

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. More than one question per section is required for candidates to qualify for full marks and examiners should be prepared to prompt candidates for several questions to enable them to have access to the full range of marks.
- In the Topic Conversation do not go back over questions already answered or material already covered in the Topic Presentation.
- In the General Conversation do not return to the topic of the Topic Presentation.
- Cover a range of topics in the General Conversation, some in depth, vary questions and topics from one candidate to another, be prepared to identify and follow the interests and passions of the candidate (not your own), and keep your own contributions to a minimum.
- Create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit a one-word or purely factual answer.

For candidates:

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

General comments

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

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

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

Administration

Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still a surprisingly high number of examples of faulty recording equipment and of the microphone favouring the examiner rather than the candidate. There were a number of cases where recorded material was unplayable or where the recording had not been transferred correctly or where the original recording was inaudible or blank or where the CD was damaged in transit or faulty. Examiners must check the equipment before using it and ensure that the microphone favours the candidate without losing the examiner's own contribution.

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

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

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

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

There were a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transcribing them to the MS1 – this should be checked carefully before submission and all paperwork enclosed with the recordings.

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

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

Format of the examination

There are 3 distinct parts to the speaking test:

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

In order to be fair to all candidates across the world, these timings should be observed – where examinations are too short, candidates are not given opportunities to show what they can do, and where conversations are over-extended, an element of fatigue creeps in and candidates 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, remained *L'Internet, La technologie, L'égalité des sexes, Les médias sociaux, Le sport, La famille, La cuisine française, L'environnement* and *La pollution*. There were a number of the usual favourites, such as drugs, unemployment, marriage, discrimination, racism and immigration, some dealing with culture or politics in a French-speaking country, as well as personal interests such as art or music. There were few topical presentations this session. 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 are advised to steer clear of very factual subjects – the mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and expand their chosen topic.

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

Topic Conversation (7 to 8 minutes)

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

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

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

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

General Conversation (8 to 9 minutes)

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

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

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

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

Assessment

Across the vast majority of the entry, moderation saw marks or adjusted by less than 10 per cent, although there were cases of adjustment of 10–25 per cent. The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where topics did not relate to a francophone country. A handful of examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness, Accuracy and Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.

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

Centres are reminded that they should normally engage only one examiner per syllabus if at all possible. 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.

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, as does the omission of essential ones.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) words or phrases unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not copy out the question as a preamble to their answer.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for parts **a** and **b** combined) is ignored.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

The paper was felt to be similar in overall level of difficulty to previous years, producing a good spread of marks and giving stronger candidates an opportunity to display their ability on a topic which was of relevance to them. There were, however, quite a number at the other end of the range whose level of linguistic competence was stretched to or beyond its limits by what was being asked of them.

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

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

The practice of copying out the question in **Questions 3 and 4** as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark: e.g. *Une année sabbatique peut-elle être bénéfique...* (**3b**) ; *Les parents d'Annette ont-ils réagi...* (**4b**) ; *Philippe a-t-il choisie...* (**4d**). 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 in recent sessions, with more 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' directly from the text, even if it includes 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, replacing a participle with a finite verb 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 candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic perhaps because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste valuable words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points, so, 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 well handled by candidates, even though some seemed to be picking vocabulary at random from the text, sometimes providing a sentence in place of a one-word stimulus. One suspected that some were picking words which bore some visual resemblance (*précis/pression; ressentent/recul*) but had no grammatical or semantic relationship to the prompt. Stronger candidates sensibly narrowed down the choice, even if one sometimes felt they did not know the word in question, for example realising that in **(a)**, **(b)** and **(e)** they were looking for an infinitive. Sadly, *l'étranger* is not an infinitive even though it ends in *-er* **(b)**, and *épuisement* and *absolument* are not third person plurals even if they share the *-ent* of *ressentent* in **(d)**. The omission of *faire* before *une pause* cost marks in **(a)** (see **General comments**). Item **(c)** was the most successfully identified.

Question 2

As usual the task proved quite demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures. Some appeared to think it an exercise in re-arranging the order of words – e.g. *On demande fait les choix doit les étudiants; Il faut qu'il un projet il doit y avoir.*

Item 2(a) required what appeared to be a very straightforward transformation into the passive but was not successfully handled by all, either because of difficulties with the past participle of *prendre* (*prendu, prenné*) or problems with its agreement. Unnecessary changing of the tense was also a problem.

Item 2(b) required knowledge of the structure following *demander*, which defeated many.

Item 2(c) was probably the most successfully handled reformulation here, but having negotiated the difficult bit, many had problems with the agreement of *apportée*.

Item 2(d) needed a subjunctive, which was spotted by a fair number. Sadly, it sometimes emerged as *aille* or *aie*, and very often the *y* disappeared in the process.

Item 2(e) regularly produced *se* and *soi* instead of *lui*. For some reason, more than a few decided to alter *ont* to *a* even though the subject remained the same.

Question 3

Item 3(a) A good number scored the first mark here by using *apprendre* (not *apprissage*), *étudier* or *perfectionner*, but fewer were able to express *travail bénévole* (*travailler sans paiement/remuneration/bénévolement* etc.). For the third mark, the idea of experience in the workplace was needed.

In **Item 3(b)** the idea of *prendre du recul* was often satisfactorily rendered by *reculer/se distancer/éloigner*, but fewer found alternatives to *se défaire* (*se libérer/débarrasser/oublier/échapper à*). *Epuisement* caused unexpected problems, with *rester* being regularly offered for *se reposer*, and *exhaustés* and *fatiguement* also appearing.

Item 3(c) The first mark was well handled by candidates who found straightforward ways of expressing *indécis* (*ne sait pas encore/n'a pas encore décidé/choisi...*). However, the idea of *un aperçu du monde au-delà du tableau noir* was sometimes used, to mean seeing the world in black or white – *penser que les choses sont complètement mal ou bien, pas entre les deux*.

Item 3(d) was best handled by replacing the nouns *découverte, élargissement, autonomie, capacité d'adaptation* by verbs: *découvrir, élargir* (not the prevalent *expandir*), *devenir plus indépendant/autonome, il apprend à/devient plus capable de ...*

Item 3(e) The first mark was scored by two contrasting adjectives (even simply *bons et mauvais*) but meaning was sometimes obscured by the use of *temps* for *moments*. *Confidence* and *confident* obscured things further for the second mark.

Question 4

Item 4(a) A good number of candidates scored the straightforward first mark here by a simple manipulation of the text to *ils s'afolent*. The remaining three marks were most efficiently scored by *ils refusent, ils ne comprennent pas, ils s'inquiètent*, but some produced unnecessarily complicated responses or suggested that it was the children who did not understand.

Item 4(b) Most candidates understood that the parents were worried but many did not suggest that the worries had been expressed to their daughter. The remaining two marks were scored by a large number.

Item 4(c) was again successfully handled by a good proportion of candidates who pointed out the possible difficulties of picking up one's studies after a gap year, but more than a few misunderstood Mme Lamotte's advice and suggested that it was a good idea to have a break between School and university, presumably not understanding the phrase *loin d'être*.

Item 4(d) saw some candidates seizing on the word *économies* and deciding that Philippe had decided to study Economics. Some interpreted *ne me convenait pas* as *inconvenient*, whilst others simply lifted *abandonnées* from the text without an auxiliary.

Item 4(e) A good number of candidates found sensible ways of expressing *ne pas faire très sérieux* but some went off at a tangent about earning money for future study, which was not what the second part of the question was asking.

Question 5

This Question asked the candidates to summarise the positive and negative aspects of sabbatical years and then to say where and how they would spend one.

Being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction. The word limit is becoming much better respected, but it is a pity to see candidates still wasting over 20% of the 150 words which they are allowed by starting with: *L'idée de l'année sabbatique est très controversiale. Le premier texte monte l'avantage de l'année sabbatique par décrire comment il y a beaucoup de moyens qu'on peut la passer. Quelques exemples sont: ...* However worthy, this scores no marks.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points of which most candidates scored 7 or 8, with some reaching an impressive 10. Others spent too long making and re-making a single point or on irrelevant material. A handful misunderstood the requirements of this exercise and gave their own opinion on the subject. The most commonly identified positives included the chance to travel/broaden horizons/learn a language/meet people; a break from academic pressures; a chance to define future plans. The most commonly identified negatives were the risk of demotivation/difficulty of picking things back up again and the dangers of being alone in a foreign country.

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

The **Personal Response** gave candidates the opportunity to come up with some interesting plans and projects of their own, which some of the stronger candidates did convincingly, providing they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Weaker candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and ventured little, resulting in some rather unambitious responses, but others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own. Some didn't read the question properly (*Vous avez décidé de prendre une année sabbatique ...*) and concentrated on saying why/whether they would or would not take a gap year rather than how/where they would spend it.

It is acceptable to offer the Personal Response (5 marks) before the Summary, but it does not make sense to do so if the candidate is going to run out of words available for the Summary (10 marks).

Quality of language

The quality of language varied from the excellent to the very poor. The very weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs (even regular ones) as usual being far the most common sources of error and basic agreements of adjectives were routinely ignored by some.

There was sometimes a phonetic approach to spelling, even with very common words e.g. *ède (aide); ôtre (autre); ganier (gagner); commême (quand même); aproupaux (à propos)*.

New words were coined: *la découverte; l'oublissement; le croissement; la perdution; la capacitation*. Studying word groups might pay dividends here: *la découverte/découvrir; l'oubli/oublier; la perte/perdre; élargissement/élargir; le refus/refuser*.

English (and in some Centres, Spanish) hovered very closely beneath the surface: *remover; interrupter; la pressure; l'improvvement; acquisiter; le survivement; entendre; perdre; incluire*.

Constructions with certain common verbs as usual caused regular problems: *dermander; permettre; aider; encourager; empêcher; obliger; recommander*.

Comme and *comment* were often confused, as were *temps/fois/moments*.

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

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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- In **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 an appropriate test, comparable 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 stretched to its limits or beyond by what was being asked of them.

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

Stronger candidates certainly 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 material unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

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

The practice of copying out the question in **Questions 3 and 4** as a preamble to the answer is a waste of time for both candidate and marker, as well as potentially introducing linguistic errors which detract greatly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark: *Les e-cigarettes aident-elles les gens ... 3(c); La vapeur des e-cigarettes pose-t-elle moins de risques ... 4(a)*. Answers beginning with *parce que* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates are advised 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 in recent sessions, with more 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' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore

does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. 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, replacing participles with finite 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. Candidates should begin their answers by writing the prompt.

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 marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (perhaps because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste up to a third 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 or personal opinions.

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The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning, drafting and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This relatively straightforward first exercise was quite successfully negotiated by the majority, with a good number of candidates scoring well, even if there were perhaps fewer full marks than in some sessions. With the weakest candidates, answers appeared completely random, bearing no grammatical or semantic relationship to the given word in the question. If all else fails, looking for a present participle in line with *mettant* might have nudged candidates towards *attestant* or *souignant* (sadly not *autant*) for **(b)**, and a feminine past participle to replace *recommandée* might have suggested *conseillée* for **(d)**. *Manufacturiers (a)* and *désireux (e)* were the most commonly correct answers.

Question 2

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

Item 2(a) offered a simple first mark which was gratefully accepted by many, although some lost it by altering the tense or by using the definite article.

In **Item 2(b)** the past participle of *reproduire* was a common source of error, in addition to problems with making the agreement when transforming the sentence into the passive.

Item 2(c) required a subjunctive, which was problematic to many. Those who recognised the need sometimes spoiled things by writing *soient* rather than *aient*.

Item 2(d) again suffered from the lack of agreement on *signée* or an unnecessary change of tense.

Item 2(e) the transformation to indirect speech required an ability to manipulate the disjunctive pronoun to *eux* and the possessive adjective to *leurs*, for which many candidates offered *leur* or *ses*.

Question 3

The first part of **Item 3(a)** was successfully handled by many, but some focused on defining *vapoter* rather than on explaining its etymology. Numerous others jumped to the third paragraph for the second mark in search of evidence of its popularity rather than finding the answer in the first paragraph as indicated.

Item 3(b) was easily answered by replacing the nouns *augmentation*, *interdiction* and *publication* by the verbs *augmenter*, *interdire* and *publier*, thereby avoiding 'lifting'. *Places* was regularly offered instead of *lieux* or *endroits*, and a combination of *avertissements* and *publication(s)* led a good number to believe that advertisements and publicity were what was meant here.

Item 3(c) saw the invention of a new verb *supprimer* and a misreading of *simulation* as *stimulation*. Some went too far in suggesting that e-cigarettes eliminated rather than reduced the desire to smoke, others in affirming that they contain no nicotine

Item 3(d) saw a good number of candidates using the verb *respirer*. *Tousser* appeared less well known, leading to vague statements about 'improved health' being offered unsuccessfully for the second mark.

Item 3(e) suffered from a good deal of easily avoidable 'lifting' of *absence de conséquences nocives*. Candidates were generally successful, however, in indicating the irrelevance of the length of time or the concentration for the second mark.

Item 3(f) A significant number focused on what the 100 French doctors were advising their patients to do, rather than on what they think the government should do. However, many salvaged the second mark with the idea of promoting e-cigarettes.

Question 4

Item 4(a) A good many candidates went too far in asserting that the vapour contains no poisonous substances at all, only to contradict themselves by saying that those which it does contain are at lower levels. *Maladies mortelles* and *niveaux inférieurs* were often avoidable 'lifts' here.

Item 4(b) Some did not draw their answers to the first part from the second paragraph, as indicated – or indeed from anywhere else in the text. The second element required candidates to indicate that it was not just/only water vapour. The third element saw much unnecessary lifting of *niveau élevé*.

Item 4(c) The first part asked what *l'OMS conseille aux autorités de faire*, indicating the need for verbs in the answer. For the third mark, a good proportion managed to suggest that *le vapotage passif* involved inhaling the vapour from someone else's e-cigarette.

Item 4(d) The first mark required candidates to say that e-cigarettes are less dangerous in the case of existing smokers. Some went too far for the second mark, suggesting that it enabled smokers to stop smoking completely, rather than simply reducing their tobacco consumption – *consommer moins de tabac* was an obvious way to avoid lifting *réduire leur consommation de tabac* here. The remaining two marks required the suggestion that e-cigarettes could actually create nicotine dependence in young people who would then move on to tobacco. *Une porte d'entrée à l'addiction* and *le passage par la suite au tabac* were commonly lifted here. The meaning of *passage* in this context was often misunderstood.

Item 4(e) Many fell back on lifting *réduction*, *comportements fumeurs* and *banalisation*, which could have been simply enough avoided by the use of verbs. *La banalisation* was sometimes understood as *banning*.

Question 5

This Question asked the candidates to summarise the benefits and dangers of e-cigarettes and then to give their own views on the reasons why young people start smoking.

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.

Some candidates wasted words by including irrelevant material (e.g. the banning of sales to minors or of smoking in public buildings, the description of how an e-cigarette functions) or by including unnecessary names or organisations (e.g. *selon le docteur Paul Garnier/d'après l'Organisation mondiale de la santé*). Other tended to make one or two points at the start and then re-make them several times.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which around 5–7 were identified by most. It was not uncommon for the weakest candidates to double their marks scored on the rest of the paper here by judicious selection from the text: The most commonly identified benefits were the help in reducing or stopping tobacco consumption, reduction of craving, improvement in breathing/less coughing, fewer toxic substances and health risks. On the negative side, the points most frequently made included the risk of creating nicotine addiction which could then lead on to tobacco consumption, the lack of certainty about what the vapour actually contained, and the risks of *le vapotage passif*.

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

The **Personal Response** gives candidates the chance to express their feelings on a specific topic, which most candidates did convincingly, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. The question here perhaps did not lend itself to a great deal of originality, but peer pressure and the wish to appear 'cool' or mature, fashion, bad examples being set by parents and celebrities, the desire for experimentation or to experience new sensations, a need to rebel by doing what they are told not to, the relief of stress caused by family problems and school work were all commonly offered as reasons for young people starting smoking.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. The strongest displayed a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a generally robust control of structure. The very weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs as usual being far the most common sources of error. Some had problems with conjugating basic verbs such as *faire*, *vouloir*, *pouvoir*, *permettre*, *interdire*, *réduire*, *produire*, *défendre*. Incorrect verb forms and agreements occurred very often, and the use of the infinitive (-er) ending – or indeed anything else that sounded similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-é). Basic agreements of adjectives and plurals too were simply routinely ignored by many.

The approach to spelling was sometimes phonetic. *Ce/se/ceux* were used interchangeably in some scripts, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça* (*sa peux aidé*), *ses/ces* and *c'est* (*c'est choses on était trouvé*), *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont*.

There was evidence of confusion over the formation of plurals: in some cases, nouns and adjectives had *-ent* added to them to form a plural, whereas the plural of *il fume* still appears as *ils fumes*. *Unes conclusions* also featured.

Anglicised verbs were much in evidence: *réproducer*, *réducter*, *publiquer*, *prohibir*, *concluser*, *prevenir*, *avertisser*, *combuster*, *damager*, *restricter*, *simulater*, *basser*. Time spent in studying vocabulary in lexical groups (i.e. nouns and their related verbs) might prove very useful.

Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll: *permettre*, *aider*, *laisser*, *encourager*, *dissuader*, *essayer*, *empêcher*, *apprendre*. The difference between *leur*, *leurs* and *ses*, and *qui* and *ce qui* was not appreciated by a large number. Other common sources of error included distinguishing between *baisse* and *basse*; *mieux* and *meilleur*; *une place* and *un endroit/lieu*. Incomplete negatives (missing *ne*)

caused confusion, as did the common use of *par* + an infinitive/present participle instead of *en* + a present participle

That said, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the best candidates wrote idiomatic and fluent (if not always very accurate) French which made very good reading.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. Additional or missing words invalidate the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not 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 an appropriate test, comparable 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 stretched to its limits or beyond by what was being asked of them.

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

Stronger candidates certainly 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 'lifted' material unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

Most candidates managed to attempt all questions although a few of the weaker ones wrote rather short summaries and personal responses. Quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unduly lengthy, however, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. Some candidates still neglect the straightforward answer and tend to over-complicate things.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates would be well advised 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.

The practice of copying out the question in **Questions 3 and 4** as a preamble to the answer is not required. Indeed, this practice has the potential to introduce linguistic errors which will detract from the Quality of Language mark: e.g. *Qu'est-ce qu'il vaudrait mieux faire est de ...* 3(c) *Les ... vents ont-ils causé des dégâts...* 4(b). Answers beginning with *parce que* or *en* are usually preferable.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished in recent sessions, with more candidates understanding how to 'work' the text to avoid it, but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply 'lifting' items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore

does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. 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, replacing participles with finite 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.

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

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 marked improvement in this respect in recent sessions, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that too many good answers to the Personal Response cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (perhaps because of different practices in other subjects), but it is easy to waste up to a third 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 or personal opinions.

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, drafting and editing their material with the word limit in mind.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was completed quite successfully by a good proportion of candidates, although some of the weaker ones appeared to be choosing words largely at random with little or no grammatical or semantic connection to the word in the question. *Enregistrements* and *records* were, for example, curious choices to replace *note* in (a). There was some evidence of candidates who were unsure of the specific meaning of words sensibly narrowing down the choice by looking for a grammatical match – e.g. a plural noun to replace *périodes de grande chaleur* (d), or a third person plural verb in the present tense to replace *attribuent* (c) or *ont lieu* (e). Sadly, this did not work for those candidates who tried to use *fortement*, *uniquement*, *réchauffement*, *changement* or *dépassement* to replace third person plural verbs in the present tense, presumably on the grounds that they end in *-ent*. The inclusion of *dans le monde* after *partout* as the answer to (b) would have given *partout dans le monde dans le monde*. There was a similar problem for those who inserted an extra *qui* before *se produisent* as the answer to (e). On the other hand, omitting the *se* before *produisent* invalidated the answer.

Question 2

- (a) This was a relatively straightforward transformation into reported speech, well handled by those who avoided *faisont* or *font*, or altering the tense unnecessarily.
- (b) This required a transformation into the passive, the need to make the past participle agree being missed by some and others altering the tense unnecessarily again. *La plus chaude année* invalidated the response.
- (c) Stronger candidates recognised the need for a subjunctive, but sometimes spoiled things by writing *sois* or with ... *n'estiment pas que le projet soit impossible*.
- (d) A number realised the need for a *ne... que* construction here, but others reversed the sense of the original sentence by writing *Les canicules ne sont pas (seulement) des variations naturelles*.
- (e) This required candidates to rephrase the sentence in the active, but many left the feminine plural agreement on *obligées*. The need to make the necessary change from *à* to *de* defeated most.

Question 3

- (a) This offered four reasonably straightforward opening marks to those candidates who realised that the questions asked *que s'est-il passé* and therefore required the use of verbs as answers.
- (b) This offered a further four marks, the first two of which were most easily scored by short phrases such as *les actions de l'homme* and *la fin du monde*. The remaining two required a somewhat lengthier response: *Ces phénomènes se produisent naturellement et n'ont pas de conséquences graves*, or similar.
- (c) The questions ask what governments are/should be trying to do, again suggesting the need for verbs as answers. Some answers to the first part were insufficiently precise about the scale of the reduction.
- (d) This was generally well handled by those who found phrases such as *Elles ont été ruinées. Elles ont perdu leur moyen de gagner leur vie. Elles ont dû déménager*. Others who invented nouns such as *la détruite* were less successful.
- (e) Many correctly identified the threat posed by the rise in sea level, avoiding lifting *élévation* by using another noun (*hausse/augmentation du niveau*) or a verb (*le niveau s'est élevé*). Manipulation of *inondation ... régions littorales* to *des côtes/régions maritimes/au bord de la mer pourraient être inondées/submergées* or similar enabled candidates to avoid lifting and therefore to score the second mark.

Question 4

- (a) There was a good deal of lifting of *le réchauffement climatique ... plus rapide* which could have been easily enough avoided by *Le climat se réchauffe/devient plus chaud plus rapidement* or similar. The records which were beaten were generally well identified.
- (b) The most straightforward way of indicating the four consequences of extreme weather without simply lifting from the text was again by using verbs: *ils ont déraciné des arbres, ont démoli des toits, ont emporté des voitures et ont détruit des champs de blé/cultures*.
- (c) *Il n'a pas gelé et il n'a pas neigé* earned both marks for those who were content to do the simple thing efficiently. *L'hiver n'est jamais arrivé* was based on a misunderstanding of *ce qui n'était jamais arrivé*.
- (d) *Arranger* in this context was widely misunderstood: *les skieurs n'ont pas pu arrangé leurs jours de ski*. Some went too far in saying that all ski resorts would have to close for lack of snow. Elsewhere, there was clearly a similar misunderstanding of the problem: *les skieurs ne peuvent pas faire du ski à cause d'une menace de neige*.

- (e) Candidates often found it reasonably straightforward to point to the fact that it had been too wet and warm in general for farmers but fewer pointed to the fact that this had allowed *les ravageurs* to flourish, with harmful consequences for plants and crops.

Question 5

This question asked the candidates to summarise climate trends this century and their impact on the planet in general as well as on France in 2014 in particular: They were then asked to suggest ways in which their own families could reduce their energy consumption.

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Some weaker candidates double their marks for the whole paper by judicious selection from the texts here. Not all candidates seemed aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 150 words is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being available for part (b).

Being concise is therefore part of the task. Candidates need to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information without a general introduction which will score no marks. The word must be observed and candidates need to make the points as succinctly as possible. 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 or personal opinions.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points up to a maximum of 10, which was achieved by number of the stronger candidates. The most commonly identified trends and impacts were the rise in temperature, extreme weather conditions and their effects, the rise in sea level, the lack of cold, populations losing their means of existence and being forced to move.

The **Personal Response** gives candidates the chance to express their own ideas on a specific topic, which some candidates did with imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Weaker candidates tended to seek refuge in the text and ventured relatively little, resulting in some unambitious and derivative responses. Others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own.

Quality of Language

The Quality of Language varied from excellent to weak. There were some very polished scripts at the top end, but the very weakest found it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form, with verbs being the most common sources of error, even with *faire, vouloir* or *pouvoir*. For weaker responses, endings of verbs by no means always related to their subjects, and basic agreements of adjectives and plurals were routinely ignored. Candidates are encouraged to check their work thoroughly for such avoidable errors.

The plural of *il estime* was sometimes thought to be *ils estimes*, and *les gouvernements veuls* also appeared. The plural of *le vent violent* on the other hand was occasionally given as *les vents violentent*.

The approach to spelling (and indeed grammar) was sometimes phonetic: *enfet, une ausse ce/se/ceux* were apparently interchangeable in some scripts, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça*, *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont*.

New verbs were created, often with significant interference from English: *destrucster/destruire, damager, inondater, reducer, démoliter, protéger*. For this paper in particular, studying words in lexical groups (particularly nouns and their respective verbs) might be time well spent: *destruction/détruire; réduction/réduire; démolition/démolir; disparition/disparaître; protection/protéger*.

Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll: *permettre, aider, encourager, dissuader, empêcher, laisser, apprendre, permettre*. The difference between *leur, leurs* and *ses* was rarely well understood or applied in responses.

That said, the linguistic competence of a good proportion of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions with a fair degree of effectiveness, whilst the very best candidates wrote idiomatic, fluent and accurate French.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/31
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well on this paper, candidates need to choose an essay title with which they feel comfortable and write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated and coherently structured. They should aim to use accurate French of a suitably advanced nature, showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary, as well as some evidence of complexity in sentence patterns. Candidates need to plan essays carefully, using the introduction to show their understanding of the question and write a logical and coherent argument, arriving at a balanced conclusion where they show their considered judgment of the issues they have discussed.

General comments

Many candidates clearly engaged with their chosen topic and wrote essays that showed understanding of the issues and contained a range of pertinent points, supported by topic-specific vocabulary and sound grammar. However, a large number of scripts did not consider the precise wording of the question, leading to generalisations and largely irrelevant answers. Candidates should also consider the structure of their essay and the need to present their arguments logically, using a range of link words to provide clarity in the progression of their ideas. The conclusion in many instances merely stated what had been included before, often in the introduction.

Quality of language

Although the quality of the language varied considerably, a good number of essays demonstrated a fair level of accuracy and some variation in the choice of vocabulary and complex structures, thus enabling candidates to communicate their ideas effectively. There was a measure of inconsistency in adjectival and subject-verb agreements, and difficulties were much in evidence with the use of irregular verbs and prepositions. Some scripts displayed a poor command of basic linguistic structures and appropriate register, with persistent errors in verb forms, agreements and the spelling of common words with the result that communication was impeded by the candidates' use of language. There was at times a considerable degree of interference from English and in some cases Spanish.

Common errors included:

Incorrect gender/spelling: problème, manque, environnement, gouvernement, effet, faune.

Use of *le numéro* for *le nombre*.

Use of *faire* instead of *rendre*.

Frequent incorrect use of *transportation* for *transport*.

Incorrect sequence of tenses after *si*, a key structure in question 3.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause de*, *grâce à* for *à cause de*.

Use of the wrong preposition after common verbs.

Use of *aussi* for *non plus*.

Nouns used without articles.

Use of accents, including in words included in the essay titles: génération, société, protéger, médias.

Lack of punctuation.

Overuse of *chose/choses*.

Inappropriate use of *personnes/ gens* (e.g. *certain gens*).

Inappropriate register: *tu* instead of *vous*; *trucs*.

Confusion between: *ces/ses/c'est*; *ça/sa*; *son/sont*; *ce/ceux*.

Confusion between *par/pour*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question struck a chord with a large number of candidates. It was by far the most popular question and it was clear that candidates held strong views on the subject. Unfortunately a substantial number of candidates wrote more generally about the problems faced by the young generation and did not target the essay question. Many essays were superficial and some pieces did not move far beyond stating a lack of understanding, with little exemplification. There were, however, mature answers where candidates offered a balanced response, considering the many reasons why adults and society as a whole may not appreciate the young generation, such as a perceived lack of social skills due to a disproportionate time spent on new technologies; the negative image conveyed at times by the media, with reports of drug and alcohol abuse and general excesses; the sense of threat or unease felt by some adults because of the way some young people dress, or their tastes in music amongst others. Some made references to young people who have been recognised by society, such as Malala, and the recognition gained by many for their voluntary work within their communities, or for a range of causes; many also stressed the creativity of the young generation particularly in the field of new technologies and the arts. The general feeling among many candidates was certainly that their efforts and contributions go largely unrecognised.

Question 2

This question was not widely chosen, and only a minority of candidates paid heed to the wording of the essay question, which asked them to consider the extent to which the media behave responsibly. Many candidates used this as an opportunity to list the problems linked to the use of social media, giving examples of irresponsible behaviours on the internet. There were some good answers which understood the implications of the question and considered the impact of the media on public opinion, and the need for impartial information. Invasion of privacy was frequently quoted as an example of irresponsible behaviour, with a great many examples involving celebrities. Many also referred to the negative influence of the media on young people, and girls in particular, with the increase in mental health issues and eating disorders amongst young people.

Question 3

This question was a popular choice. Candidates who chose this question clearly felt strongly about the changes they wanted to bring about, but many essays were limited in scope, merely focusing on one or two key ideas. Some tended to be superficial, with reforms frequently limiting themselves to starting school later and setting less homework. Better scripts backed their suggestions with research into young people's natural body clock and why they would work better at different times of the day, and presented strong arguments for reduced homework time in favour of a broader education including more sport, music and time to pursue individual talents. A few candidates fully developed their answers, explaining the shortcomings of the current system in their country and the benefits of the changes they would introduce. A wider choice of languages on offer, free education, a more personalised curriculum, fewer examinations and the use of new technologies in the classroom were amongst the most popular reforms, but often candidates were not sufficiently in control of the language to communicate their ideas. There was considerable difficulty in particular with the sequence of tenses required after *si* and a number of candidates were not confident using the imperfect and conditional tenses despite the pattern being presented in the question.

Question 4

This was the second most popular of the five questions set. Candidates who chose this question were obviously passionate and knowledgeable about new technologies. They tended to see the benefits more than the drawbacks, but many demonstrated some ability to develop a logical and balanced argument. Essays for this question tended to be more successful in terms of paragraphing and many candidates were able to include a number of points, with a good level of exemplification. Weaker scripts tended to be somewhat repetitive, and at times only considered the benefits, or disadvantages. Some answers narrowly focused on the internet, with nonetheless a fair range of points, both negative and positive whilst a number of candidates were able to consider the wider implications and included such aspects as space exploration, transport, farming and the food industry, new technologies at home and of course in the medical field.

Question 5

This was the least popular question and candidates often used this as an opportunity to rehearse what they had prepared on environmental problems and their solutions, without making specific references to the flora

and fauna, leading to generalisations and at times irrelevant answers. *Faune* was also frequently misspelt, despite being given in the essay title. Some essays offered well-informed and considered solutions both at local and international levels, including legislation, education, government involvement to fight poaching and deforestation and protect endangered species, although most would have benefited from specific references and greater exemplifications.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/32
Essay

Key messages

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

General comments

There was a wide range of ability demonstrated from the very poor to the very good. The candidates' work was generally clearly presented although there were some examples of very poor handwriting and scripts where significant numbers of revisions had been made in the text of the essay which can severely hinder the examiner in following an argument. In some cases it was clear that candidates had a poor command of linguistic structures and appropriate vocabulary and register. Their answers were naively expressed in very simple and often inaccurate language and often avoided the question set, concentrating instead on the overall topic heading. On occasion, they used a quite inappropriate register, referring to the examiner as *tu*. Candidates that did not target their essays fully on the question set inevitably did less well since their answers contained much unfocused material. More able candidates planned their essays carefully, defined the terms of the question in their introduction, wrote a coherent and convincing argument, and arrived at a balanced conclusion. They used a range of structures and idioms and argued their case successfully. Essays that were superficial in tone as well as lacking clear development or exemplification of points were much less effective and scored lower.

Common errors included:

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *effet, probleme, manque, travail, pays, environnement, développement, gouvernement, monde, phénomène, ennemi, chômage, aspect*.

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

Use of *le taux* for *le nombre* and *le/la media* for *les medias*.

Use of *parce que* instead of *à cause* and *tous que* instead of *tout ce que*.

Random and inappropriate use of words and phrases to link paragraphs such as *néanmoins* (usually wrongly spelled), *pourtant, toutefois*.

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

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* and *chômage*, and examples of candidates using one type of accent for all occurrences.

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

Agreement of past participle in phrases such as *elles ont regardees*.

Use of *de/des* after *plusieurs*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the fourth most popular question and it generated some interesting answers across the range of ability. Most candidates could see the benefit of dreams and aspirations for the young. They were able to point out that the future belongs to the young and that their ideas are invaluable in creating a new and dynamic world. It was clear to candidates that young people should be allowed time to dream before the realities of the adult world take over. They felt that dreams can lead to progress and change. They were also keen to point out that unrealistic aspirations (in terms of examination success, sporting prowess or improvement in social standing) either generated by young people themselves or their families, teachers or society, can lead to depression and misery. The answers were wide ranging and each candidate managed to answer the question according to their level of ability.

Question 2

This was the second most popular of the questions. Answers were wide ranging, with most candidates having a reasonable number of points to make. Most candidates attempted a definition of what they understood by media in their introduction. Some referred to TV, newspapers, advertising and the internet, some just to the internet. All were clear that we are significantly influenced by the media. Some effects of that influence were described as concerns about body image among young people leading to anorexia and bulimia, the support networks for terrorism on the internet leading to a growth in radicalisation and online bullying and fraud. Candidates felt that we should all be aware of the potential problems linked to our dependence on the media and had relevant points to make. Many candidates were able to enlarge the discussion to take in the benefits of freedom of expression, availability of information and the ability to share in global experiences.

Question 3

This was the most popular question. Answers ranged from some which were very superficial to some which were mature and well developed. Candidates took many different approaches to the question and most had a lot say about bad behaviour in class from disaffected students. The negative attitudes of students were attributed by many to changes in society and the education system. It was generally held that parents and schools were less disciplinarian nowadays and the education system is too geared to success in examinations. It was felt that students often did not have a curriculum that suited them or good teachers so they lost interest in studying. Better candidates pointed out that young people's attitudes towards education are rarely negative in countries where education is a means of moving out of poverty and having a solid future. They also made it clear that there are many students in developed countries such as the UK and France who do value their education, work hard and achieve success as a result. Candidates were clear that young people should recognise the importance of education and they expressed their ideas on the subject according to their ability.

Question 4

This was the third popular question. Many candidates wrote an essay on *innovations technologiques*, without making much reference to health and safety. Those who did discuss the health aspect, referred to the benefits in medical research brought about by new technology as a positive and the effects on health from prolonged exposure to computers, TV and smartphones as a negative. Most candidates recognised the importance of technology for science and communication but they expressed doubts about the impact of the internet, in particular, on personal safety. They referred to internet fraud, cyberbullying and identity substitution as real dangers. Others, in a counterargument, referred to security being improved by the use of surveillance cameras, another aspect of new technology. Candidates who talked about the effects of technology on both health and safety in all forms were awarded higher marks while those who only talked about technology in broad terms did less well.

Question 5

This was the least popular question. Many candidates made little attempt to answer the question as set, preferring instead to write generally about environmental issues. They went into great detail about the problems prevalent in the world including CO₂ emissions, the hole in the ozone layer and the exhaustion of traditional fossil fuels. They mostly described the situation without envisaging how we might preserve our current energy resources. More able candidates tried to imagine how individuals and governments might act to enable more efficient management of what we have left in the way of resources. There were some suggestions of better and more widespread development of alternative forms of energy such as that created by wind, sun and waves. Overall the question was not well answered.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/33
Essay

Key messages

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

General comments

In this paper, candidates are given a choice of 5 questions and are awarded up to 24 marks for quality of language and up to 16 for content. It was clear that most candidates understood the rubric and wrote essays of approximately the right length. Planning is clearly an important first step in writing a good discursive essay. Most of the candidates did attempt a plan but it was often short, in list form and rather superficial. It is clear that those candidates who defined the terms of the question carefully in their own mind and organised the material into some kind of order before writing generally gained higher marks for content. An essay that considers the parameters of the question and is then logically constructed will be highly rewarded in its content mark. It is particularly important that essays should not merely relate to the general overarching topic area paying little regard to relevance to the question set. There was a wide range of ability in this cohort with some candidates demonstrating little grammatical, structural or idiomatic awareness while others used a range of structures and appropriate vocabulary, did not over-reach themselves and managed to express their ideas in accurate, ambitious yet succinct and persuasive language.

Examples of good use of language include:

Appropriate use of linking words/phrases such as *d'après ce qui précède, ainsi, puisque, cependant, pourtant, d'abord, d'ailleurs, en outre, ensuite, néanmoins, d'autre part, en revanche.*

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive. Use of a range of verbs such as *accompagné de, reposer sur, promouvoir, justifier, cesser de.*

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read a range of media on subjects as diverse as social work, education and the health risks attached to abuse of technological devices.

Correct use of idioms such as *en ce qui concerne, il convient de, en d'autres mots, venons-en à, au revers de la médaille, il est généralement admis que, c'est un fait bien connu.*

Common errors:

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *démarche, mode de vie, manque, travail, environnement, développement, gouvernement, monde, rôle, exemple, avis, phénomène, deuxièmement, problème, aspect, service, public, loi.*

Use of *beaucoup des* with plural noun.

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

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

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

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

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*.

Use of *faire* for *render*.

Agreement of the past participle e.g. *ils ont organisés*

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

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the fourth most popular question. It provoked a range of responses. Some candidates understood the importance of devoting time and energy to helping out in one's local community. They recognised the benefits for young people in stepping out of their world of technology and school work in order to enlarge their experience of the world. They were keen to show the positive effect this could have on the social development of those involved. Examples were given of young people volunteering to help old people, being involved in community projects clearing waste ground or picking up litter. They saw the advantages in terms of maturity, development of concern for others and for the world in general. Candidates did point out, however, that young people often did not have the time to be involved in community work because of their concerns about the potential impact on their marks at school. Some candidates also pointed out that young people are often lazy and unwilling to make the effort required. The question was generally handled well by those who tackled it.

Question 2

This was the most popular question and was attempted by a large number of candidates. Answers ranged from the very superficial to the mature and thoughtful. Television was seen to be a mixed blessing by most, providing information and entertainment but also often becoming an addiction. Candidates were very keen to show the detrimental effects of the television on the health of those watching it every day for long periods. They referred to obesity, heart disease and diabetes as possible results of inactivity. It was clear though that most candidates felt that television was great invention that had transformed our world. The ready access to live news, sport and entertainment was felt to be a norm today that is essential to everyday life. Good candidates put forward balanced answers describing both benefits and disadvantages of television, less able candidates made sweeping generalisations and often listed and described individual TV programmes that they enjoyed.

Question 3

This was the third most popular question. Candidates generally understood the requirements of the question and were able to show the distinction between education in school and out of school. They referred to formal and social education. The former allowed students to pass exams and gain qualifications which would help them in their careers, the latter gave them the chance to learn about the world, society and other people. In general, candidates felt that balance was required in order for young people to grow into well-developed individuals ready to cope with the challenges of life. Some felt that school was also a place to learn about social development as students have to live and work closely together. Others felt that school work was often no preparation for the real world and that there should be emphasis put on practical subjects at school. Candidates had plenty to say and those that presented a range of examples in a coherent form received good marks.

Question 4

This was the second most popular question. There was a general feeling that all forms of technological innovation were an essential part of everyday life and that there was no way in which that would change. Candidates weighed up the benefits and the pitfalls of a reliance on technology among young people. Risks were seen to be cyberbullying, identity fraud, health and social problems and addiction. Young people were seen to be at particular risk as they are less careful and more likely to lay themselves open to abuse on line because of the amount of personal information they give. It was also felt that the new generation was quite severely at risk of suffering health problems in the long term directly related to their overuse of technology. There were some good answers which focused clearly on the question and balanced out the benefits and risks for young people. All candidates had strong views and expressed their opinions to the best of their ability.

Question 5

This was by far the least popular question and was attempted by few candidates. Often candidates were unclear about the meaning of *planification* and therefore chose to ignore it in their answers. Many answers appeared to be merely an assembly of facts about the environment with little or no attempt to link them to the question. Candidates who spoke about towns that were constructed to favour public transport and cycle routes and who mentioned clean air policies, recycling and buildings built to a green plan with solar panels and other alternative energy sources were highly rewarded for their answers.