

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.
- cover a range of topics in the General Conversation, some in depth, vary questions and topics from one candidate to another, be prepared to identify and follow the interests and passions of the candidate (not your own), and keep your own contributions to a minimum.
- create as natural a conversation as possible, interact with the candidate and avoid lists of pre-prepared questions, especially those which elicit a one-word or purely factual answer.

For candidates:

- make sure that the presentation is not just factual, but contains ideas and opinions and also allows further discussion in the Topic Conversation.
- ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections and make every effort to ask more than one question on the topic or topics under discussion in order to be awarded maximum marks.
- Remember that the Topic Presentation must make clear reference to a francophone culture or society: *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 ideas and opinions. Examiners should see their role as providing and facilitating this opportunity.

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

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

Administration

Recordings this year were mainly clear, though there are still examples of faulty recording equipment and of the microphone favouring the Examiner rather than the candidate. There were a number of cases where recorded material was unplayable or where the recording had not been transferred correctly or where the original recording was inaudible 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.

Most Centres now send their recordings on CD. However, it must be underlined that memory sticks are not acceptable.

A number of recordings presented problems because of the recording format chosen. Where Centres use digital recording software, each candidate's file must be saved individually, as .mp3, and finalised correctly, so that each candidate's examination can be accessed for moderation. Files should be identified using precise candidate details rather than just "number 1, 2" etc.

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

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

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

There were a number of clerical errors, either in the addition of marks or in transcribing them to the MS1 - 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.

Several Centres awarded marks out of 10 for *Providing and/or Seeking Opinions*, when the maximum is 5.

Centres are reminded that for moderation, in addition to the recordings, they need to send the Working Mark Sheet, the MS1 (computer mark sheet or equivalent), 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 *Le Sport*, *Le Conflit des Générations*, *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 would be well advised to steer clear of very factual subjects – the mark scheme criteria for the *Content/Presentation* element makes it clear that in order to score well, the presentation should contain not just factual points, but ideas and opinions. Candidates need to think carefully before making their final choice and consider whether it will be possible to develop and expand their chosen topic.

Candidates only present ONE topic and the Topic Conversation which follows will seek to develop that same topic. A few candidates presented two topics instead of one as prescribed in the Syllabus.

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.

At one Centre, the Topic Conversation was omitted completely.

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?”), 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 either not adjusted at all or adjusted by less than 10%, although there were a few cases of adjustment of 10-20%. The greatest causes of difference were where marks had been awarded for asking questions where none had actually been asked or where topics did not relate to a francophone country. A handful of Examiners also found it difficult to establish an acceptable level for *Comprehension/Responsiveness*, *Accuracy* and *Feel for the Language*, while others found it tricky to differentiate between the bands for *Pronunciation/Intonation*.

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

Centres are reminded that, except in extenuating circumstances, they should engage only one Examiner per syllabus, regardless of the size of the entry. In cases where the engagement of two or more Examiners on the same syllabus is unavoidable, the Examiners must co-ordinate with each other to establish an agreed standard. Otherwise, Moderation is extremely difficult. **All** Centres are asked to advise CIE, using form NOE, about the Examiners they intend to employ (by 1st April for the June session and 1st October for the November session).

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

In Centres with a number of candidates, Examiners were generally able to establish a logical rank order and appropriate marking pitch, 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 be advised not to begin the answer by re-working the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for **parts a** and **b** combined) is ignored. Candidates should be advised not to write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General Comments

The topic generally appeared to be one which was accessible to candidates.

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

Unfortunately many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. *Que s'est-il passé en 2007 est que ... (3a)* ; *Quelle est la liberté demandée par M. Chabert est que ... (4a)* ; *Pourquoi les mesures proposées lui semblent-elles exagérées est parce que ... (4b)*. 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' 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 or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

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

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to

find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.

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

In **Question 5**, candidates should 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 (no doubt 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: *Il y a beaucoup d'arguments pour et contre l'interdiction de fumer dans les lieux publics en plein air. Le premier texte présente les arguments pour l'interdiction et le deuxième texte présente les arguments contre. Selon le premier texte ...* However worthy, this sort of introduction merely wastes a quarter of available words 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, drafting and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of presentation and legibility.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

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

- In **(a)**, *graves* was sometimes offered for *mauvaise* - the fact that one is plural and one singular should have ruled this out, whatever the meaning. One assumed that *novices* was simply a misreading of *nocives*.
- In **(b)**, *contribuées* at least fitted grammatically with *attribuées* as a feminine plural past participle, but failed on grounds of meaning.
- In **(c)**, the omission of the reflexive pronoun (necessary to fit the 'footprint') was the most common mistake in **Question 1**.
- In **(d)**, the unnecessary inclusion *aux autres* would have resulted in *nuit aux autres aux autres* in the original text
- In **(e)**, *fermeture* and *droit* were unlikely substitutes for *obligatoire*.

Question 2

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

Item 2(a) required a straightforward transformation into the passive which was successfully undertaken by a fair number, but others changed the tense unnecessarily or forgot to adjust the agreement.

Item 2(b) saw relatively few candidates able to produce *Il est compliqué de ...*. Others didn't adjust the agreement to *compliqué* or made unnecessary changes to *ces* or *des mégots* or to *difficile*.

Item 2(c) was probably the most successfully handled item in **Question 2**, although some candidates did not realise the need for a present participle following *en* and offered *en l'interdiction* or unsuccessful attempts to paraphrase. Others produced *interdisant* or omitted *sur les plages*.

Item 2(d): the need for a subjunctive was spotted by a good number, even if some couldn't form it correctly, sometimes by inserting a curious *v*. It was a pity that others who had done the hard bit then forgot to do the easy bit with the agreement on *exposé(e)s*.

Item 2(e) offered many tolerated versions on a theme and a good proportion found one or other of them. Others came to grief with *un mégot faut* or *un mégot a besoin deux ans* or *pour se decompose*.

Question 3

Item 3(a): The question asked what happened (*que s'est-il passé*) therefore requiring a past tense in the answer: *on a interdit ...*; *le tabac a été interdit*; *on a voté une loi qui ...*, etc. Many took refuge unsuccessfully in lifting *Depuis 2007, il est défendu ...*. Three elements were required for the first mark: banning smoking / indoors / in places open to the public. *Places (publiques)* was very commonly offered incorrectly. The second mark required the element of outdoor spaces/places but was more successfully attempted, especially by those who expressed *la création* by using a verb: *elle veut créer ...*

Item 3(b) caused unexpected problems, perhaps because candidates were looking for complications which did not exist and consequently restricted the aims of the associations to collecting cigarette ends or otherwise straying into the territory of **3(c)**. On the other hand, those who simply wrote *Elles existent pour lutter contre le tabac et pour protéger les plages* scored both marks.

Item 3(c) was probably the most successfully handled, with large numbers of candidates scoring both marks, despite the frequent confusion of *maire/mairie/marie/mari*. Re-working *réaction* as a verb was the key to many of the successful answers here.

Item 3(d) required three measures that had already been taken, and most candidates identified at least some of them. Some did not really understand *panneaux publicitaires* or see how to avoid the very common lifting of *nettoyage quotidien*. *Fréquentées* was often thought to mean *frequently*, and *cendriers* occasionally mutated into *calendriers*. For the fourth mark, a minority thought incorrectly that the measures had been successful, sometimes because children were pressed-ganged into going round collecting the *mégots*.

Item 3(e) saw few candidates scoring both marks. Most managed to express (albeit sometimes clumsily) the concept of *tabagisme passif*, even if some thought that *le tabagisme* was a person or *quelqu'un qui allume votre cigarette*. But few showed that they had understood that *son voisin de serviette* referred to someone sitting/lying/next to you on a beach/towel. Many thought that *serviette* meant that the person was sitting next to you in a restaurant or someone working as a waitress, or that a towel soaked up nicotine. Others thought that smoke could seep through your walls from a neighbour's house.

Item 3(f) required for the first mark the mention of fines for restaurant/bar owners who allow smoking. Some thought it was the smoker who was fined or that owners forced their customers to smoke. *Fermeture forcée* was sometimes understood as imprisonment (sometimes for life) or forced labour. A significant number did not see the need to find a simple way of expressing *gagné ... espérance de vie* (e.g. *vivre plus longtemps*) or caused confusion by misreading *mois* as *moins*. *Amandes* were occasionally given out, and bold or curious assertions were made: *à New York le fumer n'existe plus.... La conséquence été très mauvaise car ça pourrait permettre les New-Yorkais de vivre un peu plus longtemps*.

Question 4

Item 4(a) Relatively few candidates understood or expressed M Chabert's rather jocular wish *qu'on nous laisse nous empoisonner en paix*, restricting themselves to *fumer en paix/en plein air*. Most candidates handled the second mark much more successfully by expressing *défense* as a verb.

Item 4(b) The acceptability of banning smoking in offices etc. was well identified by most candidates. The second mark (which needed the elements of the effects of passive smoking in the open air remaining unproven), and the third (which needed to make it clear that passive smokers inhale very little smoke in the open air) were subject to a fair amount of lifting straight from the text.

Item 4(c) The candidates who provided the best answers generally kept them short and simple for the first mark – e.g. *on peut faire ce qu'on veut* – rather than waxing philosophical – *personne n'a le droit d'être persécuté*. Relatively few managed to express *tant que* acceptably.

Item 4(d) asked for behaviours (i.e. actions/verbs). Many found *jouer de la musique/agacer les autres avec la musique* for the first mark. Some resorted to lifting *laissent leurs déchets*, but many found *jeter* or *abandonner* (not *quitter*) as acceptable alternatives. Confusion between *amener/emmener* or *apporter/emporter* led some candidates to suggest that it was anti-social to take your plastic bags away with you. The fourth point about the danger of excessive exposure to the sun was well identified by a majority.

Item 4(e) rewarded the large number who identified the fact that the beaches were not supervised for 12 hours a day, although some chose the wrong 12 hours. The second mark needed to indicate that more police presence/manpower would be needed.

Item 4(f) needed to suggest what could be done to improve the situation (e.g. making people more aware of their responsibilities and dissuading them) rather than simply banning or increasing police supervision. The easiest solution again was to express the nouns *responsibilisation* and *dissuasion* as verbs. A few stood things on their head with *décourager les gens de ne pas fumer*.

Question 5

This question asked the candidates to summarise the arguments for and against banning smoking in open-air public spaces and then to suggest measures designed to dissuade young people from 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.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which a good number of candidates managed perhaps 6–7, with the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the first two paragraphs of Text 1, hoping in vain to include some rewardable material. The most commonly identified arguments for the ban included the harmful effects of smoking not only on the smoker but on those around him/her, pollution of beaches, and the length of time it takes cigarette ends to decompose. The most frequent arguments against were the lack of proof of the effects of passive smoking in the open air, the attack on personal freedom and the fact that there are plenty of other anti-social behaviours which can take place on beaches.

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. Those candidates who merely rehashed what they had written in **5(a)** (producing a summary of a summary) scored few marks but others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own. Some did not focus their response on *les jeunes* (as required by the question) and wrote a general paragraph about the perils of smoking. Increasing the tax to make cigarettes less affordable, banning advertising, parental example, teaching children to cope with peer pressure, promoting other healthier activities, shock tactics, getting patients whose health has been wrecked to speak in schools were all suggested as possible measures. Rather more draconian were suggestions that shopkeepers should be sent to prison for selling to children, or even that the children themselves should be locked up.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to very poor. 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. Incorrect verb forms and agreements were legion, with some unable to conjugate basic verbs such as *mettre, prendre, vouloir and pouvoir*. Others seemed to have little notion that the endings of verbs should have some relationship with their subjects, or else decided that the way to make verbs plural is to add an s: *ils fumes*. The use of the infinitive (-er) ending - or indeed anything else that sounded similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-é) in some scripts: e.g. *ils ont présenter/présentez*. Basic agreements of adjectives and plurals too were simply routinely ignored by weaker candidates – much of this one imagines can be put down to a lack of thorough checking.

The approach to spelling was sometimes phonetic, even with very common words: *issi (ici) ; tros (trop) ; osi (aussi) ; puissent que (puisque) ; nerport coment (n'importe comment)*. Other very frequent mis-spellings included *effect; environment* (almost universal) ; *mésures ; celà ; malgréès*. *Ce/se/ceux* were apparently interchangeable in some scripts, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça*, *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont*.

There was a significant Hispanic influence in some Centres: *mostrer; gran; trabajar; disminuir; libremente; frecuentemente; la hume*.

New words and phrases were also much in evidence: *le jettage/la jetaissance; l'agissance; la bannisation; l'apportation*.

Studying vocabulary in lexical groups might help: *création/créer; réaction/réagir; nettoyage/nettoyer; défense/défendre; interdiction/interdire; dissuasion/dissuader; fumer/la fumée/le fumeur; distribution/distribuer; protection/protéger*.

Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll, in particular: *permettre, interdire, aider, encourager, laisser, rendre* (rather than *faire*) followed by an adjective. The difference between *leur, leurs* and *ses* and *qui* and *ce qui* was not appreciated by a large number. Incomplete negatives (missing *ne*) caused confusion, as did *on n'est* for *on est*.

Some candidates scattered *y* and *en* around seemingly at random, as they did with *tel que* which could appear several times in a paragraph, rarely with the correct agreement.

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

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/22
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

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- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should be advised not to begin the answer by re-working the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for **parts a** and **b** combined) is ignored. Candidates should be advised not to write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

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

Unfortunately many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. *Que s'est-il passé en 2007 est que ... (3a)* ; *Quelle est la liberté demandée par M. Chabert est que ... (4a)* ; *Pourquoi les mesures proposées lui semblent-elles exagérées est parce que ... (4b)*. 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' 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 or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3 and 4** below.

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

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to

find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible. They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.

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

In **Question 5**, candidates should 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 (no doubt 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: *Il y a beaucoup d'arguments pour et contre l'interdiction de fumer dans les lieux publics en plein air. Le premier texte présente les arguments pour l'interdiction et le deuxième texte présente les arguments contre. Selon le premier texte ...* However worthy, this sort of introduction merely wastes a quarter of available words 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, drafting and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of presentation and legibility.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

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

- In **(a)**, *graves* was sometimes offered for *mauvaise* - the fact that one is plural and one singular should have ruled this out, whatever the meaning. One assumed that *novices* was simply a misreading of *nocives*.
- In **(b)**, *contribuées* at least fitted grammatically with *attribuées* as a feminine plural past participle, but failed on grounds of meaning.
- In **(c)**, the omission of the reflexive pronoun (necessary to fit the 'footprint') was the most common mistake in **Question 1**.
- In **(d)**, the unnecessary inclusion *aux autres* would have resulted in *nuît aux autres aux autres* in the original text
- In **(e)**, *fermeture* and *droit* were unlikely substitutes for *obligatoire*.

Question 2

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

Item 2(a) required a straightforward transformation into the passive which was successfully undertaken by a fair number, but others changed the tense unnecessarily or forgot to adjust the agreement.

Item 2(b) saw relatively few candidates able to produce *Il est compliqué de ...*. Others didn't adjust the agreement to *compliqué* or made unnecessary changes to *ces* or *des mégots* or to *difficile*.

Item 2(c) was probably the most successfully handled item in **Question 2**, although some candidates did not realise the need for a present participle following *en* and offered *en l'interdiction* or unsuccessful attempts to paraphrase. Others produced *interdisant* or omitted *sur les plages*.

Item 2(d): the need for a subjunctive was spotted by a good number, even if some couldn't form it correctly, sometimes by inserting a curious *v*. It was a pity that others who had done the hard bit then forgot to do the easy bit with the agreement on *exposé(e)s*.

Item 2(e) offered many tolerated versions on a theme and a good proportion found one or other of them. Others came to grief with *un mégot faut* or *un mégot a besoin deux ans* or *pour se decompose*.

Question 3

Item 3(a): The question asked what happened (*que s'est-il passé*) therefore requiring a past tense in the answer: *on a interdit ...*; *le tabac a été interdit*; *on a voté une loi qui ...*, etc. Many took refuge unsuccessfully in lifting *Depuis 2007, il est défendu ...*. Three elements were required for the first mark: banning smoking / indoors / in places open to the public. *Places (publiques)* was very commonly offered incorrectly. The second mark required the element of outdoor spaces/places but was more successfully attempted, especially by those who expressed *la création* by using a verb: *elle veut créer ...*.

Item 3(b) caused unexpected problems, perhaps because candidates were looking for complications which did not exist and consequently restricted the aims of the associations to collecting cigarette ends or otherwise straying into the territory of **3(c)**. On the other hand, those who simply wrote *Elles existent pour lutter contre le tabac et pour protéger les plages* scored both marks.

Item 3(c) was probably the most successfully handled, with large numbers of candidates scoring both marks, despite the frequent confusion of *maire/mairie/marie/mari*. Re-working *réaction* as a verb was the key to many of the successful answers here.

Item 3(d) required three measures that had already been taken, and most candidates identified at least some of them. Some did not really understand *panneaux publicitaires* or see how to avoid the very common lifting of *nettoyage quotidien*. *Fréquentées* was often thought to mean *frequently*, and *cendriers* occasionally mutated into *calendriers*. For the fourth mark, a minority thought incorrectly that the measures had been successful, sometimes because children were pressed-ganged into going round collecting the *mégots*.

Item 3(e) saw few candidates scoring both marks. Most managed to express (albeit sometimes clumsily) the concept of *tabagisme passif*, even if some thought that *le tabagisme* was a person or *quelqu'un qui allume votre cigarette*. But few showed that they had understood that *son voisin de serviette* referred to someone sitting/lying/next to you on a beach/towel. Many thought that *serviette* meant that the person was sitting next to you in a restaurant or someone working as a waitress, or that a towel soaked up nicotine. Others thought that smoke could seep through your walls from a neighbour's house.

Item 3(f) required for the first mark the mention of fines for restaurant/bar owners who allow smoking. Some thought it was the smoker who was fined or that owners forced their customers to smoke. *Fermeture forcée* was sometimes understood as imprisonment (sometimes for life) or forced labour. A significant number did not see the need to find a simple way of expressing *gagné ... espérance de vie* (e.g. *vivre plus longtemps*) or caused confusion by misreading *mois* as *moins*. *Amandes* were occasionally given out, and bold or curious assertions were made: *à New York le fumer n'existe plus.... La conséquence été très mauvaise car ça pourrait permettre les New-Yorkais de vivre un peu plus longtemps*.

Question 4

Item 4(a) Relatively few candidates understood or expressed M Chabert's rather jocular wish *qu'on nous laisse nous empoisonner en paix*, restricting themselves to *fumer en paix/en plein air*. Most candidates handled the second mark much more successfully by expressing *défense* as a verb.

Item 4(b) The acceptability of banning smoking in offices etc. was well identified by most candidates. The second mark (which needed the elements of the effects of passive smoking in the open air remaining unproven), and the third (which needed to make it clear that passive smokers inhale very little smoke in the open air) were subject to a fair amount of lifting straight from the text.

Item 4(c) The candidates who provided the best answers generally kept them short and simple for the first mark – e.g. *on peut faire ce qu'on veut* – rather than waxing philosophical – *personne n'a le droit d'être persécuté*. Relatively few managed to express *tant que* acceptably.

Item 4(d) asked for behaviours (i.e. actions/verbs). Many found *jouer de la musique/agacer les autres avec la musique* for the first mark. Some resorted to lifting *laissent leurs déchets*, but many found *jeter* or *abandonner* (not *quitter*) as acceptable alternatives. Confusion between *amener/emmener* or *apporter/emporter* led some candidates to suggest that it was anti-social to take your plastic bags away with you. The fourth point about the danger of excessive exposure to the sun was well identified by a majority.

Item 4(e) rewarded the large number who identified the fact that the beaches were not supervised for 12 hours a day, although some chose the wrong 12 hours. The second mark needed to indicate that more police presence/manpower would be needed.

Item 4(f) needed to suggest what could be done to improve the situation (e.g. making people more aware of their responsibilities and dissuading them) rather than simply banning or increasing police supervision. The easiest solution again was to express the nouns *responsibilisation* and *dissuasion* as verbs. A few stood things on their head with *décourager les gens de ne pas fumer*.

Question 5

This question asked the candidates to summarise the arguments for and against banning smoking in open-air public spaces and then to suggest measures designed to dissuade young people from 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.

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which a good number of candidates managed perhaps 6–7, with the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the first two paragraphs of Text 1, hoping in vain to include some rewardable material. The most commonly identified arguments for the ban included the harmful effects of smoking not only on the smoker but on those around him/her, pollution of beaches, and the length of time it takes cigarette ends to decompose. The most frequent arguments against were the lack of proof of the effects of passive smoking in the open air, the attack on personal freedom and the fact that there are plenty of other anti-social behaviours which can take place on beaches.

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. Those candidates who merely rehashed what they had written in **5(a)** (producing a summary of a summary) scored few marks but others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own. Some did not focus their response on *les jeunes* (as required by the question) and wrote a general paragraph about the perils of smoking. Increasing the tax to make cigarettes less affordable, banning advertising, parental example, teaching children to cope with peer pressure, promoting other healthier activities, shock tactics, getting patients whose health has been wrecked to speak in schools were all suggested as possible measures. Rather more draconian were suggestions that shopkeepers should be sent to prison for selling to children, or even that the children themselves should be locked up.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to very poor. 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. Incorrect verb forms and agreements were legion, with some unable to conjugate basic verbs such as *mettre, prendre, vouloir* and *pouvoir*. Others seemed to have little notion that the endings of verbs should have some relationship with their subjects, or else decided that the way to make verbs plural is to add an s: *ils fumes*. The use of the infinitive (-er) ending - or indeed anything else that sounded similar - seemed interchangeable with the past participle (-é) in some scripts: e.g. *ils ont présenter/présentez*. Basic agreements of adjectives and plurals too were simply routinely ignored by weaker candidates - much of this one imagines can be put down to a lack of thorough checking.

The approach to spelling was sometimes phonetic, even with very common words: *issi (ici) ; tros (trop) ; osi (aussi) ; puissent que (puisque) ; nerport coment (n'importe comment)*. Other very frequent mis-spellings included *effect; environment* (almost universal) ; *mésures ; celà ; malgréès*. *Ce/se/ceux* were apparently interchangeable in some scripts, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça*, *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont*.

There was a significant Hispanic influence in some Centres: *mostrer; gran; trabajar; diminuir; libremente; frecuentemente; la hume*.

New words and phrases were also much in evidence: *le jettage/la jetaissance; l'agissance; la bannisation; l'apportation*.

Studying vocabulary in lexical groups might help: *création/créer; réaction/réagir; nettoyage/nettoyer; défense/défendre; interdiction/interdire; dissuasion/dissuader; fumer/la fumée/le fumeur; distribution/distribuer; protection/protéger*.

Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll, in particular: *permettre, interdire, aider, encourager, laisser, rendre* (rather than *faire*) followed by an adjective. The difference between *leur, leurs* and *ses* and *qui* and *ce qui* was not appreciated by a large number. Incomplete negatives (missing *ne*) caused confusion, as did *on n'est* for *on est*.

Some candidates scattered *y* and *en* around seemingly at random, as they did with *tel que* which could appear several times in a paragraph, rarely with the correct agreement.

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

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/23
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. Including additional words invalidates the answer.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning 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 be advised not to begin the answer by re-working the question. Answers beginning with (for example) *Parce que* are quite acceptable.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of 150 (total for **parts (a) and (b)** combined) is ignored. Candidates should be advised not to write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5b**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General Comments

The 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 material unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3 and 4**.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3 and 4** were unduly lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. Some candidates neglect the straightforward answer and look to over-complicate things, often lapsing into verbosity and repetition.

Many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the quality of language mark. *Ce phénomène est-il surprenant parce que ... (3b) ; L'agriculture bénéficie-t-elle à l'environnement en ... (3e) ; Beaucoup de produits sont-ils importés d'autres pays parce que ... (4e)*. 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' 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 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 not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.

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

In **Question 5**, candidates should 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 (no doubt because of different practices in other subjects): *Les arguments pour et contre l'agriculture biologique sont nombreux. Dans le premier texte les arguments pour ce système sont présentés. Dans le deuxième texte, nous voyons les arguments contre. Considérons d'abord les avantages ...* However worthy, this sort of introduction merely wastes nearly a quarter of available words 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, drafting and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which did little to improve standards of presentation and legibility.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

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

In (a), it was very common to find a superfluous *se*, which would have given *se se caractérise* in the original text.

In (b), *enrichissent* was generally correctly identified.

In (c), *modifiés* was sometimes offered, presumably simply on the basis that it was another past participle with a masculine plural agreement.

In (d), *génétiquement* was presumably based on the fact that it was another adverb ending in *-ment*. The reasoning behind the choice of *même* and *décennies* was more obscure. Some offered *aujourd'hui*.

In (e), *malgré* was another curious choice of synonym for *en vogue*.

Question 2

There were some 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.

- (a) required a straightforward transformation into the passive which was generally very well handled, although some forgot to adjust the agreement or omitted *chimiques*.
- (b) saw relatively few candidates able to handle the *Nous sommes obligé(e)s de ...* construction.
- (c) the need for a subjunctive appeared to be recognized by many, even if not all managed to form it accurately.
- (d) was often successfully re-worked, although some over-did things with *De plus en plus de Français s'y mettent plus nombreux*.
- (e) many candidates struggled with the correct form of *perçoivent* (*perçuent*, *percevent*, etc.). Some tried unsuccessfully to duck the problem by using *pensent* or *trouvent* instead.

Question 3

- (a) asked what farmers do, in other words requiring verbs in response. Four straightforward marks were therefore available for those who managed to avoid lifting the nouns *utilisation*, *respect*, *interdiction* and *traitement* by using some form of *utiliser* or *employer*, *respecter* or *protéger*, *interdire* or *refuser* (not *interdicter*), *traiter* or *soigner*.
- (b) candidates found several successful ways of expressing the idea that *les produits bio* are becoming increasingly available in the shops and/or popular with consumers. A good number scored the second mark by pointing out that customers were prepared to pay the higher prices involved despite tight budgets.
- (c) again asked what customers were seeking to do when buying *bio*. The key was therefore to use verbs such as *préserver*, *sauvegarder* or *protéger* (not *protecter*) and *supprimer* (not *suppresser*), *réduire*, *éviter*, *minimiser* etc. *les dangers*.
- (d) was well handled by those candidates who found other ways of expressing the idea that the products are *plus savoureux*: *ils ont plus de goût/saveur*, etc. Occasional candidates interpreted *plus savoureux* as being *more savory*, so containing *moins de sucre*. The remaining two marks were scored by the good number of candidates who went on to say that *les fruits et légumes contiennent/apportent/offrent plus de vitamines*, etc. and that *la viande est moins contaminée par les hormones*, etc.

- (e) saw some candidates inventing the verbs *éroser* and *réduire*, but most were successful in pointing to the fact that *l'agriculture bio consomme moins d'énergie* and its benefits for pollination and for bees in general.

Question 4

- (a) A good number of candidates successfully identified the drawback of a lower yield (*productivité inférieure/produit moins d'aliments*, etc.) and the consequent need to devote twice as much land to it: *le bio nécessite/a besoin de (deux fois) plus de terre/surface pour produire la même quantité*.
- (b) The reason for choosing *des produits bio* was often simply but correctly expressed as *pour améliorer/protéger la santé/rester en bonne santé*. The idea of *un taux de maladie plus faible* was less universally understood or re-phrased, but most identified *la quantité d'alcool/tabac qu'ils consomment et combien ils font d'exercice* as factors affecting health.
- (c) There was some misunderstanding of *tout aussi présents que ...* here (*ils contiennent aussi des vitamines*), but *les céréales sont moins riches en protéines* was an efficient way of avoiding lifting *sont plus pauvres en protéines*, so scoring the second of the four marks. *Les produits n'ont pas meilleur goût* was sufficient to earn a further mark, and stronger candidates found ways of re-phrasing *dénoncent la focalisation sur le bio*, e.g. *disent/estiment que nous avons tort de/ne devrions pas insister/nous focaliser/ concentrer/mettre l'accent sur le bio*.
- (d) The lack of capacity to satisfy demand in France was not understood by those who thought that the reason for importing was that foreign products were cheaper. Stronger candidates identified the consequent need to transport them over long distances, resulting in increased green-house gases.
- (e) *comme le montre périodiquement* confused a few into thinking that the answer had something to do with watches, but most found ways of expressing *difficilement vérifiable (il est difficile de vérifier ...)* and *la découverte des réseaux (on découvre ...)* without resorting to lifting.

Question 5

This Question asked the candidates to summarise the arguments for and against *l'agriculture biologique* and then to suggest ways for producers to increase their sales.

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 a good number of candidates managed perhaps 6–7, with the most efficient reaching the maximum of 10. The weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping in vain to include some rewardable material. The most commonly identified arguments in favour were the refusal to use non-natural pesticides/OGMs, etc. which protects the environment, less soil erosion, and the benefits for health and better-tasting food. The most frequent arguments against were that it isn't in fact good for biodiversity or the environment, that yield is lower and prices are higher, that the products are neither healthier nor more tasty, nor necessarily genuinely *bio*.

The **Personal Response** gives candidates the chance to express their views on a specific topic, which some candidates did with some imagination and originality, assuming they had not exceeded the word limit by this stage. Those candidates who merely rehashed what they had written in **5(a)** (producing a summary of a summary) scored few marks but others were rewarded for introducing a relevant idea or personal slant of their own. Suggestions for increasing sales included government subsidies to reduce prices, paying farmers to devote more of their land to this type of agriculture, undertaking more research to increase yield, publicising the benefits, and more sophisticated marketing and packaging.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from very good to very poor. Verbs as usual were far the most common sources of error: with weaker candidates, incorrect verb forms and agreements were legion, some having difficulties in conjugating even very common verbs. More concerning was the fact that some seemed to have little notion that the endings of verbs should have some relationship with their subjects, or else decided that the way to make verbs plural is to add an *s*: *ils commences*. Basic agreements of adjectives and plurals too were simply routinely ignored by weaker candidates – much of this one imagines can be put down to a lack of thorough checking.

Weaker candidates seemed keen to create new verbs by adding *-er* to English ones: *émitter* ; *producer* ; *contaminater*; *distinguisher*; *provider*; *préventer*; *protector*; *suppresser* ; *carer pour*. Other English words also made their appearance: *une explanation*; *légitimate*; *inconclusive*; *uncommon*.

The approach to spelling was sometimes phonetic, e.g. *défois* (*des fois*); *assé* (*assez*); *par se que*. *Ce/se/ceux* were apparently interchangeable in some scripts, as were *si* and *ci*, *sa* and *ça*, *on* and *ont*, *son* and *sont*.

Studying vocabulary in lexical groups might be a good idea: *suppression/supprimer*; *protection/protéger*; *interdiction/interdire*; *traitement/traiter*; *réduction/réduire*, etc.

Constructions with certain common verbs took their usual toll, in particular *permettre*, *interdire*, *aider*, *persuader*, *laisser*, *rendre* (rather than *faire*) followed by an adjective. The difference between *leur*, *leurs* and *ses* and *qui* and *ce qui* was not appreciated by a large number.

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

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/31
Essay

Key Messages:

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

General Comments:

The best essays engaged fully with the title, were well structured, contained a number of examples to illustrate the various points being made and had a conclusion that skilfully drew together and distilled the various strands of the argument. As far as language was concerned, though such essays did sometimes contain a sprinkling of errors, accuracy was very much the norm and fluency was the order of the day supported by the deployment of an impressive range of vocabulary and structures. In less good essays, particular problems were relevance, poor paragraph links – *mais*, *puis* and *ensuite* were particularly prevalent – bland, formulaic, pre-learned introductions that attempted to provide unnecessary definitions of words in the title and which often contained ill-fitting and frequently mangled quotations and, not least, weak conclusions that either paid no heed to the question set or simply reiterated, using exactly the same vocabulary and structures, points that had been made in the body of the essay. As far as language was concerned, the weakest candidates struggled to express themselves coherently. Elsewhere, Examiners drew attention to a high degree of inaccuracy in agreements and verb endings.

Among a number of common errors, there figured:

- the choice of the wrong preposition in verb + infinitive constructions, e.g. *préférer de*, *aimer de*
- confusion between the infinitive and the past participle of *-er* verbs
- use of the conditional perfect where simple conditional needed, e.g. *les gens seraient en meilleure santé parce que s'ils avaient moins d'argent ils auraient utilisé leurs vélos au lieu de marcher*
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- use of *que* rather than *au(x)quel(s)/à laquelle/auxquelles* in constructions with verbs followed by *à* plus noun, e.g. *les problèmes qu'ils font face à*
- the omission of *ne* in negative constructions
- use of *qui* in contexts where *ce qui* was required
- lapses of register, e.g. *ça*, *truc*, *boulot*, *télé*
- common words spelt wrongly, e.g. *recommandé*, *government*, *campagne*, *adults*, *development*, *alcohol*, *recontre*, *meuilleur*, *environnement*, *hygienic*, *exercice*, *example*
- anglicisms, e.g. *place* for *endroit*, *balancé* for *équilibré*, *dépendre sur*, *consister de*, *en addition*, *affordable*
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- use of *grâce à* in a negative context

Comments on specific questions:

Question 1

Le secret d'une longue vie, c'est savoir éviter le stress. Êtes-vous d'accord?

This was the second most popular choice of question. It is clearly an essay on the ingredients for a long life and not on the causes and effects of stress which were the centre of focus and sometimes the exclusive focus of a large number of essays.

Some candidates who did write relevantly began by making a distinction between good and bad stress. Good stress is stress that you can manage: for example, the stress of competing in athletic contests or before taking an exam quite often exercises a positive effect by stimulating performance. It is bad stress induced by such emotions as fear, panic, anger and grief that, in many cases, takes such a heavy toll on people's health. Ways to reduce stress that were cited and sometimes well developed and exemplified included exercise, leisure activities, spending plenty of time with family and friends, reducing working hours and, not least, developing a sense of humour.

Good essays went on to consider the other ingredients of a long life and to provide the appropriate analysis and exemplification. Prominent amongst these was diet, for example, eating too little fruit, too few vegetables, too few nuts and seeds and/or too much trans fat. Diet matters a lot, not just because eating too much makes one fat and therefore prone to a whole range of illnesses but also because a high body mass index ranks as the fourth highest health risk factor causing heart disease, strokes, diabetes and cancer.

Alcohol consumption too needs to be controlled. Heavy drinking can cause cirrhosis which is the 12th highest cause of death and ill health in developed countries, fatty liver disease and liver cancer. It is also implicated in other cancers, notably mouth, throat and breast cancer, to say nothing of all the alcohol induced accidents and fights in which people get hurt or killed.

'Do not smoke' was the advice given in many essays since smoking is likely to reduce life expectancy and, moreover, to make people suffer before they die. Lung cancer and obstructive pulmonary disease trigger one in six cases of heart disease which is one of the biggest killers in most countries of the world. Only half of long-term smokers live beyond 70.

Regular exercise is also of the essence: we were not designed to sit around and it's not good for us. There are both mental and physical benefits to exercise: it reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes, but it also reduces the symptoms of depression and anxiety and hence stress levels. Over a week, adults should be "moderately active" for a total of at least two and a half hours, which means brisk walking and cycling at a pace that warms you up and makes you breathe harder. As an alternative, one can get really physical and take 75 minutes of "vigorous activity" in the week, such as running swimming or playing football.

It is also important to get plenty of sleep since sleep plays an important part in ensuring good physical health. Sleep plays a vital role in the healing and repair of heart and blood vessels while protracted sleep deficiency is linked to an increased risk of kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and strokes.

Other recommendations that were made included taking the train: according to the WHO, the lifetime risk of dying before the age of 75 is one in a thousand in a car, one in 54 thousand on a plane and one in a 130 thousand in a train. Taking just adults aged 20 to 54, road injuries were the fifth highest cause of loss of life in developed countries in 2010. Staying out of hospital was also thought advisable by some, since hospitals are dangerous places. Even though the number of superbugs has come down, there is always the risk of catching something when you are there. Falls in hospitals are also not uncommon, because particularly elderly patients can be both unsteady on their feet and uncertain where they need to go. Keeping fit and healthy – following the advice given about smoking, drinking, diet and exercise – will keep most people off the wards for longer.

Good essays sometimes concluded by stating that a whole host of other factors – socioeconomic, environmental, educational, genetic and lifestyle – come into play when considering the question of life expectancy but that if we want to be dancing a jig at a lively old age, the factors outlined above will go a long way to ensuring that we are in a position to do just that.

Among a number of recurrent language points specific to this topic was the use of *longévité* for *espérance de vie* and of *travaux* for *emplois*.

Question 2

La police crée autant de problèmes qu'elle en résout. Partagez-vous ce point de vue?

This question was not widely chosen. Of those who did elect to write about it, too many wrote general essays about law and order in which they sometimes – but by no means always – made occasional reference to the issue highlighted in the title.

Many candidates began by talking about the positive role played by the police in today's society. The police force plays a vital role in the maintenance of law and order and should be a source of moral strength, confidence and happiness to all individuals who seek to live a peaceful, law-abiding existence. Life before the introduction of the police force was indeed insecure. Violent acts such as murder were committed with impunity by cruel and reckless men and lesser crimes such as theft and robbery were legion. The establishment of the police force, however, has changed the state of affairs in society. Criminals are apprehended and punished with the help of the police in order to deter others from committing acts injurious to innocent citizens. The alertness of the police force in the detection and solving of crimes serves to deter most people from breaking the law and thereby makes for a much more peaceful society than the one that existed before it came into being.

Candidates needed to follow up their analysis of the positive role of the police with specific examples of various aspects of police misconduct, whether it be illegal or unethical actions or the violation of individuals' constitutional rights by police officers in the conduct of their duties. Police brutality was the topic that came most under the spotlight, that is to say the wanton use of excessive force by over zealous officers, by young, inexperienced or macho officers or officers who have demonstrable personality disorders. Various examples of police dishonesty were quoted ranging from bribery (e.g. an officer accepting money in exchange for not arresting a suspect, for altering testimony, for destroying evidence, for passing criminal information to the media) to extortion (e.g. threatening to have someone falsely arrested if that person does not pay the officer). Another well-documented phenomenon cited was the code of silence that prevails among police officers which discourages them from reporting the misconduct of another officer or which leads them to bury evidence with the aim of protecting themselves and/or their colleagues. Numerous cases were also quoted of police officers being on the payroll of drug barons. Theft and burglary are a major problem, examples being the removal of drugs during a drugs bust, either for personal use or to sell, and stealing personal objects or money from a crime scene or from a corpse at the scene of a crime or accident. The use of coercion and even torture to force confessions is another well-documented phenomenon: a suspect who is vulnerable and/or confused or who is faced with false evidence by a coercive interrogator may make a non-voluntary, false confession. Perjury is also fairly common, the principal example given being police officers lying under oath and giving false testimony. It is typically used in a criminal trial to "make the case" against a defendant whom the police believe to be guilty when irregularities during the suspect's arrest or search threaten to result in acquittal. An allied problem is that of "framing", that is to say planting or adding to evidence, which is particularly prevalent in drugs cases, in order to ensure a conviction. Instances were also given of sexual misconduct – of sexual harassment and assault by police officers, of the demand for sexual favours in return for leniency, of officers enjoying the services of prostitutes in return for turning a blind eye to their illegal activities, of vice squad officers selling pornographic material that should have been destroyed. Not least, racism was said to be endemic in the police forces of many countries: in recent decades considerable evidence has come to light in many western countries of the disproportionate risk of police victimisation and discrimination faced by people from ethnic minorities, sometimes resulting in serious social unrest, witness the rioting seen in a number of French cities during the Sarkozy presidency.

By way of conclusion, good essays sometimes took the line that whereas in a number of countries, such as China, Pakistan, Malaysia, Russia, Ukraine, Brazil and Mexico, police corruption remains one of the largest social problems, in most western countries, though the exposure of cases of police corruption continues to corrode public trust, corruption is far from being endemic since it is kept in check by robust internal policing and various independent bodies whose job it is to investigate public complaints and decide whether a criminal prosecution should be brought against the officer or officers concerned.

Question 3

Si les gens avaient moins d'argent, ils seraient en meilleure santé. Discutez de cette affirmation.

This was by far the most popular question, chosen by almost three quarters of the candidature. Alas, however, a significant proportion of their number paid little if any heed to the specifics of the title and simply wrote about the recipe for ensuring that one stays in good health, while others made sweeping generalisations about the behaviour of the well-off and the less well-off.

The best essays were those that examined both sides of the argument and then reached a balanced conclusion. The point was made that people on lower incomes have less money to spend on tobacco products, on alcohol and on recreational drugs, all of which have a detrimental effect on health especially when consumed in large quantities. If they had less money, many people's diet would be changed for the better. Red meat with all its attendant health risks would be off limits for many and the balance would shift towards a much more healthy diet of fruit and vegetables bought at the local market or home grown. Though, given the relatively cheap price of fast food, the occasional visit to Macdonalds or to a similar fast food outlet

might still be affordable, families with a limited budget would not be able to resort to them on a regular basis, which would again be a boon for their health. Those with plenty of money can afford more or less expensive cars which they use even when it is a question of just a short distance to get to the shops or to work. A car with all its attendant expense is often out of the question for those on more limited incomes who therefore cycle or walk (even if only to the bus stop), which is much better for their health. Moreover, fewer cars on the roads would mean even less pollution, which would, in turn, mean fewer life-threatening health problems caused by air pollution. People on lower incomes would probably elect to save money by doing themselves the work done in richer households by the numerous labour-saving saving gadgets on the market (e.g. washing machines, washing-up machines, vacuum cleaners) thereby leading a much less sedentary lifestyle than those more well-off. Moreover, they usually do not have the means to buy the latest technological gadgets (computers, iPads, iPhones, computer games etc.) which again encourage a sedentary lifestyle and all its attendant ills, to say nothing of the potential health risks to a person's hearing, eyesight and even to the brain occasioned by the excessive use of computers, mobile phones, mp3 players and the like. Often, their leisure time is spent pursuing more healthy pastimes such as walking, swimming, playing football or other games which involve a fair measure of healthy physical exertion. Though it is not always the case, people on lower incomes tend to have jobs which entail less responsibility and therefore less stress, whereas those on high incomes often enjoy those incomes precisely because they occupy positions of responsibility which frequently generate high stress levels and take their toll on the physical and sometimes also the mental health of those concerned.

However, money can also prove very useful in the matter of promoting good health. People who have the means can afford to buy organic food products and other high quality foods (e.g. smoked salmon, shell fish, low fat meats) which are particularly recommended by dieticians. They can afford to take out subscriptions to gyms and fitness clubs where they have at their disposal a whole panoply of machines designed to enhance their physical well-being. They can afford to take the precautions necessary to protect their health, whether it be to buy vitamin supplements, to have themselves vaccinated against various illnesses or to buy medical insurance which guarantees that if they do fall ill, they will receive the best available private treatment with minimum delay. Moreover, it is true to say that straitened financial circumstances and debt are a major cause of stress with all its attendant health issues and that young people desperate for money for whatever reason might well turn to prostitution as a way of making easy money, thereby exposing themselves to a whole range of sexually transmitted diseases.

Notwithstanding, there are some cases where being well-off or less well-off has no bearing in the matter of a person's health. All the money in the world cannot alter a person's genes and thereby thwart diseases passed on from one generation to the next. Similarly, both rich and poor are exposed to the same environmental factors, the principal among them being air pollution, which also represent a major risk to the health.

Among recurrent language errors specific to this title, there figured the use of *un gym* for *un gymnase*, *pratiquer le sport* for *pratiquer un sport* and *la cigarette* for *le tabac/les cigarettes*.

Question 4

Un footballeur peut toucher jusqu'à un million d'euros par mois alors qu'un pompier n'en touche que deux mille. D'après vous, sur quels critères devrait-on se baser pour déterminer le salaire que mérite quelqu'un?

This question found relatively few takers. Quite a few of those who did choose it paid little heed to the second sentence of the title and simply wrote, often in woolly and/or rambling fashion, about why footballers do or do not deserve such astronomical salaries and why firemen receive adequate or inadequate reward.

The best answers did follow the guidelines laid down in the title and considered the various criteria that might be applied to determine a person's salary: sometimes they took their examples from the world of football or fire fighting, though it was perfectly legitimate to ignore those two domains altogether and to give examples from other areas. The best answers provided coverage of a number of areas. One of the principal issues highlighted was the hazards involved in the job. The point was made that practically all jobs come with health hazards but while some are minor, like computer eye strain or a slipping hazard in the break room by the coffee machine, others are more serious and even potentially fatal, e.g. construction workers falling from great heights or fireman being asphyxiated or burnt alive. Supply and demand also figured prominently as a suggested criterion, high paid jobs being those where labour supply is low but the demand is high. Professional footballers are highly skilled and the star players are so uniquely talented that even with all the desire in the world and all the training possible, the vast majority of people would never be able to acquire their skill set. Job prospects and stability of employment also need to be considered. Professional footballers

have an extremely short career – about 17 years on average. When one considers that a number of governments are looking to increase the working age to 70 or thereabouts and that a footballer is considered a veteran at 35, it does put into perspective just how short footballers' careers are. Not least, profits earned by the employer organisation come into the equation. The top football clubs generate vast sums of money from various avenues, including merchandise sales, ticket and season ticket sales, extremely lucrative broadcasting rights and transfers, to name just a few. In the case of football clubs, it is understandable that players' salaries should fall into proportion with revenues since without the top players whose performance is so crucial to their success, they would not be able to generate such revenues in the first place. Among a number of other criteria discussed were worker experience and age, educational qualifications, level of responsibility, worker effort and productivity and the prevailing wage in the sector concerned.

Question 5

A votre avis, dans quel(s) domaine(s) devrait-on être le plus reconnaissant des progrès de la science?

This title was the third most popular choice. Exemplification was of the essence here: weaker essays talked in vague terms about the benefits in terms of ensuring improved life expectancy and increasing creature comforts but provided few if any precise examples. Another pitfall was that of simply providing a list of advances in various domains without analysing why exactly they were of such significance. Relevance again proved to be problematic in the case of a significant number of candidates who had clearly prepared an essay weighing up the benefits of scientific progress against the negative consequences. And that was the essay they wrote, notwithstanding the specific wording of the title they were asked to consider.

Medicine was the domain that the majority of candidates alighted upon as their first choice, many of their number providing some very compelling arguments as to why. The number of diseases that were previously incurable but to which cures have now been found came top of the list, the most common examples cited being cholera, tuberculosis, polio and cancer. Vaccinations against such deadly diseases as malaria which for centuries have decimated entire populations are now commonplace, while highly sophisticated electronic apparatus such as endoscopes, CAT scanners and MRI scanners enable doctors to see inside the body and brain and permit the early diagnosis and treatment of diseases that previously went undetected until it was far too late to do anything about them. Contraceptive pills prevent the conception of untold numbers of unwanted children, while infertile couples and homosexuals can now know the joys of parenthood thanks to IVF fertility treatment and the development of artificial insemination techniques. Paraplegics can walk again and have the use of other limbs thanks to hi-tech prosthetic body parts and millions of diabetics in the world can enjoy a more or less normal life thanks to artificial insulin substitutes. More recently the development of stem cell technology offers the possibility of a renewable source of replacement cells and tissues to treat diseases including Parkinson's, strokes and heart and liver disease: significant technical hurdles remain that will be overcome through further years of intensive research.

Transport and telecommunications were also singled out as domains in which we should be particularly grateful to all of the developments facilitated by science. Rail travel has improved tremendously in recent decades taking hours off previous journey times, witness the bullet train in Japan and the TGV in France. Road transport too is faster, much safer and more comfortable. Developments in aeronautical science have meant that air travel has become commonplace enabling people to cross the globe for both recreational and business purposes in a matter of hours rather than days and even weeks, as was the case in the past. The development of rocket science has enabled pioneering trips into outer space which have made for a much better understanding of the universe of which our planet is just a tiny component, to say nothing of the huge range of possibilities afforded by the development of satellites. Satellite technology has come to play a crucial role in such diverse domains as weather forecasting, telecommunications, the navigation of ships, aircraft and road vehicles and prospecting for natural resources. Not only is our world a safer place thanks to all of these developments but it is now also a smaller place in the sense that we enjoy instantaneous transmission of information from one continent to another with all its concomitant benefits in a whole panoply of different areas ranging from personal relationships to business to international diplomacy.

The world of work has also been revolutionised by progress in the field of science and technology. The development of computers and the Internet makes it possible for millions of people, some of whom would otherwise be prevented from working because of various disabilities, to work from home. Particularly dangerous jobs can be done by robots, while the benefits of computer technology are especially beneficial in hi-tech industries such as aeronautical and electronic engineering. Industrial and agricultural production have benefited from the development of state of the art machinery while the development of artificial fertilisers and pesticides and of genetically modified crops has enabled greatly increased yields as well as more nutritive crops and is thereby an important weapon in the fight against famine and malnutrition.

By way of conclusion, many essays reiterated that the impact of science on people's lives in recent times has been tremendous and is still growing. Science is deeply interwoven with all aspects of our lives and scientific knowledge enables us to improve the quality of our lives at so many different levels. Science informs public policy and personal decisions on energy, conservation, agriculture, health, transportation, communication, defence, economics, leisure and exploration. It's almost impossible to overstate how many aspects of modern life are impacted by scientific knowledge to the extent that singling out just one or two areas to which society should be particularly grateful to scientific progress is a nigh impossible task.

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Paper 8682/32

Essay

Key Messages:

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Si les gens avaient moins d'argent, ils seraient en meilleure santé. Discutez de cette affirmation.

This was by far the most popular question, chosen by almost three quarters of the candidature. Alas, however, a significant proportion of their number paid little if any heed to the specifics of the title and simply wrote about the recipe for ensuring that one stays in good health, while others made sweeping generalisations about the behaviour of the well-off and the less well-off.

The best essays were those that examined both sides of the argument and then reached a balanced conclusion. The point was made that people on lower incomes have less money to spend on tobacco products, on alcohol and on recreational drugs, all of which have a detrimental effect on health especially when consumed in large quantities. If they had less money, many people's diet would be changed for the better. Red meat with all its attendant health risks would be off limits for many and the balance would shift towards a much more healthy diet of fruit and vegetables bought at the local market or home grown. Though, given the relatively cheap price of fast food, the occasional visit to Macdonalds or to a similar fast food outlet

might still be affordable, families with a limited budget would not be able to resort to them on a regular basis, which would again be a boon for their health. Those with plenty of money can afford more or less expensive cars which they use even when it is a question of just a short distance to get to the shops or to work. A car with all its attendant expense is often out of the question for those on more limited incomes who therefore cycle or walk (even if only to the bus stop), which is much better for their health. Moreover, fewer cars on the roads would mean even less pollution, which would, in turn, mean fewer life-threatening health problems caused by air pollution. People on lower incomes would probably elect to save money by doing themselves the work done in richer households by the numerous labour-saving saving gadgets on the market (e.g. washing machines, washing-up machines, vacuum cleaners) thereby leading a much less sedentary lifestyle than those more well-off. Moreover, they usually do not have the means to buy the latest technological gadgets (computers, iPads, iPhones, computer games etc.) which again encourage a sedentary lifestyle and all its attendant ills, to say nothing of the potential health risks to a person's hearing, eyesight and even to the brain occasioned by the excessive use of computers, mobile phones, mp3 players and the like. Often, their leisure time is spent pursuing more healthy pastimes such as walking, swimming, playing football or other games which involve a fair measure of healthy physical exertion. Though it is not always the case, people on lower incomes tend to have jobs which entail less responsibility and therefore less stress, whereas those on high incomes often enjoy those incomes precisely because they occupy positions of responsibility which frequently generate high stress levels and take their toll on the physical and sometimes also the mental health of those concerned.

However, money can also prove very useful in the matter of promoting good health. People who have the means can afford to buy organic food products and other high quality foods (e.g. smoked salmon, shell fish, low fat meats) which are particularly recommended by dieticians. They can afford to take out subscriptions to gyms and fitness clubs where they have at their disposal a whole panoply of machines designed to enhance their physical well-being. They can afford to take the precautions necessary to protect their health, whether it be to buy vitamin supplements, to have themselves vaccinated against various illnesses or to buy medical insurance which guarantees that if they do fall ill, they will receive the best available private treatment with minimum delay. Moreover, it is true to say that straitened financial circumstances and debt are a major cause of stress with all its attendant health issues and that young people desperate for money for whatever reason might well turn to prostitution as a way of making easy money, thereby exposing themselves to a whole range of sexually transmitted diseases.

Notwithstanding, there are some cases where being well-off or less well-off has no bearing in the matter of a person's health. All the money in the world cannot alter a person's genes and thereby thwart diseases passed on from one generation to the next. Similarly, both rich and poor are exposed to the same environmental factors, the principal among them being air pollution, which also represent a major risk to the health.

Among recurrent language errors specific to this title, there figured the use of *un gym* for *un gymnase*, *pratiquer le sport* for *pratiquer un sport* and *la cigarette* for *le tabac/les cigarettes*.

Question 4

Un footballeur peut toucher jusqu'à un million d'euros par mois alors qu'un pompier n'en touche que deux mille. D'après vous, sur quels critères devrait-on se baser pour déterminer le salaire que mérite quelqu'un?

This question found relatively few takers. Quite a few of those who did choose it paid little heed to the second sentence of the title and simply wrote, often in woolly and/or rambling fashion, about why footballers do or do not deserve such astronomical salaries and why firemen receive adequate or inadequate reward.

The best answers did follow the guidelines laid down in the title and considered the various criteria that might be applied to determine a person's salary: sometimes they took their examples from the world of football or fire fighting, though it was perfectly legitimate to ignore those two domains altogether and to give examples from other areas. The best answers provided coverage of a number of areas. One of the principal issues highlighted was the hazards involved in the job. The point was made that practically all jobs come with health hazards but while some are minor, like computer eye strain or a slipping hazard in the break room by the coffee machine, others are more serious and even potentially fatal, e.g. construction workers falling from great heights or fireman being asphyxiated or burnt alive. Supply and demand also figured prominently as a suggested criterion, high paid jobs being those where labour supply is low but the demand is high. Professional footballers are highly skilled and the star players are so uniquely talented that even with all the desire in the world and all the training possible, the vast majority of people would never be able to acquire their skill set. Job prospects and stability of employment also need to be considered. Professional footballers

have an extremely short career – about 17 years on average. When one considers that a number of governments are looking to increase the working age to 70 or thereabouts and that a footballer is considered a veteran at 35, it does put into perspective just how short footballers' careers are. Not least, profits earned by the employer organisation come into the equation. The top football clubs generate vast sums of money from various avenues, including merchandise sales, ticket and season ticket sales, extremely lucrative broadcasting rights and transfers, to name just a few. In the case of football clubs, it is understandable that players' salaries should fall into proportion with revenues since without the top players whose performance is so crucial to their success, they would not be able to generate such revenues in the first place. Among a number of other criteria discussed were worker experience and age, educational qualifications, level of responsibility, worker effort and productivity and the prevailing wage in the sector concerned.

Question 5

A votre avis, dans quel(s) domaine(s) devrait-on être le plus reconnaissant des progrès de la science?

This title was the third most popular choice. Exemplification was of the essence here: weaker essays talked in vague terms about the benefits in terms of ensuring improved life expectancy and increasing creature comforts but provided few if any precise examples. Another pitfall was that of simply providing a list of advances in various domains without analysing why exactly they were of such significance. Relevance again proved to be problematic in the case of a significant number of candidates who had clearly prepared an essay weighing up the benefits of scientific progress against the negative consequences. And that was the essay they wrote, notwithstanding the specific wording of the title they were asked to consider.

Medicine was the domain that the majority of candidates alighted upon as their first choice, many of their number providing some very compelling arguments as to why. The number of diseases that were previously incurable but to which cures have now been found came top of the list, the most common examples cited being cholera, tuberculosis, polio and cancer. Vaccinations against such deadly diseases as malaria which for centuries have decimated entire populations are now commonplace, while highly sophisticated electronic apparatus such as endoscopes, CAT scanners and MRI scanners enable doctors to see inside the body and brain and permit the early diagnosis and treatment of diseases that previously went undetected until it was far too late to do anything about them. Contraceptive pills prevent the conception of untold numbers of unwanted children, while infertile couples and homosexuals can now know the joys of parenthood thanks to IVF fertility treatment and the development of artificial insemination techniques. Paraplegics can walk again and have the use of other limbs thanks to hi-tech prosthetic body parts and millions of diabetics in the world can enjoy a more or less normal life thanks to artificial insulin substitutes. More recently the development of stem cell technology offers the possibility of a renewable source of replacement cells and tissues to treat diseases including Parkinson's, strokes and heart and liver disease: significant technical hurdles remain that will be overcome through further years of intensive research.

Transport and telecommunications were also singled out as domains in which we should be particularly grateful to all of the developments facilitated by science. Rail travel has improved tremendously in recent decades taking hours off previous journey times, witness the bullet train in Japan and the TGV in France. Road transport too is faster, much safer and more comfortable. Developments in aeronautical science have meant that air travel has become commonplace enabling people to cross the globe for both recreational and business purposes in a matter of hours rather than days and even weeks, as was the case in the past. The development of rocket science has enabled pioneering trips into outer space which have made for a much better understanding of the universe of which our planet is just a tiny component, to say nothing of the huge range of possibilities afforded by the development of satellites. Satellite technology has come to play a crucial role in such diverse domains as weather forecasting, telecommunications, the navigation of ships, aircraft and road vehicles and prospecting for natural resources. Not only is our world a safer place thanks to all of these developments but it is now also a smaller place in the sense that we enjoy instantaneous transmission of information from one continent to another with all its concomitant benefits in a whole panoply of different areas ranging from personal relationships to business to international diplomacy.

The world of work has also been revolutionised by progress in the field of science and technology. The development of computers and the Internet makes it possible for millions of people, some of whom would otherwise be prevented from working because of various disabilities, to work from home. Particularly dangerous jobs can be done by robots, while the benefits of computer technology are especially beneficial in hi-tech industries such as aeronautical and electronic engineering. Industrial and agricultural production have benefited from the development of state of the art machinery while the development of artificial fertilisers and pesticides and of genetically modified crops has enabled greatly increased yields as well as more nutritive crops and is thereby an important weapon in the fight against famine and malnutrition.

By way of conclusion, many essays reiterated that the impact of science on people's lives in recent times has been tremendous and is still growing. Science is deeply interwoven with all aspects of our lives and scientific knowledge enables us to improve the quality of our lives at so many different levels. Science informs public policy and personal decisions on energy, conservation, agriculture, health, transportation, communication, defence, economics, leisure and exploration. It's almost impossible to overstate how many aspects of modern life are impacted by scientific knowledge to the extent that singling out just one or two areas to which society should be particularly grateful to scientific progress is a nigh impossible task.

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 for this paper and essays were generally of the right length. Focus on the question set was, however, often poor and the arguments superficial. Most of the candidates did write a plan but it was often short and sketchy, written in English and very basic in content. Those who did not plan wrote essays that were poorly constructed and full of alterations, making them very difficult to follow. Ideas were often presented in a muddled way, with no clear prioritisation or sense of balance. It is clear that those candidates who define the terms of the question in their own mind and organise the material into some kind of order before writing generally gain higher marks for content. It is particularly important that essays should target the precise terms of the question and not merely relate to the general topic area. Essays on the overarching topic area (e.g. *l'ordre public*) will always score poorly on content as much of the material used by candidates will be irrelevant given the question title itself. Many candidates' first paragraphs often contained formulaic definitions of the words in the topic heading such as *la santé et la forme*. These had clearly been learned by heart and added little to the essay as they were not specifically related to the question. Often, accuracy in language dropped off after this opening paragraph. Others launched straight into the meat of their argument without any introductory statements. Quotations were often used but failed to elucidate the argument in many cases.

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

Successful candidates were those who managed to write logical and coherent arguments focusing tightly on the question set and which were written in clear and succinct idiomatic language.

Examples of good use of language include:

Appropriate use of linking words and phrases such as *donc, par exemple, lorsque, ainsi, puisque, cependant, pourtant, d'abord, d'ailleurs, en outre, néanmoins, en revanche, de prime abord*.

Range of topic appropriate vocabulary demonstrating that candidates have read a range of media on subjects as diverse as the judicial system and space research.

Range of structures including correct forms of the subjunctive. Use of a range of verbs such as *pour encourager, reposer sur, promouvoir, justifier, mener à, ne cesser de*.

Correct use of idioms such as *il s'agit de, il convient de, en d'autres mots, au revers de la médaille, étant donné que, tel que*

Common errors:

Incorrect genders/spellings (sometimes even when the word is in the title): *stress, manque, travail, confort, justice, judiciaire, loi, pays, voie, somme, coûte, développement, gouvernement, monde, planète, rôle, exemple, phénomène, crime, problème, aspect*

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

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

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

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

Incorrect sequence of tenses with *si*.

Inaccurate use of accents including in words used in the questions such as *système, coûte, remédier*

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 *rendre*

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

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

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

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

Comments on specific questions:

Question 1

This was a popular question but was often tackled in a very superficial way. Some candidates couldn't explain what they understood by *confort matériel*. They equated it merely with *choses* and went on to talk about the acquisition of possessions. Many avoided any discussion of whether material possessions can bring true happiness, preferring instead to list the high price items needed to give the right impression to others about one's status. They often appeared to view happiness as the result of having money, being able to purchase luxuries and being seen to be successful. A few candidates did however note that celebrities who, on the surface, appear to have everything they need in terms of material comforts are often unhappy and even commit suicide. This then led them to the conclusion that there are other aspects that contribute to happiness such as love, family and work. Answers to this question mostly showed little depth of analysis and balance.

Question 2

This was a question which stimulated some lively discussion. Most candidates attempted some balance within their answers, with recognition that the justice system can be at one and the same time effective and flawed. Many talked about corruption within the system from police officers being involved in drugs rackets to judges being overly influenced by expensive lawyers engaged by rich clients. There was also some discussion of the legal system and the unfairness of certain laws and prison sentences. It was generally felt that minor infringements of the law such as driving offences and recreational drug use should be treated with minimal fines and that major crimes should be severely punished. It was felt that too often celebrities and rich people who could afford top lawyers were given short sentences or even allowed to walk free. It was the strongly held view that there was one law for the rich and one for the poor. On the whole, this question led to some strongly argued essays with good exemplification and a real engagement with the topic.

Question 3

This question was quite poorly answered. Many candidates chose to ignore the title set and merely write an essay on the overall topic of health. In these essays, there was little or no reference to the developing countries and instead a discussion of general health issues such as obesity, cancer and heart disease. It was felt that that the international community was not doing enough to stem the rate of deaths from obesity in particular and its associated illnesses such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Candidates felt that more awareness-raising exercises should be carried out to encourage people to think about their health by governments and TV channels. The few candidates who did mention the developing countries talked about famine, lack of clean water and sanitation, climate change and wars having a major impact on the health of the people there. They suggested that more aid was necessary from the developed world but were also clear in their view that global political solutions were needed if the situation were ever to change.

Question 4

This question was attempted by very few candidates. There was some misunderstanding of the term *salaries* which some took to be *salaires*. This then led them to a discussion of the cost of employees to companies and how companies needed to make redundancies to stay afloat. There was also some general discussion of the range of salaries within companies and the fairness with which they were set. Those candidates who did answer the question set wrote about how workplace stress can affect the productivity of the work force. They talked about long working hours, poor rates of pay and working conditions which can cause stress to employees and thus affect their performance. It was recognised that stress is a disease of our age and can result in both physical and mental illness leading to sickness absence. This then has a knock on effect on the profits of the company. Candidates felt that better working conditions with regular breaks, a good holiday allowance and a salary that allowed people to look after their families were essential elements that should be available to all employees.

Question 5

The candidates who answered this question were generally quite vehement in their views. There was a strong feeling that space research is essential since our world population is increasing and we are outgrowing the earth. We, therefore, need to explore space to find new places to live. It was also considered to be important for scientific research in general since we can learn much about physics, chemistry and biology while in space. Examples were given of the work taking place in the International Space Station and explorations to Mars and Pluto. This was all seen as essential to furthering human knowledge. Other candidates were less in favour believing that money would be better spent on this planet to ensure that we protect people from poverty, famine, illness, war, climate change and other global issues. Overall, this was a question attempted by candidates of all abilities who mostly had something pertinent to say and some examples to support their view.