FRENCH

| Paper 7156/12 |
| Listening |

Key messages

- Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Only six boxes should be ticked on **Question 16**.
- Candidates must write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then tried to erase and overwrite answers in pen but, in doing so, they left first attempts at ticks or words. This was often difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Full sentences are not required in responses. If answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details may be included which will invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- There were cases of poor handwriting which made some scripts difficult to read.

General comments

The candidature overall performed quite well on the first two sections of the paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with weaker candidates being able to be successful on a few questions in each of the two exercises.

Candidates were usually familiar with the rubrics and were aware of the requirements of the test types. A few candidates seemed unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple-choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16** where some ticked more than six and others only four boxes. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. The examined topics and contexts were accessible to all candidates.

The French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events.

Candidates understood that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should not try to include extra material not on the recording and should not try to paraphrase answers.

There were cases of poor handwriting which made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. If Examiners cannot read the spellings of individual words they cannot award the mark for an answer. If candidates want to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. Answers were marked on the basis of communication. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple-choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed well in this opening exercise which is intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested time, food, places, personal items and household items. Rubrics and visuals were generally well understood by candidates.

Question 1 was attempted well by nearly all candidates. On **Question 2**, some candidates did not recognise *agneau.* **Questions 3**, **4**, **5** and **6** were done well by nearly all candidates. On **Question 7**, nearly half the candidates were familiar with *oreiller.* A good number of candidates recognised *au bord de la mer* on **Question 8**.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured tourist information for a region in France. Questions tested months, places to visit, leisure activities and accommodation details. Candidates generally approached **Questions 11**, **13**, and **15** very well.

On **Question 9**, some gave an incorrect month but an acceptable spelling of *janvier* was usually given by a good number of candidates. On **Question 10**, most recognised *cathédrale.* On **Question 12**, most were also able to identify *à vélo.* Candidates also had few problems in identifying *confiture* on **Question 14** with only some candidates mistakenly opting for *chocolats.*

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

The performance on this exercise was quite good with the majority of candidates scoring well. Candidates are, mostly, well accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates should use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks or crosses are both acceptable, but are likely to cause confusion when used together. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

Candidates heard four young people talking about their time spent in another country. This topic area was accessible to all candidates with a fair number scoring 4 or more marks. Even weaker candidates were able to score 1 or 2 marks here. The most frequent incorrect answer here was on option **(g)**, about Kamila, where some candidates chose this as a correct statement, not realising that Kamila had not gone on holiday but to work in America. Some also did not identify that Serge had taken a year out from his studies to go abroad.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard two interviews with two actors, Carole and André, who talked about how they had started their lives as actors. In the first interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than the one heard in the previous exercise.

Candidates generally made quite a good attempt at the first part of this exercise. On **Question 17**, well over half of the candidates were successful in identifying *technicien*. On **Question 18**, good attempts to render *avocate* were made by most candidates but some wrote *advocate,* which was not accepted. On **Question 19**, well over half the candidates gave an acceptable spelling of the very familiar word *contents.* On **Question 20**, many candidates did not give an acceptable spelling of the word *maquillage*. On **Question 21**, very good attempts were made at *voyager* with nearly all candidates scoring the mark.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

On **Question 22**, most were able to identify *sciences* but some included extra distorting material heard on the recording such as *journal*. On **Question 23**, many candidates were able to correctly identify *téléphoner*, but some candidates also included extra distorting material which occurred before the cue on the recording (*à la fin de la journée*). Only a few candidates were able to identify *vingtaine* in **Question 24**. Many wrote an incorrect number such as *20 / vingt* or *21 / vingt-et-un*. Some candidates misheard *lire* on **Question 25** and answered *lier or mire*. Others wrote instead that André watched television.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Nadia talking about a stay in Morocco with her family. The topic area was generally accessible. Generally, a good attempt was made at this exercise by most candidates. This was a suitably demanding exercise for this stage of the examination. A full range of marks was evident with a fair number scoring 4 or more marks. The question type used was multiple choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events.

Candidates made a very confident start to this exercise with nearly all candidates scoring the mark on **Question 26**. On **Question 27**, about half the candidature were able to identify the reason why there was a lot of people at the shopping centre. Candidates heard *c'était le moment des soldes* and had to link this to the synonym seen in the question, *réductions de prix.* Candidates did well on **Question 28** with most identifying that Nadia had lost her mother's bag. On **Question 29**, candidates needed to understand in the recording *le propriétaire…m'a demandé de lui dire où je logeais au Maroc.* About half the candidates fully understandood and correctly chose that she had given the shop owner her address. Candidates scored better on **Question 30** with good numbers being able to recognise Nadia's mother's reaction. **Question 31** was done very well with good numbers able to recognise *gentil*.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

This was an appropriately demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Some questions were only answered well by the very best candidates. Many weaker candidates, however, were able to score a few marks.

The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. Candidates should not write long answers as sometimes they add extra detail which is not on the recording. This can distort and invalidate an otherwise correct answer. If writing is unclear or incorrect, and if spaces appear in words which split them inappropriately, this may also invalidate an answer. Candidates should not require the Examiner to choose from two options or a list of answers in which the correct answer may feature. Such an answer counts as an invalidation and does not score the mark. Candidates should also make sure they read the questions carefully and understand exactly what is being asked rather than trying to write down too much detail from the recording.

Candidates heard an interview with Arnaud who had left France to go and live in Australia. Most candidates started the exercise confidently on **Question 32** and were able to give an acceptable spelling of *Australie*. **Question 33** was also done well with most being able to identify *économies*, but some candidates wrote *travailler* which invalidated their answer. Just over half the candidates were successful in identifying the word *fête* on **Question 34**. In **Question 35**, many candidates did not identify that Arnaud missed his family. The better candidates were able to ensure the correct word order and wrote answers such as *(sa) famille (lui) manquait.* The correct word order of *famille* and the verb *manquer* was needed to show comprehension. Only the very best candidates answered **Question 36** correctly. The question stated C*omment Arnaud se sentait-il en France* ? and some candidates invalidated their answers by putting *moins détendu* and then adding *en Australie* which was the opposite of the stated fact. Others did not put in the *moins* or wrote *mois* or *moi.* **Question 37** was answered well. On **Question 38**, *triste* was a common incorrect answer with only the better candidates scoring the mark. Candidates needed to listen very carefully as the answer *peur* was contained in the first utterance after the cue question from the interviewer. The final two questions were answered well by most candidates. Very good numbers scored the mark on **Question 39**, identifying *plages.* On **Question 40**, some invalidated the answer *rester* by adding *en France*.

FRENCH

Paper 7156/22 **Reading**

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:
* select carefully only the information from the text that answers the question, in particular in the last two exercises
* ensure that they are familiar with key question words
* attempt all questions, especially in multiple-choice exercises.

General comments

Candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete the paper and almost all candidates were appropriately entered for the examination. Where candidates change their mind about an answer, it is important that they make it clear which one is to be regarded as their final answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

This exercise was accessible to almost all candidates. Not all candidates knew *patinoire* and *chaussures* in **Questions 2** and **4**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Marks for this exercise were generally high and full marks were common.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This exercise was accessible for candidates. In **Question 11**, *la rentrée* was not well-known and **C** was often chosen for **Question 12**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Some candidates did not use the grammatical markers in the sentences to assist with narrowing down their options. Many candidates did not gain marks for **Questions 17**, **18** and **20**.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–30

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of a blog from Sabine about a recent short holiday with her family. The text was mostly straightforward and the vocabulary was familiar. Most candidates answered the questions well. Although long answers are not required, and often only a few words would answer the question, many candidates chose to copy a couple of sentences from the text for each question. For this exercise, extraneous material and incorrect tenses are often ignored as long as they do not in some way invalidate the candidate's correct response.

In **Question 24**, some candidates misunderstood the meaning of *comment* in this particular question and replied mentioning a form of transport. For **Question 25**, some candidates had understood that a timing was required, but chose *pendant le festival* instead. With **Question 28**, some candidates invalidated their answer by making reference to the hotel being old, or instead referred to the restaurants being crowded. Some candidates had misunderstood the meaning of *temps* in **Question 29** and gave a day rather than a weather condition.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 31–35

In **Section 3**, examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail and for candidates to be more selective of the information they take from the texts. In this exercise, candidates should not just write the opposite of the statement but need to look for the alternative information.

Many candidates identified the false statements successfully. For **Question 33**, incorrect answers mostly involved selecting the wrong part of the text or writing *la femme* without including *de Raymond*. For **Question 34**, candidates often invalidated their answers by adding extraneous material, such as a reference to the cold. For **Question 35**, some candidates wrote about Raymond avoiding boats.

Exercise 2 Questions 36–42

This final exercise was intended to be the most challenging part of the paper. Candidates did not gain the marks if they included information that was not necessary to answer the question.

Very few candidates were successful for **Question 36** and the use of the present participle was the most common reason for **Question 37** not being awarded. **Question 41** was usually answered well, but some candidates invalidated their answer by adding *ont été*, possibly thinking it meant in summer. Many candidates answered **Question 42** correctly by changing *ma* to *sa* in their answer.

FRENCH

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Speaking</td></tr>
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Key messages

- Candidates were usually well prepared for the role play tasks, but some Examiners deviated from the set tasks and script. This disadvantaged candidates.
- Timings in most centres were correct but, in some centres, candidates were disadvantaged as the tests were extremely short or very long in the conversation sections. In some cases, a conversation section was missed out. Marks can only be awarded for sections if they are attempted.
- Topic coverage was satisfactory in most centres. Some centres needed to cover a wider range of topics across their candidature as a whole in the Topic presentation/conversation section.
- Centres should ensure that questions to test past and future tenses are asked in **both** the Topic conversation and the General conversation sections.
- The best work was heard in centres in which spontaneous and natural conversations developed.
- In centres with more than one Examiner, it was not always clear how the internal moderation had taken place as details were sometimes not included with the sample.

General comments

The general standard of work heard was good and covered a very wide range of performance. Candidates were generally aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well. Examiners were usually sympathetic to their candidates and helped them to work for the marks and gave them the opportunity to show what they knew and could do.

Centres are reminded that candidates must not be allowed to do any writing during their preparation time and must not be allowed to bring any written materials with them into the preparation area.

It is in the interest of fairness to all candidates to make sure that each candidate is given the full examination time of 5 minutes for **each** of their two conversation sections. If the Topic conversation and the General conversation sections are too short, candidates are not given the opportunity to develop their ideas and opinions nor the opportunity to use a range of structures and tenses. Conversations which are too long can also disadvantage candidates. Examples of past and future tenses can only be credited within the stipulated timings of the test.

In the conversation sections, Examiners who included unexpected questions in a spontaneous, natural way went beyond the straightforward "closed" questions and gave their candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on Table B, Communication. It is essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in both conversation sections as candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses accurately for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on Table C, Language.

If more than one Examiner is used in a centre, the marking of each Examiner should be checked. If adjustments to marks are necessary, they must be made before the sample is chosen. Please ensure that any marks amendments are applied to the whole of the Examiner's group and not just the sample candidates heard. If internal moderation has taken place, please ensure that the final centre mark has been entered correctly on the MS1. Centres are reminded that full details of moderation procedures followed in the centre should be sent with the sample recordings.

Application of the mark scheme

Examiners must adhere to the script of the role plays and not change tasks. If cues are missed out or changed, candidates will be disadvantaged. Short responses in the role plays, if appropriate, can earn a mark of 3. If there are two parts to a task, Examiners are free to split the task, but if only one part of a task is completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 1. If a candidate uses a verb to

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complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2 and not 3 is appropriate. Apart from the task in Role Play A which requires the candidate to listen to two options and then choose one, candidates cannot be awarded marks for material given by the Examiner which is then repeated by the candidate.

In the Conversation sections, the marking tended to be generous in a number of centres. In such centres, marks were often awarded in the higher bands when there was no evidence that candidates could respond in a spontaneous way to unexpected questions or that they could communicate consistently and accurately in past and future tenses.

Candidates cannot be awarded high marks if they can only respond to very closed straightforward questions which do not enable them to develop and justify their points. Examiners must pitch the level of questioning at a different level for candidates of different abilities.

Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in centres.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Please remember to check the number of the candidate's card before starting the test and to enter the number of the card on the working mark sheet.

Examiners should prompt candidates to try to attempt all tasks. Overlong answers should not be encouraged as marks can only be awarded for the set tasks. If candidates add material extra to the set task, it may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer.

On all the Role Play A situations, there is always a task which requires candidates to listen and choose from the two options offered by the Examiner. If one of these options is not chosen by the candidate, the appropriate mark to award is 0. Likewise, there is always one task which requires candidates to respond to an unexpected question on the Role Play B situations.

A Role Plays

Candidates generally found these role plays to be accessible and even the weakest candidates were usually able to score at least one mark on each task. Examiners should always query unclear pronunciation if the meaning of the utterance is unclear.

Examiners should introduce Role Play A and start off the conversation. English should not be used to introduce the test. Once started, the whole of the test should be conducted in French.

Visit to a château

This role play was well attempted by candidates. On **Task 1**, nearly all were able to greet appropriately and say they wanted to do a guided visit of the *château*. On **Task 2**, most were able to opt for one of the choices offered by the Examiner. On **Task 3**, nearly all candidates gave a number successfully. On **Task 4**, the pronunciation of *plan* was problematic for many. Good attempts were made on **Task 5** with many able to formulate a correct and appropriate question. Those who asked about where the toilets were often mispronounced *toilettes* or gave a singular verb such as *Où est les toilettes ?*

In the tourist office

Candidates generally approached this situation well. Nearly all candidates could greet and say they wanted to go on a boat trip on **Task 1**. On **Task 2**, most were able to give a day of the week. **Task 3** required candidates to choose one of the options provided in the cue by the Examiner. Some candidates mispronounced *port* but generally the task was well done. On **Task 4**, the candidates were required to give a number of people. Most, when prompted, could give a number but some used an inappropriate verb such as *je suis deux personnes.* On **Task 5**, nearly all candidates remembered to thank but some found difficulty when asking the price or pronouncing *toilettes* well.

Buying a birthday cake

This role play was approached well. Candidates were generally successful on **Task 1**. On **Task 2**, most were able to opt for one of the choices offered by the Examiner. Those who chose *adulte* sometimes mispronounced it. On **Task 3**, many candidates gave a number when asked for the age of the friend but often omitted the *ans.* Sometimes, those who opted to give a full sentence often gave the age with the verb *être* rather than *avoir.* **Task 4** was usually communicated well with most opting for *crème* or *chocolat.* Many mispronunciations of *chocolat* were evident this year. Good attempts were also made on **Task 5**, but some candidates asked *Combien de prix?* when asking the price and could not be awarded full mark.

B Role Plays

These role plays were deliberately more demanding than the A Role Plays. They required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, to apologise, or give an opinion. They differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score some marks on some of the tasks when prompted appropriately.

Phoning a hotel

Candidates usually approached this situation quite confidently. On **Task 1**, most were able to explain why they were phoning but some used an incorrect form of register to the hotel owner. On **Task 2**, quite a few candidates needed reprompting and did not always understand *libre* in the cue. Candidates who gave a date or a period of time such as *en juin / la semaine prochaine* gained the marks. **Task 3** required candidates to state that they had already worked in a hotel and say what kind of work they had done. Some candidates did not attempt the first part of the task. Candidates who combined the tasks with utterances such as *j'ai travaillé dans un hôtel comme réceptionniste* fulfilled both parts of the task. Candidates needed to use a past time frame tense to gain full marks. Most were able, on **Task 4**, to give an opinion about their work. To gain the marks here, two details were required. On **Task 5**, a correctly formulated question was required for the mark of 3 to be awarded. Those who chose to ask about the salary often mispronounced *salaire.* Questions here were not always formulated correctly. Some of the better responses heard opted for other questions such as *Est-ce qu'il y a un uniforme ?* and were successful.

Phoning the owner of a holiday house

Most candidates approached **Task 1** fairly confidently and could rephrase the rubric and explain that they were going to be late. On **Task 2**, many could communicate a time of arrival, especially when reprompted if necessary. Others who chose to use a verb often stated *j'arrivé.* In such cases, a mark of 2, not 3, was appropriate. Those who just offered a time were more successful as a brief but appropriate response could score 3 marks. Weaker candidates often did not give two details about why they were late in **Task 3**. To be successful here, any verbs used needed to be in an appropriate past tense. A few candidates said the car had broken down or the train or plane was late. Others sometimes said they had been ill or had gone to the shops. Many candidates understood that they needed to make an apology on the first part of **Task 4**. The second part of the task was less well done with many unable to use the correct part of the verb. Some forgot that they were talking to *Monsieur/Madame Pennac* on **Task 5** and used an incorrect form of register. There were many instances of *Où habites-tu exactement ?* or *Où habite Monsieur/Madame Pennac ?* The better candidates were able to ask correctly *Où habitez-vous exactement ?* and gained 3 marks.

Talking about a school trip

Most candidates approached this situation fairly well. On **Task 1**, candidates were usually able to reformulate the rubric and state why they were phoning but some inserted the *lui* from the rubric which made the statement ambiguous. On **Task 2**, most were able to state where they went and say what they did. Many talked about visiting theme parks or going on a longer school trip to game reserves or another country. Candidates who replied using past tenses correctly were able to score 3 marks. **Task 3** was not always done well. Weaker candidates did not understand the question in the cue and did not realise they were being asked about how they had travelled. Here, short responses such as *en car* gained full marks for the task. Good attempts were made on **Task 4** with most being able to give a positive opinion about school trips. Sympathetic examining ensured that both parts of the task were attempted and that a reason for liking school trips emerged. On **Task 5**, those who used one of the given examples usually managed to ask an appropriate question but did not always use an appropriately conjugated verb.

Topic presentation and conversation

A full range of performance was heard on a variety of suitable topics and candidates had usually prepared their material well. Many candidates talked about a particular pastime or sport, life at school, the environment, their family, their ambitions, life in another country or a holiday. The best presentations were presented at a reasonable speed, were not rushed and were of the appropriate length of between 1–2 minutes. The total timing (including the presentation) should be 5 minutes. The best examining heard did not require candidates to repeat material already heard in the presentation. Some candidates prepared *Moi-même / Ma vie* as a topic. This topic is to be avoided as this can replicate the General conversation section.

There was frequently a drop in performance when candidates moved away from their prepared material and had to converse more freely on their chosen topic. Some candidates chose topics which were very challenging at this stage of study and which relied on statistical, over factual or background general knowledge. It is important that candidates choose a topic in which they are interested and about which they can express and justify their opinions. The most able candidates were usually capable of sustaining a consistent performance in the Topic conversation part of this section of the test. Such performances were characterised by opinions, justifications and routine explanations which made use of a wide range of vocabulary, structures and accurate language.

This part of the test is intended to give candidates the opportunity to go into depth on one topic rather than cover several topic areas. Centres should ensure that they cover a good range of topics across the centre as a whole. The range of presentation topics in a few centres was narrow. A variety of topics across a centre enables spontaneous and natural examining to take place, ensures good syllabus coverage and avoids repetition of similar questions from candidate to candidate.

Centres are reminded that past and future questions should be asked in both of the conversation sections. To score a mark of more than 6 for Language, candidates must show that they can use not just the present but also past and future tenses.

It always helps candidates when the end of this section of the test is indicated with a phrase such as *Maintenant, on passe à la conversation générale*.

General conversation

In this section of the test, many Examiners were aware of the need to ask questions to elicit past and future tenses, but timings were sometimes inconsistent. This section of the test should last 5 minutes.

Centres should cover only two or three topics in this part of the test and cover a good range of different topics across the candidature as this enables spontaneous and natural examining to take place. The General conversation topics must differ from the topic chosen by the candidate for the presentation.

The best examining featured an announcement as to which topic was going to be discussed and then, at the end of this topic, an indication as to which topic was going to be discussed next. Concentrating on two or three topics enables the Examiner to go into depth on fewer topics rather than cover more topics superficially. With some candidates who are less able, it may sometimes be necessary to cover more topics in less depth in order to keep the conversation going.

Questions which are very straightforward, and which require simple short responses do not give candidates access to the upper mark bands for both Communication and Language. The best Examiners gave candidates logically related questions on a topic and featured some open-ended questions which invited candidates to develop or explain an answer or reason for an opinion. This meant that candidates could try to develop their answers in a natural way.

Many candidates communicated well on topics such as family, holidays, life at home, school routine, life in the town/country, future plans and ambitions, the environment, leisure activities, food and drink and healthy lifestyle. Work heard illustrating standards at the lower end of the marking bands for Language showed some manipulation of structures, some awareness of verbs and a limited vocabulary. Work illustrating the performance in the middle bands showed the ability to produce some accurate examples in past and future tenses and usage of key Defined Content vocabulary together with some key adverbs of time and common adjectives. The more able candidates could go beyond speaking in the first person and conjugate verbs with different subjects with greater control and consistency. At the top end of performance, candidates communicated ideas in a natural way and made consistent accurate use of a range of structures, appropriate tenses, adverbs, conjunctions and a range of appropriate vocabulary.

FRENCH

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Paper 7156/42
Writing

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Key messages

- Candidates should attempt to provide eight individual items in **Question 1**.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must address all the individual tasks and not respond simply to the title.
- The final task in **Question 2** always requires a change of tense.
- Candidates should respond to each task in **Question 3** in the tense indicated in the rubric.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should make sure that they check their work carefully for basic errors.
- In **Question 3**, in order to access the top bands for Other linguistic features, candidates must demonstrate that they can use the complex structures which are detailed in the specification.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation.

General comments

The control of verb forms is not critical for success in **Question 2**. However, in **Question 3**, control of verbs is much more important and candidates must respond in the tense indicated in the task.

The ablest candidates were able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses (e.g. *quand*, *si*, *parce que*, *car*, *qui*), object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions (e.g. *donc*, *cependant*), strong negatives (*ne…jamais*, *ne…plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions (e.g. *depuis*, *pendant*, *pour*) and were familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter.

It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands

The word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If candidates write over the word limit, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Au terrain de camping

Most candidates easily achieved the five available marks. The mark scheme identifies the various acceptable spellings. Candidates did not appear to be very familiar with *sac de couchage* and *arbre*, which was variously written as *arbe / abre*.

Question 2: Mon collège

Some candidates did not fully understand what was required in this exercise. The title is an indication of the broad theme of the question: some candidates wrote their essay exclusively based on the title rather than answering the specific tasks set.

Communication

Task 1 invited a simple description of the candidates' school. This was an opportunity to gain a number of marks. Candidates are expected to use the acute accent on adjectives which come from past participles. Candidates who wrote *mon collège est situé à…* gained the mark whereas candidates who offered *mon collège est situe à…* were not rewarded.

For **Task 2**, candidates were required to say what they do at lunchtime. Many candidates provided a number of details. Candidates gained marks for stating what they do; those who chose to describe lunchtime at the school, e.g. *la nourriture à la cantine est bonne*, did not gain marks for such details.

Task 3 invited comments about the school rules. Marks were awarded for stating whether or not candidates approve of the rules and for any relevant explanations. Not all candidates understood the meaning of *le règlement* and their answers indicated that they thought it referred to the school's routine. In such cases, candidates still gained a mark for stating their approval/disapproval, e.g. *j'aime le règlement / je n'aime pas le règlement.*

In **Task 4**, candidates had to use a future time frame to indicate what they will do after their exam. Some candidates gained many marks by giving a number of details. Some wrote *je vais rentrer à la maison*. Some indicated that they needed to rest (*je vais dormir / je voudrais dormir*). Candidates who took a longer term view also gained marks for information such as *je vais devenir médecin* or *je voudrais travailler dans un hôpital.*

Language

The vast majority of candidates scored 4 or 5 for Language. They produced pieces of work which were coherent and showed that they could use relevant verbs and vocabulary with a fair degree of accuracy. To maximise their chances of scoring in the top bands for Language, candidates must ensure that they use the time frames used in the tasks.

Section 2

Question 3(a): Un repas

This question attracted 41% of candidates.

Communication

Task 1 asked candidates to state when and for whom they prepared a meal. Typical responses included *le week-end dernier j'ai préparé un repas pour ma mère.* Some candidates framed their answer using more complex sentence patterns. Many candidates did not respond to the past tense used in the rubric and instead stated what they normally do in the present tense or what they planned to do using a future time frame.

Task 2 was the most challenging of the five tasks as it required candidates to give details of a problem that they had whilst preparing the meal. Some explained that they were short of ingredients (*j'avais oublié d'acheter des tomates*) and some mentioned a technical problem (*il n'y avait pas d'électricité*). Others admitted their mistakes (*il y avait trop de sel dans le potage*) or had an accident (*je me suis coupé le doigt*).

There were many ideas in the responses to **Task 3** regarding the importance of helping at home (*les jeunes apprennent à être indépendants / les parents vont être contents*). Candidates who wanted to say that helping around the house would facilitate their lives in the future often struggled with the complexity of language needed.

Task 4 invited candidates to state their preference for *les repas traditionnels* or *la cuisine rapide.* Opinions were divided but there appeared to be a majority preferring traditional food (*je préfère les repas traditionnels, parce que les ingrédients sont frais*). Candidates with different tastes suggested: *je préfère la cuisine rapide parce que je suis paresseux.*

There was much variety in the responses to **Task 5** over the desire to work in a restaurant. This was an accessible task and generally candidates understood the need to use the tense in the rubric, at least in the first part of their answer. Opinions were again divided: *je voudrais travailler dans un restaurant parce que l'ambiance dans un restaurant est formidable / je n'aimerais pas travailler dans un restaurant car je voudrais devenir médecin.*

Verbs

Consistency and accuracy are essential. It was possible to respond to each of the tasks by adapting the verbs in the rubrics and using other common verbs, such as *aider, aimer, détester, faire, manger, préférer, préparer, travailler, vouloir…* Candidates who successfully managed **Task 2** used familiar verbs and structures, e.g. *le four était en panne / il n'y avait pas de beurre / j'ai oublié le pain…* Some candidates had a wider knowledge, e.g. *j'ai brûlé la viande / j'ai laissé tomber le plat / je me suis coupé...* Verbs must be in the tense indicated by the rubric. *Je préparé* or *j'ai préparer* were common errors. In the last task, *je voudriez travailler / je ne vodrais pas / je voundrais* were frequently seen and could not be awarded.

Other linguistic features

Few candidates showed control of simple grammar and more complex sentence patterns for marks at the top of the mark range. Candidates used some conjunctions (*car*, *parce que*) and occasionally the relative pronoun *qui*, but there was little evidence of *où, pendant que, quand.* One structure which candidates used with some success was the comparison: *les repas traditionnels sont plus sains / plus délicieux que la cuisine rapide*.

Question 3(b): Une semaine de formation sportive

Just over 53% of candidates chose this option.

Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to state what activity they chose to do during the week. A simple manipulation of the question was all that was required, e.g. *j'ai choisi le foot.* Some chose to use a different verb, e.g. *j'ai fait de la danse.* Both patterns were rewarded. A significant number of candidates responded in the wrong tense, e.g. *je vais choisir le tennis.*

Task 2 invited candidates to give details of a typical day during the sports week. Many candidates did not understand that the response needed to be in the past tense; many also gave extensive details about their normal morning routine instead of focusing on the sporting activities. Typical of the successful answers were: *j'ai couru pendant une heure / j'ai appris à nager rapidement / nous avons commencé à huit heures et nous avons fini à onze heures*.

Task 3 required candidates to state where they normally prefer to do their sport. Many gained the two available marks for statements such as: *je préfère faire du sport au collège* or *je préfère faire de la natation à la mer*. A number of candidates added a reason, which was not required, but it gave them the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of more complex language: *je préfère faire du sport à l'école parce que c'est plus amusant avec mes amis*. Candidates sometimes did not respond in the tense used in the rubric. Those who expressed the idea in a past or future tense only gained one mark.

For **Task 4**, candidates were asked for an advantage of regular sporting activity. Typical of the responses were: *les sports sont importants pour la santé* or *le sport m'aide à rester en forme*. Once again, there was the opportunity for candidates to use some more sophisticated structure to convey their ideas.

As with the first task, **Task 5** demanded simple manipulation of the verb in the rubric and a detail about the sport that they would like to try out: *je voudrais faire du patinage / je voudrais aller à la pêche.* Here too, candidates frequently added a reason for their choice: *parce que je ne l'ai jamais fait / parce que mon frère dit que c'est intéressant.*

Verbs

Candidates could answer this question using a number of common verbs: *aimer, aller, faire, jouer, pratiquer, préférer.* Verbs must be in the tense indicated in the rubric: candidates who do not respond in the correct tense cannot gain full marks for Communication and Verbs. Many candidates wrote *je choisi* instead of *j'ai choisi.*

Other linguistic features

Competent use of complex sentences, accurate spelling and consistent use of basic grammar can raise the mark for this category. Errors such as **le** *natation, fatigu***a***nt, parce qu***e** *il,* **à le** *stade,* **au** *mon collège, dans la* **mère** were frequently seen.

Question 3(c): Ma première journée de travail

Fewer than 6% of candidates chose this option. It demanded a narrative requiring the consistent use of past tenses.

Communication

Task 1 asked candidates to explain why they missed the bus on their first day at work. Candidates gave various responses: *je ne pouvais pas trouver mes lunettes / j'ai oublié mon sac à la maison / le soir avant je suis sortie avec mes parents car c'était l'anniversaire de mon père*. The pluperfect tense was necessary in some of the statements offered but, for Communication, the mark scheme allows any past tense.

For **Task 2**, candidates had to say how they felt when they realised that they had missed the bus. Many candidates successfully conveyed their emotions: *j'étais furieuse / j'étais découragé / j'ai paniqué.*

Task 3 asked for details of how they managed to get to work. Some candidates found a simple way of conveying the information, e.g. *j'ai décidé de courir au bureau / j'ai marché en ville*. Others stated that they contacted someone else, e.g. *j'ai téléphoné à mon frère*, but such ideas also required a further detail to convey exactly how they travelled to work.

For **Task 4**, candidates needed to state what they said to their employer. A few candidates used the language they knew to convey the idea, e.g. *j'ai expliqué à mon patron ce qui s'est passé / j'ai dit à ma patronne « Je suis désolée, madame ».* Many candidates tried to give an explanation for which they did not have the appropriate vocabulary and structure.

The response of the boss was required for **Task 5**. This could be done using familiar language, e.g. *le patron était furieux.* A few candidates succeeded in conveying the idea using complex language, e.g. *le patron a dit qu'il n'y avait pas de problème / il a bien réagi / elle a ri quand je lui ai expliqué ce qui s'était passé*.

Verbs

The challenge of this question was to maintain a narrative in the past tense. Many candidates tried to tell a story for which they did not have the necessary language. Some candidates correctly used *décider de, expliquer, oublier, perdre, rire.*

Other linguistic features

Candidates used object pronouns, e.g. *j'y suis allé / je lui ai expliqué / elle m'a dit*. Some candidates used a wider range of sentence patterns: *quand je suis arrivé au bureau / après être arrivé / en arrivant au travail.* Candidates should remember that consistent use of agreement is important in this category.