

FRENCH

<p>Paper 0520/12 Listening</p>
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Key messages

- Candidates scored well on the first two sections of the paper and a good number also went on to do quite well in the last, harder section. The examination was accessible to all candidates.
- Some candidates wrote first attempts at answers in pencil and then wrote over the top in ink making the formation of words very hard to read. In such cases, Examiners are not able to award marks as the answers are unclear. Candidates need to cross out material they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- There were many cases of poor handwriting.
- Candidates need to be reminded not to write lengthy answers as extra material will often invalidate the required answer.
- A few candidates ticked only four boxes instead of six on **Question 16**.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication.
- Candidates should try to attempt all questions on the paper.

General comments

The candidature overall performed very well on the first two sections of the paper with the majority going on to attempt the final section. Even weaker candidates were successful on a few questions in each of the last two exercises. The candidature was usually familiar with the demands and structure of the paper and rubrics were usually well understood. There were, however, cases of some candidates ticking too few boxes on **Question 16** and occasionally ticking extra boxes on multiple-choice questions. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. The examined topics and contexts were found to be accessible to all candidates. A full range of marks was seen across the paper.

The French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test was drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

It was clear that candidates in many centres had appreciated the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are always preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should also not answer or infer from general knowledge as they run the risk of adding extra material which is not on the recording and this will invalidate an otherwise correct answer. There were cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple-choice questions with visual options. Candidates generally performed well on this opening exercise which was intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short and the vocabulary areas tested time, weather, food and drink, furniture, personal hygiene items, sport and film types. Rubrics were generally well understood by candidates.

Nearly all candidates answered the first two questions correctly. Weaker candidates did not always recognise *ananas* on **Question 3**. **Question 4** was well done but **Question 5** proved to be the least well done question in this opening exercise. On **Question 6**, fair attempts were made but incorrect answers often identified *brosse* rather than *dentifrice*. **Questions 7** and **8** were usually quite well attempted.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured information about a hotel. Questions tested distances, room facilities, hotel facilities, local shops and tourist activities and events. Candidates generally performed well on this exercise. Most successfully identified 20 on **Question 9** but those who opted to write *vingt* were not always able to give an acceptable spelling and would perhaps have gained the mark if they had instead written the number in numerals. On **Question 10**, good numbers were able to identify *terrasse*. On **Question 11**, *douche* was well attempted but not all could understand *ascenseur* on **Question 12**. Candidates fared very well on **Question 13** but found **Question 14** harder often choosing *équitation* and not recognising *peinture*. On **Question 15**, many were successful but some chose *discothèque* instead of *feu d'artifice*.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was quite good. There were, however, cases of candidates ticking four boxes only. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks **or** crosses are both acceptable, but can cause confusion when used together. Candidates should not attempt to put a tick and a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

Candidates heard four young people talking about the topic of staying fit. Candidates made a very good attempt at this exercise and were clearly familiar with the topic area and associated vocabulary. Good numbers scored between 4 and 6 marks, with many scoring 5 or 6 marks. The most common incorrect answer was on the first extract, featuring Florence, where some chose option **(a)** as their correct answer.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–25

In this exercise, candidates heard two interviews with two different young French students, Marion and Nolan, about their work experience in catering. In the first interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than in the previous exercise. Candidates generally attempted the questions on the first interview more successfully than on the second interview.

Candidates made good attempts at giving an acceptable spelling of *serveuse* on **Question 17**. **Question 18** was usually well answered with many correctly identifying the word *travaille*. On **Question 19**, weaker candidates offered incorrect versions of *cousins* such as *cours* or *courses*. Most gave an acceptable spelling of *étudiants* on **Question 20** and nearly all candidates were successful on **Question 21**.

On the second interview, candidates heard the interview with Nolan. **Question 22** required candidates to identify the time Nolan had to get up. Nearly half the candidates answered this successfully. Candidates needed to ignore the first time mentioned and instead listen for the cue *je me lève* which was heard immediately before the correct time 5h15. Incorrect attempts often featured the first time they heard, *les repas doivent être prêts avant 10h*, and consequently they answered 10h, showing the need to read the

question carefully before listening. On **Question 23**, many were not able to give the correct answer *bonne humeur*. Some joined the two words, showing incomplete comprehension of what they had heard and others did not give an acceptable spelling of *humeur*. **Question 24** proved equally challenging with only the better candidates able to say what kind of desserts Nolan preferred preparing. Instead of *fruits rouges*, many attempted to combine the two words together and wrote answers such as *frirouge*. Others wrote answers such as *frites rouges*. Better attempts were made at *entreprise* on **Question 25** with over half the candidates gaining the mark here.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Sylvain talking about his new way of travelling. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events. The exercise discriminated well across the candidature and a full range of performance was seen with many candidates often scoring quite good marks and even weaker candidates often able to score 1 or 2 marks.

On **Question 26**, only under half the candidature was able to show they had the gist understanding required to identify what this new form of travel consisted of. Good numbers were however successful on **Question 27** and went on to be nearly as successful on **Question 28**. In the second part of this exercise, well over half the candidature was able to identify what Sylvain thought about the people he had met on his trips and what had surprised him when he had arrived in Corsica. Many candidates picked up the mark on **Question 31**. There was no discernible pattern seen on incorrect answers.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

This was a suitably demanding and appropriately challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Very few candidates did not attempt this exercise. Even the weaker candidates made commendable efforts to follow the extract and answer at least some of the questions. Consequently, they were able to score some marks.

Candidates heard an interview with Jia, a young Chinese girl, talking about her life living and working in Lausanne in Switzerland. Questions again tested key specific information and also attitudes, emotions and gist understanding. There was a good mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise and the questions were phrased in such a way as to require short answers only. Some wrote too much and attempted to write several answers per question or included extra details which contradicted the otherwise correct material they had offered. Candidates need to be concise and ensure that they do not add details from general knowledge or add material which does not answer the set question. Such material can distort and invalidate an answer. It remains very important for candidates in the reading time **before** they hear the extract that they ensure they understand precisely what is being asked and only answer with **relevant detail**.

Question 32 was done well by about half the candidates. Some invalidated their answers by including extra adjectives. On **Question 33**, candidates made good attempts and had understood the idea of the Swiss being well organised. **Question 34** was also well attempted but here some added *magnifique* which was said of Lausanne rather than describing the streets there. This therefore invalidated an otherwise correct answer. Candidates fared slightly better on **Question 35** when talking about how Jia found the air quality in Lausanne and answered correctly *excellente*. Again, however, some included *agréable* alongside the correct answer. This referred back to the description of the climate and did not show careful specific listening. On **Question 36**, many found it difficult to give an acceptable spelling of *meilleure* but were more successful on **Question 37** and correctly identified that Jia had found it difficult to find a flat. Here, some spelt *trouver* as *trover* and did not gain the mark. A similar number of candidates were also successful on **Question 38** and were able to render *voisine* quite well. **Question 39** just required the response *déjeuner*. Candidates who included the negative notion here in their response were not penalised despite the question having been phrased in such a way as to avoid them having to write too much. Some however guessed at answers such as *cricket*, *parler* or *travailler*. **Question 40** proved to be a discriminating test of accurate listening at this level and a very appropriate testing final question. Candidates were required to identify *accepter les gens*. Many misheard and wrote answers such as *taxite* and others answered incorrectly *accepter les jeunes* as they misheard *gens* as *jeunes*.

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<p>Paper 0520/22 Reading</p>
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Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:

- ensure that they answer the question asked, especially in **Section 3**
- remember that on a reading paper, reading the questions is as important as reading the texts
- remember that the questions follow the order of the text.

General comments

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

This exercise proved accessible to almost all candidates, with no questions unattempted. However, a significant number of candidates had difficulty with telling the time in French (**Question 2**) and also with **Question 5**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Scores for this exercise were generally high and full marks were fairly common. However, weather expressions appeared unfamiliar to a minority of candidates.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

Candidates were generally secure with this exercise. On **Question 13**, both distractors proved appealing to candidates.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Some candidates appeared to make use only of perceived meaning of the option words and the text, and did not use the grammatical markers in the sentences to assist with narrowing down their options. On **Question 17**, a significant number of candidates selected the distractor *ville*. Only a very small number of candidates appeared to have selected words randomly.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of an email from Nadège to her friend, Fatima, about a recent change in her family life. The text was mostly straightforward and the vocabulary was familiar and most candidates were able to cope with the demands of the task. Although long answers are not required, and often only a few words would answer the question, many

candidates chose to copy a couple of sentences from the text for each question. For this exercise, extraneous material and incorrect tenses are often ignored as long as they do not in some way invalidate the candidate's correct response.

Some candidates employed unnecessary inference in this exercise. The answer to **Question 21** is clearly flagged as being in the first sentence, yet some candidates went further down the text to find an answer. On **Question 22**, some candidates saw *hôpital* in the text and wrote that this was where the grandmother had her accident rather than the place she went as a result of the accident. Similarly, on **Question 24**, some saw *chambre d'amis* and wrote that Nadège was sharing her room with her friends rather than her sister. It is important that candidates read the questions carefully and think about the logic and likelihood of what they are writing.

Some candidates looked further back in the text for **Question 27**, and it is important to remember that the questions follow the order of the text. **Question 29** caused problems for those candidates who tried to rephrase the French rather than using the language from the text as they sometimes changed the meaning.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

In **Section 3**, examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail and for candidates to be more selective of the information they take from the reading texts when correcting the false statements. Candidates are reminded that they should not merely write the opposite of the statement and need to look for the alternative information.

Many candidates were able to identify successfully the false statements, although **Question 30** was the most frequently incorrect. This appeared to be because candidates did not know the meaning of the word *ravi* and assumed it was a negative word. Candidates often incorrectly ticked **Question 34** as true.

There were some patterns of answers that are not commonly seen, such as a minority of candidates merely adding the negative as the justification for **Question 33**. For the justification for **Question 32**, some candidates wrote the exact statement that was already there, rather than substituting in *faciles*.

Exercise 2 Questions 35–41

This final exercise was intended to be the most challenging part of the paper. Where candidates lost marks it was often through including information that was not necessary to answer the question. Very few candidates achieved full marks and the questions seem to have discriminated appropriately.

Candidates lost marks on **Question 36** for including too much information, and a significant number wrote about Isabelle receiving the email for **Question 37**, misunderstanding the question.

Candidates generally gave too much information for **Question 38**. They did not need to include that the young people were tired. **Question 39** should have been straightforward to answer but some candidates looked further back in the text.

The simple manipulation required by **Question 41** caused problems for a large number of candidates who wrote *s'ont* rather than *l'ont*.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 0520/03 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- Centres need to observe the stipulated timings of five minutes for each of the two conversations.
- Centres usually remembered to include questions in the General conversation section which would elicit past and future tenses from candidates. This was, however, often **not** the case in the Topic conversation. This often resulted in reductions to the marks awarded in centres. Such tense usage is essential in both conversations if candidates are to score more than 6 marks for Language.
- Centres are reminded not to change the cues in the role play tasks and not to add extra tasks.
- In many centres, there were not enough opportunities for candidates to respond to unexpected questions or to develop their answers spontaneously.
- Centres should aim to cover two or three topics in the General conversation with each candidate as in some centres too many topics were covered too superficially.

General comments

Centres were usually well aware that there were three sections to the test. The role play section was usually conducted well in centres. Examiners usually followed the cues correctly, prompting where necessary and encouraging candidates to work for the marks. Examiners who did not follow the scripted cues and who changed the tasks, or who did not prepare thoroughly, sometimes made this section of the test harder for the candidates.

There were cases of Examiners not observing the correct timings in the conversation sections. If conversation sections are too short, this will adversely affect candidates' marks. In such cases, candidates are not given the opportunity to develop their ideas and opinions nor can they use a range of structures and tenses. It is in the interest of fairness to all candidates to make sure that each candidate is given the full examination time of five minutes for **each** of their two conversation sections. Centres are also reminded that examples of past and future tenses can only be credited within the stipulated timings of the test. Conversations which are too long can also disadvantage candidates.

Examiners need to understand the requirements of the mark scheme for the conversation sections in order that they ask the right sort of questions which will stretch candidates and give them the opportunity to fulfil the descriptors in the higher mark bands. For example, Examiners who included unexpected questions in a spontaneous, natural way went beyond the straightforward 'closed' questions and gave candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on Table B, Communication. It is essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in both conversation sections as candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses accurately for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on Table C, Language.

Centres are reminded to make a clear transition between the Topic conversation and the General conversation. This transition should be in French. The links between the different parts of the test should be in French.

The full requirements of the test are clearly laid out in the Teachers' Notes booklet and all centres are strongly advised to read through these in advance of the test so that they have plenty of time to clarify any uncertainties. Centres should note that there are also examples of marked speaking tests on the French pages of the School Support Hub which can aid Examiner preparation.

- **Clerical checks**

The clerical work has usually been completed very efficiently and centres are thanked for this. It is essential that all clerical work is checked very carefully to ensure that candidates receive the correct mark in centres.

- **Recording**

Centres should note that the recording must not be paused between different sections of the test nor should the recording be paused at any stage during an individual candidate's test. The Examiner must introduce the candidate by name and candidate number and also give the Role Play Card number. This announcement must not be made by the candidate.

- **Application of the mark scheme**

In the role plays, if there are two parts to a task, Examiners are free to split the task, but if only one part of a task is completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 1. If a candidate uses a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2 and not 3 is appropriate. Poor pronunciation should be queried as there were many cases where poor pronunciation prevented clear communication of the set task. If the pronunciation of a key element is not clear, a mark of 3 is **not** appropriate.

In the conversation sections, marking tended to be generous in many centres, as marks were awarded in the higher bands when there was no evidence that candidates could respond in a spontaneous way to unexpected questions, develop their ideas and give routine justifications and explanations. Candidates should be encouraged to develop and support their opinions to gain high marks for Communication. To gain high marks for Language, they need to display a wide range of structures and communicate consistently and accurately in a range of tenses.

Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in centres but were a little generous in some centres when pronunciation was not good and impeded successful communication.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Examiners in centres generally prompted candidates when necessary but there were cases of candidates needing to be prompted when they missed a task. Examiners must keep to the script provided and encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. Two-part tasks were split into **(i)** and **(ii)** on the Role Play cards. This helps candidates to remember to attempt both parts of the tasks where necessary.

Candidates are also reminded that it is always important to listen to the Examiner as on all the Role Play A situations, there is always one task which requires them to listen and choose from the two options offered by the Examiner. Examiners must not offer different options of their own. Likewise, on the Role Play B situations, there is always one task which requires candidates to respond to an unexpected question. Examiners are again reminded not to change the cues in the scripts so as to ensure that the level of difficulty in the task remains the same for all candidates. Extra tasks should not be added by the Examiner.

A role plays

The A role plays were found to be of equal difficulty and accessible to candidates. They were a fair test at this level of the test and many candidates performed very well on them and made a confident start.

Centres had usually trained candidates well to include a greeting and thanks where required. Centres are reminded that often a short response (perhaps one word) will be appropriate in many tasks and, in such cases, a mark of 3 can be awarded. Examiners should always query pronunciation if the meaning of a message is not clear due to mispronunciation. Generally, candidates had been well prepared for the A role plays.

Buying tickets at the cinema

This role play was approached well by candidates but many mispronounced *tickets* on **Task 1**. On **Task 2**, most were able to choose an option with ease and also give a clear number on **Task 3**. On **Task 4**, fair attempts were made at requesting a drink but those who said *non* to the examiner's cue did not gain the mark as the task required them to say which drink they wanted. Those who chose to have a juice drink frequently mispronounced *jus*. Candidates were generally well prepared to phrase an appropriate question to ask the price and were generally successful on **Task 5**.

Buying vegetables at the market

Candidates found few problems on **Task 1** and were able to state clearly what they wanted to buy. In **Task 2**, they chose one option offered by the Examiner and were also usually well able to state a quantity well on **Task 3**. On **Task 4**, some asked for a kind of fruit instead of a kind of vegetable and consequently did not fulfil the set task. **Task 5** was well done.

Arranging to play tennis

Candidates again approached this role play well. On **Task 1**, some mispronounced *tennis*. On **Task 2**, a day was required but if a specific date was given, this was also accepted. On **Task 3**, a few candidates did not choose one of the two options given by the Examiner and chose a different time. **Task 4** was well done and, on **Task 5**, most were able to phrase an appropriate question and thank the employee.

B role plays

The B role plays were deliberately more demanding in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, and to give and justify opinions. The level of challenge was found to be balanced across the role plays. They differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score a mark on most tasks when the Examiner kept closely to the script. It is important that Examiners know their own role and stick to the set tasks. Candidates should be reminded that there will always be one task in which they have to listen to the Examiner and reply to an unprepared question. They should be advised to consider likely questions in the fifteen minutes preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room. There is also always one task which will require candidates to react in some way. Candidates should be prepared to give a positive or negative opinion about something. It is also well worth remembering that one task on B role plays requires the candidate to ask one appropriate question and candidates also need to be aware of this in their preparation time. They need to recognise that the rubrics *Posez une question* or *Demandez* appear on all role plays and require a question to be formulated. Centres are reminded that, if a verb is used by a candidate, it should be correctly conjugated for a mark of 3 to be appropriate.

Phoning a restaurant

On **Task 1**, most were able to say that they had left a present at the restaurant but pronunciation of *laissé* was often given as *lassé*. In some centres, Examiners mistakenly awarded in such cases 3 marks instead of a mark of 2. On **Task 2**, most were able to give two details about the present. On **Task 3**, most responded by giving a table number, which was acceptable. Some, however, gave inappropriate responses to the unexpected question such as *dans les toilettes* which showed that they had not listened carefully to the question. **Task 4** was not well done by weaker candidates who often just said they wanted to have the present rather than formulate a correct question. On **Task 5**, candidates were expected to give an opinion about what they thought of the evening. Those who did not give a reason for this opinion did not complete the second part of the task and only scored 1 of the 3 marks available.

Phoning about a job in a hotel

Most made a good start to this role play but, on **Task 2**, only the better candidates were quick to understand the unexpected question about which languages they spoke and sometimes said instead when they were free to work. **Task 3** required candidates to say that they had worked in a hotel and state the kind of work they did in an appropriate past tense. Candidates who said they had not worked in a hotel did not fulfil the set task. **Task 4** required candidates to give two details about why they liked this kind of work which most attempted well. However, candidates sometimes only gave one detail. On **Task 5**, most made good attempts at phrasing an appropriate question. Those who asked about the salary often mispronounced *salaire* as *salary* and did not score the marks.

Phoning to invite a friend out

On **Task 1**, candidates generally found it hard to manipulate the pronoun in the rubric *pour l'inviter* to *t'inviter* which clouded the message. **Task 2** required candidates to give a positive opinion about the event last year in an appropriate past tense and to explain why they had liked it. Fair attempts were made but weaker candidates often made verbal errors here. On **Task 3**, most were able to say where the event was taking place and give a suitable finishing time. Some caused confusion by saying the event was at their house. The unexpected question in **Task 4** required a form of transport to be given and candidates did not always understand the interrogative adverb *comment*. On **Task 5**, to score 3 marks the candidate needed to formulate a correct question and ask what clothes the friend would be wearing to the event. Candidates who stated what they were themselves going to wear did not score the marks. In a few cases, the Examiner asked the question of the candidate and, in so doing, prevented the candidate from scoring marks. This highlighted the need for Examiners to be more familiar with the cues in the script.

Topic presentation and Topic conversation

The standard of work heard in this section covered a wide range of performance. Nearly all centres conducted a Topic conversation after the presentation but the timings were often incorrect. The presentation should last between 1 to 2 minutes and the remaining time of 3 to 4 minutes should be spent discussing the topic. Some sections were too short and some sections were very long. Examiners should also try to avoid asking questions which elicit material already heard in the presentation. Often, questions here did not stretch candidates and the questioning was frequently at a level which did not invite candidates to develop their ideas in a spontaneous way. Candidates, especially the more able ones, need to show that they can talk about their material in a natural way, give explanations and give and support their opinions. If candidates are to score highly in this section of the test, the questioning must not consist of a series of pre-learnt questions and answers in which both Examiner and candidate know what is coming and in which order. Examiners who did not ask any questions to test past and future tenses disadvantaged their candidates, as this limited the Language mark to 6. Centres frequently marked this section of the test too generously.

Presentation times were usually well adhered to by candidates and many candidates had clearly often prepared their topic thoroughly. The best candidates were able to sustain the communication and level of language after the presentation but, for many, this often proved more difficult. Most candidates spoke clearly but some rushed their presentation and often mispronounced their material which prevented them from communicating clearly.

Candidates chose a good range of topics with many choosing to focus their presentation on the environment, festivals, healthy lifestyle, technology, India, holidays and ambitions for the future. These were often spoken about in a lively way and were interesting to hear. Centres had usually encouraged candidates to prepare a good range of topics within their centre. Examiners are reminded of the need to avoid too many questions which require precise geographical or statistical knowledge. It is better instead to ask candidates to say what they find most interesting/like/dislike etc. about their country/another country and why. The best performances in this section of the test were those which developed into a natural conversation and in which candidates could express not just factual information in response to straightforward questions but also develop and explain their opinions and feelings about the topic. Good examining practice was evident when Examiners clearly indicated the end of this section of the test with a phrase such as *Maintenant on passe à la conversation générale*. This is helpful to candidates.

General conversation

Timings were usually correct but some centres did not apply the correct timing in this final section of the test. Some centres need to spend more time on the General conversation section as this section was too short. Correct timings mean that candidates are given the opportunity to develop ideas and show they can use a range of linguistic features. In some centres, timings were too long and this can also disadvantage candidates.

Centres usually covered an appropriate range of topics within the centre but often they tried to cover too many topics, too superficially, with a string of unconnected questions. This did not give candidates the chance to go into depth on a topic. It was also confusing for candidates to have to switch from topic to topic. Centres are reminded that only two or three topics should be covered in this section of the test. It is helpful on each of the two or three topics examined to include questions in different tenses. Centres are reminded that for a mark of more than 6 to be scored for Language, the candidate should be able to produce accurately conjugated examples of past and future tenses.

It is also important to remember to cover different topics with different candidates and, if using the same topic with different candidates, to try to use different questions. Generally, centres need to cover fewer topics and try to include a good range of questions which enable candidates to have access to the upper ends of the mark bands for Communication. Questions which are very straightforward and which require simple short responses will not give candidates access to the upper mark bands for both Communication and Language.

The best examining gave candidates the opportunity to respond to logically connected questions on two or three topics only. Candidates need to be able to develop their answers, give and explain opinions and be able to respond to **unexpected** questions in order to gain high marks.

Generally, a good range of appropriate topics was covered in centres. Many candidates spoke about festivals, holidays, healthy lifestyle, leisure activities, future plans, their town, school, pollution and the environment. Some spoke about their daily routine but this topic was not always fully exploited in terms of a range of tense coverage. In terms of communication, the best candidates were able to go beyond straightforward questions and developed their ideas adding personal opinions and explanations in a spontaneous way in longer utterances. They also performed consistently and accurately and showed control over a range of linguistic structures and vocabulary. Such candidates were also able to use confidently structures such as the correct sequencing of tenses when using *quand* and *si*. Weaker candidates, however, often struggled to use a correct auxiliary verb in the perfect tense or mispronounced past participles which sometimes made their messages unclear.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/42
Writing

Key messages

- In **Question 1**, candidates should avoid leaving gaps in the list. If they cannot recall a word for an item illustrated, they can give other items which fit the context of the title.
- **Question 2** offers open-ended tasks which give candidates the chance to expand with additional details. Many did on this occasion and it should always be encouraged.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must remember that the final task always requires a change of tense.
- Candidates should respond to each task in **Question 3** in the tense indicated.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should make sure that they use common vocabulary and structures accurately.
- In **Question 3**, in order to access the top bands for Other linguistic features, candidates must demonstrate that they can use the complex structures which are detailed in the specification.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation. When candidates write in pen over an initial draft in pencil their work is often difficult to read: this may have a bearing on the final mark awarded.

General comments

The full range of ability was represented: there were many candidates who produced a high standard of work.

Question 1

Marks are awarded for each recognisable word which fits the context of the rubric, whether or not the item is one of those suggested by the pictures.

Question 2

Communication

A mark was awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Candidates are not required to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks. The most effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

The word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If candidates write over 90 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Some candidates crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

The maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if the candidate omits a task.

Language

The published criteria offer a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use simple sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: an email, an article, a story line to be continued.

Candidates are advised to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance. Candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs. If a candidate produces a 'correct' verb form which is in the 'wrong' tense for the task, there is no reward.

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

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

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: À la bibliothèque

This question provided candidates with a straightforward activity and many achieved 5 marks. Most candidates offered items represented by the pictures. The mark scheme lists other things which might be found in a library and worthy of marks.

Control of spelling was generally very accurate: the mark scheme identifies those incorrect spellings which were considered close enough to communicate the intended idea.

There were some common errors and confusions: *lampe* was often rendered as *lamp* and candidates should be aware of the difference in meaning between *lampe* and *lumière*. The latter noun does not designate an object. Attempts at the acceptable *magazine* were sometimes rendered as *magasin* which could not be rewarded as it means something different. *Chaise* commonly featured and there were numerous attempts at *fauteuil, sofa, canapé*, however some wrongly referred to this piece of furniture as *couche* which is not something which would be found in a library.

Question 2: Un membre de ma famille

Candidates dealt very successfully with this question.

Task 1 invited candidates to describe their chosen person. Many gave seven or eight different pieces of information, including physical descriptions, age and birthday, references to character, interests, education and employment.

Some structures presented problems: the spelling of *il/elle s'appelle* (e.g. *il/elle s'apple*), the use of *être* rather than *avoir* to express age or the use of the personal pronoun rather than the possessive adjective. The spelling of *cheveux* was a problem and was often confused with *chevaux*. Candidates should also be

more aware of the correct way of expressing dates: *le 5 janvier* and not *le 5th janvier*. Some candidates were also uncertain about the use of the disjunctive/strong pronoun, offering *ça/sa* instead of *lui/elle*.

Task 2 required candidates to state where the person lived. Some unfortunately omitted this information. A simple statement such as *elle habite à Mumbai* or *il habite un appartement en ville* was all that was required.

Task 3 provided another opportunity for candidates to gain a number of marks with information about the activities that their chosen person did during their free time. Typical responses included: *il aime jouer au cricket, elle écoute de la musique, elle aime regarder des films, il fait de la peinture*.

Task 4 asked candidates to give details about what they would like to do with this person during the next holidays. There were various ways of responding, e.g. *nous voudrions voyager au Japon, je voudrais aller au cinéma avec mon frère, ma sœur voudrait aller au parc d'attractions avec moi*. Marks were awarded for statements which clearly indicated that both the candidate and the other person were involved. Responses such as *je voudrais visiter la France* or *elle voudrait jouer au tennis* did not answer the question posed.

The task stated *Expliquez ce que vous voudriez faire ensemble* and marks were therefore also awarded to any relevant explanations and reasons given for the choice of activity.

Language

Most candidates achieved at least 4 marks for Language. There were few who were unable to produce a coherent sentence with some correct verb forms. Candidates are advised to answer each task using the tense indicated. This is especially important with respect to the final task which normally requires a future or conditional tense.

Section 2

Question 3(a): Une journée très chaude à la plage

This option was by far the most popular question with over 82% of candidates choosing it.

Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to state when and with whom they went to the beach. Most candidates were able to state successfully when and with whom they had gone to the beach using familiar vocabulary and sentence patterns, e.g. *je suis allé à la plage samedi dernier avec ma famille*. Some chose to use different verbs and idiomatic structures to convey the idea, e.g. *je suis allée à la plage avec mes amies il y a une semaine* or *j'ai passé la journée à la plage avec mon ami hier*.

Candidates should remember that there is a significant difference in meaning between *la semaine dernière* and *la dernière semaine*. In the context here, the second pattern is not correct.

If candidates chose to give the two required details in separate clauses/sentences, then both main verbs had to be acceptable; thus *je visité la plage dimanche, je suis allé avec mon frère* would only gain 1 mark.

Task 2 required details of what they did at the beach. Apart from the straightforward responses, e.g. *j'ai nagé, j'ai joué au badminton*, candidates also mentioned *nous avons mangé des glaces, nous avons fait un pique-nique, je me suis reposée*. There was evidence of some confusion between *jouer* and *faire* when referring to sporting activities. Candidates should note that *jouer des sports* is incorrect.

Task 3 offered the opportunity to explain whether candidates preferred hot or cold weather. Opinions were divided. Many whose preference was for cold weather mentioned *j'aime la neige, je peux boire du chocolat chaud*. There were some excellent attempts to give more detailed information, e.g. *je préfère le temps chaud parce que je peux porter des vêtements confortables en coton, ...parce que je suis sportive et j'aime passer du temps dehors, je préfère le temps froid parce que quand il neige, je peux faire du ski*.

Task 4 asked for specific details of what they do at home during the hot weather. Many candidates mentioned quiet activities or those which offered refreshment, e.g. *je reste chez moi, je joue sur mon ordinateur, je mange des glaces, je vais à la piscine*. Some conveyed the idea using more complex structures, e.g. *chez moi, quand il fait chaud, je mange un casse-croûte délicieux en regardant un film romantique à la télévision*.

Task 5 invited candidates to state what they would do on their next visit to the beach. Respecting the choice of tense, candidates gained the marks for familiar details, e.g. *je vais faire du surf, je vais nager*. Some succeeded in conveying less obvious activities, e.g. *j'aimerais apprendre à faire de la natation, je voudrais faire du jogging avec mon chien*.

Verbs

Candidates were able to use familiar verbs, e.g. *aller, faire, jouer, manger, nager, visiter* to communicate the desired messages. Provided that they could use tenses correctly, they could gain high marks here.

Other linguistic features

Very few candidates scored more than 4 marks for Other linguistic features. The language tended to be rather simplistic, with very little evidence of complex structures or ambitious vocabulary. Some of the examples quoted above show what able candidates can do.

Idiomatic use of grammar (such as knowing when to use *avoir* rather than *être*, using the correct object pronouns or using conjunctions and relative pronouns) is a key element of higher marks in this category.

Question 3(b): Mon ordinateur

Only 8.7% of candidates chose this option. Although some lacked language to express their ideas clearly, there were many who showed some ambition and succeeded in giving a coherent response.

Communication

Task 1 was a very straightforward task requiring simple manipulation of the rubric to state when their computer broke down. Most candidates realised that they only needed to add a suitable expression of time in order to fulfil the task, e.g. *mon ordinateur est tombé en panne hier, récemment mon ordinateur est tombé en panne*. Some candidates chose to express the situation in more complex but equally acceptable manner, e.g. *je regardais un bon film pour me relaxer, quand j'ai mis de l'eau sur mon ordinateur, quand je faisais mes devoirs*.

A few candidates misunderstood *tomber en panne*, thinking that it meant that the computer had fallen (down).

Task 2 asked candidates to state what they did next. Many explained that they told their parents, e.g. *donc j'ai expliqué à mes parents ce qui s'est passé*, or that they contacted someone, e.g. *j'ai téléphoné à une compagnie près de chez moi qui répare les gadgets électroniques, j'ai téléphoné à mon ami qui est un bon technicien*. Some mentioned that they organised for it to be repaired, e.g. *je l'ai donné à un ingénieur, je l'ai donné à mon cousin, il est informaticien*, or even attempted a repair themselves, e.g. *j'ai essayé plusieurs fois de le réparer*. Others decided on a replacement, e.g. *j'ai acheté un nouvel ordinateur*.

It was perfectly acceptable in the context of what they did next to state: *j'ai regardé un film à la télévision or je suis allé jouer au foot*.

Task 3 gave candidates the chance to detail their various uses of a computer. Candidates appeared to be in familiar territory, identifying the many and varied activities for which they use a computer, e.g. *je fais mes devoirs, j'écoute de la musique, je regarde des films*. There were more elaborate responses using complex structures, e.g. *je l'utilise pour communiquer avec ma famille et mes amis, je l'utilise pour faire du shopping en ligne, j'ai besoin de mon ordinateur pour télécharger des films*.

Task 4 invited candidates to detail the disadvantages of a computer. Among the straightforward responses were: *c'est mauvais pour la santé or c'est mauvais pour les yeux*. There were again some more complex ideas expressed using more sophisticated language appropriate to the context, e.g. *l'ordinateur peut être très mauvais pour la santé des jeunes, les jeunes passent trop de temps sur les réseaux sociaux, les jeunes passent des nuits blanches, les ordinateurs rendent les jeunes très paresseux*.

Task 5 required an explanation of why candidates would or would not like to work in computers. This was an accessible task and the majority of candidates were quite positive about a career in computing, e.g. *je voudrais travailler dans l'informatique parce que j'aime les ordinateurs, ...parce que c'est bien payé*. Other good responses included: *ce métier offre un bon salaire, j'ai de bonnes notes en informatique, la technologie*

c'est ma vie. Some identified their chosen career, which was an acceptable way of responding, e.g. *je voudrais devenir astrophysicienne*.

A few candidates gave good negative opinions: *c'est un métier très stressant, l'informatique ne m'intéresse pas du tout, je n'ai pas les qualités pour travailler dans l'informatique*.

Verbs

As can be seen from the examples quoted above, candidates found that they could convey the various relevant necessary ideas using verbs which are part of their regular working vocabulary: *donner, écouter, essayer, faire, passer, regarder, téléphoner, travailler*.

Other linguistic features

There were some candidates who were able to communicate their ideas using some complex sentence patterns. Candidates do need to show some ambition if they wish to score highly in this category. Idiomatic use of grammar (such as knowing when to use *avoir* rather than *être*, using the correct object pronouns or using conjunctions and relative pronouns) is a key element of higher marks in this category.

Question 3(c): Je n'ai pas fait mes devoirs.

Only 8.8% of candidates chose this option. There were some impressive responses from candidates who understood exactly what was required and used familiar language to convey a convincing story. There were some who neither fully grasped what the question involved nor had sufficient control of past tenses to communicate their ideas.

Communication

Task 1 invited candidates to state why they chose not to do their homework. There were some quite simple, straightforward reasons, such as *c'était mon anniversaire, j'étais fatigué, j'étais malade*. Some stated that they had other plans, e.g. *je voulais sortir avec mes amis*. Other ideas included *je n'aime pas l'anglais, ...parce que j'en avais marre* or *c'était l'anniversaire de mon ami et j'ai passé toute la journée chez lui*.

Task 2 allowed candidates to explain how they spent the weekend. There were also 2 marks available for further information about their weekend activities. Candidates often responded in a straightforward manner using vocabulary which was both familiar and easy to adapt to the context, e.g. *je suis allé au cinéma, j'ai fait de l'équitation et j'ai nagé avec ma voisine dans sa piscine, je suis allée chez mes grands-parents et j'ai aidé ma grand-mère dans la cuisine*.

Task 3 asked candidates to state how their parents felt/reacted to their decision not to do their homework. This is a regular task in this type of question. Some gained the marks by stating *mes parents n'étaient pas contents, mes parents étaient déçus* or *mes parents ont été très tristes*. Some expressed the notion with a little more imagination, e.g. *mes parents ont compris la situation, ils m'ont grondé, ma mère m'a dit 'je vais parler à tes professeurs'*.

Task 4 gave candidates the chance to explain whether they had made a good or a bad decision. Some candidates found it challenging to explain why they had regrets or not. However, there were some good ideas, e.g. *j'ai regretté mes actions parce que ma mère a pleuré, ...parce que mon professeur était très fâché* or *je n'ai pas regretté ma décision, c'était la meilleure décision*.

Verbs

Candidates had the freedom to recount the narrative **Tasks 1** and **2** using verbs with which they were familiar.

Other linguistic features

As with the other options, high marks are available to candidates who can vary their sentence patterns using different types of clauses. There were opportunities here to use object pronouns and to order the events of the weekend using appropriate adverbial and prepositional phrases, e.g. *vendredi soir, samedi après-midi, le lendemain matin, plus tard, ensuite, par conséquent*. Idiomatic use of grammar (such as knowing when to use *avoir* rather than *être*, using the correct object pronouns or using conjunctions and relative pronouns) is a key element of higher marks in this category.