

GCE



Chief Examiner's Report French

Summer Series 2017



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in French for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCE FRENCH

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit AS 1 Speaking

Conditions in Schools

Examiners were, as usual, warmly welcomed and well treated by teachers, who showed their usual courtesy and hospitality, with arrangements for tea/coffee and lunch breaks much appreciated. Schools were helpful in providing timetables for candidates, and e-mail communication facilitated the speed and efficiency of the administration of the test. In all schools, examination conditions were very good to excellent and created positive conditions for the examiners and candidates. Teachers continue to be helpful in informing examiners of difficult cases or sensitive issues among candidates. Special arrangements made for some candidates went smoothly.

Schools are reminded, that visits to moderate visiting Oral Examiners in the examination room are key to the general operation of the examination, and a longstanding practice across the sector, commended by Ofqual, and an essential element of quality control for the maintenance of high standards of examining.

Briefing Meeting

In these meetings examiners encouraged a positive attitude to assessment and created a pleasant atmosphere for candidates, seeking to calm nerves. Extreme nervousness is rare, with most students able to give of their best, so this approach continues to prove its worth. They enabled candidates to get to know the examiner in a non-threatening setting, and develop a rapport with him/her, usually without the presence of the teacher.

Presentation

The quality of presentations was high, on occasions outstanding, and there were very few less able performances. It is refreshing that AO4 has been reintroduced as an assessment task. Candidates clearly enjoyed and benefited from engaging directly with themes based in France and Francophone countries and a diverse range of topics were addressed and provided evidence of extensive and helpful research. Those who chose not to comply with this requirement were unable to score as highly as they might have done. Some talked more about themselves than was appropriate, and others focused on narrative or were too general and factual, failing to show any personal critical engagement. Others talked well short of the three minute requirement, and so deprived themselves of higher scores.

Conversation

The removal of questions on the presentation reduced pressure on candidates, and led to a simpler transition to the conversation test. In addition, the shorter length of the test overall made the oral a more positive experience for both candidate and examiner.

The clearer focus of the conversation element on the themes of relationships and lifestyle made the oral more manageable, and was more relevant to the experience of the candidates. It meant less of a leap from GCSE to demanding issues such as university and career, although there were candidates who wished to discuss aspects of those areas and sought to lead the conversation in that direction. It should be stressed that, while the candidate is encouraged to take opportunities to lead the conversation, the overall direction of the questioning belongs to the examiner.

It is important, however, also to underline that this is a general conversation, being undertaken in French, so that questions about what they are studying in French or about France are not off limits, but rather a natural expression of the situation in which they find themselves, and cannot be considered as addressing the A2 topic of school.

Overall performances in this aspect were good, with a readiness to speak without recourse to prepared speeches and an encouraging willingness to engage naturally with the examiners. There is, however, as we have observed for the AS Legacy component, often a clear difference in quality between a well-structured and carefully prepared presentation and the more unpredictable aspects of a conversation. Here, grammatical accuracy and knowledge of vocabulary still need to be strengthened. There is still work to be done, for instance, in developing the knowledge of tenses.

Candidates who had practised with their assistants, or stayed with French families did very well. On the other hand there were some outstanding performances by students who had never been to France. It was good to note that many students took French alongside science subjects, often achieving high marks.

Assessment Unit AS 2 Listening, Reading and Use of Language

Overall Performance

The new format of the examination produced a good range of responses from candidates. It was successful in discriminating between candidates of different abilities and the full range of marks was used. In general, the questions were such that the very best candidates were able to score very high marks. There were also sections of all questions that were very accessible to all candidates, meaning that less able candidates were able to be credited for what they knew and could do.

Section A Listening

This section was very accessible to most candidates. A small number of candidates infringed the rubric and answered in the wrong language.

- Q1** Overall this question proved accessible to most candidates. Several were able to score full marks. At the other end of the scale, some candidates attempted to transcribe but were unsuccessful and their answers showed no understanding.
- (a)** This question was generally very successful. Although un monde différent was only mentioned by a few, most candidates understood nouveaux amis intéressants.
 - (b)** Many candidates got a mark for this question despite their lower level of French.
 - (c)** This was quite successful although there were many forms of spelling of rencontrer. Raconter was used occasionally. Some candidates missed the mark as they did not make it clear that he was afraid that Brigitte might meet up with her new friends.
 - (d)** Quite successful overall. Although many did not understand the verb suivre, they got the mark for understanding that he wanted to befriend her on Facebook.
 - (e)** Most candidates understood the idea of setting up a new account but sometimes poor French lost them the mark. There were many different spellings for compte.
 - (f)** Most candidates understood the idea of Marc being treated as an adult. There were a few miss spellings of dialoguer. However, some got the mark for parler ouvertement.
 - (g)** Most candidates got the mark.
 - (h)** This final question was a discriminator. It proved challenging for some who could not get the idea of perdue face à Internet.
- Q2** Most candidates found this question accessible.
- (a)** This opening question was successful for most candidates with most getting the idea of having to give up sport in order to study more, although some wrote that he had to do more sport because he had been too focused on his studies.
 - (b)** Most candidates got the mark.
 - (c)** This was generally well done as most candidates understood permis de conduire.
 - (d)** A very successful question. Nearly all candidates understood that she lacked motivation.

- (e) Most candidates were successful with this question. They got the idea of a walk although some did not include the idea of duration or destination.
- (f) Most candidates understood the idea that she was encouraged by her teachers.
- (g) A challenging question. Several candidates failed to understand the idea of coping/managing by themselves.
- (h) Generally well done. Most candidates understood the idea of if she put on weight although a few wrote the opposite – if she lost some weight.
- (i) Some candidates missed the idea of the bicycle being his favourite means of transport and some thought it was his favourite way of getting some exercise.
- (j) This question was generally well done. Most candidates understood it wasn't enough to keep him fit.
- (k) This final question was a discriminator. Many thought that there too many people jogging and did not get the idea of having to travel long distances for a number of sports.

Section B Reading

Q1 This proved to be a very accessible question with many candidates scoring high marks. Whilst there is no obligation to rephrase as AO3 is not being assessed, candidates should be aware that lifting directly from the text will not be rewarded when it does not actually answer the question. Candidates should read the questions carefully and make sure that they are using the correct subject/pronoun/possessive adjective, etc. in their answers. Marks were typically lost for cases of unsupported lifting from the text which did not answer the question.

- (a) Generally very successful with most candidates getting both marks.
- (b) This was quite successful overall despite poor spelling of irresponsable.
- (c) Several candidates failed to get the mark as they lifted from the text and used the wrong subject, using the first person plural.
- (d) Generally well done.
- (e) Most candidates scored the mark.
- (f) Generally well done.
- (g) This question was a discriminator. There were some very good answers but many candidates lost marks because of lifting which did not answer the question correctly.
- (h) Most candidates scored one mark but failed to include the location for the second mark.
- (i) Several candidates found this question difficult. There was a lot of irrelevant lifting from the text and sometimes the French was very laboured. Those who lifted from the text were penalised if they used the wrong subject.
- (j) This was quite successful with the idea of being afraid being conveyed. However, a number of candidates lost the second mark for lifting from the text and not changing the possessive adjective.
- (k) This question differentiated between candidates of different abilities as it required more manipulation of the information in the text. Candidates tended to lift from *n'hésite pas à utiliser la force* and were, therefore, not answering the question.

(l) This question was also more challenging. Again, many candidates simply lifted from the text without supporting their answer.

(m) Most candidates gained the two marks. Some misinterpreted the information and implied that the children had already been attacked.

Q2 Most candidates found the translation accessible. It continues to be an excellent, robust academic exercise and a real discriminator among candidates. Some had difficulty with tenses or were careless when translating articles. Candidates should be reminded that they may lose marks through not paying sufficient attention to details.

QWC is assessed in this question, and a small number of candidates did lose marks for spelling and grammatical errors in English.

Section 1

Many candidates found the first phrase difficult and did not accurately translate *Arrivée* at the start of the first sentence. The prepositions in the first sentence caused a surprising number of problems. *At Rouen* and *to Rouen* were used instead of *in Rouen*. *Du Maroc* was often misunderstood. *S'est vite mise* also led to a number of inaccurate translations. Several candidates omitted to translate *vite*.

Section 2

Diplôme was sometimes wrongly translated as *degree*. Some candidates failed to recognize *boulangerie*. *Soudain* proved surprisingly difficult. *Pas de travail pour les postes de nuit* was the most challenging part of this section. Some misunderstood completely and referred to the post office.

Section 3

The first part of this was straightforward but *on l'a vue déprimer* caused problems for some.

Section 4

Some candidates did not pay sufficient attention to the tense and translated *n'a pas perdu* this as *hadn't lost*. Quite a few candidates did not know the idiomatic use of *arriver à*. The translation of *ses leçons de code de la route* was often clumsy. *Road code* and other variants that did not make sense in English were not uncommon.

Section 5

Most candidates coped well with this section. Some candidates did not get theory exam writing theoretical instead. There were problems with the translation of *qu'elle passait* both with the tense and also the meaning of the verb. Many candidates fell into the trap and translated it as *she passed*.

Section 6

The final section was generally well translated. However there were some infelicitous translations of *elle l'a eu du premier coup*. Some candidates did not know *sourit* and others did not pay sufficient attention to the tense, using the past tense in their translations. The last phrase was generally well translated but some candidates lost the mark for not spelling *confidence* correctly in English.

Section C Use of language

It is clear that many candidates found this section testing. With the new GCSE and the increased emphasis on grammar, it is hoped that we will see an improvement in this type of question in the future. It was encouraging however to see a number of excellent performances. This reflected the excellent teaching by a number of centres who have encouraged the learning of grammar. The full range of marks was used in all five questions.

- Q1** Adverbs were generally very well done but there were a few centres where the formation of the adverb had clearly not been taught. Those who understood the rule did very well. Part (g) was the discriminator.
- Q2** It was clear that the use of tenses has been taught and many candidates scored well in this question. Parts (a) and (d) proved the most challenging.
- (a) A number of candidates used the perfect instead of the imperfect tense.
 - (b) There were a few issues with the future tense endings.
 - (c) Mostly well done, although some used the perfect tense.
 - (d) Mostly well done, although some used the present tense as in English.
 - (e) Generally successful. Some candidates had the correct tense but the wrong ending so care should be taken in the fine detail.
- Q3** This section was mostly well done with many candidates scoring full marks. There were some surprising errors. A small number of candidates used possessive pronouns although the relevant possessive adjective was given in English in the question.
- (a) Generally well done.
 - (b) Proved to be a discriminator, with many candidates writing ton instead of votre, although vous appeared twice in the sentence.
 - (c) Also proved difficult for some, with several writing notre instead of nos.
 - (d) It was surprising to see s'émission in several scripts.
 - (e) Generally well done.
- Q4** This proved to be the most challenging question. It should be noted that although the mark scheme gives the most common answers, candidates were credited for other derivative nouns where applicable.
- Parts (a) and (b) proved challenging for many candidates.
- Parts (c) and (d) were generally well done.
- Part (e) was challenging.
- Q5** There were some candidates who achieved full marks in this question. Many of the marks were lost for minor errors such as spelling, gender and agreements.
- (a) Many candidates had difficulty with the translation of older. There was some carelessness with the perfect tense of acheter.
 - (b) This was the most challenging sentence. It was surprising that many candidates did not know how to write the date correctly and included sur le or a th after 24.
 - (c) Several candidates were unable to spell l'obésité correctly. Is becoming proved challenging with many translating literally est devenant or est devenir. There was some carelessness with the gender and the accent on un problème.

- (d)** Many candidates scored full marks but there was some carelessness. Beaucoup des was not uncommon. A l'étranger, although known by the majority, was badly spelt. Some candidates tried to rephrase.
- (e)** Again many scored full marks, however quite a few did not make the adjectives bons and importants agree with the noun. Nowadays proved difficult for some.

Assessment Unit AS 3 Extended Writing

Overall Performance

Candidates have shown great enthusiasm in their responses to this new paper. Their answers showed that they had enjoyed the opportunity to study a film or a text at this level and their knowledge was often impressive. There were very few less able answers.

It was evident that candidates were familiar with the requirement to address all three bullet points in turn and to develop each one with sub-points.

It would be helpful for candidates to clearly write at the top of the page which question they had chosen to answer. Some less able candidates who were storytelling rather than keeping to the points in the question did not do this and as their essay was of a general nature it was unclear at first which question they were answering.

In terms of length of answer, the shorter essays failed to fully develop points and longer answers tended to include irrelevant or repetitive material. Longer essays are also at risk under AO3.

The handwriting and general presentation of some of the work was disappointing. It is in the interest of candidates to write clear, legible answers.

It is not necessary for candidates to double space lines but it is advisable to leave a space between paragraphs as it helps the examiner to see the structure of the essay.

Candidates are assessed for AO2, AO4 and AO3. For further clarification of the requirements of this question, refer to the Mark Scheme grids for the three assessment objectives, the Suggested Lines of Development and Resources in Appendix 3 of the Scheme of Work and the relevant Fact Files on the CCEA French microsite.

AO2: Understanding

Candidates are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the requirements of the question by following the three bullet points given in the question.

An introduction and conclusion help to give coherence to the essay but they should both be short. There is no need to repeat the exact wording of the three bullet-points in the introduction or to repeat the main points of the essay in the conclusion.

Candidates should be encouraged to aim for three sub-points for each bullet point and for a good balance between the three bullet points. They should also be encouraged to plan their answers before they start writing to avoid unbalanced answers and/or repetition. Lack of planning also leads to some messy answers.

Each sub-point should have good development but material has to relate well to the task. Candidates need to focus on key aspects of the question and avoid over-narration of plots. Storytelling which does not address the question directly will not give access to the top two bands.

AO4: Knowledge

Most candidates scored well in AO4 and were able to get into the top two Bands. Knowledge needs to focus on the specific question and be relevant. Quotations are desirable but not essential. A few appropriate quotations will enhance a response, but they need to be both relevant and accurate. Candidates need to refer to specific events in the film/text to gain access to the top two Bands.

AO3: Target Language

A good effort was made to include examples of complex language but there were many careless mistakes. Some essays were too long and candidates penalised themselves under AO3 by failing to correct basic mistakes. Frequent grammar mistakes included lack of agreements, mixing up genders and incorrectly conjugating verbs. Some candidates resorted to using anglicisms or English words.

Q1 Berri: Manon des Sources

This was a very popular option and candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the film.

Several candidates included paragraphs on the technical aspects of the film which were irrelevant to the question. They wrote pre-learnt introductions and conclusions about the actors who played the characters and the awards that they won for the film. Several commented on the lightening and music of the film and the various cinematic techniques used by Berri throughout the film, displaying good knowledge of the technical vocabulary of the cinema but unfortunately failing to answer the question.

Other candidates wrote too much about the film Jean de Florette instead of concentrating on Manon des Sources. Some simply wrote on why Manon des Sources was their favourite French film.

- (a) Candidates who answered this question generally coped very well. Some candidates however wrote extensively about what took place in the previous film Jean de Florette and then failed to mention some of the key points in this question. For the first bullet-point, most candidates were able to mention the responsibility of César, Ugolin and the villagers. They then wrote about Manon blocking the spring and then unblocking it with Bernard at the end. Good candidates were able to elaborate more and talk about Manon trying to set fire to the farm and the miracle at the end.
- (b) Again candidates who answered this question generally coped well although there was some irrelevance in some answers. For the first bullet-point, most candidates were able to mention the father-son relationship between César and Ugolin. For the second bullet point, they were able to explain César's desire for Ugolin to get married. Delphine's revelations were mentioned for the third bullet-point but some candidates failed to link this back to the question and talked about Jean and the film Jean de Florette in general. Most candidates were able to mention César's letter to Manon at the end. Some candidates however focused on how Ugolin was nothing but César's puppet and failed to develop the second and third bullet-points. It was disappointing that very few candidates mentioned César's reaction to Ugolin's suicide and intermarriage among the Soubeyran family.

Q2 Truffaut: Les 400 coups

Few candidates answered on Truffaut but overall the answers showed a good knowledge of the film.

- (a) This question was more popular than Part (b) and more successful. Candidates were able to describe Antoine's life with his parents, the Doinel's cramped apartment and the evidence of poverty. The response to the second bullet point was disappointing, with some candidates focusing on the episode of the cinema and little else. The better candidates included his father's reactions to the theft of the typewriter and the scene in the police station. The third bullet point on his mother's attitude was generally well done. Most candidates described her selfish attitude and included Antoine's answers to the psychologist in the juvenile observation centre.

- (b)** This question proved more difficult. The first bullet point was usually well done as candidates understood the conflict between Antoine and his teacher. The second bullet point was less successful. There was some storytelling and lack of focus. The third bullet point was the most successful. Most candidates were able to mention Antoine's lie about his mother's death, the lie about the guide Michelin and his explanation to the psychologist as to why it is easier to tell lies.

Q3 Camus: *L'Étranger*

This was a popular option but there was some evidence that the less able candidates found *L'Étranger* a difficult text. Several candidates reproduced prepared essays and ended up storytelling rather than addressing the question and the bullet points. There were many inaccurate quotations and several irrelevant points, especially in Part (a). There was also some irrelevant material about Camus' philosophy and existentialism.

- (a)** Answers on this question were disappointing. The first bullet point on *les plaisirs simples* was usually quite well done, with most candidates mentioning the beach and nature's positive influence on Meursault. The second bullet point was less well done. Several candidates described Meursault's indifferent attitude towards the death of his mother and during the wake. Few candidates mentioned the negative influence of nature or its influence on Meursault on the day of his mother's funeral. In the third bullet point some candidates made reference to the trial rather than to the actual murder. Several candidates failed to mention the role of the heat and the sun at the time of the murder.
- (b)** This question was more successful. Most candidates were able to talk about Meursault's reaction to his mother's death and how he rarely visited her in the home, his relationship with Raymond and the physical nature of his relationship with Marie. The first and third bullet points were particularly well answered. The second bullet point was sometimes disappointing as candidates concentrated solely on Raymond but failed to mention Emmanuel, Céleste and Salamano.

Q4 Vigan: *No et moi*

This was a popular text. It was pleasing to see the enthusiastic response from candidates who clearly identified with Lou's problems.

- (a)** Most candidates coped well with this question. For the first bullet point, they mentioned the death of Thaïs, Anouk's depression and her lack of relationship with Lou quoting the incident when Lou fell off her bike and before Léa's party. The second bullet point about Lou's relationship with her father was more general about how they get on well and only some candidates were able to develop this point and mention specific examples illustrating their close relationship. The third bullet point was generally well done although some candidates did not refer to her mother's reaction when Lou returned to her parents' flat at the end of the novel.
- (b)** Most candidates coped reasonably well with this question. For the first bullet point they mentioned how No's mother had rejected her after being raped and her childhood with her grandmother and in care homes. The second bullet point was generally well done. Candidates mentioned social exclusion, violence on the street and the practical difficulties. Some answers, however, were very general and described the living conditions of homeless people without backing up their points with specific examples from the text. For the third bullet point, most candidates mentioned finding comfort in alcohol but again some answers were very vague.

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