



# GCSE Examiners' Report

French

GCSE

Summer 2024

## 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.	<a href="https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/">https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/</a>
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.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a> 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: <a href="#">Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)</a>

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<sup>1</sup> 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.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a>
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.	<a href="https://resources.wjec.co.uk/">https://resources.wjec.co.uk/</a>
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.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a> or on the WJEC subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	<a href="#">Become an Examiner   WJEC</a>

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Unit 1 Speaking**

This year candidates were generally well prepared and able to perform well with most speaking tests being well organised by the teacher-examiner. The following advice would help improve performance further:

#### **Role play**

Responses need to be a single sentence and candidates are not given extra marks for extended answers or additional information which is not required. Candidates need to be aware of the context and scenario of the role play.

#### **Photo card**

Responses to the questions do need some expansion but it is important that the timing is managed so all four questions can be answered adequately in the allocated time.

#### **Conversation**

The conversations must focus clearly on the sub-sub-theme selected by the candidate. The conversation is the opportunity to show a breadth of vocabulary and structures. Candidates may take some time to think, but long pauses eat into the time allocated. The theme where candidates struggled the most and need a greater awareness is “Local and regional features and characteristics of France” and, preferably, of other francophone countries.

### **Unit 2 Listening**

Most candidates adhered to the rubric instructions although a small number completed too many boxes, therefore losing 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. Handwriting was an issue for some candidates, making some responses very difficult to mark. The paper is marked online so candidates who write their answers outside of the designated area need to ensure that the whereabouts of their answer is clearly signalled in the question box, so that examiners can access other parts of the paper to mark their answers.

In some sections of both papers, candidates gave too many responses, often one correct and one incorrect. Candidates should be reminded that if there is only 1 mark to a question or 1 detail required that they should adhere to this. If a candidate gives two responses and one is incorrect then they will score 0 as it is a rubric error.

### **Unit 3 Reading**

Candidates did not seem to recognise many cognates or near cognates in the texts. Cognates are often of a higher register in English and many candidates did not spot a link between the French and the English word.

There was an improvement on adherence to rubrics particularly where candidates had to choose a specific number of boxes. Legibility of handwriting is increasingly problematic making responses very difficult to decipher. Candidates are advised to check that their writing is clear.

It is important to advise candidates that where one detail is specified in a question it is vital that candidates adhere to this rubric. Where two or more responses are given candidates are given a mark of '0' as this represents a rubric infringement and hedging your bets is not rewarded in the mark scheme.

#### Unit 4 Writing

Candidates seemed well prepared for this unit overall and were generally well matched to the appropriate tier of entry although there were a minority of candidates at foundation tier that did not attempt parts of the paper.

Candidates' general abilities on communicating facts, ideas and opinions have continued to improve this year.

On the Foundation tier question one, it is important that candidates aim to respond in a full sentence with an accurate verb to gain the two marks.

In the Foundation tier question three and the overlap question one on Higher tier, candidates need to address all three bullets to obtain the highest marks, demonstrate knowledge of the vocabulary of that theme and focus on accurate conjugation of verbs.

At Higher tier it is important the candidates demonstrate more than one time frame in their responses particularly if they are not responding to the bulleted prompts which help to direct candidates to use different time frames.

For the translation the main areas to focus on would continue to be theme specific vocabulary and identifying the verb tenses correctly in order to correctly render the text into English/Cymraeg.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Knowledge of sub theme Local and regional features	<a href="#">Activities on sub theme Local and regional features</a>	Listening and reading activities on Local and regional features
Theme based vocabulary	<a href="#">GCSE WJEC French Knowledge Organisers</a>	Revision sheets covering each of the subthemes
Role Plays	<a href="#">Role Play   e-sgol</a>	Video presentation on role plays

**FRENCH**  
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**UNIT 1 SPEAKING**

**Overview of the Unit**

This unit aims to test a candidate's ability to communicate and interact effectively in speech in three parts: the role play, the photo card and the conversation, while using a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Each candidate's test covers four sub-sub themes and all sub-sub themes are covered twice somewhere across the six prescribed sets of questions.

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

The majority of tests were timed in line with recommendations, both for each section and overall but some were excessively long, especially conversations.

Unfortunately, the quality of some recordings still gives cause for concern as candidates' voices cannot be clearly heard.

There are documents such as the attendance register and centre form that must be uploaded with the recordings but these were frequently incomplete or missing.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Role Play Foundation Tier**

Generally, the Role Plays were completed well with candidates able to respond to most cues, even if briefly. Most candidates were able to deal with the unseen question and better able this year to ask a question in some fashion.

Candidates do need to read the setting and listen carefully to the teacher's cue to ensure that they are providing a relevant response that fits the context.

Teachers must read their cues exactly as printed in the booklet. Cues, or any part thereof, must not be repeated once a candidate has started to respond nor should any part of the cue be unduly emphasised.

**Role Play Higher Tier**

The above comments apply equally to the Higher tier as to the Foundation tier. In many cases candidates gave much more information than was required to fulfil the task. Sometimes this led to confusion as candidates' extended responses answered a following question as well. Even in the Higher tier a complete response only needs a single clause.

Excessively long responses also have a knock-on effect in that, in the Higher tier, a Role Play response has to be perfect to score maximum marks, so the longer the response the greater the likelihood of an error.

Candidates coped well with the tense usage, though the actual future tense was not much in evidence. This year candidates were more comfortable formulating a question.

## **Photo Card Foundation and Higher Tier**

The description of the picture is intended to be purely descriptive and does not expect a personal opinion. Most candidates were able to respond to the seen questions on the picture to some extent. Indeed, some descriptions were very thorough, though candidates need to be careful as this section is time limited and there may not be time to complete all questions in the time allowed. However, candidates should endeavour to give fuller responses to the final question to give more evidence of their ability to use tenses. If tenses can be used appropriately in earlier answers, so much the better.

All questions were accessible to some candidates and questions were at times rephrased to help candidates, which is permissible providing the meaning is not changed. Candidates should be encouraged to expand responses using the printed cues but any additional questions are disregarded in the assessment and may exceed the time allowed.

## **Conversation Foundation and Higher tier**

The conversation consists of two topics which should be of equal length and both give opportunities for showing linguistic ability. Every effort should be made to adhere to the stipulated timing.

Candidates appeared more comfortable with this section as the material is more familiar to them and they have a choice of topic.

Candidates performed best when there was interaction between candidate and teacher, that is the teacher was responding to answers rather than asking a series of unconnected questions.

Printed in the teacher's booklet are instructions for the conduct of the conversation but often candidates were not asked on the recording which topic they had chosen or given the chance to initiate Part One, as required by the mark scheme. A candidate's statement of their chosen theme is not initiating the conversation. Having stated the theme, the candidate should then continue to start the conversation.

## **Comments on individual questions**

### **Role Play Foundation Tier**

Inevitably, there were vocabulary items that caused issues for individual candidates, both in the question and in their attempt to answer.

- RP1 The question "Quel jour..." was not understood and an opinion often given.
- RP3 Many candidates did not grasp the setting or know that Corsica is a Mediterranean island and gave inappropriate responses.
- RP4 "Combien d'heures..." proved to be a challenging question.
- RP5 The word "schoolwork" was misinterpreted by some who were then confused when asked about favourite subjects. Again, "combien" as a question proved awkward.

## Role Play Higher Tier

- RP1 Few candidates could use, or place correctly, the direct object pronoun in cue 4, "...a aidé moi..." was a common rendering.
- RP2 Again, the use of the direct object pronoun was an issue.
- RP3 There was confusion for some over what is a "social issue" as opposed to an environmental one.
- RP5 The setting was in Switzerland. This was often overlooked in cue 4 with answers like "Je vais manger chez moi". "On" was often answered as "Je", thus ignoring the point that the situation included a friend.

## Photo Card Foundation and Higher Tier

- Card 3 FT Candidates found it hard to focus on the qualities needed for restaurant work and, also, how their qualities would fit into the world of work.
- Card 6 FT Candidates agreed recycling was important but could rarely justify the opinion.
- Card 1 HT Many answers were poorly focused. The unseen questions specified "la campagne" and "la nature" not the environment in general so comments on recycling and putting out lights were of little relevance while tree planting would be beneficial.
- Card 2 HT Candidates were very good discussing fast food but showed little imagination when describing a special meal. The conditional tense was poorly used.
- Card 5 HT The classroom of the future was rarely described successfully and often became the ideal classroom using the present tense. School trips were a poorly discussed concept.
- Card 6 HT Transport of the future was often reduced to improving local transport, though flying cars were mentioned.

## Conversation Foundation and Higher Tier

As a rule, candidates in both tiers produced competent conversations because they were on familiar ground. They had the necessary vocabulary and structures to express facts, ideas and opinions, often with justification. Attainment could be improved by trying to add more detail, by having an opportunity to narrate and by giving more evidence of tense usage. The standout candidate develops their answer independently using more complex syntax and a variety of constructions. The future tense, in particular, was little used. Opinions could be more adventurous than "C'est" plus adjective.

The disappointing aspect of the conversation was the amount of irrelevance in relation to the question asked. It is important to note that relevance to the chosen topic is an assessment criterion. The sub-sub-themes are discreet topics but often the content of one sub-sub-theme overflowed into another. This was particularly noticeable with school/college life, school/college studies and post-16 study or with social and environmental issues.

## Summary of key points

This year candidates were, by and large, well prepared and able to perform well with most tests being well organised. The following advice would help improve performance further:

- Role play responses need to be a single sentence and aware of the context.
- The photo card responses do need some expansion but all four questions need to be answered in the allocated time.
- Conversations must focus clearly on the sub-sub-theme selected by the candidate.
- The conversation is the opportunity to show a breadth of vocabulary and structures.
- Candidates may take some time to think but long pauses eat into the time allocated.
- Candidates need a greater awareness of “Local and regional features and characteristics of France” and, preferably, of other francophone countries.

## FRENCH

### GCSE

Summer 2024

## UNIT 2 LISTENING

### 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 target language questions at both levels were multiple choice questions and candidates were not required to answer in the target 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, with few 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, therefore losing 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 some responses was an issue, making some responses very difficult to mark. The paper is marked online so candidates who write their answers outside of the designated area need to ensure that the whereabouts of their answer is clearly signalled in the question box, so that examiners can access other parts of the paper to mark their answers.

In some sections of both papers, candidates gave too many responses, often one correct and one incorrect. Candidates should be reminded that if there is only 1 mark to a question or 1 detail required that they should adhere to this. If a candidate gives two responses and one is incorrect then they will score 0 as it is a rubric error.

### Comments on individual questions/sections

#### FOUNDATION TIER

- Q.1 This was a multiple-choice question based on school/college life. This was very accessible for most candidates, although numbers were often confused in 1b).
- Q.2 This was a multiple-choice question based on holidays and tourism. This was a very accessible question. Some candidates opted for 'Easter' in part a) but the rest of the question was very successful.
- Q.3 This was the first target language question. Candidates were required to complete a sentence in French with the appropriate answer from a choice of three. The topic was festivals and celebrations. Generally, this question was accessible. Part d) was the only question that threw up a higher proportion of incorrect answers as candidates failed to notice the negative construction in relation to 'chocolate'.

- Q.4 This was the second target language question. Candidates had to choose the correct picture from a choice of three for each mark. The topic was health and fitness.
- (a) Approximately two-thirds of candidates correctly identified 'natation' and 'muscultation'. Surprisingly, a sizeable number of candidates knew 'muscultation' but opted for 'équitation' or 'escalade' as the other answer.
  - (b) Most candidates correctly identified the time.
  - (c) 'Bien manger' was well-understood by the majority of candidates. Most also recognised 'se coucher' and 'bien dormir' but this tended to be where candidates lost marks.
- Q.5 This proved to be a more challenging question for most candidates. The topic was post-16 study but many candidates did not appear to understand the term 'bac professionnel'. Many candidates did not seem sure about what the 'bac' was in general. This is perhaps a vocabulary area that needs more work as most questions on post-16 study are likely to be referencing a baccalauréat of some sort.
- (a) Alternative translations of 'le bac' were allowed, such as 'A Level options' but using the term 'the bac' is perfectly acceptable. This was also a 'What is this article about?' type question. Candidates need a global view of the article's subject matter, and this will often come in the introductory sentence. Here it was clearly signposted in the first sentence (quel bac choisir ?)
  - (b) This was, on the face of it, quite a straightforward answer, but, as many candidates had not understood what the report was about, answers were often incorrect.
  - (c) Candidates had picked up 'avantage' from the question and were able to successfully answer the question.
  - (d) Three options were given for two details. Many candidates did not know 'à l'étranger' or 'métier'. Métier was often confused with 'matière' and 'partir' was often translated as 'have a party'.
- Q.6 This was a text about pocket money from the theme of self and relationships. Candidates had to listen to a radio report in two parts and select the three correct answers from a choice of six in each section. A number of candidates only ticked three boxes across the two sections, despite each section having the rubric instruction to tick three boxes. The total mark for the question is six, so it was not clear why some candidates misunderstood this. Careful reading of the rubric and setting is to be encouraged. Section 1 was more successful than section 2. The negative constructions in part 2 were often not understood and many did not distinguish between 'grands-parents' and 'aunt and uncle'. Generally, though, many candidates scored well on this text.

- Q.7 This was the first of the overlap questions with the higher tier. The theme was local areas of interest and the text was about French people living in Wales. The word 'ville' was often translated as village, which was incorrect. 'À notre porte' was frequently mistranslated as 'ports'. In both sections, some candidates offered 'Wales' as an answer. As the question specifically says that they live in Wales, then that is clearly not an answer to the question. Again, reading the setting, as well as the question, is paramount. In section 2 'près de la mer' was frequently mistranslated as 'near her mother'
- Q.8 This was the second overlap question about someone training to be a police officer, covering the theme of skills and personal qualities. The word 'formation' was not widely known. Some candidates heard 'école' and 'examen' and answered that you needed to pass your exams in school, rather than pass an entrance exam (to the police training school). A number of candidates answered 'physically fit' in this section despite the key words 'pour devenir policier il faut....' which mirrored the task in box 2 and 'quelles qualités faut-il avoir ?' clearly signposting the task in box 3. Some candidates mistranslated 'être discipliné' as 'to be good at discipline'. Overall though, this question was handled well by most candidates.
- Q.9 This was a text about the use of electricity in France under the theme of environment. Candidates were asked to complete a sentence with the correct information from the text.
- (a) Most candidates did not recognise the superlative 'la plus grande quantité' and so answered with 'a lot', 'a big amount'.
  - (b) A large number of candidates used the word 'reduce' as a substitute for 'reduction'. This was accepted at conference but seems to point to candidates not reading the sentence carefully before answering. Many simply answered with 'reduction' without saying what the reduction related to.
  - (c) 'Chauffeur' was frequently mistranslated as the English word chauffeur.
  - (d) There were two possible answers for this, both aimed at reducing energy used – reduce heating (in winter), limit air-conditioning (in summer). Some candidates wrote answers such as 'reduce the heating in the summer'. Many candidates did not understand 'la climatisation' and wrote answers such as 'limit climate change'.
  - (e) This was generally well-answered, with most candidates understanding 'énergie solaire', although some candidates said that they were going to install solar panels on trains, showing again, that they had not read the question properly.

### Higher Level

- Q.1-3 Generally speaking, these were handled much better than at Foundation level.
- Q.4 This was a text based on the theme of technology and social media. The 'promotional bundle' was prefaced by 'de très belles promotions' followed by 'offre de la semaine'.
- (a) Many candidates correctly identified a mobile phone as one item but seemed unsure of the term 'montre intelligente' and often fell back on 'a variety of tech products' mentioned in the opening sentence.

- (b) This proved to be tricky, with two prices and a percentage mentioned. The key information was 'une économie de...'. Some candidates tried to work out the answer, despite all the necessary information not being available. A question would never require a candidate to work out a mathematical response.
- (c) The text says 'avant la fin du mois' but many candidates answered 'a month', which is incorrect. Many candidates did not seem to recognise 'avant'.
- Q.5 This was the first target language question. Candidates had to listen to a text in two parts and choose the two correct answers from a choice of four in each section. Again, comparatives and vocabulary such as 'avant' were not well known by some candidates. The preparation time would be well-used here to identify the key ideas in each sentence to allow candidates to eliminate the incorrect answers more easily.
- Q.6 This was the second target language question, based on the theme of post-16 study. Candidates had a choice of three possibilities to complete each sentence.
- (a) almost all candidates answered this correctly.
- (b) most candidates answered correctly.
- (c) the text stated 'les cours sont gratuits' and 'on recevra un salaire', cancelling out answers 1 and 2, although around a third of candidates opted for 'il faut payer'.
- (d) over a third of candidates opted for 'plus de vacances' although the text said 'vacances plus courtes'.
- (e) all three types of bac were mentioned in the text but the negative clearly ejected two. However, a third of candidates opted for an incorrect answer, suggesting that the negative construction was not understood.
- Q.7 This question required candidates to complete a grid about weddings in France, from the theme, festivals and celebrations. The task clearly asks for general information about weddings in France, and not the specific wedding mentioned briefly in the introductory sentence. The word 'mairie' was not well-known and the sentence 'on peut pas se marier à l'église *seulement*' was often translated as 'you can only get married in church'. 'Vin d'honneur' and 'quelque chose à boire' were often not understood, with many candidates confusing quelque chose with quelquefois. 'Feux d'artifices' was often translated as 'artificial flowers'. For the last answer, 'soup' or 'onion soup' was accepted. Many candidates answered 'lamb soup', having confused 'agneau' and 'oignon'.
- Q.8 This was a text based on the theme of holidays and tourism about the October 'Toussaint' holiday. The text was more challenging for many candidates.
- (a) Many candidates answered that the cafés were empty or plain (misunderstanding 'pleins'.)
- (b) Many candidates struggled to understand that the 'surveillance de la plage' concerned lifeguards, and not CCTV. Answers such as 'surveying the beach/closing the beach' were common.

- (c) The question asked for the implications for the local authority, so an answer of '5000 euros' was insufficient, as that referred to the weekly cost, not the total cost.
- (d) This was mostly answered correctly.

Q.9 This was a text on the theme of school life, about a scheme for school refusers.

- (a) Generally answered well, although some candidates wrote 'students who don't like school'.
- (b) Many candidates heard 'sous la responsabilité de...' and answered that the course offers responsibility. 'Dix semaines' was frequently mistranslated as 'two weeks'.
- (c) Box 1 was usually well-answered. For box 2, many candidates simply reversed the answer for box one (small class/big class), although that was not mentioned in the text. Many answered that he had to stand/sit at the front of the class, misunderstanding 'au fond de la classe'.
- (d) This question asked what he was doing now. Many answered that he is a mechanic, having failed to understand that he was at a 'lycée professionnel' completing a 'formation'. Again, some vocabulary pertaining to school/qualifications/training was not well-known.

## FRENCH

### GCSE

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#### UNIT 3 READING

##### 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 target language questions at Foundation level did not require written answers in French and all took the form of a matching exercise. At Higher level candidates had to complete a matching exercise, a multiple-choice exercise and select the correct answers from a choice of thirteen. Again, no response in the target language was required.

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, with few questions left completely blank this year. The literary texts proved to be a little more demanding, but this is often because candidates don't notice the sub-theme (eg leisure and entertainment, self, family and friends). 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. There has been an increase in very small handwriting or handwriting that is impossible to read. Candidates must ensure that their answers are clear. Another issue concerns where the candidate writes their answer. Papers are marked on screen and presented as individual clips. If the candidate writes the answer elsewhere they must indicate in the original question space where that can be found so that the examiner can locate it, otherwise it might be recorded as 'not attempted'.

One of the main issues that costs 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 1 mark would be awarded, so it is vital that candidates are sure of both answers if they choose to do this. Candidates should be discouraged from 'hedging their bets', writing down two or three answers, in the hope that one is correct. 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. Good practice would be to encourage candidates to break down the translation first, circling tenses and linking words before rebuilding the sentences.

Finally, it was noticeable that candidates did not seem to recognise many cognates or near cognates in the texts. Cognates are often of a higher register in English and it was a little worrying to see that so many candidates did not spot a link between the French and the English word.

## Comments on individual questions/sections

### Foundation Tier

- Q.1 This was a short advert on the topic of entertainment and leisure.
- (a) Days of the week are a little sketchy for some candidates. Many wrote Monday for mardi.
  - (b) Generally fine although some translated juillet as June.
  - (c) 'Devant' was not well known by weaker candidates. Many wrote 'in' school.
  - (d) Most candidates coped well with this question, requiring two out of three activities mentioned. Some just wrote 'tennis' rather than table tennis.
  - (e) Generally good – 'gratuit' was well-known.
- Q.2 This was on the topic of technology and social media and was the first target language question. This was a very accessible text, with many candidates recognising the key words and therefore able to match them to the pictures.
- Q.3 This was the second target language text on the topic of local areas of interest. Candidates were able to match up the preferences of the French people with an appropriate place to visit. There were comprehension issues with 3b) and 3c) because 'montagne russe' was not well known and was often linked to the mountains of Snowdonia, whilst 'parc d'attractions' was often understood as just a park, so answers for Marie and Manjitha were very often reversed.
- Q.4 This question required candidates to match up newspaper headlines with environmental concerns. It was the third target language question. 'Arbre' was the least well-known item, as well as 'déchets ménagers'.
- Q.5 Candidates were required to match up a place to eat with the requirements of each person. At conference it was decided to accept (1) as an alternative acceptable answer for Soulaymaan because some people, who do not eat meat, do eat fish. This question, on the theme of food and drink, was accessible and generally answered well.
- Q.6 This was the first literary extract. Questions 6a) and 6e) caused the most issues. Questions b) to d) were generally fine.
- (a) Many candidates tried to concoct an answer through the word 'horreur' and didn't spot that the reason for the 'horreur' was at the start of the sentence. Candidates should be encouraged to look at sentences as a whole and understand that word order might put the 'cart before the horse'.
  - (e) For this question, candidates simply needed to say that the teacher was going to talk to them about what they were going to be doing. Unfortunately, as in the listening paper, the word 'formation' was not very familiar to many, who got bogged down trying to translate CAP Coiffure, which wasn't required.

- Q.7 This was an article about changes to the ‘baccalauréat’ in France, from the theme post-16 study. Again, this particular topic seemed tricky for some pupils.
- (a) This was a ‘What is this article about?’ question. As I have said in previous reports, the answer needs to be a global take on the text and the answer is nearly always encapsulated by the title. Here, ‘La réforme du bac arrive’ is full of cognates and should have been an easy mark, but many chose to just write ‘A levels’ or ‘6<sup>th</sup> form’, which does not render the crux of the text.
  - (b) The grid asked for information using key words that should have clued up the candidate on where to find the answer. Box 1 ‘possibilité de...’, box 2 ‘choisir’, box 3 ‘chaque lycée’, box 4 ‘spécialité Arts’, box 5 ‘matière optionnelle’. Candidates should be trained to match the key words in the text with the questions.
- Q.8 This was the second literary text and the first overlap question with the higher paper. The text, from a Maupassant story, was on the theme of employment. Generally speaking, this text was accessible and many candidates were able to find some answers. 8b) was the most tricky as many candidates thought it referred to contact details for emergencies or for contacting the doctor rather than Pierre gathering contacts that might be useful to him in the future.
- (d) was also often misunderstood, with many thinking that he was doing it *for* his family, rather than him no longer depending on his parents for money.
- Q.9 This text was an article about a poor holiday season in Corsica, on the theme of holidays and tourism. This was the second overlap text. In 9 (a), some candidates changed the meaning round by saying that there was a reduction of reservations available, rather than there being a reduction in the number of tourists making reservations.
- (b) required two main issues causing the problem. Many candidates just wrote ‘planes/boats’ which does not explain what the issue was. The question required a comment on the *lack* of, or poor availability of, transport/boats/planes and also the fact that it is expensive. With 9c) many candidates said that tourists were making last minute bookings rather than cancellations and in 9d) many candidates clearly did not understand that ‘plutôt que...’ signalled the type of accommodation rejected. 9e) was also quite difficult for many candidates at this level to grasp the idea of needing to improve advertising and their image.
- Q.10 This was the translation, on the theme of social issues. The whole of each chunk needs to be correct for a mark, so it is vital that candidates check that they have translated all parts of the text and that the tense is correct.
- ‘Dans les grandes villes beaucoup de jeunes...’ – many candidates did not know how to translate grandes villes and many missed that it was plural. This is something that can be looked for by candidates to ensure that they don’t lose marks for something basic.
- ‘Les jeunes’ was often incorrectly translated as kids/children.
- ‘...et leurs parents vivent...’ – ‘leurs’ often missed and the tense often incorrect.
- ‘...dans la rue en ce moment.’ – this section was usually more successful.

'En décembre il fait très froid la nuit'. Many candidates changed this to a past tense and/or missed out 'very'.

'Les associations caritatives vont donner...' – the word for charities was not well-known yet is a staple item for this topic. Many candidates changed the tense.

'..des vêtements chauds aux familles sans-abris'. Sans-abris was not well-known, despite being a core item for social issues. Many also struggled to translate 'warm clothes'.

## Higher Tier

Q.1&2 Higher tier candidates generally coped better with the two overlap texts, although they had the same issues as some Foundation candidates, but to a lesser extent.

Q.3 This was a target language question on the theme of local areas of interest. Candidates needed to match up what the visitors were talking about. No written target language was required. This was a generally accessible text for most.

Q.4 This was the second target language text, on the theme of school/college life. The text was about the cost of buying textbooks and candidates had to choose an appropriate ending to the sentence from a choice of three.

- (a) Most candidates selected the correct response.
- (b) Just over a third of candidates chose box 2, which was incorrect. The text says that the books are now 'inutiles' which is the exact opposite to the 'sont utiles' in the answer box. It may just be that candidates failed to spot the difference in the two words.
- (c) Most candidates selected the correct answer.
- (d) Approximately a third of candidates opted for one of the incorrect answers. Candidates failed to spot that 'les lycéens...se trouvent dans *deux situations différentes*' so the use of 'tout' in both incorrect options should have pointed to the impossibility of two different situations if 'all' had to do something.
- (e) A third of candidates opted for 1 which said that 'even more money' was being requested from parents, despite the text saying that 'Sept régions en France propose la gratuité totale'. 'Gratuit' is a commonly known word, so it is surprising that so many got this wrong.
- (f) Most candidates successfully chose the correct answer.

Q.5 This was the final target language question and was a text based on the theme of health and fitness. The task was to select the six correct sentences from a choice of thirteen. This was a largely successful text for many candidates but problems did arise with opposing words such as 'suffisamment/insuffisante'/146 pays/la France seulement/maximum/minimum/très peu de raisons/les raisons sont multiples/comparatives etc. Candidates should be encouraged to look for things that reverse the meaning of a word. Various forms of negation are also often ignored. For a reading exercise, where all the information is there to be examined (unlike listening), candidates should take the time to work through the list and look for evidence that agrees or contradicts the sentence.

Q.6 This was a text about the changes in French meals over time from the theme food and drink. 6a) was a 'What is this about?' question and, again, candidates needed to look no further than the title.

In 6b) candidates had to complete a grid with information from the text. Box 2 caused problems, despite the direct translation being available thanks to the cognates used. In the box about changes to restaurant meals, many candidates just wrote 'vegetarian' which did not answer the question. The idea of vegetarian food now being offered or more and more vegetarian dishes appearing was what was required. In the final sentence, the alternative meaning of 'cuisine' for cooking (or even cuisine) was not well known and resulted in many answers about responsible kitchens.

Q.7 This was the second literary text, based on the novel *No et Moi* on the subject of social issues. Parts of the question were well-understood.

(b) 'avoir peur' was not widely known and this was the lowest performing question for this text.

(d) Many struggled to explain that he could not go into a homeless shelter *because* he had a dog and shelters don't accept dogs.

(f) Many candidates did not know 'le lendemain' or 'il y a + time'.

Q.8 This proved to be the most difficult question on the paper (as one might expect). The theme was technology and social media and the article was about the effect of screen time on people.

Box 2 specifically asks how he answers the question. There was only one question in the text so the answer should have been easy to locate. Again, negation was missed, and many incorrectly said that the body was dependent on it, like a drug. Box 3 asked for common factors. The text mentions 'points communs', signposting the answers. 'Manque' was not well understood and neither was the phrase 'on finit par...'. Box 5 asks for the difference between the two and the text signposts this again with 'une grande différence...'. Many wrote that 'one requires medical intervention' without actually saying which one.

In a difficult text like this, again, candidates should be looking chronologically for hook words that signal where the answer can be found.

Q.9 The translation was on the theme of post-16 study. This has been a tricky topic for candidates with many not understanding core vocabulary for this theme. The other issue in this translation was the total disregard of tenses by many candidates.

'Chaque année, les lycéens doivent choisir...' – 'chaque' often not known and neither was 'lycéen'. 'doivent' was often ignored.

'trois spécialisations pour l'année suivante.' – so many candidates ignored the obvious 'specialisations/options' and 'l'année suivante' was often translated incorrectly.

'Les étudiants devront bien comprendre le contenu de chaque option.' – the future tense was usually ignored.

'car ils passeront douze heures par semaine à les étudier.' – future tense ignored. Many did not know the meaning of 'passer'. 'Douze' often translated as two or ten. Direct object pronoun ignored.

'Avant, il n'y avait pas la possibilité de personnaliser le bac...' - better but 'avant' frequently mistranslated or left out.

'mais le gouvernement a changé le système. – often correct but many changed the tense to the future.

## FRENCH

### GCSE

Summer 2024

#### UNIT 4 WRITING

##### Overview of the Unit

Overall this year, candidates at both tiers seemed well prepared by the Centres for the demands of the Unit 4 exam as candidates were generally able to respond imaginatively and it was encouraging to see that candidates' general abilities on communicating facts, ideas and opinions had continued to improve this year.

Candidates were generally well matched to the appropriate tier of entry although there were a minority of candidates at Foundation tier that did not attempt parts of the paper.

The question titles for both the Foundation and Higher paper allowed candidates to produce interesting work, particularly at the higher level.

At Higher tier it is important the candidates demonstrate more than one time frame in their responses particularly if they are not responding to the bulleted prompts which help to direct candidates to use different time frames.

For the translation, the main areas to focus on would continue to be theme specific vocabulary and identifying the verb tenses correctly in order to correctly render the text into English/Cymraeg.

The facility factor for the foundation tier indicated that candidates found questions 1,2 and 3 most accessible with the facility factor falling to 36.3% for question 4, highlighting that question 4 was the most challenging for candidates. Interestingly, this was also the case for higher tier candidates as the facility factor showed that candidates coped well with question 1 and 2 and that question 3 was the most challenging with a facility factor of 48.8% at higher tier. An area for improvement for both tiers consequently is the translation element of the paper.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

###### Question 1 Foundation Tier

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Wales and the World' and tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme 'Holidays and Tourism'. Candidates seemed well prepared by centres as the majority of candidates seemed aware that they needed to provide a verb in order to gain maximum marks. The majority of candidates attempted responses to all six headings, and many candidates were able to produce a sentence with a secure verb to gain 2 marks. The question was accessible to most candidates and allowed for a variety of answers. The following difficulties were encountered by a significant number of candidates:

**Heading 1** The secure conjugation of the verb 'aller'.

**Heading 3** Discussing an activity that they liked to do rather than something that they liked in general was problematic for some candidates.

**Heading 4** The correct conjugation of the verb 'rester'.

**Heading 5** Again, noting an activity was problematic for some.

**Heading 6** Several variations of the spelling of 'touristes'.

Areas for improvement would be to encourage pupils to ensure that they respond fully to the prompt given as well as ensuring that they write a full sentence with a secure verb in order to obtain the 2 marks.

### **Question 2 Foundation Tier**

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Current and Future Study and Employment' and tested the knowledge and understanding of candidates of the sub-theme of 'Employment'. The majority of candidates were able to meet or exceed the 50-word requirement here. The main shortcomings among a few were as follows:

- Some candidates interpreted the question as being about schoolwork.
- The word 'collègues' in the rubric seemed to be problematic and poorly recognised with a number of candidates writing about school rather than colleagues.
- 'Métier' and 'matière' also seemed problematic for a number of candidates.

Areas for improvement would be to ensure that candidates address all three bullet points in order to have access to the top bands. In addition, candidates need to ensure that they show use of topic-specific vocabulary and conjugate verbs accurately.

### **Question 3 Foundation Tier**

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Identity and Culture' and the sub-theme of 'Food and Drink'. Overall, there was a pleasing response to this question with most candidates being able to satisfy the word count and cover most of the bullet points. In addition, candidates were well-prepared to provide opinions throughout their answers and many candidates attempted to use complex structures.

Candidates for this answer in the foundation paper struggled with the final bullet point as they tended to use pre-learnt language rather than discuss which dish they would like to prepare in the future and therefore did not address the three bullet points fully. Tenses and correct verb endings continue to be an area for improvement, with many students simply lifting the prompts within their answer for example 'tu as mangé' and 'tu vas préparer'.

Areas for improvement would be to ensure that candidates can manipulate the language to convert the prompt from the second person to the first person in the response as well as ensuring that candidates address the three compulsory bullet points. Pupils at foundation tier also seemed to confuse 'santé', 'sain' and 'sainement'.

#### **Question 4 (Translation) Foundation Tier**

This question was set from the broad theme 'Wales and the World - areas of interest' and the sub sub-theme 'Environment'. On the whole, 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 'je recycle' accurately in sentence (a) although 'recycler' and 'recyclage' were problematic for some. Most candidates translated sentence (c) 'c'est important mais très barbant' accurately.

Sentence (d) and (e) proved to be the most difficult for candidates, with many candidates struggling to secure verbs in the past and future tenses. In addition, many candidates were omitting words from their translation into French meaning that the translation was not fully conveyed and could consequently not obtain the full marks for that sentence.

Areas for improvement would be conjugating the past and future tenses and ensuring candidates translate the sentence in its entirety in order for the full marks to be awarded.

#### **Question 1 Higher Tier**

This being the overlap question, candidates' answers were much fuller at the higher level than at the foundation level with candidates in the higher tier providing answers that covered the requirements of the task more fully as well as expressing different time frames more successfully. Many successful candidates' answers included attempts at more complex structures and ensured that they answered the 3 bullet points fully. However, the final bullet point was again problematic as candidates tended to use pre-learnt structures on the future tense rather than what they were going to prepare and therefore did not satisfy all the requirements of the task.

Areas for improvement would be to ensure that all three bullet points are met as well as referencing the past and future tenses successfully.

#### **Question 2 Higher Tier**

There were some original and inventive responses to both titles and most of the candidates satisfied the word count whilst also using idiomatic language and complex structures. Candidates who used the bullet points as a guide in their responses tended to use more than one time frame within their answer which is needed in order to reach the higher bands for the linguistic knowledge and accuracy of the mark scheme. Candidates who did not follow the bullet points tended to overlook this and some candidates only referred to the present tense in their answers.

Areas of improvement would be to ensure that candidates write in more than one time frame when not following the bullet points as well as avoiding over-complicating sentence structures as this tended to lead to too many basic errors impacting on both communication and linguistic knowledge and accuracy. In addition encourage candidates to note which question they are attempting as there could have been some cross over with some answers covering elements which were relevant to both a) and b)

### **Question 3 (Translation) Higher Tier**

This question was set from the broad theme 'Wales and the World - areas of interest' and the sub sub-theme 'Environment'.

This question seemed to be a clear discriminator amongst candidates as only a few were able to translate the verbs 'to create', 'to encourage' and 'to save' accurately. In addition, translating 'we must work together' proved to be challenging for many candidates.

Areas of improvement would be to discourage candidates from leaving blanks in the translation as well as knowing subject specific vocabulary.

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