GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

FRENCH

SUMMER 2014
Grade Boundaries

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FRENCH

General Certificate of Secondary Education

SUMMER 2014

UNIT 1: LISTENING

Principal Examiner: Angelique Davies

General Comments

Candidates at both Foundation and Higher Tier seem to have found the examination accessible and were for the most part entered at the correct level.

Candidates at both levels found some parts of the listening examination challenging. As in previous years, many candidates in both Foundation and Higher Tiers had difficulty with numbers.

Although candidates were able to access high marks at both levels, few gained full marks. Most candidates respected the rubric and answered in English / Welsh as required and most seemed to be aware of the allocation of marks per question and answered accordingly. In the multiple choice questions, fewer candidates ticked boxes over the number required although a few ticked fewer boxes in spite of clear instructions and the mark allocation in the margin.

Very few candidates did not attempt at least part of each question.

Spelling and handwriting presented problems in some instances.

In terms of answers, too many candidates are still using “non-specific” words such as “good”, “nice”, “fun” or “interesting” where a precise word is needed.

There was evidence that some candidates had used the reading time profitably by circling / underlining / highlighting the mark allocation and interrogative pronouns and noting key vocabulary under pictures. These examination techniques demonstrate good practice in many centres.

There were no differences to note in the performance of Welsh medium candidates nor in that of candidates who undertook the on-screen version of the examination.

Administration

Generally, centres are using the correct procedures for forwarding scripts to examiners. Most scripts arrived promptly and were well packed and labelled. Attendance registers were correctly completed.

However, as was the case last year, a few envelopes did not display the information required. Problems encountered included:

- No information on the outside of the script packet other than the centre number. The front should also indicate the title and paper number as well as the number of scripts inside.
• No register included, or the register from larger centres was included in one of the packs only instead of splitting the register sheets to correspond to the names and numbers in each envelope.

• Where multiple packages were sent from larger centres, no indication was made of either the content or the sequence (1 of 6, 2 of 4 etc.) of the packages, entailing the opening of each one in order to establish this.

• Scripts were so tightly packed in one plastic envelope that the envelope had split and the outer candidates’ scripts had been severely damaged in transit.

• Some candidates muddled their candidate number with the centre number or gave a different surname to the one recorded on the attendance register. Centres are requested to check this information.

FOUNDATION TIER

Question 1

This question was suitably answered by most although a minority of candidates ticked only one item per row. The division of Question 1 into two sections with clear instructions and a mark of [2] next to each grid may have contributed to this question being more accessible to weaker candidates this year.

Question 2

Section 1

A number of weaker candidates selected ‘park’ instead of patinoire as would be expected.

Section 2

A few candidates selected ‘swimming pool’ instead of ‘horse riding’, either confusing équitation and natation or only knowing natation.

Question 3

This question was answered correctly by a good number of candidates.

Section 1

(a) Age ‘14’ correctly selected by most.
(b) ‘January 8th’ selected by a few instead of ‘July 28th’.
(c) ‘a brother and a sister’ answered correctly by most.

Section 2

(d) ‘South’ correctly answered by most although ‘North’ was also answered by a few who may not have covered compass points in class.
(e) ‘Flat/Apartment’ mostly selected correctly.
(f) ‘Town’ selected correctly by most.
Section 3

(g) ‘Library’ ticked correctly by most although a few candidates selected ‘Museum’.

(h) ‘Go swimming’ mostly selected correctly.

Question 4

Section 1

This question format worked well, since candidates could tick correct answers in a grid, rather than complete a grid as in the past by writing a letter corresponding to an image, which penalised candidates with unintelligible writing.

Some candidates did not know the word *vêtements* and selected: (1) ‘She works in a shoe shop’ which affected some of their answers in Section 2. (3) ‘She works from Monday to Friday’ was often selected instead of (4) ‘She does not work on Friday’ signalling either that they did not infer the meaning or thought *je travaille du lundi au jeudi* meant ‘she works from Monday to Friday’. Some candidates assumed that *c’est bien payé* indicated that (6) ‘She does not earn much money’ was correct. Others may have selected answers randomly. On occasions, only three answers were given instead of four.

Section 2

(a) If *caisse* had not been understood, then responses seemed to be based on guesswork e.g ‘serving/ talking to customers’ etc.

(b) ‘Stacking shelves’ or ‘cleaning’ were often given as answers for *ranger les vêtements*. Some candidates had evidently made an association with the commonly used *ranger ma chambre* and were able to infer the answer to be ‘tidying up’ but the mark was only allocated if ‘clothes’ was included in the answer. Other candidates answered ‘arranging the shoes’ (influenced by their answer in Section 1).

(c) ‘Passionate people’, ‘her friends’, ‘polite customers’, ‘her colleagues’ were often given as answers to this question. The terms *personnes âgées* and *patientes* were rarely understood.

(d) A high number of candidates answered this question with ‘managing a shop’, ‘working in a different shop’ or ‘working for a magazine or ‘in fashion’ demonstrating that the noun *magasin* is still causing confusion. *Vêtements* was sometimes misunderstood for meaning ‘veterinary surgeon’ giving answers such as ‘becoming a vet’ or ‘working with animals’.
OVERLAP QUESTIONS

Question 5 Foundation / Question 1 Higher

This question was answered reasonably well. Q1/ Q5 (d) and (e) posed problems for a considerable number of Foundation and Higher tier candidates as mentioned previously.

Section 1

(a) Two answers required: not many candidates answered ‘farm’ correctly and ‘bakery’ or ‘baker’s’ was often misspelt as ‘backer’ or ‘backery’ and even ‘bakerie’. Other answers were ‘little village’ which is where Yohan lived, not one of the places he visited. Several candidates gave the following answers: ‘cake shop’ for bakery which was not accepted. Other answers included: ‘flower shop’, ‘fairground’, ‘corner shop’, ‘grocer’s’, ‘butcher’s’, ‘library’. Some heard ‘farm’ and answered ‘field’ or even ‘park’. Candidates were penalised for giving three answers instead of the two required where the third answer was incorrect.

Section 2

(b) ‘Houses’ answered correctly by most, although some answered ‘swimming pool’ or ‘houses with swimming pools’. A few candidates answered ‘buildings’ which may have been a guess on their part or taken from the question wording of (c) ‘Name one of the new buildings in the village’.

(c) ‘Swimming pool’ answered most often rather than ‘police station’, although some answered ‘sports centre/ leisure centre’ which was not accepted unless ‘swimming pool’ was included in the answer.

(d) As mentioned above, this question posed difficulty with some candidates who do not know French numbers; ‘300, 1000’, ‘about 3000’ were answers given with quite a few ‘three million’ instead of ‘three thousand’.

Section 3

(e) As mentioned previously, most candidates heard ennuyeux and answered ‘boring’ missing out moins = ‘less’. Some answered ‘annoying’ rather than ‘boring’.

(f) Two details required: a lot of answers offered. ‘Busy’, ‘lively’, ‘crowded’ were not accepted as correct answers while ‘busier’ or ‘more traffic’ were. Few candidates answered correctly both terms ‘dirty’ and ‘noisy’. The term sale = ‘dirty’ was often misunderstood as meaning ‘sales’ giving some answers as ‘too many shops’.
Question 6 Foundation / 2 Higher

Section 1

(a) ‘When’ was often mistaken for ‘Where’ giving ‘Spain’ as the common answer. Not many candidates knew printemps. Answers included months, dates, or ‘last year’ or ‘Easter’.

(b) To the answer of ‘Who did he travel with?’ many answers were given as ‘his friends’ in the plural form. ‘Aunt’ or ‘Auntie’ was often misspelt. Other answers given included any member of the family or if ‘aunt’ had been given, ‘her friend’ was offered.

Section 2

(c) Mode of travel was often given as ‘plane’ correctly, but candidates misspelling the word as ‘plain’ were penalised accordingly. A number of candidates answered ‘boat’ or ‘ferry’ as a guess.

(d) This was answered either correctly as ‘expensive’ or wrongly most commonly as ‘long/short or boring’ from candidates’ own travelling experience perhaps.

Section 3

(e) Answer was often given as ‘hotel’ including ‘on the first floor’ or ‘in the Premier Inn’ (from je suis resté pour la première fois dans une auberge de jeunesse). Few candidates answered ‘youth hostel’ correctly. ‘By the beach’ was often given as an answer.

(f) Two items out of three required: portefeuille was not often known, nor was serviette for ‘towel’. The English term ‘serviette’ was accepted as correct, as was ‘napkin’, owing to candidates’ perceived confusion, as ‘beach towel’ was not specifically mentioned in the script. However, general marking principles for words which have the same spelling in English as in French were applied with the answer of ‘serviette’. ‘Glasses’ was often given without ‘sun’ and therefore not accepted as correct. Common answers given were wrongly guessed as ‘sun cream’ ‘passport’ ‘money’ ‘keys’ ‘phone’ or ‘charger’.

HIGHER TIER

Question 3

Weather forecast: five boxes to tick for each day of the week Monday to Friday. This was very well answered by candidates who knew weather terminology in a variety of tenses.

Many candidates chose their answers at the first playing of the CD and then confirming them the second time round.
Question 4

Section 1

Two boxes to be ticked: weaker candidates ticked (a) when they heard the word oncle instead of (b) ‘She did her work placement in a surgery’ (her uncle’s surgery). Some candidates did not deduce that Anne did not enjoy her work experience from the expression ennuyeux à mourir. Many candidates selected (d) ‘She had two hours for lunch’ from hearing je finissais à deux heures.

Section 2

As in Section 1, two boxes to be ticked. Again, some candidates just heard café and téléphone and selected (e) and (f) instead of (g) and (h).

Question 5

Section 1

(a) This was well answered although candidates were penalised if they wrote ‘uniforme’ with an ‘e’ at the end of the word as in French.

(b) This question was also well answered ‘they look the same’, although some candidates hazarded a guess or offered their personal judgement: either negative ‘it is stupid’ ‘it is uncomfortable’ ‘pointless’ or positive ‘makes everyone equal’ or ‘smart’.

Section 2

(c) This was answered correctly by a high number of candidates, although many could not spell ‘assembly’ correctly. Some offered wrongly ‘they start school early’ ‘they arrive to school early in the morning’ or ‘they register in the morning’. Few candidates appeared familiar with the term assemblée.

(d) A few candidates answered correctly that the pupils ‘sat’ in silence, although many answered ‘they have to be silent’ which was accepted as correct. Many offered ‘they leave’ or ‘they can’t leave till they are silent’, again guessing or offering their own judgement or experience.

Section 3

(e) The term assister à un cours de gallois was not understood, with the answer often given as ‘help’ for assister and ‘gaelic’ for gallois from English centres.

(f) The answers given, although positive, ‘incredible/wonderful’ were not specific enough. The adjective inoubliable was not known or not deduced from the verb oublier which most candidates would have used in the target language in class (j’ai oublié mon stylo / mon cahier).
Question 6

Section 1

(a) Well answered by a number of candidates. However, many answered 'musician' or 'artist' which was not deemed precise enough. Some mistook *Canadienne* to mean 'comedian' and answered accordingly 'comedian artist'.

Problems with numbers as mentioned previously: 1949, 1995, 1976, 1969 often offered – 1989 being the correct answer. Candidates were not penalised for giving the wrong date as the question only required the birth year.

(b) A good number of candidates answered correctly that Béatrice Martin was Coeur de Pirate’s real name. Amusingly, one candidate answered ‘her parrot’ while other answers included ‘her boss’, ‘her manager’, ‘her inspiration’, ‘her assistant’, ‘her husband’, ‘her mum’, ‘background vocalists’.

Section 2

(c) Two details required: most candidates answered at least one correctly. Most made reference to her singing and piano playing, although often omitted that ‘she plays well'. Many thought she was French. Many answered Ludovic liked her because ‘she was beautiful’, perhaps a personal judgement from the photograph.

(d) Two details about her appearance: the black hat and blond hair noticed on the photograph were often given as the answer. *Robe* was often given instead of ‘dress. Very few candidates knew or understood the word *tatouage*.

Section 3

(e) This question was rarely answered correctly: ‘she cancelled a concert’ (singular) the most common answer given or ‘an annual concert’ from the term *annuler*. Evidently, *quelques* (some, a few) was not known.

(f) This question was well answered: ‘she is pregnant’ or ‘she is/was having a baby/going to have a baby’. One candidate wrote ‘she was waiting to have a baby’, from *attendait* which was not quite correct.
FRENCH
General Certificate of Secondary Education
SUMMER 2014
UNIT 2: CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT SPEAKING

Principal Examiner: Angelique Davies

General Comments

On the whole, centres have carried out the Controlled Assessment Speaking in accordance with WJEC guidelines and specifications and have assessed the candidates fairly and in line with the WJEC mark scheme. However, the same issues seem to have arisen this year as in previous years regarding general administration, timing and assessment.

Administration

(i) There seemed to be an increase in the number of centres failing to submit the CAS sample by the deadline.

(ii) Packaging of CDs was occasionally insufficient to ensure that they were not damaged in transit which resulted in having to request another copy.

(iii) Some samples were sent to the wrong examiner/moderator – Speaking to the Writing examiner and vice versa or the wrong language sample sent.

(iv) Most centres enclosed only the relevant mark sheets but some sent mark sheets for both tasks and / or for all candidates.

(v) A number of sheets had not been signed and / or dated to authenticate the work.

(vi) While most CDs / USB pens were labelled, some were not. In many cases the candidate names and numbers as well as the task appeared on screen which was useful but there were some which only showed the track number. This was especially difficult if the teacher did not clearly state the candidate’s name and number at the start of the recording.

(vii) There were a number of clerical errors made in transferring marks online. In some cases the Structured Conversation mark had been submitted in the column for the Presentation and Discussion and vice versa.

(viii) Some individual mark sheets and / or topics did not correspond to the recorded task submitted.

(ix) There were a few isolated incidences of the wrong mark scheme being applied to the task – Structured Conversation for Presentation and Discussion and vice versa.

(x) Although most centres sent equal numbers of Structured Conversations and Presentations and Discussions, there was not always a balance of tasks in the sample.
(xi) Quality of recordings was generally good although there were occasional instances of background noise or faint recordings.

(xii) It was useful when centres sent the printout of the sample, although this is not a requirement.

Timings

The timing of the tests seemed to be more of an issue this year with a number of tests falling well short of the prescribed timing. In some cases this may have been a reflection of the candidate’s ability (or inability) to sustain the conversation, but in many cases it was felt that candidates had been curtailed and that they had not been given sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their skills. It is apparent that many teachers are under pressure to limit the time used in order to complete the assessments and therefore rush through the task. There were a number of Structured Conversations of 3 minutes or less but the timing issue was more prevalent in the Presentation and Discussion where one or both elements of the task fell short of the prescribed time. Some Presentations were too long at over 4 minutes but there were many under 2 minutes. If the Presentation was long, the questioning tended to be short.

In both tasks, incorrect timing often had repercussions on the accuracy of the centre’s assessment, with candidates being credited with higher marks when there was insufficient evidence that they had met the criteria. (One Presentation was under 20 seconds but the candidate had been given 3 for delivery).

Structured Conversation

‘Self’, ‘family’, ‘healthy lifestyles’, ‘holidays’, ‘education’, ‘work experience’, ‘local area’ and ‘environment’ were, as usual, the main topics chosen for the Structured Conversations. Some candidates were well prepared, giving long, pre-learnt responses but not always with clarity or conviction. Others were able to answer in full sentences but did not develop or sustain the conversation sufficiently to attain the highest marks for Content and Communication. Weaker candidates, however, were for the most part able to take part in a simple conversation and answer open questions.

Pronunciation was at times disappointing with simple words and phrases pronounced incorrectly (c’est, aussi, trop, piscine, montagne, campagne). This impacted on the mark for Accuracy.

However, for the most part, pronunciation was more correct than incorrect. Most candidates were able to demonstrate the use of different tenses (although not always accurately) but there was a lack of evidence of complex structures or sophisticated language.

When conducting the speaking tasks some teachers corrected pupils or repeated what they had said. This should be avoided at the assessment stage of the task.

Occasionally some candidates asked the teacher some questions; this is not needed.

Presentation and Discussion

Topics for the Presentation were for the most part similar to those of the Conversations. Some interesting topics included ‘le cyclisme’, ‘la musique et son histoire’, ‘Jeux olympiques’, ‘Les drogues dans le sport’ and ‘Le Body Art’. The theme of football was very popular and was presented well by candidates who had a deep interest in the topic. When candidates presented a topic that was personal to them and about their interests, the candidate’s ability to respond to the follow up questions was very good. This is good practice and motivates the candidates.
Most candidates were adequately prepared and were able to deliver their presentation at least competently – although there were some candidates who seemed to deliver their presentations fluently but with so many errors of pronunciation that communication was compromised.

In general, teachers avoided interrupting the delivery of the presentation but there were a few examples of unnecessary teacher intervention.

In responding to questions, some candidates were obviously well prepared and there were indications that they knew the exact questions that were going to be asked – which often meant that there was not the desired interaction between teacher and candidate. Others may have delivered the presentation well but could not deal with the unpredictability of the questioning. Accuracy and Range of Language were generally good in the presentation but less so in the response to questions.

For the follow-up discussion teachers used the presentation as a starting point although there was a tendency to deviate from the main topic at times.

The timing of the two elements of the task was an issue as outlined above.

**Assessment by Centres**

In general the marks awarded by the centres were fair and reflected the standard of performance of the candidates. The WJEC mark scheme was applied appropriately by most centres but there was a general tendency to be more generous than strict. Most centres were consistent in their marking and there was some evidence of cross moderation within departments, but there were a few centres which did not seem to be consistent in their interpretation of the WJEC mark scheme.

In some centres, examining teachers had made use of the “optional” section of the candidates’ sheets to make a comment to explain how marks had been allocated. This proved to be very useful for both internal and external moderation processes.

In the Structured Conversations candidates were awarded the higher range of marks for Communication and Content even though they did not always develop or steer the conversation, and in the case of pre-learnt material, they showed insufficient evidence of “interacting readily”.

Poor pronunciation was often overlooked in the allocation of the Accuracy mark and 4 or 5 marks were often awarded for Range when there was little evidence of complex structures and language.

On the other hand, at the lower end, some candidates were not sufficiently credited for their ability to answer open questions using full sentences and occasionally a variety of tenses. For the Presentation, some candidates were awarded 4 or 5 for fluent delivery even though poor pronunciation impeded communication. The mark for Accuracy and Range seemed at times to be based on the presentation only and did not take into account the less competent performance in the discussion.

Failure to comply with the prescribed timings had repercussions on the accuracy of centres’ assessment. Despite not fulfilling the timing requirement of the tasks, candidates were given access to the full range of marks in each strand of the marking criteria.

A few teachers corrected errors during the assessments; this should be avoided.
Some common errors included:

- The 's' in *est* was often pronounced and the 't' in *et*
- *Piskine* for *piscine*
- *Par queue* for *parce que*
- *Deu ux* for 'two'
- *Sink* for 'five'
- *Generalemente*, sounding the *ent* at the end of adverbs
- *Anniversary* for *anniversaire*
- Many candidates used anglicised pronunciation in cognates (e.g. *comfortable*)
- *Montage* for *montagne*
- *Ozzi* for *aussi*
- *Fritz* for *frites*
- *Je pence* for *je pense*
- Confusion between *préféré* and *préfère*
- Pronouncing the *x* at the end of words
- Pronouncing consonants at the end of words and in the middle of words (e.g. *le temps, tandis que*).  

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General comments

Examination Officers are reminded that it is important to write the centre number and the number of candidates on the plastic envelope and that the envelope should be sealed using only the seal provided i.e. without the use of duct tape or sellotape. Scripts are being damaged when envelopes are opened because they are being packaged too securely.

There was an increased incidence this year of candidates writing conflicting alternatives such as 1145 [quarter past 12] or even giving the examiner the choice of alternative answers, sometimes even explicitly by writing please choose! The onus is firmly on each candidate to communicate a single answer unambiguously.

FOUNDATION TIER

Candidates are reminded that, where they are asked to write letters [Q1-3] and, even more importantly, words [Q4 -6], their handwriting must be legible.

Q.1 Many candidates mixed up cahiers and livres but other vocabulary was well known.

Q.2 Some candidates ignored the rubric and put a letter in every box, thereby, inevitably, repeating some of the letters. Others ticked 6 [or more] boxes instead of writing a letter next to the statements. Dos, bras and genou were less well known than tête, dents and ventre, though the latter may have been helped by the inclusion of trop mangé.

Q.3 Some candidates used the same letter more than once which, while allowed in the rubric, would have been an unlikely solution. Marchand and gendarme seemed not to be well known.

Q.4 Some candidates did not copy the words correctly from the box and others put in meaningless answers e.g. (i) ‘Brigitte is the countryside in her family’ and (iv) ‘she hates seeing countryside in the river’. Many did not understand ‘fencing’ as a sport and so gave it as an answer to both (iii) and (iv). Campagne, quinze and chariots were the least well known words. Some candidates could not connect plus âgées que moi with cadette.
There were few answers written in French this year.

(i) Most candidates picked up on *cuisine* but many failed to connect it with *faire la*, so ‘she likes being in the kitchen’ was a common answer.

(ii) Lots of candidates failed to notice the *not* in the question so answered with ‘trousers’ or ‘shirt’ and then others, who may have understood both *interdites* and *jupes* gave ‘jumpers’, ‘wet suits’, ‘black skirts’, ‘bikinis’ or ‘white blowzers’.

(iii) Few candidates gave both reasons correctly with many depending for at least one on assumptions or their own experience e.g. ‘customers only wanted to use the toilet’, ‘dripping water from their swimming costumes’ or ‘bringing sand in from the beach’. The inclusion of *en retard* in the text led a number to suggest that the owner thought the customers and/or the employees were ‘retarded’, ‘stupid’, ‘idiots’ or ‘fools’. Lots of candidates wrote ‘employers’ or, more frequently, ‘employees’ where, presumably, they meant ‘employees’. Those who gave ‘late employees’ presumably did not grasp the ambiguity of the expression.

(iv) *Escargots* was quite well known though ‘frogs’ legs’ and ‘horse’ were given fairly frequently.

(v) *Agneau* was not as well known as *lapin*.

(vi) Some candidates recognised that the purchases were made for lunch but implied that it was for Sophie’s personal consumption.

(vii) A range of medical professions, including ‘paramedic’, was given in incorrect answers along with ‘chef’.

There were few answers written in French this year.

(i) A range of ages was given, most of them based around 60 but the candidate who gave 22 presumably had not read the question.

(ii) Many wrong answers displayed a disturbing inability to convey an analogue time in a written form e.g. ‘a minute from quarter/quatter/quature to’, ‘a minuet to four’, ‘sixteen minutes past’, ‘quarter pas’, ‘quarter past the afternoon’ and ‘a minute to quarter past’. Even those who understood *minuit* struggled to convey the time accurately.

(iii) Neither *bandes dessinées nor romans* was particularly well known and many candidates tried to combine them e.g. ‘books about romance/romans/bands/bandits/designers’.

(iv) Generally well done though ‘foughtknight’ was given.

(v) *Courses* gave rise to many answers involving ‘running’ or ‘lessons in town’. There were many and varied misspellings of terrace as well as ‘tanning’ e.g. ‘tannin on the terrist’ and ‘tanned by the terrorist’. In Welsh ‘torheulio’ was very often given for ‘torheulo’.
(vi) Many assumed that the accident must have taken place on the ski slopes and others gave a part of the body [not always the leg] as a response to where Louis had had the accident. It was the location and not the presumed but unstated activity which was required as an answer to the interrogative where? Patinoire led some to give ‘pantomime’.

HIGHER TIER

Q.3 Generally a well answered question with the most common mistake being transposing Leila and Florent.

Q.4 There was no discernible pattern to the incorrect answers but candidates are reminded that their writing must be legible and that there is little to differentiate A and H, E and F, I and J, k and h and i and j.

Q.5 Many candidates displayed a weak grasp of grammar and/or vocabulary as many nonsensical answers were submitted.

Q.6 (i) Most candidates understood at least one of the conditions but some lost marks by repeating what was already in the question viz ‘As well as actually turning up….’. The inclusion of à l’heure led some candidates to suggest that the pupils had to ‘stay for [at least] one hour’. Many, naturally and quite rightly, felt that the pupils should respect the teachers but that was not explicitly stated in the text. Se montrer productif dans leur travail was probably the hardest expression for the candidates to translate with many opting for a variation on ‘work hard’.

(ii) Many candidates noted the reference to enfant later on and gave ‘look after/distract young children’, ‘making babies’ or ‘stay at home’.

(iii) Candidates struggled with the idea of no other solution being effective.

(iv) The concept of un sur vingt was not universally known with 5 or its variations e.g. ‘less than 50%’ being very common.
FRENCH
General Certificate of Secondary Education
SUMMER 2014
UNIT 4: CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT WRITING

Principal Examiner: David Thomas

ADMINISTRATION

Packaging
- Many centres continue to send scripts in plastic wallets or envelopes, attach sheets with staples or treasury tags or send scripts loose or in no particular order.
- Centres should refrain from securing the sacks with parcel tape and sellotape as this makes it difficult for examiners to open the sacks and reuse them to return to WJEC.

Cover sheet
- Some centres are still using the old landscape pro-forma.
- A number of cover sheets lacked the necessary signatures.
- The title on some cover sheets did not match that on the candidates' writing sheet.

Pro-forma 2
- Some centres did not submit pro-forma 2 (the crib sheet) and an increasing number of candidates do not make use of them.
- Centres should remind candidates that all words (including sub headings such as ‘paragraph 1’) are included in the limit of 40 words.
- One teachers had, wrongly, written on a candidate’s crib sheet “You cannot (sic) have conjugated verbs on this sheet”.

Other
- Some scripts were corrected and/or annotated by teachers.
- Centres must ensure that the task is completed within one session and that candidates do not make amendments after the end of the session.
- Candidates are allowed only one attempt at completing a task. Whilst an attempt at a different title within the same topic area is allowed, the second task cannot be simply an improved version of the first.
- Some candidates wrote fewer than 200 words, thus restricting their access to the higher marks of the mark scheme.

TASK SETTING
- Tasks must be restricted to one context and only one Context must be circled on the cover sheet. There were several examples of tasks which spanned two contexts e.g. Les vacances et moi; Ma maison, ma ville et mon environnement; School and work experience; School and future plans; Leisure and technology; Write a blog about your favourite film and school.
• If a task has been set within the context of The World of Work (e.g. My work experience and future plans) then reference to future plans should be about ‘future careers’, as stated in the specification. Personal plans e.g. getting married, becoming rich, going on safaris/exotic holidays and winning the lottery fall within ‘future plans’ in the context of Personal and Social Life.

• Tasks on environmental issues that are presented within the context of Local Community should relate to local environmental issues and those which discuss environmental issues on a global scale fall within the context of The Wider World.

• Tasks must be specific. Titles such as: ‘A letter to a penfriend’, ‘A magazine article’, ‘Writing Task’, ‘A Famous Person’ (in one case an interview with the god Zeus!) or ‘Creative writing’ are not appropriate and are not stated topics in any Context in the Specification.

TASK TAKING

Most centres are now ensuring that candidates respond appropriately to the tasks set. However, although less frequent, the issue of candidates failing to address the title/task still occurs and this affects the marks awarded for Communication and Range. Examples include:

‘Mon Stage’ including information on household tasks, pocket money or personal plans for the future (travelling around the world, marrying a celebrity etc.).

‘An account of a holiday’ including information on several holidays and ‘Healthy living’ presenting a list of things the candidate eats/does not eat, with no reference to health.

There were, however, some excellent responses to all of the titles above.

QUALITY OF WORK

In general, candidates managed narration well but many missed out on marks in the top bands because of a lack of points of view, opinions and justification. There were many successful attempts at adventurous language but some betrayed a lack of knowledge of the written form e.g. il est important de voyager on peut, Mais Loisirs, m’a (for ma), je voyage un/yn avion, pour sur détendre and j’essaie être un meilleure santé.

Presentation

• Some centres are still presenting work on unlined paper.
• Some scripts contained lots of crossings out or were very heavily corrected, which made for difficult reading.
• Candidates whose handwriting is barely legible and/or miniscule would be better advised to word-process their answers. In addition, many candidates took little care about their handwriting with some writing dune instead of due and avons instead of allons. Others had not crossed “ts” so wrote était for était or had crossed “ls” and wrote atter for aller. Sometimes a candidate simply did not finish off a word correctly e.g. brocolli est bon pour la peu.
• A number of high-frequency words are often misspelt: maintenant (maintenat; maintent; maintenent) rencontrer (recontrer; reconter) vacances (vacanes) étranger (entranger) Espagne (Espange) extrêmement (extrement; extrêmént) magasins (magazins; magazines) normalement (normalent)
• The 3rd person plural form of verbs is often misformed: donnent (donnet); étaient (étaint).  
• The conditional form of préférer (je préférais) is frequently misformed, with most candidates presenting it in its imperfect form (je préférais).  
• Poor punctuation often hinders communication e.g. .... et avant de faire une randonnée dans les collines. Vous pouvez manger un bon repas chez un pub.

Dictionary errors

• Once again some candidates showed that they had not (wholly) mastered the skill of using a dictionary effectively with Crème écran, une allumette de foot and je testament jamais fumer appearing again.