



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE
FRENCH
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2022

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FRENCH
General Certificate of Education (New)
Summer 2022
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
AS UNIT 1: SPEAKING

General Comments

For the 2022 Series of examinations, the test consisted of only one task-task B- the discussion based on a text. The content of the test was modified to take account of the difficulties candidates and centres had experienced because of the Covid epidemic.

This single task contains a text (of approximately 50 words) and three starter questions on the topic being discussed. Understanding the text is an important part of this text (AO2). Both tasks evaluate candidates' ability to interact with the examiner orally (AO1) and the quality of their language (AO3).

Many of the remarks contained in the examiner's report on this unit between 2017 and 2019 are still relevant to candidate's performance in 2022. This year, however, for the first time, the test was conducted by centres themselves, recorded and uploaded for the board's examiners to mark.

In the main, teachers conducted the task well. The quality of the recordings was good, candidate and centre details were given clearly, and the tasks uploaded properly. Examining teachers were aware that the oral is a conversation, that questions follow naturally from what the candidate or teacher has said previously. It is perhaps difficult for teachers to do this when examining, but they should refrain from making comments about the quality of responses e.g. "très bien" during the test. In this specification, candidates are not required to ask the examining teacher a question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

AO1 (4/24)

Candidates generally responded to examiner questions. Indeed, the ablest showed some initiative and were able to take a lead. There was, however, a tendency to answer the three set questions at length -and this limited interaction. Quite long answers are acceptable, however, when candidates introduce an evaluation of the text. The examining teacher should ask these three questions immediately after each other to ensure consistency in the examining procedure and to give the candidate an element of familiarity at the beginning of the test.

AO2 (8/24)

The AO2 mark is a third of the total mark allocated for the task. Although most candidates were aware that they had to refer to the content of the reading passage, many did not explain in detail what the text said, even when prompted to do so, and could not interpret the implications of the text for the topic under discussion.

The actual amount of information in each text will vary and there is no mechanical way of allocating marks for points that have been understood. The mark allocated is given on the basis of both identifying the points and showing that candidates understand them, e.g. in the text on smoking, saying “Ils imitent leurs parents” only repeats the text. If they say “ils fument parce que leurs parents fument,” they have shown clearly that they have understood the meaning. One possible way for candidates to show understanding is to paraphrase the text, another is to give a further discussion during the ensuing discussion. The examining teacher can prompt the candidate to give attention to the text in a general way, but the candidate cannot be credited for information from the text that the examining teacher gives when questioning.

AO3 (8/16)

The ablest candidates’ oral language was grammatically very accurate. These candidates handled the language confidently and used a wide variety of structures and a breadth of vocabulary. Their pronunciation was often good. The weakest candidates’ quality of language was marred by important grammatical mistakes, (verbal forms, agreements, genders, morphology) a lack of vocabulary and structures to maintain a discussion, and poor pronunciation which reflected the written rather than the oral form of the language.

AO4 (4/24).

The specification is quite clear that discussions must relate to France or a French-speaking country/community. The starter questions specifically related the questions to France or a French-speaking country. Candidates needed suitable knowledge and a good understanding of the themes included under the heading “Being a young person in French-speaking society” to contribute well to the discussion. There was a danger of discussions about friendship, tobacco and youth unemployment becoming “generic” rather than specific to France/a francophone country. In many of the better discussions, suitable starter references were made in the texts themselves. Candidates needed to be aware that the texts themselves often gave details which would have helped with the discussion.

Summary of key points

- Centres need to ensure that candidates have detailed knowledge relating to France or a French-speaking society. Candidates also need to ensure that they refer continuously to the topic as it relates to France or a French-speaking country in the discussion task.
- Candidates need to be able to think “on their feet”, and not be too dependent on what they have noted previously in the preparation room as they might not be answering the questions asked but what they think they have been asked.
- The specification requires the candidates to make obvious and detailed reference to the text in the discussion task.

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UNIT 2: LISTENING, READING, TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

General Comments

Candidates responded well to the topics and managed the requirements of each type of question very well. Very few candidates left items incomplete or not attempted.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Listening

Question 1: multiple choice

Most candidates coped well with the task. No active use of French was required.

The second half of the question proved challenging for some candidates.

The most common incorrect answers were 7 and 8:

7. “dépendant” was misunderstood by a number of candidate as meaning dependable
8. “variables” was not understood by some candidates.

Question 2: true or false/ correction if necessary

This question proved accessible to most candidates however there was an element of challenge in correcting a wrong given statement.

In addition to choosing the wrong answer, the usual reasons for an incorrect answer was either language that did not convey the required meaning or a correction which was not clear or precise enough. Equally, spelling or serious grammatical errors hindered clarity and failed to communicate the required answer.

A few candidates were able to manipulate the statements provided to formulate their own answers. It is pleasing to report that very few candidates simply negated the statements given.

Issues were as follows:

- b) L'actualité was misunderstood by some candidate
- j) precision in correcting the statement (though understood by most candidates)

Spelling errors:

Ambitieuses

Moitié

Maroc/ Sénégal/ Afrique

Section B: Reading

Question 3: summary

Many candidates gained 4/5 marks for this task. Candidates needed to pay close attention to the text in order to select the most appropriate end for each sentence starter. Most commonly, candidates failed to correctly select the end for starters 2 and 5.

Question 4: gap-fill

This was completed well, however most candidates did not make sufficient use of the translation paragraph for context.

Section C: Translation

Question 5

Although this is traditionally the most challenging task it was done fairly well. There were some spelling errors, lack of knowledge in relation to basic vocabulary and errors in sentence construction. Some candidates did not take sufficient care when translating and most failed to use Q4 for context.

The most common issues were as follows:

- Part 1:** Des jours durant / location
- Part 2:** Bretagne
- Part 3:** filles
- Part 4:** aussitôt/ propriétaire/ figurait/journal
- Part 5:** trésors/ future tense

Section D: Critical response in writing

Question 6

For this section, the assessment objectives are AO3 (manipulating the language accurately, using a range of lexis and structure) and AO4 (showing knowledge and understanding of, and responding critically to the film). The question is marked out of 36. AO3 carries twice as many marks (24) as AO4 (12).

Most candidates manipulated persuasive literary language well and showcased extensive knowledge of their chosen film. Most candidates endeavoured to produce a critical response, which is very encouraging. However, lack of accuracy in some instances meant that the knowledge of the film was impaired and this impacted the quality of the response as a whole.

Issues were as follows:

- common grammatical errors (verbs/ tenses/ agreements)
- spelling of basic vocabulary
- anglicised constructions
- incorrect/ partial quotations
- spelling of characters/ places/ themes
- basic punctuation
- overuse/ lack of accents
- use of “cette” for cela/ ça
- use of “mal” for “mauvais”
- essays exceeding the recommended number of words

Un long dimanche de fiançailles:

Very fewer candidates answered questions on this film.

Le Havre: candidates usually chose option (b) about Idrissa and endeavoured to respond to the question set.

La Classe: candidates usually chose option (a) and here again really attempted a critical response.

La Rafle: the most popular option with both questions being chosen almost equally. Candidates knew the film very well.

Summary of key points

Series 2022 has seen pleasing progress.

- Overall, candidates were well prepared to deal with the challenges of this paper.
- Translation skills need celebrating and continued refining.
- Progress has been made by centres in relation to Question 6; this need to be celebrated and further refined.
- Increased grammatical accuracy is key to improving responses to Questions 2, 5, 6, which is key to improving overall performance.

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A2 UNIT 3: SPEAKING

General Comments

The Principal Examiner's report on the 2018 examination of this unit provides information on the guidance which WJEC offers centres submitting candidates for this test, the administrative requirements, the IRP form, centre/candidate declaration and possible models of a good presentation. That report also explains how centres can give candidates general advice without giving individual candidates specific help on their projects.

Centres will also find the examiner's report on the 2019 examination of this unit useful.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The presentation (20 marks) and the discussion of the IRP (52 marks) form the whole of the marks awarded for the oral test. There is no preparation time.

(A) The presentation

The presentation is evaluated according to three assessment objectives: AO2 (4 marks), AO3 (8 marks) and AO4 (8 marks). The timing is strictly limited to two minutes. There is no need to spend time stating the IRP title during the presentation as the examiner will have a copy of the IRP document and will check the title with the candidate. In addition, there is no need to explain in the presentation why the candidate has chosen that topic as this takes up valuable time. Explaining why a candidate has chosen a topic is often a suitable response to first question of the following discussion.

AO2 is the candidate's ability to respond to written material from a variety of sources. As only two minutes are allotted to the presentation, there was no time to go into detail of the sources but suitable short references to the sources - where and when found, or quotations from whom - did strengthen the examiner's evaluation of the amount and quality of research undertaken. The greatest indicator of the quality of research undertaken, however, was from the content of the presentation itself rather than any oblique reference to a source.

AO3 is the quality of the language. This includes grammatical accuracy, the range and appropriateness of structures, vocabulary and idioms and the quality of the pronunciation and intonation.

The candidates had pre-prepared their presentation themselves and many had learnt it off by heart. Accuracy was good on the whole as most candidates used constructions with which they were familiar.

The third criterion is AO4. Here, the candidate needed to show knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken which was relevant to topic to the subject chosen. Even a short, well crafted presentation did show the extent and depth of understanding, analysis and evaluation of issues raised by the topic under discussion.

Some candidates had learnt their presentation by heart. In some instances, candidates became nervous or forgot parts of their presentation and this sometimes affected their confidence. Presentation completely learnt off by heart were sometimes delivered it at a fast pace. This made comprehension difficult at times. Candidates were able to bring a copy of their IRP pro- forma into the examination as a memory aid. Using an aide-memoire made the presentation sound more natural and spontaneous.

The presentation serves as a springboard for the discussion that follows as it is likely to provide the examiner with possible lines of enquiry. It needs to be well-ordered, analytic and self-contained.

(B) The discussion

The discussion lasted 7-9 minutes in 2022 (an adaptation made because of Covid). The examiner will have used the candidate's presentation to draw up the possible questions that arise from it. The examiner will also have a copy of the completed IRP pro-forma. The examiner uses the bullet points as a guide only to the discussion and does not slavishly follow them.

All four assessment objectives are used to evaluate the IRP discussion. The weighting for each assessment objective is shown below.

AO1 (12/52). Candidates did show that they were able to answer questions. They displayed the ability to understand "understand and respond in speech to spoken language including face-to-face inter-action". To some extent candidates were able to predict questions which they might well have been "cued" in their introduction or IRP form.

AO2 (8/52). Candidates showed the outcomes of their research and referred in greater detail than in the presentation to research done both by themselves and others. The more successful candidates were able to compare as well as evaluate research undertaken

AO3 (16/52) AO3 is worth just under a third of the marks awarded for the discussion. Examiners evaluate the candidate's ability to manipulate the language accurately in its spoken form. As the candidates were required to respond spontaneously to questions, the level of accuracy varied. In almost all instances the language was accurate enough to ensure understanding. As the candidates had prepared the IRP themselves, the knowledge of topic-related technical terms and also related structures and idioms were good. Nevertheless, candidates committed the usual mistakes in verb (and tense) forms, genders, agreements (where audible). Candidates generally used structures and idioms with which they were familiar and their ability to respond correctly using more complex sentences varied. Lack of accuracy did affect understanding of what was being said (AO4) in some cases. In a few instances, pronunciation reflected written rather than oral language.

It was essential that candidates gave relevant information, analysed and evaluated it correctly as the high proportion of marks (16/52) is allocated to AO4. The candidates are required to show “the ability to show knowledge and understanding of and respond critically to aspects of the culture and society of the countries/communities where the language is spoken”.

Relatively few candidates chose to discuss any films or books but where they did so, they needed to concentrate on the film or book’s contribution to AO4 - knowledge of country and so on. For example, when discussing *La Haine*, the picture of French society at the time and of life in the *banlieue* was relevant whereas character studies of Vinz and others or discussion of the plot did not contribute significantly to AO4.

Similarly, quite a few candidates chose certain famous French persons as the topic of their IRP. Dior or Marie Curie were often chosen. The contribution of that famous person to France or French society was required, not a factual biography or a “generic” account of that person’s contribution to science, sport, fashion etc. or to the world in general.

Summary of key points

From 2023 onwards, centres will conduct this test themselves and teachers are advised to make use of any training or guidance which the board provides. The following are a few pointers.

- Teachers will be aware of the candidates’ general topics for their IRPs and will need to think of a few relevant questions themselves before conducting the examination. This will become clearer when the IRP document is received. Examining teachers must not slavishly follow IRP bullet points but rather use them as points of reference or prompts. It is likely that the research that candidates have undertaken will mean that they might well know more about the topic than the examining teacher.
- The presentation is likely to provide a source of ideas for possible questions and lines of enquiry and examining teachers need to be ready to jot down ideas for possible questions during the presentation itself.
- Examining teachers should think in terms of questions which allow the candidate not only to show their knowledge but also their understanding of topics. The candidates need questions which allow them to show their ability to evaluate aspects of their chosen topic as well as describe it.
- Candidates should be discouraged from delivering long uninterrupted monologues. Examining teachers must be prepared to interrupt overlong answers. Interaction is an important aspect of the evaluation of AO1.

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A2 UNIT 4: LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

General Comments

The 2022 paper was received well as it was accessible whilst offering a good level of challenge. Candidates responded well to the topics and managed the requirements of each type of question very well.

Most candidates attempted all seven questions. A few seemed to have run out of time and did not complete question 6 and/or 7.

More traditional style of questions that demanded active production of continuous French i.e. Q3, Q4, Q6 and Q7 proved more challenging.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A – Listening

Question 1: multiple choice

Many candidates scored high marks.

Incorrect answers were as follows:

7. some candidates opted for “respectueux”

8. some candidates opted for “à redouter”

10. some candidate did not infer “poisson” from “pêcher”

Question 2: matching exercise

Many candidates did well on this question.

Question 3: question and answer

Many candidates did well on this question however some candidates found this question challenging as a response in the language of study was required. The assessment objective used for marking this question is AO2 (understanding) rather than accuracy - though the French must be accurate enough to give a correct, understandable answer. Some candidates provided more than the number of details required for (d) and (h).

Issues were as follows:

(a) spelling of survivre

(b) answered well

(c) les Allemands/ Allemandes

(d) spelling of « rationnement »

(e) « unstable » was a common answer

- (f) answered well
- (g) answered well
- (h) answered fairly well

Section B – Reading

Question 4 (a) : summary

Some candidates found this question challenging as a response in the language of study was required. The assessment objective used for marking this question is AO2 (understanding) rather than accuracy - though the French must be accurate enough to give a correct, understandable answer. Some candidates provided more than the number of details required. Some candidates lifted whole sentences from the extract.

Issues were as follows:

1. «le taux » was misunderstood as meaning “high level of”
2. Spelling of “payes”/ pays
3. Answered well by some
4. Answered well by some
5. Misunderstood by most candidates.

Question 4 (b)

Answered fairly well by most candidates.

Question 5 (a)

Answered well by most candidates.

Issues were as follows:

- (a) **se** missing from the answer
- (e) “**d**” was included in the answer

Question 5 (b)

Answered well by most candidates.

Question 5 (c)

Answered well by most candidates.

Question 6

In this exercise, reading comprehension was tested by means of a traditional question and answer type question. Although AO2 rather than AO3 was the assessment objective applied for assessing this question, the French had to be clear enough to be understandable. Very few candidates did not attempt this question; time might have been a factor. Some candidates lifted whole sentences.

Issues were as follows:

- (a) A number of candidates used “vanter” on its own or without “se”
- (b) “La xénophobie” on its own
- (c) Answered fairly well by some candidates.
- (d) Very few candidates answered correctly
- (e) Answered well
- (f) Answered well
- (g) Answered well
- (h) Answered well
- (i) Answered fairly well
- (j) Answered well
- (k) Answered fairly well
- (l) Answered well
- (m) Answered fairly well
- (n) Answered well
- (o) Answered fairly well
- (p) A number of candidates failed to convey the answer without lifting

Section C – Translation

Question 7 Accuracy (AO3) is the key assessment objective used in evaluating this task. Only a few candidates scored high marks. Many candidates displayed a lack of vocabulary and also grammatical mistakes were very frequent. There were the usual problems of incorrect syntax when combining more than one clause, dependent infinitives, verb forms/tenses, pronouns and possessive adjectives, genders, adjective agreements and so on.

Issues were as follows:

- Part 1:** baby-boom/ noise/ Germans/ allies/ previously
- Part 2:** older/ nightmare
- Part 3:** hardship/post-war years/ itself/ short supply
- Part 4:** starve to death/ dozens/ coloured

Summary of key points

- Overall, candidates were well prepared to deal with the demands of this paper.
- Centres need to be aware that candidates need to time their examination so that they can complete the seven questions.
- Almost every sub-theme in the A level specification is tested in some part of the examination.
- The two most challenging tasks, as in 2019, proved to be the extended listening (Q3), the extended reading (Q6) and the translation into French (Q7)
- AO1 and AO2 are the assessment objectives used for evaluating performance in Q1-Q6, but if the candidate has answered the question fully and correctly, accurate French will ensure that examiners understand the answers.
- AO3 is used for Q7 - the translation into French specifically challenged the candidates' knowledge of grammar and lexis.
- In order to address issues relating to productive question ie Q3/4/6/7, increased accuracy, by way of competence in basic grammar, and knowledge of theme specific vocabulary, are essential.

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UNIT 5: CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

General Comments

This paper offered four texts for *analysis*. *The most popular choice was Un Secret. Second in popularity was Le Bal and finally Kiffe Kiffe demain. Very few centres chose Les Amants d'Avignon.*

Candidates had a choice of two titles for each text and they engaged well with both choices offered. It was a pleasure to see the candidates cope well with the AO4 element. They knew their texts and the background very well. Although the manipulation of the language as assessed in the AO3 element was a challenge for many candidates, there were some outstanding essays where the French and critical analysis were of a very impressive standard. They were a pleasure to read.

Comments on individual questions/sections

It is important to note that there are two assessment objectives which carry equal weighting. AO3 and AO4 are both marked out of 20. Careful consideration of both assessment objectives can be useful to guide teaching and learning. Candidates who can sustain a balance of both AO3 and AO4 within this task write successful answers.

The AO3 element assesses the language used in the essay and has three strands which guide this assessment. It evaluates not only linguistic accuracy but also whether the language is that of critical evaluation and the expression of ideas that respond to the title set. Precise vocabulary for the ideas of the novel and the task of critical analysis are very important also.

The issues to be aware of are the frequency of the grammatical errors and a tendency to drift away from the title. Lack of vocabulary impedes candidates from successfully expressing the full range of their thoughts.

The AO4 element assesses knowledge of the text studied in the context of the question set. It evaluates the critical selection of evidence to support the line of logic presented to answer the title set. The dangers to be avoided here are the tendency to explain or narrate events. The focus must not drift away from the title set. Candidates must be careful not to introduce irrelevant material.

Question 1: *Le Bal*

Both options were answered and elicited good responses. It is pleasing to see how well candidates understand social context, themes and characterisation in this text.

- (a) In this question the best candidates were able to argue that Mme Kampf was a figure that inspired both pity and sympathy, supporting their arguments very effectively.
- (b) In this question the best candidates were able to analyse the impact of social exclusion in relation to class, religion and on an emotional level.

A minority of candidates failed to provide some level of analysis

Question 2: *Kiffe kiffe demain*

This was a very popular choice. It is a pleasure to see that candidates know this text, understand the social background and are sensitive to the themes and issues raised by the author.

- (a) This was the most frequently chosen title. The majority focused on Doria's life but some candidates were able to examine the lives of other salient characters. The responses were generally critical and well supported.
- (b) This was not a popular choice however the best answers made very a pertinent study of Nabil's impact on Doria's emotional and social development.

Question 3: *Un Secret*

This was the most popular choice.

- (a) This question elicited some excellent responses dealing with the concept of belonging socially, religiously and emotionally.
- (b) By far the most popular question in this paper. Despite a higher incidence of descriptive responses, there were some excellent essays where well supported arguments and counter arguments in relation to keeping the secret were put forward.

Question 4: *Les Amants d'Avignon*

Very few exam centres chose this text if any.

Issues were as follows:

Essays exceeding the recommended length

Long introductions

Misspelling of characters/ places/ themes

Lack of basic punctuation which hindered clarity

Basic grammar and conjugation

Use of accents (missing where they are needed and appearing on consonants)

Widespread misspelling and misuse of language:

Ce/ celle montre for cela montre que

Je pense- for je pense que

Modal verbs/ subjunctive

De/ a + infinitive

Traite for trait/ traitement

Car- because of/ thanks

Grace a: followed by a negative concept

Sentir used for se sentir

Supporter for soutenir

Mémoire used for memories by a few candidates in one centre

Mal for mauvais

Premièrement/ deuxièmement

Overuse of faire (instead of rendre) / une part/ une partie/ avec... in typically anglicised structures

Dans la façon/ manière for d'une façon...

Quitter/ partir/ laisser used as synonyms indiscriminately

temps for fois

Summary of key points

Overall, this was a very encouraging series of the examination. There are examples of very good practice with candidates engaging well with the texts. They employ good analytical skills and respond appropriately to the question set and write with flair and style in French.

To improve further:

Keep introductions short and relevant to question set. The best answers are based on a clear plan where the points for each paragraph are identified before the writing begins; this appears to be a well-established habit.

- Candidates would benefit from learning the vocabulary specific to their text and to the expression of the themes and issues within it.
- Candidates know the background to their text well. However, they need to be more selective when using it to answer a specific title.
- Candidates should continue to increase their knowledge of analytical language and steer away from anglicised structures.
- Most importantly, the level of general accuracy in this task of sustained writing needs attention. Fewer errors will improve the mark for the AO3 element which would benefit clarity of argumentation in AO4. All aspects of grammar are involved:
 - Accurate use of tenses
 - Agreements of subject and verb
 - Agreements of nouns and adjectives
 - Possessive adjectives
 - Verbal structures and prepositions.



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