **(a)** or **(b)** and invest in providing as complete and relevant an answer to that one question as possible
- Answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read.
- Note key words in the questions
- Answer the question precisely; stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions. A conclusion needs to refer to the points made in the essay and must be associated with the title. It is worth repeating or rephrasing the title at the start of an essay, e.g. **3(b)** ‘Jeanne rejette une fin heureuse...’ **6(b)** ‘Les personnages veulent mourir...’, **7(b)** ‘Lucien dit...’ A conclusion could be a summary of the points developed in the essay, with a personal judgement.
- Explore all elements of questions
- Finish with a concluding paragraph
- Start each new essay on a fresh page
- Be careful to attach any continuation sheets in order

General comments

Passage-based questions were dealt with more effectively than in previous years; there were fewer purely narrative answers and candidates showed a greater ability to locate the extract within the text and highlight the relevant issues. However, many candidates still attempted to answer these questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then omitting to explain what the point was that the quote illustrated or exemplified. It was as though they felt that the words spoke for themselves. It is important, though, for candidates to give their interpretation of the significance of those quotations.

There is a need to dissect the title of essay questions and to weigh up and define each element. Candidates need to avoid making the same point in multiple ways, even if they come at it from slightly differing

directions. Careful thought can make the difference between a good structured essay and a poor repetitive piece of writing, labouring points already made earlier.

Candidates need to find a 'happy balance' between assuming that the examiner knows nothing and remembering that the examiner has also read the text. Although narration irrelevant to the question is not required, candidates should begin to answer the question at the beginning, but should not hold back from showing knowledge of the texts, not just retelling the story, but also making points.

Candidates should not write an opening paragraph which addresses in rather general terms the author, his or her works or the audience that he or she was addressing. Candidates should just answer the question.

It was evident that Centres had used past questions when training their candidates, and detailed knowledge was shown in those areas. Candidates should select the question they choose to answer carefully, though, and ensure that their material is relevant. Sometimes the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to this session's questions, but at other times, there were resounding echoes of previous years' questions.

The language used was on the whole appropriate but some essays contained colloquialisms. The best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although it is helpful if these are crossed through to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Molière: Le Malade Imaginaire

This year, again, questions on Molière were attempted by the great majority of candidates, who showed that they knew the text well and that they had enjoyed studying the play.

- (a) Was the more popular and was generally well answered.
- (i) For the most part, candidates gave the impression that they knew the context of the answer, namely that Purgon had issued a 'curse' and that his services had been dispensed with. Many could recall the events leading up to Purgon's threat, however few candidates explained that it was Béralde's dismissal of the apothecary which was the cause of M. Purgon's threats. Most candidates successfully identified Argan's hypochondria, anxiety and addiction to medicine and doctors, but some could have been more precise in defining the worry experienced by Argan as shown in this extract or in explaining it with reference to the preceding scenes. Though 'la médecine se venge' was often quoted, very few candidates attempted to interpret what was meant by the remark.
- (ii) Part (ii) was answered well by a number of candidates who used 'attitude' words such as 'concerned' and 'frustrated', and by those who provided evidence for their answers from the extract and from elsewhere in the text. In other responses to this question, there was much digression – it was less successfully dealt with by those who put too much emphasis on Béralde's compassion for his brother, and who did not make sufficient attempt to interpret what he actually said in the extract. Most seemed to get the idea that Béralde reasoned with his brother, Argan, but few went beyond that. Many candidates lingered on the psychological aspect of Béralde's intervention. Not many mentioned the fact that Béralde was suggesting to Argan that he should change doctor and stop taking the medicines.
- (iii) Whilst there were some very good answers to (iii), some candidates felt that Molière's aim was to condemn the medical profession as a whole, rather than to criticise charlatan doctors and their gullible dupes – in some essays, all doctors were described as dangerous killers who were greedy for money, and medical science was said to have no value. 'La médecine était pratiquée par des ignorants' was seen, as well as the logically problematic, 'Molière nous démontre dans cet extrait que la médecine n'était pas aussi précise que maintenant'.

- (b) This was a popular question, and there were many good answers which showed close attention to the title, a sound knowledge of the play and an understanding of the comic techniques used by Molière. The illustrations of Argan being comical were not always well chosen, and there was the usual cohort of specialists in 'comédie de situation', or 'comique verbale'. Nevertheless, most candidates were able to address both the comical effects and the malevolent aspects of Argan's nature and seemed more willing to start discussing humour in Molière earlier, suggesting that messages in previous examiner's reports had been read by teachers and understood by students.

Many candidates were able to give separate examples of the 'méchant', 'maniaque' and 'égoïste' aspects of Argan's character and the best responses identified how these failings were used for comic effect, although some repeated that Argan was 'méchant, maniaque et égoïste' without offering many examples. 'Maniaque' was not always well understood by candidates; they assumed that it meant 'mad' rather than 'maniac, manic, fussy and obsessive'. Weaker candidates tended not to organise their answers in a discernible way and even omitted to provide any evidence for Argan being 'méchant, maniaque et égoïste', or if they did, then they argued that these traits in themselves made Argan a comic figure. They did not always notice the words 'to what extent'.

Question 2 – Émile Zola: Thérèse Raquin

This text seemed to have been appreciated and generally understood.

- (a) This was a passage-based question which truly tested the candidates' understanding of plot and character.
- (i) Candidates generally identified the salient points. Most candidates identified the negative aspects of the description of Camille and the portents of what was about to befall him. The 'grimace' was mentioned, but the ridicule contained in the description went largely unidentified. Less able candidates tended to use the adjectives in the first paragraph to describe Camille without commenting on the meaning of the portrait of the sleeping figure. Better responses stressed the fact that the description of 'sleeping Camille' was soon to become 'dead Camille', with little difference in appearance. The 'rouge brique' in the neck was pointed out by some candidates as a significant reference to Laurent's wound after the murder.
- (ii) The calculating side winning over the violent side of Laurent was generally well perceived. Laurent's character was understood, and his deviousness, his violent nature and lack of compunction were well described by most candidates. Many underlined his laziness and wish for an easy life, coupled with a total lack of scruple as he plotted to murder his friend.
- (iii) Most candidates identified the dire consequences that would befall Laurent because of the murder, although few addressed the question of whether he was morally right to think this way and fewer still identified that he was never in fact accused or even suspected of murder. The question gave rise to a variety of points of view. 'Sans danger' was understood clearly. Laurent did get away with the murder, but little reference was made to the conscience and sense of guilt experienced by the culprit.
- (b) There were some good responses, and most candidates showed a good understanding of the novel and Zola's intentions. The great majority of candidates who chose this question developed the points that Thérèse was frustrated throughout her childhood and her early married life.

There were some clear, detailed and interesting answers, and very good explanations of why Thérèse was to be pitied, as well as some good analyses of the less attractive aspects of her character. Candidates had plenty of scope to show what they knew about the text and to demonstrate a sensitive, thoughtful and well-presented argument. Some candidates expressed indignation at her lack of morality as she plotted to murder her husband, as well as her hypocrisy after the deed was done, and the dreadful treatment of her by the aunt when the old lady could not retaliate. There was, however, a noticeable number of candidates who stated that Thérèse was perfectly forgivable for wanting to kill her husband because she wanted to be free, as though this were justification in itself.

There was more pity for Thérèse than condemnation, on the whole, but the evaluation of her conduct varied with a number of subtle points being made. Most were valid and concluded with a condemnation of her actions which showed some sympathy for her motives. In some cases, more should have been made of the torment the murderers suffered, the need for self-punishment and the necessity for justice to be done, but overall, it was pleasing to see how mature some of the answers were. Unfortunately, some were so passionate about feeling pity (or not feeling pity) that they could not see the other side of the argument.

Question 3 – Jean Anouilh: L'Alouette

A great many essays on 'L'Alouette' were seen, with slightly more opting for (a).

- (a) (i) Most candidates understood and answered well, identifying Charles' childishness, lack of courage and reluctance to take on royal duties. Some identified his fickleness, but not so many perceived that his behaviour was 'typique' in as much as his remarks were facetious and self-deprecating. He had no self-confidence and lacked regal qualities but was no fool. His unceremonious treatment of the archbishop showed his cynicism towards the church. In his dismissal of both men, he made a parody of what his role should be. The extract was not always put in the appropriate context, though, as some thought that it took place during the trial.
- (ii) All candidates knew that the word 'pucelle' referred to Jeanne, but relatively few could explain that receiving Jeanne was the wish of the people. Those candidates who understood the passage had no trouble answering that she was popular with the masses and that it was necessary for the king to hear what she had to say. Some candidates did not understand 'imposer à Charles'. They thought it meant that he was not to receive her.
- (iii) Most answers in **part (iii)** seemed to centre purely on the Archbishop's concern at losing his control. A few candidates also commented on Jeanne's challenging the church's authority, identifying the threat that Jeanne represented to the archbishop's personal standing with the Dauphin and the people. The politics of the situation was not clear to all, but a few recognised the fact that the archbishop's loyalties lay with the English, and that the authority of the established church was being threatened by Jeanne.

The archbishop's reaction was explained properly by those who knew the text well: Jeanne was a country girl; if it was God who was truly sending emissaries to talk to human beings, he would have contacted the archbishop himself. Should Jeanne's help be genuine, he would not want it since his loyalties were with the English. Only a few candidates mentioned that the archbishop would relent eventually.

- (b) There were a few excellent answers to this question which showed an understanding of Jeanne's mission and purpose. Not all candidates had grasped Anouilh's disregard for chronology in this play, though. The flippant tone sustained throughout concealed serious undertones. As one of the 'Pièces costumées', 'L'Alouette' presented Jeanne as a protagonist seeking 'a moral path in a world of corruption and manipulation'. Not all candidates were able to identify that Jeanne rejected returning to a normal ordinary life as she wished to remain true to the extraordinary identity she had created. Nevertheless, most were able to demonstrate some good knowledge and relevance.

Question 4 – Marguerite Duras: Moderato Cantabile

- (a) (i) This question was understood and answered well. Much was made of Chauvin's feelings for Anne but precise details on the garden, the house and Chauvin's obsession for watching Anne's movements when she was at home were not given. Most candidates could recall that Chauvin had watched Anne from outside her house, but not enough was made of the obsessive nature of his surveillance, the symbolism of the padlock or his sense of exclusion from her represented by the walls and the padlock.

- (ii) The child's upbringing was debated. Some candidates thought that Anne was negligent, others considered her protective. The majority felt that she was a good mother, who placed her child above her love life. The author's intentions were open to interpretation, and some candidates found it challenging to explain and interpret what Anne was implying about the child.

Some had interesting ideas and inventive answers about Chauvin's reaction to and attitude towards the child, offering a variety of suggestions for Chauvin's manner of response. The strongest candidates noted Chauvin's dismissive attitude and lack of interest in Anne's child, who was an obstacle between them. They showed how mention of the child anticipated the separation of Anne from her admirer.

- (iii) Responses were good, generally detailed with good quotations and examples. The intimacy of the hands was understood by many. Not so many responses alluded to the movement of the hands, but the significance of the trembling was understood as an expression of passion. There were some detailed analyses, although some had difficulty in interpreting the illusory touch. More candidates commented successfully on the 'pose mortuaire', showing how the relationship had reached a point of immobility in death.

- (b) This was the more popular and the better answered of the two questions, as candidates took advantage of the opportunity to show what they knew. Candidates generally felt empathy with Anne and showed a good understanding of the book.

Many candidates who chose this question acquitted themselves well, considering the very subtle information given in the text. Sometimes candidates focused on the child only and discarded other aspects of the Desbaresdes' life and relationships. At other times, they found it hard to go beyond the more obvious description of the relationship between the husband and wife. Appropriate references were made to the social background, the large house, the elusive husband, and the strong-willed but also accommodating child. Many developed their responses and underlined Anne's social solecism, frequenting a working men's bar and drinking wine.

The strongest candidates provided evidence for the correct inference that Anne's domestic life with her husband was unsatisfactory. They commented well on the extent to which Anne continued to observe the social expectations of the wealthy bourgeois middle classes in valuing such things as piano lessons and property, despite her solitary existence, while departing from that code in her behaviour and emotional yearning, analysing in particular Anne's conduct at the formal dinner and in the bar.

Question 5 – André Gide: *Les Caves du Vatican*

- (a) Not many answers on this text were seen, although the elements of (a) were relatively straightforward, and the question was well addressed.
- (b) The few responses were successful, showing a sound knowledge of the character and his interaction with others in the novel.

Question 6 – Albert Camus: *Les Justes*

Both questions were very popular and often well answered by conscientious candidates. Candidates appeared to have enjoyed the study of the text.

- (a) This question was generally quite well answered. Discussions regarding Stepan's personality and life were well illustrated, but not so many candidates took the opportunity to say much about Dora. It would have been worth discussing what her attitude to Stepan said about herself: it would have been good to see more candidates identifying Dora's fear as not so much a personal concern, than as a concern for the revolution and for the effect of adopting an 'end justifies the means' morality whose ultimate consequences were totalitarianism. Most candidates were able to recount the background to Stepan's bitterness and the stark contrast that he represented to the other revolutionaries. It was made clear that he had had a troubled past and had been traumatised by his ordeal in prison. Finer detail of his brutal punishment was given by some. More thoroughly prepared candidates identified that Stepan represented the bleakness of Sartre's approach to existentialism, whereas Kaliayev represented a slightly more optimistic slant.

The best candidates analysed the character of Dora briefly and explained what prompted the remark. They discussed aspects of Stepan's past, and showed how his ideas and plans provoked fear. Some contrasted his view of revolutionary action with that of Kaliayev. Some did not respond to the invitation to say what they thought of the remark. Of those who referred to the context of the comment, most saw it as coming much earlier in the play, during the planning of the attack.

- (b) This was the more popular of the two questions. The text and question were well interpreted by most, and answers were very successful, with candidates showing good knowledge of the text and the ability to provide details for each of the characters' reason(s) to 'want' to die.

Some candidates took the chance to discuss virtually every character, even if not in great detail, although there were some very perceptive responses regarding the role of each individual. Others restricted themselves to one or two, often Kaliayev and Dora (better ones picked up on his refusal to denounce his comrades and her desire to share the same rope – her death was particularly well explained), which tended to limit the range and scope of their answer.

Stronger responses also addressed Voinov, Stepan and even La Grande Duchesse (who wanted to die with her husband) and could point out the differences in outlook of members of the group who officially shared the same beliefs but whose views were inevitably influenced by their varied background and experience, giving detail on each character's position towards their choice.

Weaker candidates simply explained why those characters who die wanted to do so and did not cover the place of self-sacrifice in the philosophy of all the revolutionaries. Some candidates, however, did not explain that Kaliayev seeks death as a justification and atonement for his own action in killing the Grand Duc. He was not just dying out of self-sacrifice for the good of the people.

Question 7 – Simone de Beauvoir: Les Belles Images

This text was a very popular choice indeed. Many candidates were clearly happier with this novel featuring young characters, with whom they could identify, and relating well to the issues. Candidates seemed to enjoy writing against a macho and materialistic world.

- (a) This was the more popular of the two questions.

This question provided a good canvas for candidates to express themselves clearly, presenting a good opportunity for them to show what they knew with some originality and to offer their own interpretation and analysis of the text. There were a number of good, sensitive answers. Most candidates started with the main point – that Catherine, indeed rarely seen, was important because she obliged the main character, Laurence, to reconsider all aspects of her life. Most saw the way that Laurence, in particular, found that her daughter's problems helped her to re-examine her own upbringing and to focus on issues in her own life, career and marriage, pointing out that Catherine was a catalyst for change in Laurence's life.

A few considered the idea that other characters could be considered to be 'au coeur du roman'. The best answers carefully organised knowledge of the text into a concise argument.

- (b) This question was particularly successful with the more able candidates. Answers generally showed an imaginative focus on the issues. A small number assessed each character's attitude relevantly. Some took the question as an invitation to comment on the life of all characters in general, rather than in the light of the quotation. This was a missed opportunity which produced some relevant points at times by chance rather than design.

Most candidates latched on to the meaning behind the quotation and wrote about why most of the characters in this novel are unfulfilled. Brigitte and Catherine could have been used as a counterpoint to the quotation but seldom were. Only a few saw the 'resilience' of Brigitte, even though she was included in most analyses, or mentioned the fact that Jean-Charles was actually quite happy with his life.

Question 8 – Romain Gary: La Vie devant soi

- (a) This question was less popular than (b), but was quite successfully addressed.

Some candidates did not understand 'plaider' and did not provide enough evidence of the life lived by 'les jeunes'. Those who understood the question knew that Gary's support of the underclass included everyone, not just the young. The question necessitated an analysis, and often the candidates only provided a view of the lives of Momo and other young orphans in the novel. More focus on the wording of the question would have been of benefit to many candidates.

- (b) This was overwhelmingly the candidates' preferred choice of question on this text. Generally candidates offered very good answers, and the detail was covered well. Good knowledge of the book was presented.

The quality of response varied according to the candidate's knowledge of the text and ability to illustrate relevantly. Some gave detailed responses, explaining that fear could lead to paranoia. Answers centred on Mme Rosa and Momo, and gave ample evidence of the source of their fears of losing each other, as well as her fear of cancer and ageing. Stronger candidates gave broader examples of the role of fear within the novel, widening the focus to a fuller cast of characters and their marginality and vulnerability. Some conclusions showed maturity and compassion.

Candidates were at risk of simply listing instances of fear in the novel, with little analysis or discussion, however the question was well understood.

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| <p>Paper 9716/42 Texts</p> |
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Key messages

Teachers should:

- Think carefully about which texts to prepare as some present conceptual problems that are challenging for average and below average candidates.

Teachers should train their students to:

- Check carefully that they manage their time in the examination room well and answer three questions;
- Check carefully that they do not answer two questions on the same text;
- Think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write;
- Refer to the question during the answer, not just at the start and the finish.
- Practise responses to the passage-based exercises, pointing out that one question usually concerns what happened before the extract, another requires detail on the contents of the extract, and the other addresses more general issues, in this case, satire or comedy.

Candidates should:

- Note that the word for character is ‘personnage’ and not ‘caractère’
- Label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If questions have not been labelled, it can look as though **(ii)** and **(iii)** were not attempted at all, when all three of **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** should be answered in the passage-based questions
- Remember that ‘soit ... soit’ means ‘either ... or’ and should not be copied before question numbers
- Choose carefully either **(a)** or **(b)** and invest in providing as complete and relevant an answer to that one question as possible
- Answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read.
- Note key words in the questions
- Answer the question precisely; stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions. A conclusion needs to refer to the points made in the essay and must be associated with the title. It is worth repeating or rephrasing the title at the start of an essay, e.g. **3(b)** ‘Jeanne rejette une fin heureuse...’ **6(b)** ‘Les personnages veulent mourir...’, **7(b)** ‘Lucien dit...’ A conclusion could be a summary of the points developed in the essay, with a personal judgement.
- Explore all elements of questions
- Finish with a concluding paragraph
- Start each new essay on a fresh page
- Be careful to attach any continuation sheets in order

General comments

Passage-based questions were dealt with more effectively than in previous years; there were fewer purely narrative answers and candidates showed a greater ability to locate the extract within the text and highlight the relevant issues. However, many candidates still attempted to answer these questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then omitting to explain what the point was that the quote illustrated or exemplified. It was as though they felt that the words spoke for themselves. It is important, though, for candidates to give their interpretation of the significance of those quotations.

There is a need to dissect the title of essay questions and to weigh up and define each element. Candidates need to avoid making the same point in multiple ways, even if they come at it from slightly differing

directions. Careful thought can make the difference between a good structured essay and a poor repetitive piece of writing, labouring points already made earlier.

Candidates need to find a 'happy balance' between assuming that the examiner knows nothing and remembering that the examiner has also read the text. Although narration irrelevant to the question is not required, candidates should begin to answer the question at the beginning, but should not hold back from showing knowledge of the texts, not just retelling the story, but also making points.

Candidates should not write an opening paragraph which addresses in rather general terms the author, his or her works or the audience that he or she was addressing. Candidates should just answer the question.

It was evident that Centres had used past questions when training their candidates, and detailed knowledge was shown in those areas. Candidates should select the question they choose to answer carefully, though, and ensure that their material is relevant. Sometimes the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to this session's questions, but at other times, there were resounding echoes of previous years' questions.

The language used was on the whole appropriate but some essays contained colloquialisms. The best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although it is helpful if these are crossed through to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Molière: Le Malade Imaginaire

This year, again, questions on Molière were attempted by the great majority of candidates, who showed that they knew the text well and that they had enjoyed studying the play.

- (a) Was the more popular and was generally well answered.
- (i) For the most part, candidates gave the impression that they knew the context of the answer, namely that Purgon had issued a 'curse' and that his services had been dispensed with. Many could recall the events leading up to Purgon's threat, however few candidates explained that it was Béralde's dismissal of the apothecary which was the cause of M. Purgon's threats. Most candidates successfully identified Argan's hypochondria, anxiety and addiction to medicine and doctors, but some could have been more precise in defining the worry experienced by Argan as shown in this extract or in explaining it with reference to the preceding scenes. Though 'la médecine se venge' was often quoted, very few candidates attempted to interpret what was meant by the remark.
- (ii) Part (ii) was answered well by a number of candidates who used 'attitude' words such as 'concerned' and 'frustrated', and by those who provided evidence for their answers from the extract and from elsewhere in the text. In other responses to this question, there was much digression – it was less successfully dealt with by those who put too much emphasis on Béralde's compassion for his brother, and who did not make sufficient attempt to interpret what he actually said in the extract. Most seemed to get the idea that Béralde reasoned with his brother, Argan, but few went beyond that. Many candidates lingered on the psychological aspect of Béralde's intervention. Not many mentioned the fact that Béralde was suggesting to Argan that he should change doctor and stop taking the medicines.
- (iii) Whilst there were some very good answers to (iii), some candidates felt that Molière's aim was to condemn the medical profession as a whole, rather than to criticise charlatan doctors and their gullible dupes – in some essays, all doctors were described as dangerous killers who were greedy for money, and medical science was said to have no value. 'La médecine était pratiquée par des ignorants' was seen, as well as the logically problematic, 'Molière nous démontre dans cet extrait que la médecine n'était pas aussi précise que maintenant'.

- (b) This was a popular question, and there were many good answers which showed close attention to the title, a sound knowledge of the play and an understanding of the comic techniques used by Molière. The illustrations of Argan being comical were not always well chosen, and there was the usual cohort of specialists in 'comédie de situation', or 'comique verbale'. Nevertheless, most candidates were able to address both the comical effects and the malevolent aspects of Argan's nature and seemed more willing to start discussing humour in Molière earlier, suggesting that messages in previous examiner's reports had been read by teachers and understood by students.

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Many candidates who chose this question acquitted themselves well, considering the very subtle information given in the text. Sometimes candidates focused on the child only and discarded other aspects of the Desbaresdes' life and relationships. At other times, they found it hard to go beyond the more obvious description of the relationship between the husband and wife. Appropriate references were made to the social background, the large house, the elusive husband, and the strong-willed but also accommodating child. Many developed their responses and underlined Anne's social solecism, frequenting a working men's bar and drinking wine.

The strongest candidates provided evidence for the correct inference that Anne's domestic life with her husband was unsatisfactory. They commented well on the extent to which Anne continued to observe the social expectations of the wealthy bourgeois middle classes in valuing such things as piano lessons and property, despite her solitary existence, while departing from that code in her behaviour and emotional yearning, analysing in particular Anne's conduct at the formal dinner and in the bar.

Question 5 – André Gide: *Les Caves du Vatican*

- (a) Not many answers on this text were seen, although the elements of (a) were relatively straightforward, and the question was well addressed.
- (b) The few responses were successful, showing a sound knowledge of the character and his interaction with others in the novel.

Question 6 – Albert Camus: *Les Justes*

Both questions were very popular and often well answered by conscientious candidates. Candidates appeared to have enjoyed the study of the text.

- (a) This question was generally quite well answered. Discussions regarding Stepan's personality and life were well illustrated, but not so many candidates took the opportunity to say much about Dora. It would have been worth discussing what her attitude to Stepan said about herself: it would have been good to see more candidates identifying Dora's fear as not so much a personal concern, than as a concern for the revolution and for the effect of adopting an 'end justifies the means' morality whose ultimate consequences were totalitarianism. Most candidates were able to recount the background to Stepan's bitterness and the stark contrast that he represented to the other revolutionaries. It was made clear that he had had a troubled past and had been traumatised by his ordeal in prison. Finer detail of his brutal punishment was given by some. More thoroughly prepared candidates identified that Stepan represented the bleakness of Sartre's approach to existentialism, whereas Kaliayev represented a slightly more optimistic slant.

The best candidates analysed the character of Dora briefly and explained what prompted the remark. They discussed aspects of Stepan's past, and showed how his ideas and plans provoked fear. Some contrasted his view of revolutionary action with that of Kaliayev. Some did not respond to the invitation to say what they thought of the remark. Of those who referred to the context of the comment, most saw it as coming much earlier in the play, during the planning of the attack.

- (b) This was the more popular of the two questions. The text and question were well interpreted by most, and answers were very successful, with candidates showing good knowledge of the text and the ability to provide details for each of the characters' reason(s) to 'want' to die.

Some candidates took the chance to discuss virtually every character, even if not in great detail, although there were some very perceptive responses regarding the role of each individual. Others restricted themselves to one or two, often Kaliayev and Dora (better ones picked up on his refusal to denounce his comrades and her desire to share the same rope – her death was particularly well explained), which tended to limit the range and scope of their answer.

Stronger responses also addressed Voinov, Stepan and even La Grande Duchesse (who wanted to die with her husband) and could point out the differences in outlook of members of the group who officially shared the same beliefs but whose views were inevitably influenced by their varied background and experience, giving detail on each character's position towards their choice.

Weaker candidates simply explained why those characters who die wanted to do so and did not cover the place of self-sacrifice in the philosophy of all the revolutionaries. Some candidates, however, did not explain that Kaliayev seeks death as a justification and atonement for his own action in killing the Grand Duc. He was not just dying out of self-sacrifice for the good of the people.

Question 7 – Simone de Beauvoir: Les Belles Images

This text was a very popular choice indeed. Many candidates were clearly happier with this novel featuring young characters, with whom they could identify, and relating well to the issues. Candidates seemed to enjoy writing against a macho and materialistic world.

- (a) This was the more popular of the two questions.

This question provided a good canvas for candidates to express themselves clearly, presenting a good opportunity for them to show what they knew with some originality and to offer their own interpretation and analysis of the text. There were a number of good, sensitive answers. Most candidates started with the main point – that Catherine, indeed rarely seen, was important because she obliged the main character, Laurence, to reconsider all aspects of her life. Most saw the way that Laurence, in particular, found that her daughter's problems helped her to re-examine her own upbringing and to focus on issues in her own life, career and marriage, pointing out that Catherine was a catalyst for change in Laurence's life.

A few considered the idea that other characters could be considered to be 'au coeur du roman'. The best answers carefully organised knowledge of the text into a concise argument.

- (b) This question was particularly successful with the more able candidates. Answers generally showed an imaginative focus on the issues. A small number assessed each character's attitude relevantly. Some took the question as an invitation to comment on the life of all characters in general, rather than in the light of the quotation. This was a missed opportunity which produced some relevant points at times by chance rather than design.

Most candidates latched on to the meaning behind the quotation and wrote about why most of the characters in this novel are unfulfilled. Brigitte and Catherine could have been used as a counterpoint to the quotation but seldom were. Only a few saw the 'resilience' of Brigitte, even though she was included in most analyses, or mentioned the fact that Jean-Charles was actually quite happy with his life.

Question 8 – Romain Gary: La Vie devant soi

- (a) This question was less popular than (b), but was quite successfully addressed.

Some candidates did not understand 'plaider' and did not provide enough evidence of the life lived by 'les jeunes'. Those who understood the question knew that Gary's support of the underclass included everyone, not just the young. The question necessitated an analysis, and often the candidates only provided a view of the lives of Momo and other young orphans in the novel. More focus on the wording of the question would have been of benefit to many candidates.

- (b) This was overwhelmingly the candidates' preferred choice of question on this text. Generally candidates offered very good answers, and the detail was covered well. Good knowledge of the book was presented.

The quality of response varied according to the candidate's knowledge of the text and ability to illustrate relevantly. Some gave detailed responses, explaining that fear could lead to paranoia. Answers centred on Mme Rosa and Momo, and gave ample evidence of the source of their fears of losing each other, as well as her fear of cancer and ageing. Stronger candidates gave broader examples of the role of fear within the novel, widening the focus to a fuller cast of characters and their marginality and vulnerability. Some conclusions showed maturity and compassion.

Candidates were at risk of simply listing instances of fear in the novel, with little analysis or discussion, however the question was well understood.

FRENCH

Paper 9716/43
Texts

Key messages

Teachers should:

- Think carefully about which texts to prepare as some present conceptual problems that are challenging for average and below average candidates.

Teachers should train their students to:

- Check carefully that they manage their time in the examination room well and answer three questions;
- Check carefully that they do not answer two questions on the same text;
- Think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write;
- Refer to the question during the answer, not just at the start and the finish.
- Practise responses to the passage-based exercises, pointing out that one question usually concerns what happened before the extract, another requires detail on the contents of the extract, and the other addresses more general issues, in this case, satire or comedy.

Candidates should:

- Note that the word for character is ‘personnage’ and not ‘caractère’
- Label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If questions have not been labelled, it can look as though **(ii)** and **(iii)** were not attempted at all, when all three of **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** should be answered in the passage-based questions
- Remember that ‘soit ... soit’ means ‘either ... or’ and should not be copied before question numbers
- Choose carefully either **(a)** or **(b)** and invest in providing as complete and relevant an answer to that one question as possible
- Answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read.
- Note key words in the questions
- Answer the question precisely; stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions. A conclusion needs to refer to the points made in the essay and must be associated with the title. It is worth repeating or rephrasing the title at the start of an essay, e.g. **3(b)** ‘Jeanne rejette une fin heureuse...’ **6(b)** ‘Les personnages veulent mourir...’, **7(b)** ‘Lucien dit...’ A conclusion could be a summary of the points developed in the essay, with a personal judgement.
- Explore all elements of questions
- Finish with a concluding paragraph
- Start each new essay on a fresh page
- Be careful to attach any continuation sheets in order

General comments

Passage-based questions were dealt with more effectively than in previous years; there were fewer purely narrative answers and candidates showed a greater ability to locate the extract within the text and highlight the relevant issues. However, many candidates still attempted to answer these questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then omitting to explain what the point was that the quote illustrated or exemplified. It was as though they felt that the words spoke for themselves. It is important, though, for candidates to give their interpretation of the significance of those quotations.

There is a need to dissect the title of essay questions and to weigh up and define each element. Candidates need to avoid making the same point in multiple ways, even if they come at it from slightly differing

directions. Careful thought can make the difference between a good structured essay and a poor repetitive piece of writing, labouring points already made earlier.

Candidates need to find a 'happy balance' between assuming that the examiner knows nothing and remembering that the examiner has also read the text. Although narration irrelevant to the question is not required, candidates should begin to answer the question at the beginning, but should not hold back from showing knowledge of the texts, not just retelling the story, but also making points.

Candidates should not write an opening paragraph which addresses in rather general terms the author, his or her works or the audience that he or she was addressing. Candidates should just answer the question.

It was evident that Centres had used past questions when training their candidates, and detailed knowledge was shown in those areas. Candidates should select the question they choose to answer carefully, though, and ensure that their material is relevant. Sometimes the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to this session's questions, but at other times, there were resounding echoes of previous years' questions.

The language used was on the whole appropriate but some essays contained colloquialisms. The best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often shown on the answer paper, although it is helpful if these are crossed through to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Molière: Le Malade Imaginaire

This year, again, questions on Molière were attempted by the great majority of candidates, who showed that they knew the text well and that they had enjoyed studying the play.

- (a) Was the more popular and was generally well answered.
- (i) For the most part, candidates gave the impression that they knew the context of the answer, namely that Purgon had issued a 'curse' and that his services had been dispensed with. Many could recall the events leading up to Purgon's threat, however few candidates explained that it was Béralde's dismissal of the apothecary which was the cause of M. Purgon's threats. Most candidates successfully identified Argan's hypochondria, anxiety and addiction to medicine and doctors, but some could have been more precise in defining the worry experienced by Argan as shown in this extract or in explaining it with reference to the preceding scenes. Though 'la médecine se venge' was often quoted, very few candidates attempted to interpret what was meant by the remark.
- (ii) Part (ii) was answered well by a number of candidates who used 'attitude' words such as 'concerned' and 'frustrated', and by those who provided evidence for their answers from the extract and from elsewhere in the text. In other responses to this question, there was much digression – it was less successfully dealt with by those who put too much emphasis on Béralde's compassion for his brother, and who did not make sufficient attempt to interpret what he actually said in the extract. Most seemed to get the idea that Béralde reasoned with his brother, Argan, but few went beyond that. Many candidates lingered on the psychological aspect of Béralde's intervention. Not many mentioned the fact that Béralde was suggesting to Argan that he should change doctor and stop taking the medicines.
- (iii) Whilst there were some very good answers to (iii), some candidates felt that Molière's aim was to condemn the medical profession as a whole, rather than to criticise charlatan doctors and their gullible dupes – in some essays, all doctors were described as dangerous killers who were greedy for money, and medical science was said to have no value. 'La médecine était pratiquée par des ignorants' was seen, as well as the logically problematic, 'Molière nous démontre dans cet extrait que la médecine n'était pas aussi précise que maintenant'.

- (b) This was a popular question, and there were many good answers which showed close attention to the title, a sound knowledge of the play and an understanding of the comic techniques used by Molière. The illustrations of Argan being comical were not always well chosen, and there was the usual cohort of specialists in 'comédie de situation', or 'comique verbale'. Nevertheless, most candidates were able to address both the comical effects and the malevolent aspects of Argan's nature and seemed more willing to start discussing humour in Molière earlier, suggesting that messages in previous examiner's reports had been read by teachers and understood by students.

Many candidates were able to give separate examples of the 'méchant', 'maniaque' and 'égoïste' aspects of Argan's character and the best responses identified how these failings were used for comic effect, although some repeated that Argan was 'méchant, maniaque et égoïste' without offering many examples. 'Maniaque' was not always well understood by candidates; they assumed that it meant 'mad' rather than 'maniac, manic, fussy and obsessive'. Weaker candidates tended not to organise their answers in a discernible way and even omitted to provide any evidence for Argan being 'méchant, maniaque et égoïste', or if they did, then they argued that these traits in themselves made Argan a comic figure. They did not always notice the words 'to what extent'.

Question 2 – Émile Zola: Thérèse Raquin

This text seemed to have been appreciated and generally understood.

- (a) This was a passage-based question which truly tested the candidates' understanding of plot and character.
- (i) Candidates generally identified the salient points. Most candidates identified the negative aspects of the description of Camille and the portents of what was about to befall him. The 'grimace' was mentioned, but the ridicule contained in the description went largely unidentified. Less able candidates tended to use the adjectives in the first paragraph to describe Camille without commenting on the meaning of the portrait of the sleeping figure. Better responses stressed the fact that the description of 'sleeping Camille' was soon to become 'dead Camille', with little difference in appearance. The 'rouge brique' in the neck was pointed out by some candidates as a significant reference to Laurent's wound after the murder.
- (ii) The calculating side winning over the violent side of Laurent was generally well perceived. Laurent's character was understood, and his deviousness, his violent nature and lack of compunction were well described by most candidates. Many underlined his laziness and wish for an easy life, coupled with a total lack of scruple as he plotted to murder his friend.
- (iii) Most candidates identified the dire consequences that would befall Laurent because of the murder, although few addressed the question of whether he was morally right to think this way and fewer still identified that he was never in fact accused or even suspected of murder. The question gave rise to a variety of points of view. 'Sans danger' was understood clearly. Laurent did get away with the murder, but little reference was made to the conscience and sense of guilt experienced by the culprit.
- (b) There were some good responses, and most candidates showed a good understanding of the novel and Zola's intentions. The great majority of candidates who chose this question developed the points that Thérèse was frustrated throughout her childhood and her early married life.

There were some clear, detailed and interesting answers, and very good explanations of why Thérèse was to be pitied, as well as some good analyses of the less attractive aspects of her character. Candidates had plenty of scope to show what they knew about the text and to demonstrate a sensitive, thoughtful and well-presented argument. Some candidates expressed indignation at her lack of morality as she plotted to murder her husband, as well as her hypocrisy after the deed was done, and the dreadful treatment of her by the aunt when the old lady could not retaliate. There was, however, a noticeable number of candidates who stated that Thérèse was perfectly forgivable for wanting to kill her husband because she wanted to be free, as though this were justification in itself.

There was more pity for Thérèse than condemnation, on the whole, but the evaluation of her conduct varied with a number of subtle points being made. Most were valid and concluded with a condemnation of her actions which showed some sympathy for her motives. In some cases, more should have been made of the torment the murderers suffered, the need for self-punishment and the necessity for justice to be done, but overall, it was pleasing to see how mature some of the answers were. Unfortunately, some were so passionate about feeling pity (or not feeling pity) that they could not see the other side of the argument.

Question 3 – Jean Anouilh: L'Alouette

A great many essays on 'L'Alouette' were seen, with slightly more opting for (a).

- (a) (i) Most candidates understood and answered well, identifying Charles' childishness, lack of courage and reluctance to take on royal duties. Some identified his fickleness, but not so many perceived that his behaviour was 'typique' in as much as his remarks were facetious and self-deprecating. He had no self-confidence and lacked regal qualities but was no fool. His unceremonious treatment of the archbishop showed his cynicism towards the church. In his dismissal of both men, he made a parody of what his role should be. The extract was not always put in the appropriate context, though, as some thought that it took place during the trial.
- (ii) All candidates knew that the word 'pucelle' referred to Jeanne, but relatively few could explain that receiving Jeanne was the wish of the people. Those candidates who understood the passage had no trouble answering that she was popular with the masses and that it was necessary for the king to hear what she had to say. Some candidates did not understand 'imposer à Charles'. They thought it meant that he was not to receive her.
- (iii) Most answers in **part (iii)** seemed to centre purely on the Archbishop's concern at losing his control. A few candidates also commented on Jeanne's challenging the church's authority, identifying the threat that Jeanne represented to the archbishop's personal standing with the Dauphin and the people. The politics of the situation was not clear to all, but a few recognised the fact that the archbishop's loyalties lay with the English, and that the authority of the established church was being threatened by Jeanne.

The archbishop's reaction was explained properly by those who knew the text well: Jeanne was a country girl; if it was God who was truly sending emissaries to talk to human beings, he would have contacted the archbishop himself. Should Jeanne's help be genuine, he would not want it since his loyalties were with the English. Only a few candidates mentioned that the archbishop would relent eventually.

- (b) There were a few excellent answers to this question which showed an understanding of Jeanne's mission and purpose. Not all candidates had grasped Anouilh's disregard for chronology in this play, though. The flippant tone sustained throughout concealed serious undertones. As one of the 'Pièces costumées', 'L'Alouette' presented Jeanne as a protagonist seeking 'a moral path in a world of corruption and manipulation'. Not all candidates were able to identify that Jeanne rejected returning to a normal ordinary life as she wished to remain true to the extraordinary identity she had created. Nevertheless, most were able to demonstrate some good knowledge and relevance.

Question 4 – Marguerite Duras: Moderato Cantabile

- (a) (i) This question was understood and answered well. Much was made of Chauvin's feelings for Anne but precise details on the garden, the house and Chauvin's obsession for watching Anne's movements when she was at home were not given. Most candidates could recall that Chauvin had watched Anne from outside her house, but not enough was made of the obsessive nature of his surveillance, the symbolism of the padlock or his sense of exclusion from her represented by the walls and the padlock.

- (ii) The child's upbringing was debated. Some candidates thought that Anne was negligent, others considered her protective. The majority felt that she was a good mother, who placed her child above her love life. The author's intentions were open to interpretation, and some candidates found it challenging to explain and interpret what Anne was implying about the child.

Some had interesting ideas and inventive answers about Chauvin's reaction to and attitude towards the child, offering a variety of suggestions for Chauvin's manner of response. The strongest candidates noted Chauvin's dismissive attitude and lack of interest in Anne's child, who was an obstacle between them. They showed how mention of the child anticipated the separation of Anne from her admirer.

- (iii) Responses were good, generally detailed with good quotations and examples. The intimacy of the hands was understood by many. Not so many responses alluded to the movement of the hands, but the significance of the trembling was understood as an expression of passion. There were some detailed analyses, although some had difficulty in interpreting the illusory touch. More candidates commented successfully on the 'pose mortuaire', showing how the relationship had reached a point of immobility in death.

- (b) This was the more popular and the better answered of the two questions, as candidates took advantage of the opportunity to show what they knew. Candidates generally felt empathy with Anne and showed a good understanding of the book.

Many candidates who chose this question acquitted themselves well, considering the very subtle information given in the text. Sometimes candidates focused on the child only and discarded other aspects of the Desbaresdes' life and relationships. At other times, they found it hard to go beyond the more obvious description of the relationship between the husband and wife. Appropriate references were made to the social background, the large house, the elusive husband, and the strong-willed but also accommodating child. Many developed their responses and underlined Anne's social solecism, frequenting a working men's bar and drinking wine.

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