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 and be prepared to follow the interests and passions of the candidate.

For candidates:

- Make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions as well.
- 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 should make clear reference to francophone culture or society: *the presentation **must** demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where the target language is spoken.*

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 type of question asked by an Examiner can make a huge difference to how a candidate is able to make use of this opportunity – 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 generally clear, though a number presented problems because of the recording format chosen. Where Centres use digital recording software, each candidate's file must be saved individually, as an MP3 file, 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.

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. There were also cases of third parties entering the examination room in error. Centres should make sure that the examination room is clearly signposted.

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 level, 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.

Care should also be taken with the packaging of recorded material – CDs are not unbreakable and there have been 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 - 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.

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*, *L'éducation, Les jeunes, Le Conflit des Générations, La Famille*, *La Religion* 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, personal interests such as art or music, as well as a small number of topical presentations. 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. Topic choice in this session was more conservative than usual.

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

Topic Conversation (7 to 8 minutes)

In this section, candidates have the chance to expand on what they have already said and develop ideas and opinions expressed briefly during the presentation. Examiners need to beware of merely asking questions which allow a repetition of the same material already offered – their aim should be to ask more probing questions in order to give candidates opportunities to expand on their original statements and then respond to what the candidate says. There are not necessarily "right" answers either here or in the General Conversation section and it is in the nature of a genuine conversation that those taking part may not agree with opinions expressed.

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 aim to 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 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. Examiners should try to keep their questions general rather than moving inappropriately into personal areas.

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 vast majority of the entry, moderation saw marks either not adjusted at all or adjusted by less than 10%. 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 *Accuracy* and *Feel for the Language*.

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, if possible, 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.

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

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

FRENCH 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) 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 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

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 some at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was at times over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one to which candidates could relate.

The better 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 and there was little evidence of time pressures. Quite a lot of 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, and might introduce 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 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. 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.

These limits are 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 (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

This exercise was generally successfully negotiated, with a good number of candidates scoring high marks. Items **(b)**, **(d)** and **(e)** caused few problems, although some invalidated **(e)** by adding *seront* before *sûres*, which would have given *seront seront sûres*. A few did something similar with *loin d'imaginer* in **(a)**. In **(c)**, there was evidence of candidates sensibly narrowing down the possible choices by looking for a present participle to replace *cherchant*, but sometimes being misled by *durant*.

Question 2

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

Item 2(a) required candidates to produce a future tense: *plairont* or *vont plaire*. Some overdid things with *Il est sûr que des activités amusantes sont sûres de plaire …*

Item 2(b) required a subjunctive (*perde*), which was found by a good number but was clearly uncharted territory to some.

Item 2(c) required a transformation into the passive. Some problems occurred with those candidates who could not form the past participle of *contenir*, but missing the agreement on *contenues* was a more common problem.

In **Item 2(d)**, loss of the mark was caused either by the omission of the agreement on *rendue*, or by the omission of the word altogether.

Item 2(e) comprised a reasonably straightforward transformation into direct speech. Although it involved manipulating two elements, it was generally handled well.

Question 3

Item 3(a) Most candidates were able to open their account successfully with both marks here by stating that the idea dates back to the 1930s or that it was started by an editor, with 2.5 million copies sold annually.

Item 3(b) offered further straightforward marks to those candidates who used the technique of replacing the nouns *révision* and *préparation* from the text with the infinitives *réviser* and *préparer* or *anticiper*.

I**tem 3(c**) was generally quite well understood, and a good number identified the various elements explaining the success of the *cahier*, up to a maximum of four marks: the *cahiers* being age-related; content becoming more specialised as age increases; new versions being published every year; content being closely linked to school courses; and offering a good variety of enjoyable activities.

Item 3(d) was again well handled by candidates who pointed to the benefits of keeping the memory/brain exercised, of forgetting less of what had been learnt the previous year and of therefore starting the next year with confidence high.

Item 3(e) required candidates to identify three of the four ideas of families working <u>together</u>; of families being able to gauge the real level of achievement of their children; of giving children something useful and structured to do over the summer; and of being able to correct the answers themselves. Many did this effectively, finding ways of expressing in their own words the concepts of *rapprocher les familles* or *une idée bien concrète du niveau atteint*.

Question 4

Item 4(a) asked candidates to identify teachers' insistence and parents' worries about their child's poor marks as the reasons for imposing a *cahier*, which most managed to do successfully.

In **Item 4(b**), the easiest way of avoiding lifting from the text was by expressing *sans concentration ou motivation* by using appropriate verbs.

In **Item 4(c)**, candidates often identified the relevant negative areas, but sometimes simply copied *source supplémentaire de conflits* and *ne sont efficaces que s'ils sont complètement remplis*.

In **Item 4(d)** some candidates simply listed elements from the text: *connaissances acquises; explications limitées; difficultés renforcées* or *baisse de son estime personnelle* rather than expressing the concepts in their own words, as required.

In **Item 4(e)**, most candidates were able to identify alternative activities and many avoided 'lifting' by the very straightforward rendering of *lecture, recherches sur Internet,* and *visites aux musées* by the use of appropriate verbs *lire, (re)chercher* and *visiter*.

Question 5

This Question asked the candidates to summarise the positive and negative aspects of the *cahier de vacances* and then to discuss the more general point of what holidays should be for.

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

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points of which many candidates managed perhaps 6 or 7 or more, with a good number reaching an impressive 10. The most commonly identified positives included

helping revision of the previous year as well as preparation for the next one, keeping the memory active, bringing families together and giving children something worthwhile and structured to do in the holidays. The most commonly identified negatives were that they serve no purpose if they are completed under duress or only partially, causing family strife and a loss of self-confidence because they do not give enough explanations for those who have not understood things the first time round.

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 is a far more general one than the summary though, and those candidates who merely rehashed the texts in the context of the *cahier de vacances* (a summary of a summary) scored few, if any, marks. Better candidates sometimes talked of the opportunity for rest and relaxation, re-charging batteries, travel, new cultures and experiences, strengthening family ties, forging new friendships. Weaker candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and ventured very little, resulting in some unambitious and derivative responses, but others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own.

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The very weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs (even entirely regular ones) as usual being far the most common sources of error. Particularly concerning was the wide-spread notion that the plural of *il révise* is *ils révises.*

Examples of incorrect verb forms and agreements were legion, and the use of the infinitive (*-er*) ending seemed interchangeable with the past participle (*-é*). But basic agreements of adjectives too were simply routinely ignored by weaker candidates.

There was sometimes a phonetic approach to spelling, even with very common words: *accer; passe que*. C*e/se/ceux* were apparently interchangeable in some scripts, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça*, (*ci sa leur intéresse*) *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont.*

Constructions with certain common verbs caused regular problems *: permettre, aider, encourage, empêcher, apprendre.* The difference between *leur* and *leurs* or *qui* and *ce qui* was not appreciated by a large number.

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 which was a pleasure to read.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored.
- 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

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 at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was at times over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one to which candidates could relate.

The better candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of questions, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks. Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied 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. Quite a lot of 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, and might introduce 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 – especially if it is written as two words.

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 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 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.

These limits are 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 over 20% of the available words on this for no reward: *Venir à l'école en vélo comporte des avantages mais aussi des désavantages et des risques. Il y a du bon et du mauvais, comme partout. Je vais commencer par citer les désavantages et risques.* 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

This exercise was generally quite successfully negotiated, with a good number of candidates scoring well. Items **(c)** and **(e)** caused few problems, but *clairs* **(d)** in the sense of *évidents* was less obvious to some who went outside the first two paragraphs indicated in the rubric to find *lumineux*. In **(a),** some candidates invalidated their answers by including additional words: *commencent à bouger* which would have resulted in *se mettent à bouger à bouger*. Some did the same by including *a poussé* in **(c).** In **(a)** and **(b)** there was evidence of candidates sensibly narrowing down the possible choices by looking for a third person plural verb (*commencent*) and a present participle (*demandant*), but weaker candidates sometimes mistook *dégagement* and *échappement for verbs.*

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) looked a relatively easy transformation into the passive, but there was widespread loss of marks over the agreement on *mise*. Attempts to change the tense changed the sense too. *Une politique a mis la ville en place* suggested little grasp of the meaning of the sentence.

Item 2(b) discriminated well by asking candidates to avoid the passive by the use of *on*, but in this case many of the same candidates forgot to remove the agreement on *conçues*. Attempts at other tenses were again penalised, as were re-phrasings which reduced the original to nonsense: *on a conçu les automobiles pour ces routes.*

Item 2(c) required a subjunctive**,** but was as well handled as any of the items. Some spoiled things by producing *faissent*.

In **Item 2(d)** the manipulations themselves were not complicated (*… tu dois porter ton gilet*), but candidates needed to follow them through logically. Some were content to leave it at *tu dois insister sur le port de son gilet.*

Item 2(e) caused surprising difficulties over the past participle of *suivre*. Others misread *formation* as *information* or ignored common sense: *après avoir passé un test, ils suivent une formation.*

Question 3

Item 3(a) The question asked for the aims of the petition and the plan, which some candidates reversed or thought were identical. The idea of children (not just anyone) using bikes to come to School (not just as a leisure activity) was the key for the second mark, with *se rendre à l'école* easily avoidable.

Item 3(b) produced some good scores from candidates who found the easy way of avoiding lifting by transforming *réduction, dégagement* and *augmentation* into corresponding verbs. Some missed the point that it is life in towns that is improved.

I**tem 3(c**) was generally well understood, and the better candidates found simple ways of rephrasing by transforming present participles (*rendant, améliorant*) into finite verbs or with *c'est amusant de pédaler*.

Item 3(d) offered stronger candidates the opportunity to demonstrate full comprehension. Others simply copied out the list of dangers from the text (badly-lit tunnels etc.) without the essential element of the plan identifying them, or of establishing recommended routes to avoid them.

In **Item 3(e),** a good number of candidates scored one mark for suggesting that the three items collectively had the purpose of keeping riders safe. But the fact that three marks were indicated in the right-hand margin told the more observant that the three items each had their own individual purpose

In Item 3(f), the first mark was often well made, the second less often so. Again, better candidates opted for transforming *prise de conscience* and *maîtrise* into appropriate verbs.

Question 4

Item 4(a) earned most candidates at least two of the three marks.

In **Item 4(b)**, the first point was not successfully made by many who did not understand the contradiction of banning bikes against the background of national campaigns promoting their use, and accused Mme Gaillard of being the contradiction. The three remaining points were easier to identify and to express without resorting to *augmenter la circulation automobile; la pollution atmosphérique* and *le surpoids*.

Item 4(c) was probably the most straightforward on the paper, with 'lack of space' and 'potential theft' being well identified.

Item 4(d) was again relatively straightforward for those who saw the need to express the idea of *appauvrissement* or *perte* in other terms. Most saw the choice of transport to school as the parents' business, not the school's.

In **Item 4(e),** most candidates were able to quote the statistics, but many missed to point out that numbers of children using a bike have dropped. Stronger candidates were able to find adjectives or verbs to express *incompréhension* and *déception*.

Question 5

This Question asked the candidates to summarise the advantages and dangers of coming to school by bike and then to discuss the far more general point of whether children today are overprotected.

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 of which a many of candidates managed around 6 or 7 or more, with a good number reaching 10. The most commonly identified advantages included environmental ones (less traffic, exhaust gases, pollution) as well as health benefits (more exercise, keeping weight down). The most commonly identified dangers were the risk of accidents, badly maintained roads and bikes, and risk of theft.

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 is a far more general one than the summary though, and those candidates who merely rehashed the texts in the context of bikes (a summary of a summary) scored few if any marks. Better candidates sometimes talked of the need to allow children to find out dangers by themselves (including those of the Internet) and to grow up in the process. Others pointed to the dilemma of parents whose responsibility is to protect their children but also give them enough freedom to make their own mistakes. Weaker candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and ventured very little, resulting in some unambitious and derivative responses, but others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own.

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The very weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs (even entirely regular ones) as usual being far the most common sources of error. Particularly concerning again was the wide-spread notion that the plural of *il ne pollue pas* is *ils ne pollues pas*.

Examples of incorrect verb forms and agreements were legion, and the use of the infinitive (*-er*) ending seemed interchangeable with the past participle (*-é*). But basic agreements of adjectives too were simply routinely ignored by weaker candidates.

There was a phonetic approach to spelling - *ce/se/ceux* appeared to be interchangeable in some scripts, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça*, *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont, donc* and *dont. quand, qu'on* and *qu'an*

Constructions with certain common verbs caused regular problems*: permettre, aider, encourage, empêcher, apprendre.* The difference between *leur, leurs* and *ses (*sometimes *s'éducation),* and *qui* and *ce qui* was not appreciated by a large number.

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 which was a pleasure to read.

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 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored.
- 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

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 at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

The topic generally appeared to be one 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, and might introduce 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**, copying wholesale from the text has diminished considerably in recent session, 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 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**, 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.

These limits are such that candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble, however polished. It appears that candidate 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 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 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 generally quite successfully negotiated, with a good number of candidates scoring well. In **(a)**, most demonstrated that they recognised *crainte* as a synonym for *peur*, but in **(b)**, *révélées* was a very common incorrect choice, possibly induced by the search for a feminine plural past participle. In **(c)**, *nocive* was usually correctly identified. In **(d)**, some candidates invalidated a potentially correct answer by including a redundant *bien* (which would have given *semble bien bien*) and did the same in **(e)** by adding *loin d'être* before *catégoriques*.

Question 2

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

Item 2(a) required a very straightforward transfer into direct speech, but some changed the tense and therefore the meaning.

Much the same happened in **Item 2(b)** where all that was required was the avoidance of the passive by the use of *on*. Candidates who altered the tense of the original again lost the mark.

Item 2(c) required a subjunctive**,** which a good number of candidates handled well but which was clearly not familiar ground for all.

Item 2(d) offered two possibilities: *sont à éviter* or *doivent être évitées*. Many of those who chose the latter pattern forgot to add the agreement.

Item 2(e) often suffered from a lack of agreement on *considérée*. Unnecessary alteration of the tense (*est/était considérée*) again cost marks.

Question 3

Item 3(a) saw most candidates off to a good start, particularly those who found alternative ways of expressing *surpoids* and *révélées negatives*, thereby avoiding lifting material from the text.

In **Item 3(b),** the notion of US steak containing more calories than the French equivalent was successfully identified by a good number, even though rather fewer successfully made the point that the average portion size is larger in the US.

I**tem 3(c**) was generally well understood, and most managed to convey the ambiguity of the findings without simply 'lifting' *pas toujours synonyme d'alimentation équilibrée*.

Item 3(d) was best handled by those candidates who used verbs to express the nouns of the text in order to avoid 'lifting'. Thus *protection* became *protéger*, *prévention* became *prévenir/empêcher*, and *croissance* became *grandir* or *développer physiquement.*

Item 3(e) required the identification of three risks: that of being burnt by the heat of the barbecue; of eating carbonised meat; and of eating undercooked meat. This caused confusion in some cases: *manger la viande cuite peut vous brûler* but on the other hand *la viande pas assez cuite peut vous brûler.*

Item 3(f) was well answered by candidates who managed to find straightforward other ways of expressing *bénéfique* and *ne pas dépasser* or *les excès sont à éviter.*

Question 4

Item 4(a) asked candidates to compare the meat consumption of the three countries with each other and with the past. Most managed this successfully enough, even if some were not sufficiently precise about meat consumption having doubled.

In **Item 4(b**), the benefits to health of a vegetarian diet were well identified by the majority, but some resorted to the unnecessary 'lifting' of *une espérance de vie supérieure* for the third mark.

Item 4(c) asked candidates to identify four reasons for not eating meat, and most managed to do so efficiently, meaning that full marks were quite common here.

Item 4(d) discriminated more successfully, rewarding those who understood or guessed the meaning and function of *les poumons*. The second mark required the idea of forests being cut down to allow planting of food for animals, which was often not fully grasped or satisfactorily expressed.

In **Item 4(e)** many candidates managed to express ideas without resorting to lifting *la lutte contre le réchauffement climatique* or *plus de dépenses d'énergie fossile*.

Question 5

This Question asks the candidates to summarise the benefits and risks of eating meat presented in the two passages, and then to say whether children should have a balanced diet imposed or be free to choose what they eat.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points of which many candidates managed perhaps 7 or 8 or more, and a good number reaching 10. The most commonly identified benefits were those of being part of a balanced diet, promoting growth and protecting against heart problems and anaemia. The most usually mentioned risks included environmental ones (wasting resources, gas emissions) alongside dangers to health (increased risk of disease, cholesterol levels and weight).

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 the candidate the chance to express their feelings on the topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, although some simply re-hashed the benefits and risks of eating meat – in other words, ignoring the task and simply summarizing the summary. These candidates inevitably scored poorly, if at all. The stronger candidates were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own.

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. 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*). The same candidates often ignored basic agreements in general.

Some candidates displayed a distinctly phonetic approach to spelling: *ce/se/ceux* appeared to be interchangeable in some scripts, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça*, *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont.*

Constructions with certain common verbs caused regular problems*: permettre, aider, encourager, empêcher, apprendre.* The distinction between *leur* and *leurs* was commonly not appreciated, and the same was often true of *qui* and *ce qui.*

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 which was a pleasure to read.

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

The best candidates wrote relevant essays that were clearly structured and that contained a good range of points supported by examples. Their authors demonstrated a sound grasp of grammar in spite of lapses and some capacity to use more complex structures accurately and appropriately. At the other end of the spectrum, there was a significant number of very weak essays which bore witness to very little evidence of grammatical awareness, an extremely limited range of vocabulary and structures and, as result, a lack of coherent and fluent expression in the language.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Comment expliquer le fait que, de nos jours, les gens mangent de façon beaucoup moins saine qu'il y a 50 ans ?

This question proved to be quite a popular choice. The best works featured a range of points and demonstrated a solid understanding of the issues. Essays focused on the lack of appropriate education both at school and at home on matters nutritional and also on the time factor: pressures of work and the desire to maximise leisure time mean that people have less time to shop for and to prepare carefully planned meals that take into account nutritional values. Lack of money too was seen as a significant factor: in the current economic climate, people simply cannot afford good quality food and are forced to resort to cheaper alternatives. The sheer accessibility of fast-food was highlighted as being of major significance as was the role of advertising which, it was argued, is particularly successful in targeting the younger generations. Technological advances such as the development of genetically modified foods and the advent of mass production of processed foodstuffs containing preservatives, artificial colouring and chemical additives were seen as highly detrimental to healthy eating, all the more so since they have been largely responsible for ousting fresh produce from the shelves of our shops. Social changes were also pinpointed, not least the change in the nature of leisure activities: the sedentary pursuits of computer based activities, watching television and cinema-going all encourage snacking, which leads to the consumption of excessive quantities of such unhealthy foodstuffs as biscuits, chocolate, sweets, crisps, chips, hamburgers, hotdogs and the like. Moreover, families are less close-knit than they were 50 years ago and professional constraints mean that one or both parents are often absent from the home for much longer than used to be the case: as a result, in most households, the traditional family gathering round the dining-room table at mealtimes is a thing of the past and children are often left to their own devices.

Less good essays usually had a very narrow focus and often quickly lapsed into irrelevance: fast food was identified as the sole culprit and, instead of exploring the reasons why that is the case, many answers simply complained about the incidence of obesity among the young and about the steps needed to combat it.

Question 2

L'aide apportée par la communauté internationale aux pays en développement est souvent inefficace. Jusqu'à quel point êtes-vous d'accord ?

This question was the choice of just a handful of candidates. Essays emphasised the importance of aid in alleviating poverty and in financing sustainable development projects in Third World countries and pointed in particular to the crucial role it plays at times when natural disasters strike. On the negative side, prominence was given to the incidence of corruption among the leaders of countries receiving aid which means that the money intended for aid projects is not used for the intended purpose at all: either it goes into the pockets of members of the governing party or it is used to buy arms to be used in the civil conflicts that beset many Third World nations. Moreover, even if the money does not fall into corrupt hands, it is frequently entrusted to people who have no economic or other appropriate training to ensure that it is put to best use.

Question 3

Trop de gens voyagent pour de mauvaises raisons. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

This proved to be the most popular title, and it was particularly popular among less strong candidates whose essays were often lacking in substance. Irrelevance was a problem in some cases, when candidates focussed on the reasons why tourism is so important for a country. Better candidates who wrote relevantly were at pains to put forward a balanced case. Among examples of beneficial travel that figured were journeys made for educational reasons, such as to study a language or to take a non-linguistic course at a foreign university, journeys made for cultural, gastronomic or sporting reasons, and journeys made to visit friends and family, to seek medical treatment, to find work or to promote business interests. On the negative side, essays cited sex tourism, international drug trafficking, terrorist activity, the poaching of wild animals for their furs and tusks and illegal immigration.

Question 4

Les parents qui ne font pas confiance à leurs enfants risquent de le regretter plus tard. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez ?

This was the third most popular title. Unfortunately, a few candidates who chose it did not know the meaning of *faire confiance à* and wrote about the need for children to display self-confidence in order to be successful. Among those who had understood that it was a question of trust, there was occasionally a tendency to write in very abstract terms with much repetition of the words of the first half of the title and to lose sight of the consequences of a lack of trust and the ensuing regret. Those who did write relevantly focused on such possible consequences as involvement with undesirable individuals who lead children astray, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, failure at school with all its implications, suicide and even involvement with fanatical religious sects. Most expressed the view that parents need to strike the right balance between exercising the necessary authority to ensure that their children remain on the straight and narrow and giving them the opportunity to make their own decisions. That they will make mistakes is inevitable but, it was argued, that is all part of the growing-up experience necessary to ensure that they develop into responsible adults.

Question 5

La nature crée des différences, la société en fait des inégalités. Discutez de cette affirmation.

This was the least popular question. Of the small number of candidates who did choose it, only a few really saw to the heart of it. Particularly good essays that were well-structured, coherent and very thoughtful took in turn differences of sexuality, differences of race, differences of gender and differences in physical attributes and analysed the way in which society erects barriers of prejudice based on those differences. For example, people born with physical deformities are frequently ostracised or harassed by other members of society and find it very difficult to find work or even to win the trust or affection of their fellow men.

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

The candidates' work was generally well presented although there were some examples of poor handwriting which can be a severe challenge for the Examiner. In some cases it was clear that candidates had a poor command of linguistic structures and appropriate register. The answer of such candidates were often naively expressed in very simple and often inaccurate language and at times avoided the question set, concentrating instead on the overall topic heading. Candidates that 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 (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *manque, travail, pays, tourisme, environnement, développement, gouvernement, monde, planète, rôle, exemple, avis, phénomène, crime.*

Agreement of past tense with avoir – e.g. *ils ont essayés*.

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

Inappropriate register addressing the Examiner as *tu*.

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

Nouns used without articles.

Overuse of the word *chose/choses* and *cela.*

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

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

Inaccurate and careless use of accents including words used in the questions such as *phénomène, privilégier, détriment, générations, égalité* 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.*

Inability to form the past tense e.g. *l'inégalité à toujours exister.*

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1:

This was the third most popular question and was chosen by candidates across the range. It was clear that many candidates did not fully understand the meaning of *mondialisation* and so chose to avoid it in their answers. Many answers were on the overall topic title of *L'alimentation et les boissons* and discussed the benefits of healthy eating and diet. There was some discussion of the westernisation of the diet across the world resulting in the growth of the fast food industry and the consequent impact on people's health. Obesity, eating disorders and disease were cited as the results of the obsession with food and diet. Candidates who answered this question successfully made reference to the benefits as well as the negative impacts of globalisation on what we eat. They referred to the changing world and the demands on people's time which has led to the increase in the consumption of fast food and convenience foods. Some could see that this actually helps people as it frees up time for them to spend with their families or to pursue other activities rather than being tied to the kitchen. They could see that it was a question of balance and that a range of types of food is best. They also pointed out that overseas travel had resulted in people getting a taste for different foods and that had led to the increase in ethnic restaurants around the world allowing people to enjoy different flavours and dishes wherever they were. Too many candidates became bogged down in the Big Mac equals obesity argument and failed to see the real parameters of the question.

Question 2:

This question was equal in popularity to Question 1. It was evident once again that some candidates had not fully read the question and took it to be solely about the benefits of education. Better candidates realised that this question was specifically asking about the role of education in the developing world in allowing those countries to move forward on their own in the future. There were many superficial answers on the importance of education in making sure that people can read and write and learn to socialise but very few took this to the next level and discussed the positive impact an educated population might have on countries in the developing world. Good candidates explained the connection between education and the development of skills essential for running a country efficiently and without corruption, allowing people to develop understanding that would lead to them questioning the status quo. They also understood that the question referred to education being the most important factor but gave the hint that there might be other things to consider. Those candidates mentioned sanitation, clean water, health programmes and family planning as being also of great importance in improving the chances of a developing country.

Question 3:

This was the second most popular question. Candidates were acutely aware of the problems brought about by tourists who now travel the globe in search of new adventures. It was clear that they were very concerned by the damage caused by tourism, particularly in the developing world. They felt that tourism has a major impact on the host country because of the money that has to be spent on developing the infrastructure needed to support the tourist industry. It was felt that the destruction of forests to create hotels, the creation of new roads, the impact on local flora and fauna and the consumption of water and energy by tourists presented a real threat to the local community whose needs were being forgotten. Candidates often wrote a list of the ways in which their particular country was being affected with examples of beaches being taken over by tourists and attractions being created that the locals could never afford to visit. Good candidates balanced this pessimistic view with the more optimistic view that local people would benefit in the long run as tourism would bring in money to the economy and allow better facilities for the locals to be created as well as jobs. There were some very good answers to this question which fully explored the dangers and benefits of tourism in a balanced way. Superficial list-type answers did less well.

Question 4:

This was the most popular question. Some candidates did not answer it particularly well since they took it to be an essay on *le conflit des generations.* They did not read the question and launched into a discussion of family life and conflicts between parents and children. They did not take account of the notion of respect mentioned in the question. These essays were often trite and repetitive and went down the route of describing family life as two parents working, children left to their own devices turning to crime and substance abuse. Candidates who engaged with the question talked about adolescence being an age of intolerance and questioning and explained that lack of respect was often the visible effect of that. There were some very astute and intelligent answers focusing on the difference in mind-set between the young and

the old, the desire for the young to make their way in the world by pushing at the old order. The perceived lack of respect for everyone and everything is part of that struggle for independence and creativity.

Question 5:

This was the least popular question. A number of candidates did not appear to understand the terms used in the question – there was widespread misunderstanding of *la médiocrité et l'incompétence*. Some took these to be positive factors and therefore wrote incoherent answers. Many candidates answered on the overall topic heading and talked about the progress of equality in modern society. Some talked of the equality of the sexes exclusively, others talked about race and sexuality as well but most did not tackle the essential issue of equality of opportunity creating a culture of incompetence and mediocrity. The few candidates who did broach the subject did so mentioned the positives and negatives of positive discrimination, the progress made in creating opportunities for people who might otherwise not have succeeded but it was generally felt that true equality of opportunity is a good thing but that it is hard to attain.

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 coherent. They should use accurate and idiomatic French with some evidence of complexity both in structure and vocabulary. They should plan essays carefully and use the introduction to show how they will approach the subject and the conclusion to show their considered final judgment of the issues raised.

General Comments:

There was a wide range of ability in this cohort. It was clear that candidates understood the instructions for this paper and wrote essays of the right length. There was evidence of some planning but this was often done in English and was quite superficial. When the candidate organises the material and defines the terms of the question before starting to write, the mark is generally much higher. A logical argument that comes to a reasoned conclusion is highly rewarded in the content mark for the paper. Where candidates had not planned their essays, ideas and thoughts were thrown together haphazardly and often the argument was very hard to follow. There was no sense of balance or ranking of relevance and importance of ideas. It is clear that many candidates do not address the question set but rather write a general essay on the overall topic heading. It is vital that candidates turn their answers to the particulars of the question and address all elements. Essays on the overarching topic area will always score poorly on content as much of the material is irrelevant given the question title itself. There were some cases where candidates showed very little grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness and whose essays were largely incoherent and with persistent serious errors. Some of the less able candidates did not have the language skills to express their ideas and resorted to Anglicism, actual English words (e.g. *de avoir pas enough norriture*) and phonetic spelling. The more successful candidates used a range of structures and vocabulary, did not over-reach themselves and managed to express their ideas in a cogent and coherent manner, arriving at a balanced conclusion.

Examples of good use of language include:

Links between paragraphs such as *d'abord, d'ailleurs, en outre, ensuite, la dernière constatation qui s'impose, quelle est la conclusion qu'on peut en tirer, néanmoins*

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive such as *bien qu'il y ait, il est nécessaire que la communauté internationale fasse*

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read widely in the target language

Correct use of idioms such as *il va de soi, en d'autres mots, faire obstacle à, faire la sourde oreille, au revers de la médaille, pour couronner le tout, le débat s'ouvre, quant à, avoir encore son mot à dire*

Common errors:

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *manque, travail, pays, touriste, environnement, développement, gouvernement, monde, planète, rôle, exemple, avis, phénomène, crime, deuxièmement.*

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

Incorrect agreement of past tense with avoir – e.g. *ils ont essayés*.

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

Overuse of the word *chose/choses* and *cela.*

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Inaccurate use of accents including 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 on words such as *téndénce*.

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).*

Lack of knowledge of relevant vocabulary. In **Question 1**, for example, the English word chemicals was rendered as *les chemicaux, les chemiques, les chimicals, les chemicals*.

Frequent inability to form the past tense e.g. *l'inégalité à toujours exister.*

Comments on specific questions:

Question 1

This question was the most popular on the paper and was answered by candidates across the full range of ability. On the whole, candidates were happy to talk about the importance of healthy eating but some were not fully aware of what precisely *la cuisine bio* represented. Many of the less able candidates took it to be food which had been, in some way, chemically changed such as genetically modified food. Their arguments then became a discussion of the merits or disadvantages of this process. They did not understand the implications of the question so could only ever elicit a content mark in the Poor category. Those candidates who did appreciate that the question concerned organic food received better marks. Their arguments were generally well balanced with an understanding that organic foods may well be better for the health of the population and that of the planet but are often priced beyond the reach of most people. Organic farmers usually have smaller yields from their acreage and struggle to compete with the large agribusiness companies which use pesticides and antibiotics to increase the likelihood of high yields. It was generally felt that organic foods tasted better and were a better option for the health but that with large parts of the world experiencing famine, it was necessary to produce large amounts of food and that this could only be done through large scale farming and genetically modified products.

Question 2

This was the fourth most popular question and was not answered by many candidates. Those that did demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the issues raised. They talked about the history of war and showed that through the ages, war had always been a means for countries to show their power. Candidates clearly viewed today's world as little different with wars raging throughout the developing world. It was felt that more should be done to prevent the situation and that governments in the developed countries should be doing more to support the populations in countries where wars were raging. It was felt that there should be more laws, more sanctions, and more aid for refugees and prisoners of brutal regimes and education programmes. Candidates were quite realistic in their answers, recognising that wars do impede development but that with corrupt regimes hungry for power and money, wars are likely to continue whatever the developed nations try to do.

Question 3

This was the most popular question along with **Question 1**. All candidates understood the implications of the question and answered it according to their ability. It was clear that tourism can bring benefits but also difficulties to the host countries. Candidates were keen to point out the qualities that make up a good tourist. They felt that it was important to be considerate, keen to learn and sensitive to the environmental needs of the area visited. They pointed out the potential for animosity between local populations and tourists when the latter came purely to luxuriate in large hotels using vast quantities of water and energy and showed little care for local customs and practices, threw down rubbish and treated the locals with disdain. Candidates also mentioned those tourists who travel for sexual gratification and demean the locals. The question

aroused strong feelings and it was clear that candidates had experienced at first hand some of the problems associated with the growth of tourism and cheap travel.

Question 4

This was the third most popular question among candidates. As the title required candidates to look into the future, the future tense was demanded. Often this created problems for candidates and gave rise to some badly formed verbs and incorrect tenses. The issues involved in the question were clear for candidates of all abilities. They explained what the conflict meant for families and were often quite dogmatic in how they would deal with situations themselves in the future. Most mentioned the need to listen, spend time together as a family, and find activities in common. They said they would not impose draconian laws on their children, they would allow them the freedom to explore and to become independent. They criticised their own parents' disciplinarian attitudes and were determined to be more liberal and forgiving of mistakes in their own children. Candidates were well able to answer this question from a content point of view but they struggled with the future aspect of the grammar, so marks for language were fairly low.

Question 5

This was by far the least popular question and was attempted by few candidates. Some candidates didn't engage with the full parameters of the question, choosing to stay on the safer ground of discussing inequality generally. There was little mention of the specifics of women being given a fair chance in the world of work or of their value as employees. The arguments were poorly developed and contained much irrelevant material so scored low marks for content.

FRENCH

Paper 8682/42

Texts

Key Messages

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2. Read the question carefully, work out the key words and answer all parts of the question. If the demands of the question are not understood, it may result in 'simple and superficial' responses or answers which show 'dependence on narrative' (i.e. the lower mark bands);

3. Show their knowledge relevantly in detailed answers with full explanations, structuring their essays with an introduction, points for and against, including illustration and development, and finally a conclusion. Familiarity with the principles and the standards of the Mark Scheme will help them; stronger candidates are distinguished by their ability to answer the questions fully and to draw comparisons and contrasts.

Candidates should give the question number and **(a)** (as well as **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)** in ***Section 1***) or **(b)** and need to answer the question set. Using key words from the question is likely to help candidates to focus and produce a relevant response. It is perfectly legitimate to teach the social, historical and/or literary background to the work in question, but teachers of this examination should stress to candidates that ONLY textual knowledge and understanding are being assessed.

Teachers are advised to choose texts that their candidates can cope with well. This session, many candidates coped well with texts such as those by Anouilh, Joffo or Molière, whereas it tended to be only the stronger candidates who made good sense of 'La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu' and who had a handle on the plot complexities (and probably the length) of 'Le Grand Meaulnes'.

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In ***Section 1***, **Questions (b)** do **not** relate to the passage. If no knowledge of the text is shown except what is contained in the passage, the candidate cannot be deemed to have independent knowledge of the plot.

General Comments

Many candidates had clearly studied hard and read the texts thoroughly. Unfortunately there seemed to be more language problems in candidates' scripts this session.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Duras: *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique*

(a) The extract was taken from chapter 4 of the '1ère Partie'.

Mention 'broadly in favour of' a marriage between M. Jo and Suzanne was considered to be a minimum in **(i)**. The 'point de vue' (lines 2-3) that Joseph was about to express to M. Jo was that Suzanne's family had waited long enough (fifteen days, but they were 'malheureux' – only the rich, it was said, could wait two years!) for M. Jo to marry Suzanne. Joseph thought he should do this for their mother's sake. There were a small number of answers which did not include a reference to marriage.

Joseph's tone (and language) was described as 'grossier', 'scandaleuse franchise'. His mother sought to justify it to M. Jo later in the chapter, 'S'il est grossier quelquefois, ce n'est pas de sa faute, dit la mère, il n'a reçu aucune éducation.' Most candidates understood Joseph's low opinion of M. Jo, whether as a possible match for Suzanne or otherwise, but did not often refer to the manner in which Joseph presented his ultimatum, or the coarseness or vulgarity of his address.

Answers to **(ii)** were generally fair and detailed. Some candidates approached the question by discussing their opinion of the description of M. Jo as 'raté', drawing on evidence from elsewhere in the text. Others discussed Joseph's treatment of M. Jo in this way, although material repeated from **(i)** could not be given further credit. Few candidates gave even a hint of sympathy in their assessments of the character of M. Jo.

The mother 's'attristait davantage' (line 7) as a result of the champagne, already looking at Suzanne and M. Jo 'tristement', and 's'assombrit encore' (line 15) after a flicker of doubt that M. Jo really was 'un raté', followed by a swift decision that the word described her equally well. Responses to **(iii)** did not always mention the champagne (line 6) and its effects, or the mother's sudden realisation of herself as 'de plus raté' (line 14) or 'la preuve en est ... de marier ma fille à ce raté-là' (lines 16-17).

(b) Most candidates were able to give at least some balance to an analysis of the mother's 'naïveté' and lack of common sense versus the virtues of her long and valiant struggle against misfortune and to achieve some justice. Unfortunately the 'cadastre' was not given the benefit of similar understanding, receiving very short shrift, often without any attempt at all to suggest possible mitigating circumstances such as attributing its limitations to incompetence, or even fair business. Candidates usually had sufficient to say, but the weakest answers were content merely to catalogue the mother's trials in narrative.

Question 2

Anouilh: *Antigone*

(a) There were a number of very capable answers to this question. Answers to **(i)**, almost without exception, understood the reference to the deaths of Antigone, Hémon and Eurydice narrated by the chorus immediately before. Generally there was good understanding of Créon's appearance, character and attitude to duty in **(ii)**, a small number of responses making some comparison with the page boy. Lack of emotion was not always recognised but there was good emphasis on the word 'seul'. In **(iii)**, most understood Antigone's obligation to bury Polynice. With 'c'est vrai', the chorus acknowledged and affirmed Antigone's own statement to the guard shortly before, 'Sans la petite Antigone, vous auriez tous été bien tranquilles', and this was sometimes recognised by candidates.

(b) Although this was among the more frequently studied texts not so many candidates chose to answer this question. They sometimes used 'key' words, but without seeming to understand the demands of the question or to realise the significance of '*le sale espoir*'. The phrase was used by the chorus almost half way through the play as Anouilh defined and praised the virtues of tragedy, in contrast to 'le drame, avec ... ces lueurs d'espoir, cela devient épouvantable de mourir ... Dans la tragédie on est tranquille ... c'est reposant, la tragédie, parce qu'on sait qu'il n'y a plus d'espoir, le sale espoir'. Antigone used the expression towards the end of the text, attributing 'le sale espoir' to Créon and distancing herself from it.

Question 3

Molière: *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*

(a) There were some good responses to **(i)**, but a number of the weaker ones were too general (i.e. flattery to extract money) and some candidate's wrongly saw Dorimène as Dorante's partner in swindle and dishonesty. There was no reference to the comedy or its place in the context of the play. The weakest answers to **(ii)** did not recognise the references to the meal from which Mme Jourdain was excluded but which she inadvertently disturbed on her return from visiting her sister, and therefore provided little relevant comment, or recognition of Dorimène's graciousness in accepting the apology. **Question (iii)** was less well answered overall. In the main, the importance of the arrival of 'Son Altesse Turque' was adequately dealt with but, although there was general agreement that the scene was also comic, there was little attempt to explain what made it so. Few candidates understood that the scene was, after all, the climax of the comedy and that the humour provided by the disguise, 'Turkish' language and general confusion and misunderstanding was essential to the unravelling of the plot and to the dénouement of the play.

(b) Within the context of this play, a comedy ballet, the spectator or reader is free to chuckle at M. Jourdain's egocentricity without seriously pitying him. Most candidates managed to present points in favour of feeling pity for M. Jourdain (he was exploited and manipulated), and a few provided more balanced responses by mentioning arguments against (he should have listened to his wife, servant, etc.; he pursued Dorimène behind his wife's back, so could not expect to be sympathised with; if he had not refused Cléonte, he would not need to be deceived by the masquerade). It was fairly common for candidates not to give a direct answer to the 'to what extent?' part of the question. Occasionally candidates attempted to assess the extent to which one could pity M. Jourdain in the passage in **Question (a)**, but this did not give enough material representative of the play as a whole to produce very competent responses. Centres should note the 'Key Messages' above, particularly, 'In ***Section 1***, **Questions (b)** do **not** relate to the passage. If no knowledge of the text is shown except what is contained in the passage, the candidate cannot be deemed to have independent knowledge of the plot.'

Question 4

Alain-Fournier: *Le Grand Meaulnes*

(a) The extract was Seurel's 'reconstruction' of Meaulnes' diary. Meaulnes had by that point 'résolu ... de faire passer Valentine pour sa femme'. For her part, 'A vous, dit-elle, je veux donner tout ce que j'ai' – 'les lettres de son fiancé'. On occasions, candidates did not recognise the context and some attempts to explain the complexity of the situation were confused and lacking in clarity.

Whatever their ability, candidates were able to cope easily with **(i)**, although regrettably there was sometimes little development beyond the information given in lines 12-13 of the extract, 'voilà que je lui ai pris sa fiancée'. Most answers to **(ii)** revealed little knowledge of Meaulnes' friendship with Frantz and sparse details of their encounters leading up to this point of the play. A few provided fairly good comparison of their characters and their common love of adventure. Like Meaulnes, Valentine had thought 'tant de bonheur était impossible' (3e Partie, Ch. 3) when she doubted her suitability to marry Frantz and broke off their engagement, and she gravitated to the house in Paris where the de Galais used to spend time (2e Partie, Ch. 12), so perhaps Meaulnes could have had more sympathy. Answers to **(iii)** tended to emphasise the candidates' opinions, however, rather than using the evidence of the novel.

(b) This question was chosen less frequently than **(a)**. The quotation, from Book 2, chapter 11, was preceded by 'je redevenais'. While Meaulnes was at the School, there was more of a polarity between him/Seurel and the local boys who liked a fight. When Meaulnes left the School, shortly

before the quotations, Seurel became reintegrated into social relationships. Nevertheless, the quotation may have been a little self-deprecating. Seurel valued education, learning and later teaching, and more perceptive candidates had no difficulty in appreciating that Seurel's loyalty and devotion to Meaulnes, Yvonne and their child went far beyond what could be expected of 'just anyone'..

Section 2

Question 5

Mauriac: *Thérèse Desqueyroux*

(a) Although there were not a large number of responses to this text, there were some fair attempts at both **(a)** and **(b)**, of which a few were sensitive and quite well illustrated. There was evidence that the 2012 film version had already provided an added resource to the study of this novel.

It did not seem necessary to doubt the veracity of the statement in the question, a quotation from chapter 13. It was clear, however, that Bernard would not say such a thing, as the sentence following it began, 'Mais Bernard...', and this was only a few pages before the end of the book.

(b) This question put forward an accessible proposition that candidates found it easy to agree with, though not always with much explanation. There were, nevertheless, some interesting discussions centring on Thérèse as a victim, and on her upbringing in a bourgeois society. She was 'different' from what some around her expected of a young woman, with her love of reading, heavy smoking and feisty character, so was always to some extent at odds with those around her. Some argued convincingly that Thérèse was a victim of her own personality. She married her best friend's brother, but quickly found herself estranged from Anne. She needed not to jeopardise her father's political career or her husband's/family's reputation, and became the victim of an unhappy marriage and unsuitable husband, but perhaps not exactly 'la victime de la société bourgeoise dans laquelle elle a été élevée'.

Question 6

Giraudoux: *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*

(a) Ulysse arrived in Act 2, scene 12 'pour une conversation diplomatique', knowing that the 'Troyens' were thought to be 'moins doués que nous pour le négoce'. He sought to establish whether Hélène had been 'respected'. He spoke at greater length in scene 13, including, 'Parce que nous avons été créés sensés, justes et courtois, nous nous parlons...', suggesting that he was indeed 'un homme de bonne volonté'. He accepted Hélène and pledged his sincerity to Hector. Some answers seen revealed little knowledge of Ulysses; others discussed his character at great length, but without mentioning whether he could be evaluated as 'un homme de bonne volonté'.

(b) 'Balanced' discussions were achieved by candidates who stated what they understood by 'une tragédie pacifiste' and who explored possible 'yes' and 'no' answers to the question, 'Is the play a pacifist tragedy?' Candidates seemed ready to give 'for and against' material about whether the play was a tragedy (or a comedy), but this material was not usually well 'transferred' to the question in hand. Answers were generally successful; there was some understanding of plot and characters. 'Une tragédie pacifiste' seemed a fitting description in that war was not (initially) waged 'belligerently'. An ultimatum was given, and the conditions were not met.

Question 7

Bazin: *Au nom du fils*

(a) Candidates found it difficult to comment on M. Astin's conduct in the light of the judgement – his interaction with his children, and the way in which they all 'got by' despite their emotional trials, and as M. Astin juggled his own emotional needs with his single parenting of his children. Candidates' strengths lay in explaining the family composition, but this did not begin to answer the question.

(b) Mamette, Madame Hombourg, M. Astin's mother-in-law, who lived 'au mair' (until her death towards the end of the book after a long decline) opposite him, 'au pair', played a major role in the novel as she did in her family members' lives, hosting Sunday lunches and much more, so there was a lot of material that could have been drawn from. Memorably, it was she who commented in chapter 5 that it was Bruno whom M. Astin 'saved' from the water first – a significant point in their troubled relationship. Unfortunately candidates sometimes confused Mamette with other characters, most often Laure, producing a character study and evaluation of a role played, but which was not relevant to this question.

Question 8

Joffo: *Un sac de billes*

(a) This question was chosen by just over half of candidates answering on this text, and there were a number of very competent answers. Père Joffo, the curate(s), the priest and the doctor all figured regularly in answers. Rather less frequently used were Zérati and the Mancelier family. Although in theory candidates could have provided a full answer on a single character, in the event, more thorough discussion was provided by candidates who developed their discussion in relation to a number of different people from the novel. A few candidates chose to include characters who were memorable for their prejudice or cruelty, such as M. Boulier and the SS officer who interviewed Ferdinand in the Hôtel Excelsior, thus providing some contrast and source of comparison.

(b) This question was answered with the same enthusiasm as **(a)**. Some good answers covered love from the parents, love of each other within the family and unexpected love and assistance from strangers. The more of the latter the better since lengthy illustration of different combinations of the family's interaction did not usually add a great deal to the argument. Some responses were often narrative in tone, but there were also answers which showed very good understanding of the text and ability to compare and evaluate.

FRENCH

Paper 8682/43

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Giraudoux: *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*

(a) Ulysse arrived in Act 2, scene 12 'pour une conversation diplomatique', knowing that the 'Troyens' were thought to be 'moins doués que nous pour le négoce'. He sought to establish whether Hélène had been 'respected'. He spoke at greater length in scene 13, including, 'Parce que nous avons été créés sensés, justes et courtois, nous nous parlons...', suggesting that he was indeed 'un homme de bonne volonté'. He accepted Hélène and pledged his sincerity to Hector. Some answers seen revealed little knowledge of Ulysses; others discussed his character at great length, but without mentioning whether he could be evaluated as 'un homme de bonne volonté'.

(b) 'Balanced' discussions were achieved by candidates who stated what they understood by 'une tragédie pacifiste' and who explored possible 'yes' and 'no' answers to the question, 'Is the play a pacifist tragedy?' Candidates seemed ready to give 'for and against' material about whether the play was a tragedy (or a comedy), but this material was not usually well 'transferred' to the question in hand. Answers were generally successful; there was some understanding of plot and characters. 'Une tragédie pacifiste' seemed a fitting description in that war was not (initially) waged 'belligerently'. An ultimatum was given, and the conditions were not met.

Question 7

Bazin: *Au nom du fils*

(a) Candidates found it difficult to comment on M. Astin's conduct in the light of the judgement – his interaction with his children, and the way in which they all 'got by' despite their emotional trials, and as M. Astin juggled his own emotional needs with his single parenting of his children. Candidates' strengths lay in explaining the family composition, but this did not begin to answer the question.

(b) Mamette, Madame Hombourg, M. Astin's mother-in-law, who lived 'au mair' (until her death towards the end of the book after a long decline) opposite him, 'au pair', played a major role in the novel as she did in her family members' lives, hosting Sunday lunches and much more, so there was a lot of material that could have been drawn from. Memorably, it was she who commented in chapter 5 that it was Bruno whom M. Astin 'saved' from the water first – a significant point in their troubled relationship. Unfortunately candidates sometimes confused Mamette with other characters, most often Laure, producing a character study and evaluation of a role played, but which was not relevant to this question.

Question 8

Joffo: *Un sac de billes*

(a) This question was chosen by just over half of candidates answering on this text, and there were a number of very competent answers. Père Joffo, the curate(s), the priest and the doctor all figured regularly in answers. Rather less frequently used were Zérati and the Mancelier family. Although in theory candidates could have provided a full answer on a single character, in the event, more thorough discussion was provided by candidates who developed their discussion in relation to a number of different people from the novel. A few candidates chose to include characters who were memorable for their prejudice or cruelty, such as M. Boulier and the SS officer who interviewed Ferdinand in the Hôtel Excelsior, thus providing some contrast and source of comparison.

(b) This question was answered with the same enthusiasm as **(a)**. Some good answers covered love from the parents, love of each other within the family and unexpected love and assistance from strangers. The more of the latter the better since lengthy illustration of different combinations of the family's interaction did not usually add a great deal to the argument. Some responses were often narrative in tone, but there were also answers which showed very good understanding of the text and ability to compare and evaluate.