

GCSE Examiners' Report

French
GCSE
Summer 2025

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Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
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Executive Summary

Overall, performance across the four units of the WJEC GCSE French Summer 2025 suite of examinations showed that most candidates were appropriately entered at the correct tier and demonstrated solid preparation. Candidates generally engaged well with tasks, especially at the higher tier, where responses were often extended and thoughtful. However, persistent issues were observed in areas such as tense accuracy, vocabulary range, and following rubric instructions. Across all units, the most common barriers to success were weak understanding of verb conjugation—especially in the past and future tenses—limited thematic vocabulary, and frequent rubric errors such as writing too much, too little, or illegibly.

Unit 1: Speaking

Candidates were generally well-prepared, and tier selection was mostly appropriate. Recordings were improved, though a few were affected by low volume or background noise. In the **role play**, most candidates responded well but sometimes misinterpreted the context or prompts. In the **photo card** section, vague or overly long answers and weak use of past/future tenses were common. Some candidates lacked cultural knowledge about France or struggled with relevant vocabulary. In the **conversation**, top-performing candidates used a range of vocabulary and responded fluently. However, many included irrelevant information or strayed from the sub-theme, and some conversations ran too long, resulting in unmarked content.

Unit 2: Listening

Candidates were mostly correctly entered, and performance on the overlap questions confirmed this. While the paper was generally accessible, there was an increase in blank responses and rubric errors—often due to providing too many answers or writing outside designated areas. Common challenges included understanding similar-sounding numbers, time expressions, and vocabulary. Many struggled with negative constructions, quantifiers, and linking spoken information to the questions. Misunderstandings of basic vocabulary were widespread. To improve, candidates should practise core vocabulary (numbers, time, dates), negatives, and synonyms, and must be trained to follow instructions and check the logic of their answers.

Unit 3: Reading

Tier entry was largely appropriate, though many candidates left questions unanswered or made rubric errors—especially when ticking too many or too few boxes. Poor handwriting was a notable issue, making marking for examiners difficult. Literary texts posed difficulties, often due to candidates not linking them to the sub-theme. Key areas of weakness included vocabulary recognition, especially cognates and negative constructions, as well as quantifiers and verb tenses. In the translation task, even small omissions (e.g. “very”, “often”) and tense mistakes led to lost marks. Higher tier candidates were expected to pay more attention to detail, especially in assessed-language tasks.

Unit 4: Writing

Both foundation and higher tier candidates were generally well-prepared and engaged effectively with tasks. Foundation candidates often responded fully to all bullet points, but some misinterpreted key words within them leading them to write irrelevant content. Recognising required tenses in prompts also caused issues. Translation questions showed partial success, but common issues included weak past tense construction and limited vocabulary. At higher tier, responses were more detailed, but accuracy varied. Ignoring bullet points often led to a lack of tense variation. Spelling errors and mistranslations of common vocabulary were observed. Clear, tense-aware, and thematically precise writing remains a key target for future improvement.

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UNIT 1

Overview of the Unit

Unit 1 aims to test a candidate's ability to speak in French and to interact effectively using appropriate vocabulary and grammar. The unit consists of three parts: the role play, the photo card, and the conversation. Six sets of questions are used in this test with each candidate being allocated a set at random by the WJEC.

Each candidate's test covers 4 sub-sub-themes. However, across the six prescribed sets all 18 of the sub-sub-themes are covered twice in one form or another.

Overall candidates were well prepared, and the majority had been entered for the appropriate tier.

Most of the tests were timed in line with recommendations both for each section and overall though a number of tests were still excessively long, especially during the conversation. It should be noted that material beyond the recommended times, is not credited.

The quality of recordings was much better this year though the achievements of some candidates were affected by recording quality, either by their voice being faint or due to noise from outside the examination room.

Along with the recordings there are documents that must be uploaded to the Surpass website, but this was not always the case.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Role Play Foundation Tier

Generally speaking, all role plays were completed well with candidates able to respond to all cues even if briefly. This year candidates were more likely to deal with the unseen question and the ability to ask questions in one form or another was noticeable.

Candidates do need to be mindful of both the setting and the questions asked by the teacher. Some teacher examiners reminded the candidates of the setting, but candidates do need to read the setting themselves. Candidates also need to listen carefully to the teacher's question so as to provide an answer that is relevant to the context and the question. The answer they have prepared may not be suitable for the question asked.

Cues must be read exactly as printed in the booklet without undue emphasis on any part of them and not rephrased. They may be repeated but not once the candidate has begun to respond.

As may be expected, individual candidates found difficulty with particular items of vocabulary, both in understanding the question and in formulating their response.

- RP1 That the cue specified “public transport” was sometimes overlooked. “Ça coûte combien?” was often unknown as was the question “Quand”, here and in other questions.
- RP2 Candidates had issues asking about “study plans” and some asked questions about school instead.
- RP4 Candidates often had difficulty asking specifically about their friend’s “school day” rather than school in general.
- RP6 In answering the first question, candidates often failed to distinguish social issues from environmental issues.

Role Play Higher Tier

The comments about the foundation tier role play apply equally to this tier.

This year, candidates were better at providing relevant answers to the question without over elaborating. However, there were still cases where some candidates provided much more information than was required and were then confused when the next question duplicated what they had said or made mistakes in the superfluous material. As was noted last year, a single clause is all that is required.

Questions based on “Où?” and “Quand?” did not always elicit pertinent information.

This year candidates seemed much more aware of the questions requiring a specific tense and were better able to formulate questions using interrogative adverbs. However, several of the questions to be asked by the candidate required an “aspect” of health/ education/public transport and this aspect was not specified in their question, merely a vague question being asked.

- RP1 As with foundation tier candidates, higher tier candidates often had difficulty asking specifically about their friend’s “school life” rather than other aspects of school.
- RP3 As with foundation tier, higher tier candidates often had trouble distinguishing social issues from environmental ones.
- RP4 For the third prompt, some candidates overlooked the “when” aspect of the question.
- RP5 Some candidates were unaware that the role play concerned post-16 study and were unfamiliar with the concept of “le lycée” in question 4.

Photo Card Foundation and Higher Tiers

Most candidates were able to access the printed questions on the picture to some extent and all questions were accessible to some candidates. Questions were sometimes rephrased by the teacher to make them more accessible to their candidates, something that is permissible in this section.

The first question is intended to be purely descriptive of what is clearly visible in the picture. Some descriptions were very complete and objective, whilst others included irrelevant, imagined material. Candidates do need to be aware that an over long description may lead them to exceed the overall recommended time. Some candidates could make better use of the preparation time to develop a fuller answer to the first question.

Candidates should aim to extend their response beyond a single sentence and additional cues are provided on the question paper to encourage candidates to expand their answers; however, responses to any additional questions asked by the teacher examiner will not be credited.

In both tiers, the final question requires a tense other than the present and candidates should be encouraged to provide several examples of that tense in an extended response. Too many were content with a single sentence as their response which may or may not show a clear grasp of the tense.

For many candidates this was the least successful part of the test.

Photo Card Foundation Tier

- Card 1 Quite often candidates found it difficult to describe this picture and to discuss personal qualities useful in the workplace.
- Card 3 The question about the local area produced some interesting responses and comments. However, some candidates found this a difficult question to explain.
- Card 4 Unfortunately many candidates lacked an awareness of France as a country, certainly outside of Paris, despite this being a specified sub-sub-theme.
- Card 6 The unseen question asking candidates where they went last weekend with their friends, caused issues for some candidates. Some instead, talked about what they did with their family.

Photo Card Higher Tier

- Card 1 While some candidates exhibited a good knowledge of France and "la francophonie", many others lacked information.
- Card 2 The second unseen question was misunderstood by candidates generally. The question specifically stated, "la nature" and not the environment in general.
- Card 3 The second unseen question was misunderstood by candidates not hearing "cet été" and focusing on other future times.
- Card 4 Both of the unseen questions proved difficult. Question 3 focused on the importance of school uniform, not on the candidates' opinion of it. For question 4 there was a shortage of ideas for improving their school life.
- Card 6 As at foundation level, candidates found it difficult to focus on specific qualities needed to develop career prospects to answer question 2.

Conversation Foundation and Higher Tiers

This section carries half the marks for the paper and is assessed holistically over the two topic areas chosen by the candidate; therefore, it is essential that the two halves are of equal length and offer the same linguistic opportunities.

The candidate is expected to initiate the first conversation. Merely stating the chosen topic is not initiating the conversation and the candidate is expected to continue after stating that choice. Unfortunately, a number of candidates were not afforded the opportunity to initiate the conversation nor to state for the recording which topics they had chosen.

This year conversations seem to consist of much more interaction between teacher-examiner and candidate. Candidates seemed rather more at ease with this section as the material was more within their control. For most candidates this was the most successful part of the test as they were on familiar and well-rehearsed ground. Therefore, they were familiar not only with the content but also with the vocabulary and structures needed to express both facts and opinions.

Candidates were only too willing to offer an opinion to a statement often of the “C’est” plus adjective variety. This year “C’est amusant”, “C’est intéressant” and “C’est génial”, were popular but were frequently used inappropriately for the context.

Candidates began to stand out when they constructed longer sentences with subordinate clauses, varied tenses, added adjectives or adverbs and then inserted better constructions such as pronouns. The better performances were by candidates who not only responded promptly to questions but were able to develop some information independently on a particular topic. The best candidates were able to interact well with their teacher and to choose language well suited to the question. Often this meant that responses could be of varying length, as in a conversation. At higher tier, some candidates impressed by using more complex constructions, but they must be able to use them naturally and not feel that they must use a specific construction somehow or other.

Regrettably, many conversations contained a great deal of irrelevance. The specified sub-sub-themes are discrete topics, and the conversation should relate solely to that one topic. Again, this was most noticeable when candidates were discussing school related issues and the conversation wandered freely between school studies, school life and post-16 study instead of focusing solely on the stated sub-sub-theme as required. Social issues and environmental issues also tended to overlap.

Summary of key points

In general terms candidates were well prepared for this year’s tests and able to show their abilities positively. To improve performance further candidates should consider the following:

- In the role play, be aware of the context and answer in a single sentence.
- In the photo card, aim to say 3 or 4 things for each response especially on questions 2,3 and 4.
- The conversation is the opportunity to show true potential, aim to respond promptly and develop answers in appropriate detail.
- In all aspects of the test, be mindful of the exact focus of the question and provide relevant, specific information rather than something vaguely connected with the topic. Listen to the whole question, rather than certain words.
- A greater awareness of the geography of, at least, France and the attractions it has to offer, would be of benefit when discussing certain sub-sub-themes.

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UNIT 2

Overview of the Unit

This unit tests the listening skills of candidates through short texts with either one or two speakers. The topics reflect the nine sub themes outlined in the specification. Task types included multiple choice questions, the completion of a grid, matching activities, and written answers in English. The assessed language questions at both tiers were multiple choice questions and candidates were not required to answer in the assessed language.

Candidates had mostly been entered for the appropriate level and there was a noticeable difference in performance in the overlap questions which also seems to suggest candidates were entered correctly. The general accessibility of the paper seemed to be appropriate, although there was an increase in the number of questions left completely blank. On questions which required not all boxes to be completed, most candidates adhered to the rubric instructions although a small number completed too many boxes, resulting in a loss of marks because of rubric error. It is important for candidates to note the number of marks available if they unsure how many boxes they should complete. The legibility of responses is becoming an issue, making some responses very difficult to mark. The paper is marked online so candidates must ensure that their answers are written within the confines of the question. If they are written elsewhere, candidates must indicate where the answer is to be found.

In some sections of both foundation and higher tier papers, candidates gave too many responses, often one correct and one incorrect. Candidates should be reminded that if there is only one mark to a question or one detail required that they should adhere to this. If a candidate gives two responses and one is incorrect then they will score zero as it is a rubric error.

Improving performance:

- Practise differentiating between numbers that sound similar.
- Work on synonyms.
- Revisit basics, such as numbers and time/date vocabulary as they always feature in the exam paper.
- Candidates should be encouraged to look at their answer to check that it makes sense, is logical and answers the question.
- Practice of time indicators would be very useful as they are frequent on exam papers.
- Practise quantifiers.
- Practise recognising negative constructions.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

Question 1

This was a multiple-choice question based on transport. This was very accessible for most candidates, although a significant number of candidates did not recognise 'Il y a un bon service?' on question 1d.

Question 2

This was a multiple-choice question based on regional features. This was very accessible. The only slight drop in performance was noted in 2(d) where candidates opted for rides, presumably because the extract was about a theme park, and in 2(e) where candidates did not recognise '*samedi*'.

Question 3

This was a multiple-choice question based on the environment. It was the first target language question. This was generally accessible, but candidates were unsure of numbers in (a) and quantifiers in (b). In 3(c) candidates did not make the link between '*encourager les Français à recycler correctement*' and '*faire un effort avec le recyclage*'. In (d) many opted for '*bouteilles*' as they did not make the link between '*journaux et magazines*' and '*papier*'.

Question 4

This was a picture match multiple-choice question on school life. Performance on this was surprisingly low. Many candidates thought '*le car*' was a car in (a). Recognising time in (b) was an issue, with many candidates opting for the wrong time. In (c) a third of candidates did not recognise '*rentre à la maison pour manger*'. School subjects in (d) were generally good but some candidates thought '*education physique*' was either science or geography. '*Anglais*' was well-recognised.

Question 5

This was a short answer question on technology. The first question asked 'What *exactly* is this report about. The article concerned a ban on mobile phones in school. Many candidates just wrote 'phones'. In 5(b) half of all candidates were unable to identify the correct year. The rest of the text was handled reasonably well, although 5(e) was more difficult as it needed the idea of the school taking care of/protecting the phones.

Question 6

This was a multiple-choice question in two sections on entertainment and leisure. This was mostly done well. A small number of candidates ignored the instruction to tick three correct statements in each part, instead ticking three overall or an uneven number in each.

Question 7

This question required a grid to be completed on the subject of festivals. This is the first of three crossover questions that also features in the higher tier paper. In question 7(a) very few candidates recognised '*10 jours*' and many candidates mistook the number for 2 or 12. Many candidates translated '*jours*' as hours/weeks /months. In part (b) some candidates answered, 'big in the world' and many missed the superlative. A large number of candidates lost marks because they were unable to recognise '10 days' or 'big', which was rather surprising. In section 2 part (c), '*fête foraine*' was not widely known and many guessed 'fete' or games. Part (d) threw up some surprising answers, with many candidates simply writing 'red' in answer to what the famous drink is made of. Clearly this made no sense. Only 20% of candidates recognised '*vin*'.

For part (e) many candidates just wrote 'sport' which was deemed insufficient as sport alone was not mentioned. The examiners were looking for the specific items mentioned, which were all fairly easy (*sports extrêmes/patinage/sports d'hiver*)

Question 8

The second crossover question required short answers on the topic of employment. Vocabulary that was not well-known included *équipe*, *passionnant* and *je ne m'ennuie jamais*. *Passionnant* was often mistranslated as passionate. Hardly any candidates recognised *équipe* or *les conditions de travail*.

Question 9

The third crossover text required short answers and was on the topic of skills and personal qualities. Many candidates found this text challenging. Question 9(b) in section 1 was not well-understood at all and the idea of '*il est rare de...*' was often missed. In section 2, part (d) candidates often heard *intérêts* and *travail* but missed '*en dehors*'. Few understood the idea of looking after your health. Many mentioned mental health, which is not in the text.

Higher Tier

Questions 1-3

Similar issues to the foundation tier but higher tier candidates performed better, as would be expected.

Question 4

This required short answers on the topic of school life. In (a) '*il y a + time*' was not well known at all. Similarly, in (b) '*à partir de*' and '*au lieu de*' were often not recognised, resulting in candidates answering that the age had increased to six, instead of reduced to three. A surprising number of candidates answered with illogical ages such as 13/16.

Question 5

This was a 'tick the correct answers' type exercise on the topic of health and fitness and the first target language question. There were no issues with this question, other than the occasional candidate who ticked the incorrect number of boxes.

Question 6

This was a multiple-choice target language question on local areas of interest. In (a) some candidates did not understand '*presque seuls*' or '*très peu*'. In (b) candidates often missed that they were not allowed to stand up and opted for photos being forbidden, despite the text saying that it was '*difficile de prendre des photos*'.

Question 7

This was a grid on the topic of environment. Generally, this was well-handled by many candidates. Candidates misunderstood '*la pluie ne tombe plus depuis 4 ans*', so often gave the opposite answer. In (c) many candidates pounced on 27 million and looked no further. Very few heard the 'plus d'un million'.

Question 8

This was a short answer question on the topic of technology and social media. Some candidates missed the negative constructions here and so reversed their answers.

Question 9

This was a short answer question on regional features. The first question was answered well by most candidates. In 9(b) the idea of '*comme un film en direct*' was missed by many candidates. In 9(c) *inouvable* was generally not understood. In 9(f) the word '*former*' was not recognised by many, with candidates translating this as 'perform' rather than train.

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UNIT 3

Overview of the Unit

This unit tests the reading skills of candidates through texts of different lengths and contexts. The topics reflect the nine sub themes outlined in the specification. Task types included multiple choice questions, the completion of a grid, matching activities, written answers in English and a short translation from French into English. Two texts at each level are taken from a literary extract. The assessed language questions at foundation tier did not require written answers in French and all took the form of a matching exercise. At higher tier, candidates had to complete a matching exercise, a multiple-choice exercise and complete a grid in the assessed language.

Candidates had mostly been entered at the appropriate level and the overlap questions were handled better by higher candidates, which further highlights candidates being entered for the correct level. Overall, the general accessibility of the paper was appropriate, although there was a higher frequency of questions left completely blank this year. The literary texts proved to be a little more demanding, but this is often because candidates do not notice the sub-theme (e.g. school life, employment, self, and relationships). Some questions ask for a certain number of boxes to be ticked, out of a larger selection. Some candidates ticked too many boxes, resulting in a loss of marks due to a rubric error and some candidates lost marks because they failed to tick enough boxes. One area causing significant difficulty for examiners concerns the presentation of answers. Handwriting is becoming a major barrier to communication. Candidates must ensure that their answers are clear.

One area that continues to cost candidates marks is when they give too many responses, often one correct and one incorrect. Candidates should be trained to look at the number of marks available and the question instruction. If one detail is required but they write two details and one of those is incorrect then they will be awarded $+1-1=0$. However, if a candidate gives two details and both are correct, then one mark would be awarded, so it is vital that candidates are *sure* of both answers if they choose to do this. In the target language question on the higher paper, some candidates wrote the answers in English, which is a rubric error and therefore no marks could be awarded. In the translation, candidates should take time to underline words such as 'very', 'all', 'always', 'lots of' as their omission will cost the candidate marks. The correct tense is also important, and candidates should be encouraged to circle and work out the different tenses used. Often an entire sentence is correct apart from the tense.

Finally, it was very noticeable that candidates did not seem to recognise many cognates or near cognates in the texts.

Points to improve performance:

- Try to anchor full or near cognates to the equivalent word in English and its meaning.
- Practise quantifiers and revise numbers thoroughly as these always carry marks.
- For an 'overall message' question, use the title and avoid minimal answers.
- It is important to check that what a candidate has written, actually answers the question and is logical.

- Recognition of negative constructions is very important as it often reverses the meaning.
- If an assessed language response is required, ensure that enough has been written to answer the question.
- Towards the end of the higher tier paper, attention to detail is expected.
- In the translation, encourage candidates to underline and identify the verb and tense and also underline words such as 'very', 'often' etc.
- Encourage candidates to break down the translation first, circling tenses and linking words before rebuilding the sentences.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Level

Question 1

This was a matching exercise on local areas of interest. This was very accessible for most candidates.

Question 2

This required candidates to match a picture to the text on the topic of career plans. Again, this was very accessible to most candidates.

Question 3

This was the first target language text on the topic of entertainment and leisure. Many candidates seemed unsure of TV programme vocabulary. Although this was a target language exercise, all candidates needed to do, was match single words to the TV programmes, such as '*nature, équipe, crime, chanteurs*' but more than half of all candidates were unable to do so.

Question 4

This was a target language, multiple-choice question on the topic of environment. Quantifiers such as '*plus*' or '*moins*' caused issues and numbers written out in full seemed to be not well-known by many candidates. Two-thirds of candidates did not recognise '*soixante-dix*'. In 7(f) they were often unable to match '*chez toi*' with '*à la maison*'.

Question 5

This was a short answer question on the topic of health and fitness. The first question asked what the article was about exactly. The title is the safest answer as it tends to encompass the overall message of the text. The answer needs to incorporate enough information. A simple answer such as 'food' is not precise enough. Here, the article was about watching what we eat/healthy eating. 'Cent ans' caused a few issues in (c). In 5(d) the question asks what the problem is with this type of food. The text clearly signposts the answer with '*Le problème?...*' and many then wrote 'it's dangerous', despite question 5(e) asking 'Why is this dangerous?' In (f) the question asks, 'what should you do instead?' Many just answered 'natural food' rather than 'eat natural food'.

Question 6

This was the first literary text on the topic of self and relationships. Hardly any candidates understood '*journal*'. Most interpreted it as 'journaling'. In 6(b) most candidates did not understand '*je suis montée dans ma chambre*.' The final two sentences were rarely understood, with most candidates opting for 'to show affection', ignoring the negative construction and '*seulement*' in the final sentence.

Question 7

This was a short answer text about festivals and traditions. In (a) many ignored the near cognate '*chasse*' and opted for 'eating chocolate eggs'. In (b) candidates often successfully identified the correct answer but some then fell afoul of the +1-1 rule by adding 'in the 40 days *after* Easter, rather than *before*. For (c), many ignored '*cadeau*', and instead wrote 'decorate them', which did not answer the question. Question (d) was universally misunderstood, despite vocabulary such as '*partir*', '*retour*' and '*laisse tomber*'. For (e) many ignored '*du chocolate en forme de...*' and simply wrote that it was traditional to eat fish at Easter.

Question 8

This was the first crossover question with the higher tier paper and an extract from a literary text on the topic of school life. In (c), many translated '*propre*' as clean. In (d) many candidates thought that '*pensionnaire*' was something to do with pensions and old people and many thought that Rudy was protecting older pupils, rather than being the older pupil whose job it was to look after younger pupils. In 8(e), a surprising number of candidates could not translate that he was '*pas content*'.

Question 9

This was the second crossover text and required completion of a grid on the topic of holidays and tourism. This was generally an accessible text, with the only issue being candidates not understanding '*le moins touristique*', often translating it as being the most popular. '*Grandes villes*' was often translated as villages and the cognate '*vaste*' was often not recognised.

Question 10

The translation was on the topic of post-16 study. This continues to be a challenging topic for many candidates. The text is marked in six sections.

1. *J'ai décidé de faire un diplôme professionnel* – This was often translated successfully, although some ignored the tense.
2. *cette année. C'est bien pour..* – well-recognised.
3. *les élèves comme moi qui préfèrent...* - this was not very successful.
4. *entrer dans le monde du travail.* – often successful but a surprising number could not recognise the world of work.
5. *Il y a moins d'heures de cours* – '*cours*' often the only item that was recognised.
6. *et on peut faire des stages.* – '*stages*' not known by most candidates.

Higher Tier

Questions 1 and 2

Some similar issues to Foundation tier questions 8 and 9 but, generally, much better handled by higher tier candidates.

Question 3

This the first target language exercise and required text to be matched up on the topic of post-16 study. This was very accessible for candidates, apart from the first box (Alexis). Despite words such as '*preparer la nourriture*' '*poissonnier*' and '*boucher*', most candidates ignored '*alimentation*' and opted for A because of the word hygiene.

Question 4

This was the second target language exercise in a multiple-choice format on the topic of food and drink. This was very accessible for most candidates.

Question 5

This was the third target language text, on the topic of technology and social media. Candidates were required to complete a grid in French. Question 5(a) required an overall message. Most candidates were able to answer *'la vidéo à la demande'* without any issue. For the first box, two advantages were required. Candidates needed to ensure that what they wrote answered the question. Some simply answered *'pouvoir regarder les films'* without the addition of *'chez soi'*, which was the point of the service. Box 2 asked for two disadvantages. Some candidates simply wrote *'l'accès à l'internet est limité'* or *'l'internet est très ralenti'* without *'quand'* or *'si'* at the start, which removed the conditions required. In box 3, many just wrote '2000' instead of *'fin des années 2000'*. All answers could have been simply lifted from the text but required enough of the sentence to fully answer the question.

Question 6

This was a short answer question on the topic of the environment. Parts of this were very well done. In (a), most had no issue with '9 months'. In (b) there were many correct possibilities, but a large number of candidates wrote 'Tara', despite the text stating *'le bateau « Tara » et..'*. In (d) many failed to spot that it was *'la deuxième région du monde...'* and simply wrote that it was the largest polluter. The other questions were usually well-handled.

Question 7

This was the final literary text, requiring short answers on the topic of employment. The main problem here was that many candidates did not know the meaning of *'chef'* and immediately went off at a wrong tangent, affecting later questions, because they mistranslated it as a chef. *'Équipe'* was also not well-known and often translated as equipment. In (b) *'se sympathiser'* means to make friends. Many candidates gave various rendering of them being sympathetic or kind rather than friendly or getting on well. Answers to later questions often involved kitchens, restaurants, and cooking as a result of the initial mistranslation.

Question 8

This was a short answer question exercise on the topic of local areas of interest. For (a) many candidates did not understand *'peu sophistiqué'* and therefore reversed the answer. Many also did not know *'plus rien à voir avec'* and often chose this as the answer, saying that there was nothing to do. For (b) there were a number of easier options, such as young or lively, but some candidates went for the second part of the sentence and did not spot the *'marie bien la tradition et la modernité'*, simply saying that it was now modern. In question (d), some candidates did not realise that the 15 minutes on foot referred to sites within the town, rather than it taking 15 minutes to get into town. In (f) *'les jeunes'* was often translated as 'children' and the *'retraités (avec leurs chiens)'* was translated as people with dogs, rather than retired people. At this stage of the Higher paper, attention to detail is important.

Question 10

The translation was on the topic of health and fitness and caused some surprising difficulties in parts.

1. *L'année dernière environ dix mille écoliers ont dû courir* – many candidates wrote 'last week'. *'environ'* and *écoliers* were not well-known. Many made mistakes with the number. The *'devoir'* perfect tense was often missed.
2. *Une distance de vingt mètres aussi vite que possible.* – This should have been a fairly simple translation but *'aussi ... que'* was not well-known.
3. *On a trouvé que ces jeunes n'étaient pas en forme.* – Another relatively straightforward translation but many ignored both tenses.

4. *Et pourraient avoir des problèmes de santé plus tard.* – conditional tense often ignored.
5. *Faire au moins une heure d'exercice par jour* – this was often translated as doing 'less' than an hour a day.
6. *Serait une bonne solution pour améliorer leur condition physique.* – again, the conditional was often ignored.

FRENCH

GCSE

Summer 2025

UNIT 4

Overview of the Unit

Overall, this year, candidates at both tiers appeared to be well prepared by centres for the requirements of the Unit 4 exam, with most candidates able to effectively communicate facts, ideas, and opinions in their responses.

In general, candidates were appropriately entered for the correct tier, and there was a noticeable reduction in instances of foundation tier candidates leaving parts of the paper unanswered with all questions being attempted by 90% and above.

The question titles on both the foundation and higher tier papers enabled candidates to produce engaging responses, especially at the higher tier.

It remains important for candidates to demonstrate use of more than one time frame in their answers—particularly for higher tier candidates who chose not to respond directly to the bulleted prompts, which are designed to encourage varied time frame usage. Accurate conjugation of tenses remains to be an area of improvement with the past tense in particular proving to be challenging for candidates.

Overall, there is a need to expand theme-specific vocabulary key words and phrases as this sometimes led to the requirement of the task being misunderstood and key elements of the translation being mistranslated.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1 Foundation Tier

This question was set from the broad theme of ‘Current and future study and employment’ and tested candidates’ knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme ‘Employment’. Candidates seemed well prepared by centres as most candidates seemed aware that they needed to provide an accurate verb to gain maximum marks. Many candidates attempted responses to all six headings. The question was accessible to most candidates and allowed for a wide variety of answers.

The following difficulties were encountered by a significant number of candidates:

Heading 1 Naming a profession.

Heading 4 The accurate conjugation of the verb ‘acheter’ when used to say why the candidate likes a job.

Areas for improvement would be to encourage candidates to use a verb that they are confident is accurate, as this is necessary to gain 2 marks. In addition, candidates should ensure that they must write an appropriate response that refers to the heading.

Question 2 Foundation Tier

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Identity and culture' and tested the knowledge and understanding of candidates of the sub-theme of 'Technology and social media'. Most candidates were able to provide simple opinions and justification about their phone and the problems with technology. Many candidates were able to meet or exceed the 50-word requirement here. The main shortcomings were as follows:

- Not referring to all the bullet points.
- The word 'application' in the rubric seemed to be problematic and poorly recognised with some candidates misinterpreting the rubric and referring to a job application.
- Verbal errors.

Areas for improvement would be to ensure that candidates address all three bullet points to have access to the top bands as well as ensuring that they conjugate verbs accurately.

Question 3 Foundation Tier

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Wales and the world' and the sub-theme of 'Environment'. Candidates were well-prepared to provide opinions throughout their answers and some candidates attempted to use complex structures.

Candidates for this answer in the foundation paper struggled to recognize from the prompts the tenses required for the final two bullet points as only some candidates seemed to recognise that the past tense was required to fulfil the requirements of the second bullet point and that the future was required for the third bullet point.

Areas for improvement would be to ensure that candidates address the three compulsory bullet points and are able to recognize time phrases such as 'récentment' and 'à l'avenir' as prompts to use the correct tense.

Question 4 (Translation) Foundation Tier

This question was set from the broad theme 'Current and future study and employment' and the sub sub-theme 'School/College life'. Overall, most candidates attempted this question and received 1 or 2 marks for partially conveying the meaning or conveying the meaning but using incorrect grammatical structures. Successful responses were secure in their use of verb endings and ensured that the meaning was fully conveyed. Most candidates translated 'c'est' accurately in sentence (a). The translation of 'lessons' and 'homework' in sentence (b) was challenging for a number of candidates. It was pleasing to note however that many candidates translated 'Mon père pense' accurately for sentence (c) and most coped well with the translation of the 3-mark sentences (d) and (e) with many candidates conjugating the conditional tense accurately in (e). For sentence (d) candidates coped well with successfully conveying the meaning of the translation but accurate conjugation of the past tense proved challenging.

Areas for improvement would be conjugating the past tense and developing candidates' knowledge of thematic vocabulary.

Question 1 Higher Tier

This being the overlap question, responses from higher-tier candidates were more comprehensive than those from the foundation level. Higher-tier candidates addressed the task requirements more thoroughly and demonstrated greater success in expressing different time frames. Many successful candidates' answers included attempts at more complex structures and ensured that they answered the three bullet points fully.

Areas for improvement for both the foundation and higher tier candidates would be the accurate use of 'recycler' and 'recyclage' as well as the accurate spelling of 'l'environnement' as, although present in the rubric, this was challenging for several candidates.

Although higher tier candidates used more complex structures in their responses, success varied. An area of improvement for higher tier candidates would be to improve accuracy when attempting more sophisticated language.

Question 2 Higher Tier

Candidates were able to write extended responses for both (a) and (b) and included opinions confidently in their work. Successful candidates included more complex structures effectively and accurately within their answers. Candidates who used the bullet points to structure their responses were more likely to include multiple time frames, which is essential for achieving higher marks in linguistic knowledge and accuracy. In contrast, those who ignored the bullet points often missed this requirement, with some using only the present tense in their answers.

Areas of improvement would be to encourage candidates to prioritise accuracy within their answers as although many candidates attempted to use complex structures within their work, errors impacted the clarity of their responses. Candidates should also be reminded that although they are not obligated to follow the bullet points for this question, they should try to ensure that they use a variety of tenses accurately in their work to reach the top band of the mark scheme. Candidates should also be made aware that the accuracy of their answer can impact their marks for communication and content as communication must be clear with little or no ambiguity to reach the top band of the mark scheme. In addition, candidates responding to question (b) 'Les jeunes et la santé' struggled to use 'santé', 'sain' and 'sainement' accurately.

Question 3 (Translation) Higher Tier

This question was set from the broad theme 'Current and future study and employment' and the sub sub-theme 'Employment'. This question clearly differentiated between candidates, as only a few were able to accurately translate 'work experience' as well as the verb 'to hope'. Additionally, many candidates found translating 'Thursday' and 'easier tomorrow' particularly challenging. Candidates coped well with the translation of 'my colleague can be difficult' and were generally confident translating cognates such as 'difficile', 'important' and 'expérience'.

Areas of improvement would be to encourage candidates to develop their subject specific vocabulary, to ensure that they revise basic vocabulary such as days of the week and numbers and to practice accurate conjugating verbs in the past tense.

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