

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/01
Speaking

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.
- cover a range of topics 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 be awarded maximum marks.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society. This should 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 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 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. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the Examiner's own contribution.

A number of recordings presented problems because of the recording format chosen. 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 rather than just "number 1, 2" etc.

Please ensure that all recording material (including CD and cassette cases) is labelled with details of the Centre, syllabus, and candidates, listed with their names and candidate numbers in the order of recording. Where a Centre has candidates at both A and AS levels, they should be recorded on separate CDs or cassettes. If using cassettes, only ONE candidate should be recorded per side of a 60 minute cassette and a maximum of TWO candidates per side of a 90 minute cassette. It is very disruptive to candidates for the Examiner to have to turn over a cassette in the middle of an examination – with the inevitable result that parts of the conversation are lost.

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 this session 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 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 form – this should be checked carefully before submission and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings. For the size of sample needed, please see the details in the syllabus booklet.

There were instances when candidates were examined and recorded on CD, but no marks were entered on the WMS or the MS1. Examiners and Centres should check paperwork very carefully.

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

Centres and Examiners are reminded that the Examiner and the candidate must be in the same room during the examination and not speak long-distance.

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 sometimes 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, were *Le Sport*, *Le Conflit des Générations*, *La Famille*, *La Cuisine Française* and *La Pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage, violence in society, discrimination, racism and immigration, some dealing with culture or politics in a French-speaking country, others with personal interests such as art or music. There were few topical presentations this series. 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 not 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.

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 should not merely ask 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 and there were many varied and interesting discussions heard. 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?”), 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

Across the entry, moderation saw a good proportion of the marks either not adjusted at all or adjusted by less than 10%, although there were a number of cases of adjustment of 10-20%. 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 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 CIE, using form NOE, about the Examiners they intend to employ (by 1st April for the June session and 1st October for the November session).

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.

In Centres with a number of candidates, Examiners were generally able to establish a logical rank order and appropriate marking pitch and Examiners should be congratulated on their efforts to apply the criteria of the mark scheme so conscientiously.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/21
Reading and Writing

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. Including 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) words or phrases 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 copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored.
- 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

This was felt to be a fair test, generally similar in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced a good spread of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were also a fair number of candidates whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one which candidates found relevant to their own experience.

The stronger 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 quite often because they copied phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Most candidates managed to attempt all questions although there were some very short answers to **Question 5** from some candidates. Some answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible.

The practice of copying out the question in **Questions 3 and 4** as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would 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.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished considerably in recent sessions, with candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid it, but it does still occur in many scripts. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' sections 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. 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.

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.

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 realize 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 very 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.

This limit is 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 it is easy to waste over 20% of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Item (a) caused few problems overall, but (b) and (e) presented more difficulties which might perhaps have been eased if candidates had narrowed down the possible choices by looking for an infinitive or a past participle with a feminine agreement if they did not already know the words. In (d), *affirme* was sometimes offered for *explique*, but came from outside the specified first three paragraphs.

Question 2

Item 2(a) was generally the most successfully handled, but the wrong tense cost some candidates the mark, as did the wrong agreement. Candidates need to keep in mind that altering one element of the sentence is likely to have an impact on other elements.

Item 2(b) demanded the reverse process of a transformation into the passive. Here again, incorrect agreement cost the mark for some candidates.

Item 2(c) required a subjunctive which the many candidates handled well, but it was clearly unfamiliar ground for others.

In **Item 2(d)**, some candidates did not recognise the need to use *en*, and even some of those who did kept the noun *utilisation* rather than forming a present participle

Item 2(e) comprised a transformation into direct speech, it involving manipulating more than one element. An insecure grasp of pronouns (*chez ils/leur(s)*) was sometimes in evidence.

Question 3

Item 3(a) Most candidates scored the first mark here, although some saw *mesure* as a verb rather than a noun, and others risked causing confusion by referring to *caméras* (here and throughout) as *ils*. The second mark was less frequently scored by candidates who could not re-phrase *mettent en péril la solidarité*.

Item 3(b) was worth four marks, all of which were best scored by the use of finite verbs rather than the nouns of the text. The problem was that the verbs offered sometimes bore an unfortunate resemblance to English: *preventer*; *reducer/reduiser*; *committer*; *recorder*.

Item 3(c) appeared generally quite well understood, even if not all managed to avoid lifting *vols de vélos* and *apparition de graffitis*.

Item 3(d) was relatively undemanding and offered plenty of easy ways to avoid lifting *hésitent avant de faire des bêtises*.

Item 3(e) rewarded candidates who found other ways of expressing *améliorer leurs techniques* without resorting to *improver*.

Item 3(f) saw stronger candidates expressing both ideas in one simple sentence of their own (*Ils apprécient la sécurité qu'elles offrent, mais n'aiment pas se sentir espionnés*). Others resorted to copying out the original sentence from the text.

Question 4

Item 4(a) rewarded those who understood the concept of the death of freedom. The second mark was available for explaining the notion of *surveillance* as required by the question.

In **Item 4(b)**, by far the easiest way to avoiding lifting from the text - and to score the marks - was by expressing the nouns *inefficacité*, *coût* and *violation* by using appropriate verbs, which did not include *violater*.

In **Item 4(c)**, candidates usually understood the dangers of revealing personal details on the Internet and often went on to explain successfully the contradiction of being under constant surveillance at school.

Item 4(d) saw a good number of candidates scoring the first two marks for pointing out that there is no evidence of cameras preventing aggression or violence but that they merely shift the problem to other, non-equipped, areas. The third mark for suggesting that it is a simplistic solution/does not address the real issues was more elusive

In **Item 4(e)**, a fair number of candidates were able to identify the alternative uses for the money, with the strongest again able to use verbs rather than nouns to express them in a way which avoided simple copying from the text.

In **Item 4(f)**, the notion of *le glissement vers la technologie* (or of how to express it without simply lifting it from the text) proved challenging for some candidates. The second point about the neglecting/replacing of human relationships was better handled.

Question 5

This Question asked the candidates to summarise the positive and negative aspects of security cameras in schools and then to make their own alternative suggestions.

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 word limit is becoming much better respected, but it is a pity to see occasional candidates still wasting over a third of the 150 words which they are allowed by starting with something like: *Les*

avantages et les inconvénients de la présence des caméras de surveillance dans les écoles sont nombreuses. Il y a des faits que les avantages sont plus que les inconvénients, mais il y a aussi des faits que la présence des caméras est une topique controversiale et plus une inconvénients q'une avantage. However worthy, this scores no marks.

The mark scheme identified 15 rewardable points. The most commonly identified positives included helping to keep candidates safe, preventing thefts and vandalism/graffiti, discouraging and identifying miscreants. The most commonly identified negatives were that cameras are ineffective, costly, an intrusion into private life and an attack on individual liberty.

The **Personal Response** gives candidates the chance to express their feelings on a specific topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. The question specifically excluded security cameras, so those who merely went through their advantages again scored few, if any, marks.

The quality of language varied from the excellent to the very poor. A number of candidates found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs as usual being far the most common sources of error. The agreement of verb with subject and agreements of adjectives were routinely ignored.

There was sometimes a phonetic approach to spelling, even with very common words e.g. *pars que; part tous (partout)*. *Ce/se/ceux* were treated as interchangeable by some candidates, and pronouns in general were common sources error

New words and phrases were also much in evidence, often with heavy English influences as noted above: *destroyer; improver; describer; depriver; libérer; les burglars; la privacie/privacité*.

Constructions with certain common verbs as usual caused regular problems: *permettre, aider, encourager, empêcher, demander, obliger*.

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

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) phrases 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 copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored.
- 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

This was felt to be a fair test, generally similar in overall level of difficulty to previous years, and one which produced a wide spread of marks. There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one which had a relevance to candidates' own experience.

The better candidates 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 phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Most candidates managed to attempt all questions although some candidates wrote very short summaries and personal responses. Quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unduly lengthy, however, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible.

The practice of copying out the question in **Questions 3 and 4** as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would 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.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished considerably in recent sessions, with candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid it, but it is still a fairly common practice. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' sections 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. The rubric clearly states that candidates should answer *sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte*. Candidates should try to express the relevant points using different

vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications. 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. Marks on **Question 3** were generally higher than on than **Question 4**.

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.

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This limit is such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidate are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (not doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste 25-30% of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This exercise was quite successfully negotiated by the majority, with a good number of candidates scoring well. Items **(a)** and **(e)** caused few problems (apart from to those who added a redundant *temps* to **(e)**), but some found *ravages* rather less accessible in **(b)**. In **(d)**, some candidates invalidated their answers by omitting the necessary *en* before *commun* or by doing the opposite and including *transports* in their answer (which would have given *transports transports publics*). *Assurer* and *affirmer* were offered without reward as alternatives for *constater* in **(c)**, at least having the merit of being possible grammatically.

Question 2

Item 2(a) was a relatively easy transformation into the passive, but some candidates lost marks over the lack of agreement on *empêchée*. Attempts to change the tense changed the sense too.

Item 2(b) also suffered from an unnecessary change of tense in some cases. It required manipulations which individually were not complicated but which needed candidates to follow them through logically. There was no justification for the frequent omission of the *en* contained in the original.

Item 2(c) required a subjunctive, but was actually as well handled as any of the items. Some candidates did not adjust the ending of *acceptés* and therefore did not score the point.

In **Item 2(d)**, some did not see that *récemment* replaced *vient de*. Others struggled to form the past participle of *introduire*.

In **Item 2(e)**, successful candidates were able to produce *pendant* as the key word. *En, pour, dans, longtemps, en passant* and *nothing* were all regularly offered unsuccessfully as alternatives.

Question 3

Item 3(a) This opening comprehension question was probably the most straightforward of all. Most communicated the split in opinions, but some went too far in suggesting either a majority or a minority or unanimity on either side.

In **Item 3(b)**, by far the easiest means of avoiding 'lifting' from the text involved the manipulation of the nouns into verbs: *préservation* to *préserver*, *suppression* to *supprimer*, *protection* to *protéger*, *création* to *créer*. Some took simplicity too far by producing *suppresser* and *protecter*. *Sentiment d'appartenance* also required re-expressing in order to score the fourth mark – simply adding *aux seins de l'établissement* failed to do this. Some jumbled things by suggesting that uniform prevented the suppression of social differences and protected the tyranny of brands.

In **Item 3(c)** most candidates re-worked *jalousie* into a rewardable adjective, and many went on to score the remaining two marks by mentioning family tensions and pressure exerted on parents by the children wanting to be bought top brands.

Item 3(d) rewarded quite a large number who managed to express *moqueries* and *exclusion* in their own words, usually by the use of a verb.

Item 3(e) was generally successfully handled, although not all showed that they understood that it was candidates misbehaving outside school who could be identified.

In **Item 3(f)**, the first point about removing the need to make a decision was often well made, the second less often so. The answer for the second mark required the idea of speeding up the process of getting ready for school in the mornings rather than giving even more time for Kim to brush her hair or look in the mirror.

Question 4

Item 4(a) produced some irrelevance from candidates who concentrated on everyone being the same and/or limiting discrimination. Many candidates managed to express the idea of the problems re-emerging in other settings, even if an acceptable attempt at conjugating *réapparaître* defeated some. Most understood the importance of accepting/appreciating difference, and found it easy to re-work *appréciation* as a verb.

In **Item 4(b)**, some candidates did not manage to avoid *le même moule conformiste*, but many saw that the easy way to score two of the remaining marks was the straightforward manipulation of *expression* and *développement* to their corresponding verbs.

Item 4(c) was probably the most straightforward in this section, with large numbers scoring both marks. The most successful candidates tended to be those who kept their answers the simplest: *La plupart des élèves acceptent l'uniforme. Les autres se rebellent.*

Item 4(d) seemed to strike a chord with many and was largely well handled. Some answers were over-general: *ils ne portent pas l'uniforme comme il faut.*

In **Item 4(e)**, a good number of candidates understood the element of vested interest in Vanessa's statement. Many then went on to score further by pointing to the candidates' desire to choose and their view that uniform represents the removal of a right or of their freedom to be different.

Question 5

This Question asked the candidates to summarise the arguments for and against school uniform and then to discuss the more general point of whether they are greatly influenced by fashion.

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 15 rewardable points. The most commonly identified arguments in favour included equality, inclusion, protection against the dictates of fashion, discipline and the lack of need to make decisions in the morning. The most commonly identified arguments against were conformity, removal of freedom/rights and provoking confrontations/rebellion.

The **Personal Response** gives candidates the chance to express their feelings on a specific topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. The question asked for a personal response to a more general question, and those candidates who merely rehashed the texts in the context of uniform scored few, if any, marks. Successful candidates were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own, sometimes mentioning the waste of money involved in fashion, their wish to be comfortable rather than stylish, their desire to have their own style rather than be dictated to by other people, wanting to look elegant without being a slave to fashion and wanting freedom and independence to be themselves.

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. Some candidates found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs as usual being far the most common sources of error: incorrect verb forms and agreements were common. Basic agreements of adjectives and plurals too were sometimes ignored by candidates and there were widespread problems with pronouns. Negatives were commonly not completed

Constructions with certain verbs proved to be problematic: *permettre*, *aider*, *encourager*, *empêcher*, *apprendre*, *permettre*. The difference between *leur*, *leurs* and *ses* and *qui* and *ce qui* was not appreciated by some candidates.

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

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/23
Reading and Writing

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. Including additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning (or tense) unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) phrases 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 copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 words (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) cannot be credited.
- 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

There were some very good scripts from able and well prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy, whilst there were some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was simply over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one of which candidates had some awareness.

The better candidates 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 phrases unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Most candidates managed to attempt all questions and there was little evidence of time pressures. Some answers were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. The practice of copying out the question in **Questions 3 and 4** as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates should look at the number of marks available for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, copying wholesale from the text has diminished considerably in recent sessions, but remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' sections 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. The rubric clearly states that candidates should answer **sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte**. Candidates 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. Even quite

small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs) 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.

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.

In **Question 1**, candidates 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**, the word limit was well respected more often than in the past by candidates who were clearly aware of the importance of sticking to 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. Being concise is part of the task. 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.

If, on the other hand, the responses to **Question 5** are significantly below the word limit, the overall quality of language mark is likely to be reduced accordingly.

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 penalized for not introducing the topic (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste 25% of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points, and from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/résumé of specific points from the texts that is requested in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay which is quite likely to score 0/10.

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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This exercise was often quite successfully negotiated, with a good number of candidates scoring well. In **Item 1(a)**, most identified *découvert* although some incorrectly included *ont* in their answers, which would have given *ont ont découvert* when inserted back into the text. The inclusion of *plus* before the very straightforward *tôt* had similar consequences in **Item 1(b)**. *Facultés* proved more elusive in **Item 1(c)**, with some opting for *mécanismes*, which might have come close had it not been the wrong gender. *Pendant* caused problems for a large number in **Item 1(d)**, where *jusqu'à* was quite frequently offered, and some candidates omitted the *de* after *au cours*, without which the phrase does not work in the context. In **Item 1(e)**, *développer* was sometimes offered instead of *recupérer*.

Question 2

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

Item 2(a) required two manipulations which were in themselves straightforward enough but relatively few candidates managed both. Changing the tense occasionally cost the mark. *Nous sommes oubliés plus tôt qu'on ne le supposait* suggested lack of understanding of the original.

Item 2(b) required candidates to recognise the need for a subjunctive and then to form *puisse* correctly. Some negotiated this without mishap, but it was clearly not familiar to all.

Item 2(c) again required two manipulations, one the transfer to the *nous* form of *devoir* and the second the changing of the pronoun to *se*. A fair number managed the first hurdle but not the second.

Item 2(d) perplexed a good number who offered *le stockage peut stocker une liste de numéros*, or similar. Others found one of a number of acceptable possibilities: *Le stockage d'une liste de numéros est possible/faisable/ce qu'on peut faire/peut se faire/être fait*. Omission of the element of *une liste* occasionally cost the mark.

Item 2(e) asked candidates to transfer the sentence to the passive. Some altered the tense unnecessarily, but the major cause of loss of the mark was the failure to make the past participle *proposés* agree. Others omitted the element of *par la technologie*.

Question 3

Item 3(a) saw most candidates get off to a good start providing they avoided *se détériore* (*empire/diminue/s'abîme* etc.) The remaining two marks were most easily scored by transforming the nouns into their corresponding verbs: *renforcement* to *renforcer*; *récupération* to *recupérer*, thereby avoiding 'lifting'.

In **Item 3(b)**, successful candidates made the obvious point that the Internet has given us access to a vastly increased wealth of information. Some then went on to say that this had removed the need to learn things by heart for the second mark.

Item 3(c) was again most simply answered by using verbs to avoid the nouns of the text: *mémorisation*, *recherche* and *vérification* (although *vérifier* was not always found).

In **Item 3(d)**, the first point about the new technology reducing the risk of forgetting information and reinforcing memory was often well made. Many went on to score a second mark for stating that technology meant that we no longer have to remember birthdays, dates or phone numbers etc. because new technology does it for us. Rather fewer made the point that it facilitates communication and contact with family and friends (avoiding lifting *perte de contact avec son entourage*), and those who mentioned the stimulating games available did not always mention their advantages for the elderly in particular.

Item 3(e) offered four possible further advantages for the three marks available: organising/safeguarding our memories (not *mémoires*); preserving photos; handing down personal information about ourselves to our descendants; storing large amounts of information in little space. The third element was the least successfully identified, but the other three were often satisfactorily pointed to and expressed.

Question 4

In **Item 4(a)**, candidates were able to point to the damaging effects of the Internet on the memory by finding a large number of alternative ways of expressing *l'appauvrissement* (*Il la réduit/dégrade; elle devient plus pauvre/moins riche* etc.) and *disponible sur ordinateur* (*si on sait qu'on peut trouver une information sur ordinateur* etc.)

In **Item 4(b)**, some candidates went rather too far at the start of their answers in stating that students were less willing to study or learn in general, rather than to commit material to memory. Most went on to mention the increased dependence on technology in place of the memory to retrieve facts.

In **Item 4(c)**, the easiest way of scoring the three marks was to transform the nouns *lecture*, *estimation* and *choix* into their corresponding verbs. Some tied themselves in knots by interpreting *lecture* in the English sense.

Item 4(d) was usually successfully negotiated, with candidates pointing to the three examples of the limitations of technology.

Item 4(e) offered another straightforward opportunity to make sufficient changes to the text to avoid 'lifting' by re-working *calcul mental*, *mémorisation* and *stimulation* as verbs. Those candidates who did this generally scored the full three marks.

Item 4(f) was more testing as far as the ideas were concerned, and proved a good discriminator. For the first mark, candidates had to express either the concept of technology providing us with 'virtual' memories which have not been experienced first-hand, or else the concept of those memories being devoid of the other senses. The second mark required candidates to explain that such 'memories' can be common to everyone, thus not enabling individuals to construct their own unique identity. The stronger candidates often did this with clarity.

Question 5

This question asked the candidates to summarise the positive and negative aspects of modern technology as far as memory and the brain are concerned, and then to suggest other ways in which memory can be improved or diminished.

The mark scheme identified 16 rewardable points of which a good number of candidates managed perhaps 6 or 7, with the strongest reaching the maximum mark of 10. The most commonly identified positives were the removal of the need to memorise, the increase in information readily available, the reduction of the risk of forgetting, and the transmission of information to future generations. The most usually mentioned negatives included the deterioration of the memory, the dependence of the brain on technology and the consequent loss of certain mental functions.

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 result in a lower quality of language mark.

Candidates who scored fewest marks of all included those who wrote general essays for which there was no evidence in the texts and therefore no mark.

The **Personal Response** gives candidates the chance to express their own ideas, which some did with imagination and originality, perhaps suggesting word or number games, reading or learning a foreign language as means of improving one's memory, or unhealthy life-styles or excessive alcohol consumption as means of harming it. The question states *à part la technologie*, so those who simply re-hashed the pros and cons of technology - in other words, ignoring the task and simply summarizing the summary - inevitably scored poorly, if at all. The stronger candidates were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own.

Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to weak. As ever, incorrect verb forms and agreements were the major sources of error, and in the case of weaker candidates the use of the infinitive (-er) ending seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-é) or indeed -ez, -ait and other variations on the theme. The same candidates often ignored basic agreements in general. An insecure grasp of pronoun usage was also a significant source of error. Constructions with certain common verbs caused regular problems: *permettre, aider, encourager, empêcher, demander*.

Some candidates displayed a distinctly phonetic approach to spelling, and new words and phrases were also much in evidence, usually with heavy English influences: *provider, distributer, possessor, involver*.

That said, the linguistic ability of most candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and accurate French.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/31

Essay

Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select a title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherently structured. The use of French should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

General comments

Many candidates engaged well with the topics set and wrote essays that contained a range of pertinent points. However, again this year, a marked problem was the failure to heed the precise wording of the titles and a tendency to submit essays that were largely irrelevant. The quality of the French did vary considerably and some candidates struggled to express themselves coherently.

Quality of language

There were a good number of essays which were characterised by a fair level of accuracy and some variation in the choice of vocabulary though also some repetition: common tenses and regular verbs were mostly correctly formed though difficulty tended to be experienced with irregular verbs and in the use of prepositions, and there was a measure of inconsistency in adjectival and subject-verb agreements. There was some use of less common words but not always appropriate or correct use. However, consistent errors were in evidence in a number of essays submitted, pointing to considerable limitations in the ability to manipulate grammar, the choice of vocabulary was extremely limited and anglicisms abounded.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Le mariage homosexuel: évolution positive ou négative?

This title was a very popular choice. The problem was that many who chose it did not focus their attention on the issues involved in the debate on gay marriage, electing rather to write more generally, and often in a not very controlled way, about homosexuality in society or, alternatively, confining themselves almost exclusively to a description of recent events and developments concerning homosexual marriage in Europe and the United States. Those candidates who did heed the parameters laid down by the question concentrated principally on the human rights issues involved, the religious issues and the social issues, including the duty of society to ensure the emotional and mental well-being of its members whatever their sexuality and not least, the possible effects on children brought up in families with two homosexual parents.

Question 1

La qualité de la vie dans les grandes villes se dégrade. Que faire?

This was the second most popular title but many candidates who chose it focused exclusively or almost exclusively on the causes of the deterioration in the quality of urban life rather than on ways in which the situation can be improved. Relevant essays put forward various ideas for reducing pollution, for bringing down unemployment and for ensuring better public transport, better health care, more and better quality housing and an increased range of leisure facilities. Some essays advocated the idea of moving to the countryside and commuting, though regrettably their authors quite often fell into the trap of devoting too much time to a description of the advantages of rural life at the expense of discussion of ways in which the quality of urban life might be made better.

Question 3

Une société de loisirs: perspective effrayante. Êtes-vous d'accord?

The number of candidates who chose this title was quite small. Essays tended to operate at a fairly basic level with candidates detailing their own leisure activities and the benefits they derive from them. Just a few candidates did consider the negative side but it went no further than a brief description of the dangers inherent in such popular ways of spending one's leisure time as playing computer games, watching television and chatting on social media sites.

Question 4

Le terrorisme: mal de l'époque moderne. Comment mieux le combattre?

Of the handful of candidates who chose this title, only a couple paid any heed to the key sentence which asked them to consider ways of combatting terrorism. Essays were usually descriptions of the evils of terrorist activity and of the reasons underlying its resurgence in recent decades. Suggestions that were put forward for fighting the scourge were increased surveillance at national frontiers, efforts to reduce poverty in those regions which tend to be a breeding ground for terrorists and increased international cooperation.

Question 5

Pour combattre la pollution, les gouvernements ont trop recours aux taxes et aux sanctions et pas assez à la nouvelle technologie. A votre avis, dans quelle mesure est-ce vrai?

This was the third most popular title. A common problem was that some candidates used this as the opportunity to rehearse what they had prepared on the various types of pollution and their causes. Moreover, those who did mention the use of taxes and sanctions by governments to reduce pollution often gave no examples. Examples of the benefits of technology to improve and protect the environment tended to be more forthcoming, for example the importance of exploiting renewable energy sources and recent advances in the development of eco-friendly modes of transport. However, there were quite a few essays that operated at a purely abstract level and that contained no examples of the use of either taxes and sanctions or of new technology, which was most certainly not a good idea. Not many candidates paid any heed at all to the key question posed in the final sentence of the title.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/32
Essay

Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select a title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherently structured. The use of French should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

General comments

Candidates' work was generally well presented but some cases it was clear that candidates had a poor command of linguistic structures and appropriate 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 on the question set inevitably did less well since their answers contained much irrelevant material. Better candidates planned their essays carefully, defined the terms of the question and wrote a logical and coherent argument, arriving at a balanced conclusion. They used a range of structures and idioms and convinced the reader with their arguments. Essays that were vague and general in tone as well as lacking clear exemplification of points made scored much lower. In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully, plan their essays, write logical, well illustrated answers and arrive at a conclusion that does not merely state what went before. They also need to have a good range of grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions at their disposal in order to attain high marks for language.

Common errors included:

Incorrect genders/spellings: *manque, travail, pays, environnement, développement, gouvernement, monde, planète, rôle, exemple, avis, phénomène, crime se marier, aggraver, loisir.*

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

Use of *le taux* for *le nombre*.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de*.

Nouns used without articles.

Inappropriate use of words and phrases to link paragraphs such as *néanmoins, pourtant, toutefois*.

Overuse of the word *chose/chose, personnes (for gens)* and *cela*.

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Inaccurate use of double letters in words such as *développer, agressif, ressources*.

Inaccurate use of accents including words used in the questions such as *phénomène* and *paraît*, and examples of candidates using one type of accent for all occurrences.

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, sa/ça* (overused instead of *cela*), *mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs, ils/eux*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the most popular question and was attempted by candidates across the range. It was clear that candidates had some strong views on the subject of marriage or cohabitation. Most did try to discuss the pros and cons of both options and eventually reach a conclusion. Many essays, however, were very simplistic and superficial and did not move far beyond the excitement of the wedding day, the dress, the cake and the celebration if they were in favour of marriage. There were, however, some very mature essays which talked about the nature of love and commitment which might be compromised by merely living together and of the problems of divorce for both partners and children if a marriage were to break down. The general feeling among many candidates was that it was a good idea to live together for a time before entering into the contract of marriage in order to be sure that this was the right person. They also felt that the nuclear family with two married and fully committed parents was the best environment in which to bring up children. Each in their different way and according to their level of ability answered the question set.

Question 2

This was the fourth in the rank of question answered. Here it was clear that many candidates had merely read the topic heading and chose to write on the benefits and disadvantages of living in town or country. There were some pertinent answers which talked about the mass migration from the country into the town which had resulted in a high rate of unemployment there and thus the creation of some ghetto areas where people were very poor, living conditions were unpleasant and the crime rate was high. In most candidates' minds, there was an obvious correlation between the number of people in the town and the rate of criminal activity. They felt that, in the country, people lived in smaller communities where everyone knew everyone else and that criminal acts were rare. Most candidates stopped at the point of describing the reasons why crime might be more of a problem in towns. They failed to engage with the second part of the question about how to deal with crime and their content marks reflected this. Those who did answer this part of the question discussed the use of more police on the beat, stricter laws and prison sentences and government involvement in job creation and better living conditions.

Question 3

This was the second most popular question. There were some good answers which understood the implication of the question concentrating on the word *trop*, but most candidates did not recognise that they were required to discuss the overimportance of leisure in our modern world. Answers that concentrated merely on the role of leisure in society and listed ways in which people could spend their leisure time could not be given high marks. It would appear candidates saw the word *leisure* and started to write without taking care to read and understand the full question. The general feeling was that we do recognise the importance of leisure and people have many different ways to spend their time. The world of technology was mentioned and its potential impact on the health of the population. It was felt that leisure activities such as sport were better for the physical health but less and less likely to be the chosen activities of the young. The few candidates who recognised the import of the question discussed the effect on productivity of more leisure time but could also see that in order to work at their peak, people need an appropriate amount of time to relax and refresh their minds and bodies.

Question 4

This was the least popular question but still there were some very pertinent and mature essays. The question was well understood and candidates made appropriate reference to a number of recent examples of Western countries intervening in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. They were well informed and handled the discussion well, being able to see why intervention might start with good intentions but often turns into a disaster for the local people who have to suffer endless war and suffering during and after foreign troops leave. It was mostly felt that the Western powers always had a secondary purpose in sending troops to help out other countries in the developing world. This might be the acquisition of resources, support of one particular leader over another for political or financial reasons or an attempt to colonise or have a base in the country. On the whole this question was well answered with some interesting and varied answers.

Question 5

This was the third most popular question. Many candidates took the overall heading of *la pollution* and wrote an answer on the different types of pollution with little reference to the question set. Better candidates discussed the role of governments in fighting pollution feeling that the impetus had to come from them. It is their responsibility to create laws both nationally and internationally, co-operate and meet regularly, sponsor research on climate and the environment and ensure that the public is informed. It was felt by candidates that governments do not really work together and that it was difficult for the developing economies in the world to conform to rules on pollution put forward by the developed world. It was felt that individuals could have little impact as long as world powers could not agree on limits for pollution levels or even on the degree of the problem. The few candidates who did engage fully with the question wrote mature answers that showed they understood the nature of the problem. Those who listed types of pollution and made superficial reference to individuals recycling did less well.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/33

Essay

Key Messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to select a title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated and coherently structured. The use of French should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

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 wrote essays of approximately the right length. It is not clear if candidates planned their essays but there was no evidence of this in the examination booklet. It is extremely important in an essay of this type to define the terms of the question in one's own mind and to organise material before beginning to write. A logical and coherent answer with a conclusion that relates to the question set will be highly rewarded. Essays should target the precise terms of the question and not merely relate to the general topic area. Candidates often used the first paragraph to define the terms of the generic topic without reference to the question. After this initial pre-learned paragraph, language accuracy frequently declined.

In terms of language and range of structures, candidates frequently used set, pre-learnt phrases which often did not fit naturally into the flow of language. Some candidates used the full title frequently in the middle of sentences without quotation marks, almost like a mantra. Awkward use of idiom and a significant proportion of anglicisms were common along with frequent examples of phonetic spelling e.g. *iln'est pas les enfants faux, mais pour habite a la rural est bonne*. The more successful candidates used a range of structures and appropriate vocabulary, did not over-reach themselves and managed to express their ideas in accurate, ambitious and succinct language.

Examples of good use of language include:

Appropriate use of linking words/phrases such as *lorsque, ainsi, puisque, cependant, pourtant, d'abord, d'ailleurs, en outre, ensuite, néanmoins, d'autre part, en revanche, de prime abord, pour conclure*.

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive such as *bien qu'il y ait, il est possible qu'on fasse*.

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read a range of media in the target language.

Correct use of idioms such as *il va de soi, il convient de, en d'autres mots, faire obstacle à, au revers de la médaille, tout bien considéré, d'après un sondage*.

Common errors:

Incorrect genders/spellings: *manque, travail, pollueurs, pays, environnement, développement, gouvernement, monde, planète, rôle, exemple, avis, phénomène, crime, deuxièmement, problème, aspect*

Frequent use of *beaucoup des* with plural noun.

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*.

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Inaccurate use of accents including in words used in the questions such as *phénomène, générations, égalité* and examples of candidates using one type of accent for all occurrences. Accents used randomly where not appropriate e.g. *adultés* and *centrés*.

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, sa/ça* (overused instead of *cela*), *mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs*.

Confusion of *eux* and *leur(s)*.

Use of *faire* for *render*.

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*.

Overuse of *il faut que* and the conditional tense of *devoir*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was attempted by a small number of candidates. On the whole, many did not understand the word “*égoïsme*” and ignored it as a concept. Essays were on the general theme of human relationships and their success or lack of success. Candidates wrote about problems within the family particularly addressing the conflict of generations. They discussed the difficulties associated with the difference in point of view and understanding of the world displayed by adults and young people. Often there was little or no mention or understanding of the notion of self-interest or selfishness and how that might impact on relationships.

Question 2

This was not a popular question but those candidates attempting it did try and put forward some relevant arguments relating to the topic. Many, however, soon turned their answers into a discussion of the pros and cons of city and village life, making little reference to where it might be best to raise children. Those who engaged with the topic wrote about the delights of city life with its diverse opportunities for schooling, entertainment, sport and hobbies but clearly pointed out the downsides of pollution, noise, lack of open space and crime. Rural life was seen to be an ideal place to bring up children when they were young because they could benefit from the clean air and places to play freely but candidates clearly felt that as children became young adults the city would offer much more. Many answers were quite superficial, with candidates seeing little overlap between town and country or considering the influence of family and culture.

Question 3

This was the second most popular question and candidates appeared to understand the implications of the title and provided responses commensurate with their knowledge and linguistic standards. It was clear to candidates that technology has indeed changed completely the world of leisure. Most felt that this was a good thing overall since they now had the opportunity to use computers, smartphones, play computer games, use social media sites, watch TV. They recognised that this meant that they no longer had the chance to be bored since they were always connected in their spare time. There was a general feeling, though, that living in a virtual world, seated at a computer and indoors might not be the best thing for developing healthy human relationships or good physical health and wellbeing. Weaker candidates talked about the benefits of technology without limiting themselves to the terms of the question. Overall, candidates understood the subject and were able to provide some relevant material but often in a superficial and descriptive way.

Question 4

This question was attempted by too few candidates to make comments possible.

Question 5

This was the most popular question, with candidates across the range of abilities choosing to answer it. Many candidates expressed their ideas in well-argued and coherent essays reaching a reasoned conclusion. Other candidates could not engage with the question, frequently misunderstanding the notion of *faire payer* and often taking it to mean that the government had to pay those who caused pollution. Many candidates felt that making those responsible for pollution pay could never work since large industries were generally making products which would have a significant impact on a country's economy so they could refuse to pay and the rule would not be enforced. They also felt that if a penalty or tax was imposed on individuals, many would be unable or unwilling to pay and it would cost the government a huge amount of money to enforce the laws. Many candidates, therefore, moved on to other strategies that might work better such as insisting on using renewable energy sources, using hybrid or electric cars, recycling, creating an environment in which it was normal to take account of the damage we are doing to our planet. Other candidates had little to offer by way of alternatives, preferring to stick to a straight negative response to the question.