GCSE Examiners' Report (Legacy)

French

GCSE (Legacy)

Summer 2026

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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.***

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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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Contents

	Page
Executive summary	5
Unit 1	6-9
Unit 2	10-11
Unit 3	12-14
Unit 4	15-17
Supporting you – useful contacts and links	18

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Executive Summary

As the last series of this specification concludes, we would like to thank centres for their hard work and diligence in preparing their candidates well for the assessments and to commend candidates for their performance this year in GCSE French. The vast majority of Unit 1 speaking assessments were conducted and administered in accordance with the instructions set by WJEC and in the main centres ensured that candidates were given the best possible chance to perform well by conducting the assessments in environments free from distraction and background noise.

It is clear that centres have a good understanding of the expectations of the assessments and prepare their candidates appropriately to be able to answer all questions. Candidates are generally entered for the appropriate tier across the units, with a noticeable difference in the performance of higher tier candidates on the crossover questions to lend further weight to this.

As in previous series, the main area for improvement is the knowledge of theme-specific vocabulary and basic vocabulary such as days of the week and numbers. Surprisingly, cognates were also not well known. In addition, accuracy of verb formation and tenses were often barriers to accessing the highest bands of the mark schemes. These areas impacted marks available for comprehension in the receptive skills tested within the reading and listening units and were also evident in the units where productive skills were assessed (speaking and writing) where in some cases, candidates were unable to understand the prompts and/or to extend their own responses. Rubrics within Units 2 and 3 were mainly adhered to, with only a minority of candidates not ticking the correct number of boxes or writing too little to demonstrate comprehension.

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FRENCH

GCSE (Legacy)

Summer 2026

UNIT 1

Overview of the Unit

Unit 1 aims to test a candidate's ability to understand spoken French and to respond appropriately in French using suitable vocabulary and structures.

The unit consists of three parts: the role play, the photo card and conversations on two topics. Six sets of questions are used in this test with each candidate being allocated a set at random by WJEC.

Each candidate's test covers 4 sub-sub-themes. However, across the six available sets all 18 of the specified sub-sub-themes appear 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 few tests were still excessively long. Although the conversation was usually the overlong element, the effect on the marking was mostly on the photocard when not all questions were answered in the allotted time.

The quality of recordings seemed much better this year though a minority of centres provided poor quality recordings, either the candidates voice being faint, an uncomfortable contrast between teacher and candidate, voice distortion or noise from outside the examination room.

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

Across the whole test, the main weaknesses were the lack of understanding of question words, especially *comment* and *quand* and using the required tense; the response thereby lacking precision.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Role Play

Generally speaking, all role plays were completed well with candidates able to respond to all cues even if briefly. This year candidates often struggled with the unseen question whereas the ability to ask questions was improved, particularly the use of interrogative adverbs.

Candidates did need to be mindful of the setting; some teacher-examiners reminded the candidates of the setting, but candidates needed to read the setting themselves. Candidates also needed to listen carefully to the teacher’s exact question so as to provide an answer that was relevant to the context and the question; answers they had prepared, or learnt in class, may not have been suitable for the precise question asked.

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Role play cues had to be read exactly as printed in the booklet. It was possible to repeat them but not once the candidate had 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.

There were still cases where some candidates provided much more information than was required; a single, pertinent sentence is all that was required. In general, though, this year, candidates were better at providing relevant answers without over elaborating.

Role Play Foundation Tier

RP1 The setting for this role play required the candidate's question to use "Vous", as the teacher's questions had. Some questions asked by candidates did not relate to a job.

RP2 Some candidates overlooked the significance of "local attraction", and weather expressions were not well known.

RP3 Candidates often asked about food generally and not meals specifically.

RP5 There was some confusion of cues 4 and 5, "when you go" and "what you did".

RP6 Questions about "tourist attractions" proved difficult.

Role Play Higher Tier

RP1 The use of "depuis" proved difficult. The interpretation of a "tourist attraction…in your region" gave some banal or distant responses. The setting for this role play required the candidate's question to use "Vous", as the teacher's questions had.

RP2 Cue 4 did not always elicit a specific job but where the candidate wished to work.

RP3 For cue 5 "Tu as des amis ?" did not fulfil the task.

RP4 In cue 4 "type of holiday" was often overlooked in favour of a place or simple activity.

RP5 It would have been nice had candidates shown greater knowledge of French cuisine in cue 4.

Photo Card

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 was permissible in this section.

The first question was intended to be purely descriptive of what is clearly visible in the picture. Indeed, some descriptions were very thorough and objective; others included irrelevant, material such as negatives "Il n'y a pas de chat" or personal reminiscences and opinions "Ça me rappelle…".

Candidates needed to be aware that an overlong description may have led them to exceed the allotted time, meaning later questions may not have been credited. Other candidates could have used the preparation time to develop a fuller answer to the first question; some higher tier discussions were under 2 minutes.

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Often, the third question required an evaluation rather than personal experience and candidates struggled with this, unaware verbs in the third person were expected.

In both tiers the final question required a tense other than the present and candidates would have done well to provide several examples of that tense in an extended response. Too many were content with a single sentence which may or may not have shown a clear grasp of the tense.

Regrettably, for many candidates this was the least successful part of the test.

Photo Card Foundation Tier

Card 1 "Quels sont…" such questions were often difficult, here and elsewhere.

Card 5 The question about IT skills in the workplace proved challenging.

Card 6 The unseen question caused issues for some candidates who did not focus on the time frame.

Photo Card Higher Tier

Card 1 In the unseen question the idea of "nouvelle" for an activity was often overlooked.

Card 2 In the unseen question the idea of "cuisine" as a style of cookery confused some.

Card 4 Question 3 proved challenging as candidates agreed technology was important in education but could not explain why.

Card 5 The wording of questions 2 and 3 is impersonal and invites an evaluation but candidates frequently narrated personal holidays, past or future, with vague reasons and so did not address the real question.

Card 6 2.

Conversation Foundation and Higher Tiers

This section carried half the marks for the paper and was assessed holistically over the two topic areas chosen by the candidate.

The candidate was expected to initiate the first conversation. Merely stating the chosen topic was not initiating the conversation, and the candidate was expected to continue after stating that choice. Unfortunately, often candidates were not afforded the opportunity to initiate the conversation nor, indeed, offer any evidence of candidate choice.

Again, this year conversations seemed to consist of much more interaction between teacher and candidate rather than a series of discreet and unrelated questions. Candidates seemed rather more at ease with this section as the material was more familiar and well-rehearsed. They were familiar not only with the content but also with the vocabulary and structures needed to express both facts and opinions.

For most candidates this was the most successful part of the test.

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Candidates were only too willing to add automatically an opinion to a statement, often of the "C'est" plus adjective variety. Again, this year "C'est amusant", C'est intéressant" and "C'est génial", were popular but were frequently used inappropriately for the context.

This year there seemed to be an upsurge in candidates simply not listening to the question. Too many picked on a particular word and built an answer of dubious relevance around that. Usually, the first word of the question was the vital one.

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 and offer more original opinions. 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, but the conversation flowed. At higher level some candidates impressed by using more complex constructions, but each candidate should be able to use them naturally and not feel that they must use a specific construction somehow or other. It did not sound authentic when every candidate in a centre used the same idiom.

Regrettably, many conversations contained a great deal of irrelevance. The specified sub-sub-themes were discrete topics, and the conversation should have related 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. The amount of irrelevance impacted on the marking.

Summary of key points

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

- Correctly pronouncing the third person plural of the present tense.
- Correctly pronouncing the first-person singular of the future and conditional tenses.
- Not try to use a "present continuous" tense.
- In a conversation 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. Listen to the whole question, rather than certain words.

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FRENCH

GCSE (Legacy)

Summer 2026

UNIT 2

Overview of the Unit

Unit 2 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 include multiple choice questions, matching activities, and short answers in English. This year, the target language questions at both tiers 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, although there seemed to be 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 very small number completed too many boxes, resulting in a loss of marks because of rubric error. The legibility of some responses was an issue, making some responses very difficult to mark.

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. Similarly, some candidates gave a minimal answer which was insufficient to show comprehension.

To improve 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

Questions 1-4 were multiple choice and generally successful. Basic vocabulary, such as numbers/months/days of the week needs revision.

Q5 was a short text on career plans and was generally accessible to most candidates.

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Q6 was a multiple-choice question on social issues. The statements in section 1 were more successfully found than in section 2. Numbers need revision.

Q7 was an article about school studies concerning a heatwave in France affecting school exams. A very high number of candidates were unable to recognise 'le 2 juillet', with most opting for 2nd June and a surprising number opting for other dates. In 7b some candidates wrote 'extreme weather' which is too vague. The cognate 'température' was very clear and should not have caused an issue. In 7e many missed the negative, so wrote the opposite to the correct answer.

Q8 was about a ballet dancer. Generally, 8a was handled well, with many scoring 2 marks. In 8b, many heard 'un souvenir de son travail' and wrote about her getting souvenirs rather than it being a souvenir/record of her work.

Q9 concerned teenagers working on the internet. There were many rather vague answers for 9a such as 'it was out of date' or 'there were no rules' without mention of it relating specifically to internet work. In 9c candidates lost marks as they missed the negative that parents could not access it. Many answered this well though.

Higher Tier

Crossover questions 1-3 were generally executed better than at Foundation Tier (as you would expect) although a surprising number could also not recognise 'le 2 juillet'.

Q4 was about why people choose Wales as a holiday destination. This was an accessible text. In 4b 'voile' was often translated as volleyball but 'escalade' was well recognised. In 4c 'gastronomie' was translated as 'astronomy' by some candidates but the idea of local food/restaurants was often successfully understood.

Q5 was a multiple-choice target language question about Information Technology, and this question was very successful.

Q6 was a multiple-choice target language question about relationships and was generally well done.

Q7 was an interview with a holidaymaker in France. 7a asks 'What are Christophe's plans?' the text says 'Quel est votre programme, Christophe?' followed by 'J'ai l'intention de….' which points the candidates to the incoming answer. However, many candidates just wrote 'camping'. In 7b candidates often struggled to differentiate between deux and douze.

Q8 was about a new law requiring vegetarian options in school canteens. Many missed 'la loi insiste que…' and made no reference to the obligation to provide vegetarian food. 8b was often successful but in 8c some candidates referred to religion despite the question asking about the reason for the *change* in eating habits. Religion could not be an answer here and the text mentions animal suffering and environmental factors. 8e was very successful although some candidates wrote 'food containing gluten' after missing the negative.

Q9 was generally well answered. In section 2 9d some candidates just wrote 'explosive' which does not answer the question. In 9e some wrote museums when the text says that he created 'un petit musée'. In 9f the construction 'ne…que' was not widely known and only better candidates understood that it was to find only fish in the river.

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GCSE (Legacy)

Summer 2026

UNIT 3

Overview of the Unit

Unit 3 tests the reading skills of candidates through texts of different lengths and contexts. The topics reflect the nine sub themes outlined in the specification. This year the 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 tier are taken from a literary extract. The target 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 and a multiple-choice exercise

Candidates had mostly been entered at the appropriate tier, and the overlap questions were handled better by Higher Tier candidates, which further highlights candidates being entered for the correct tier. Overall, the general accessibility of the paper was appropriate, although there seemed to be a higher frequency of questions left completely blank this year. The literary texts were more successful this year. 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.

An 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 1 mark would be awarded, so it is vital that candidates are sure of both answers if they choose to do this. 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, consider the title of the text 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.
- Towards the end of the Higher Tier, attention to detail is expected.

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- 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 Tier

Questions 1-4 were all matching exercises and were generally well answered.

Q5 was a local area question. In 5a, the superlative was often not recognised ‘la plus petite ville de…’ and ‘ville’ is still often translated as village. In 5d, some candidates struggled with times and days of the week. The other questions were often very accessible.

Q6 was a literary text based on food. The expression ‘il n’y a rien…’ was not well known but we also accepted that dinner was a disaster as so many candidates had plumped for that instead. In 6b ‘boucherie’ was not well known and neither was ‘chou’ in 6d.

Q7a was about a cycle mechanic apprenticeship. Box 1 was often successful. In box 2 ‘entreprise’ was not well known. In box 3 many lost marks because they simply wrote 1800-2000 euros with no reference to what that referred to.

Q8 was the second literary text about a holiday. In 8b ‘la même heure’ caused lots of problems and in 8e ‘ballon’ was often translated as balloon. Otherwise, it was generally well-executed.

Q9 concerned a new system to heat a road in a snowy part of France. ‘la frontière’ was not recognised by many. In 9c many candidates missed ‘in winter’ and in 9f ‘faire des économies’ was not well-known, leading to many answers about the economy of France.

Q10 A surprising number of candidates could not translate ‘garder la forme’. ‘La semaine dernière’ was often translated as last weekend and the perfect tense ignored. ‘musculation’ was not well known. ‘J’essaie de’ was not recognised and the negative often ignored. ‘Sucrées’ was often translated as fizzy.

Higher Tier

Q1-2 are the crossover and were generally handled better by Higher Tier candidates.

Q3 was a target language matching exercise on school studies and generally well executed.

Q4 was a target language multiple-choice exercise on electric bikes. This was often completed successfully.

Q5 was a target language multiple-choice task about the ‘Fête des voisins’. This was generally successful although many thought that Corinne was disappointed.

Q6 was a grid and overall subject text about a scheme for old and young people to live together. The answer to ‘What is this article about?’ was in the title as indicated in previous Examiner Reports. Some candidates lost marks because their answer just said old and young people, with no context. Generally, however, the text did not cause too many problems, other than the final box where candidates often struggled to understand the idea that many stayed much longer than the initial contract.

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Q7 was a literary text about a woman at a ball. Many parts of this were very accessible. Candidates struggled with ‘un petit salon désert’ and often wrote things about puddings/desserts which made no sense. In 7d some did not spot that she did not want rich women to see her everyday clothes. In 7f only the best candidates understood that she was missing jewellery. ‘Bijoux’ and ‘cou’ were not well known. Many said she saw a note on her mirror.

Q8 was a little more challenging. It was an article about post-16 studies. In box 1 many did not understand that he had no choice – it was simply carry on or leave. In box 2 many translated ‘serveur’ as server which we accepted as so many candidates wrote this and seemed unaware of the word waiter. The last two boxes were more difficult to score maximum points, with candidates getting muddled. ‘Stage’ and ‘enseignement général’ seemed not very well known.

Q9 ‘Faire une demande d’empoli’ was often translated as ‘Doing a job interview’. ‘Souvent’ was often missed or mistranslated. The future tense ‘vous serez’ was often ignored. ‘Have you done an interesting work experience?’ Was the most successfully translated sentence. ‘Prouver’ was often ignored and ‘vous savez’ was often translated as ‘you can’ rather than ‘you know how to’. The last sentence was often well translated but ‘appris’ was the word that caused a problem for those who were less successful.

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GCSE (Legacy)

Summer 2026

UNIT 4

Overview of the Unit

Unit 4 assesses candidates' writing skills in French and their ability to communicate effectively through a range of written tasks. Candidates are required to produce written responses for different purposes and audiences, demonstrating their ability to convey information, express and justify opinions, and use a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures accurately. The assessment covers the three broad themes of the specification.

Overall, candidates were entered to the appropriate tier and made a good effort to respond to all questions, including the extended writing tasks, even when they found aspects of the paper challenging. Many candidates demonstrated a pleasing standard of performance. It should also be noted that very few questions were not attempted which was very encouraging.

The titles provided on both the Foundation and Higher Tier papers allowed candidates to produce engaging and relevant written responses, with particularly strong performances seen at Higher Tier.

For both Foundation and Higher Tier, candidates would benefit from a broader range of theme-specific vocabulary and key expressions. In some cases, limited vocabulary knowledge led to misinterpretation of task requirements or prevented candidates from fully addressing all aspects of the question. Expanding topic-specific language would support candidates in producing more precise, detailed and accurate written responses.

In addition, it remains important for candidates to demonstrate the use of a range of language structures in their writing, including evidence of more than one time frame where appropriate. Candidates who incorporated references to past, present and future events were often able to produce more detailed and developed responses. Accurate use of tenses continues to be an area for improvement, with errors in verb conjugation affecting both clarity and communication.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1 Foundation Tier

This question was set from the broad theme of Identity and Culture. Candidates generally appeared to be well prepared by centres, with many demonstrating a secure understanding of the task requirements and producing relevant responses. Most candidates attempted all parts of the question, and the task proved accessible while allowing opportunities for a wide range of responses. Some candidates did, however, respond in English/Welsh to the last 3 prompts with no attempt to respond in a complete sentence in French.

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Areas for improvement include encouraging candidates to use vocabulary and language structures that they can apply accurately and confidently. Candidates should also be supported in developing their responses more fully, making use of a range of relevant vocabulary, opinions and justifications where appropriate. Greater attention to grammatical accuracy, particularly in verb forms and tense usage, would help candidates access the highest marks available.

Question 2 Foundation Tier

This question was set from the broad theme of Current and Future Study and Employment. Most candidates attempted the task and were able to produce responses of an appropriate length. Those who understood the prompts were generally able to provide relevant information and develop their ideas effectively.

The main issue encountered by candidates was a misunderstanding of the French prompts. In particular, a significant number of candidates confused métiers (jobs/professions) with matières (school subjects), resulting in responses that did not fully address the requirements of the task. This limited candidates' ability to access the higher mark bands, as the content was not always relevant to the focus of the question.

Areas for improvement include encouraging candidates to read the prompts carefully and identify key vocabulary before beginning their response. Centres should ensure that commonly confused words such as ‘métiers’ and ‘matières’ are explicitly taught and regularly revisited. Candidates should also be reminded of the importance of responding directly to all bullet points and using accurate language in order to access the highest mark bands.

Question 3 Foundation Tier

This question was based on the broad theme of ‘Wales and the World’. Candidates were generally well prepared and were able to express opinions throughout their responses but only a few candidates at Foundation Tier had the ability to use more complex language structures within their answers.

Candidates entered for the Foundation Tier often found it difficult to identify the tenses required by the final two bullet points and answers were predominantly written in the present tense. While many could respond to the first task successfully, fewer recognised that the second bullet point required the past tense with many candidates misinterpreting ‘récemment’ as ‘to recommend’. It is good practice to develop not only candidates’ awareness of cognates to aid comprehension but also ‘false friends’. In addition, a common error which impeded some candidates from accessing the top band was not writing about their local area as specified in the prompt and lead them to writing about things that were not appropriate to the task set.

Question 4 (Translation) Foundation Tier

Most candidates attempted some element of this question and were able to gain 1 or 2 marks by partially conveying the meaning or by communicating the intended message despite inaccuracies in grammatical structures. The most successful responses demonstrated secure control of verb forms and grammatical accuracy, ensuring that the meaning was conveyed clearly and fully.

To improve performance, candidates should focus on the accurate formation of verbs and the application of key grammatical structures, as greater linguistic accuracy would enable them to communicate meaning more effectively and access the highest marks available.

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Question 1 Higher Tier

This was the overlap question, and as expected, responses from Higher Tier candidates were generally more detailed and developed than those from Foundation Tier candidates. Higher Tier candidates were more successful in meeting the demands of the task, addressing the bullet points in greater depth and demonstrating a wider range of language across different time frames. Many strong responses included attempts at more complex structures and fully addressed all three bullet points.

Higher Tier candidates attempted more sophisticated language and complex grammatical structures however this did seem to be less prevalent than in previous years. To access the highest marks more consistently, candidates should focus on improving the accuracy of complex language while maintaining the breadth of structures and vocabulary within their writing.

Question 2 Higher Tier

Candidates generally responded well to this question with an equal split of candidates choosing to write about 'L'amitié' and 'Le temps libre'. Candidates produced extended pieces of writing and expressed opinions with confidence. The most successful responses demonstrated a secure command of a range of linguistic structures, with more complex language used both effectively and accurately. Candidates who used the stimulus bullet points to help structure their responses were more likely to incorporate multiple time frames, an important requirement for accessing the higher mark bands for linguistic knowledge and accuracy. By contrast, candidates who did not use the bullet points as a guide often overlooked this aspect of the task, with some relying solely on the present tense throughout their response.

To improve performance, candidates should focus on maintaining accuracy when attempting more complex language. While many candidates showed ambition in their use of sophisticated structures, inaccuracies sometimes reduced the clarity of communication and limited access to the highest marks. Candidates should also be reminded that, although there is no requirement to follow the bullet points for this question, responses must include a range of accurately used tenses to meet the expectations of the top mark bands. Furthermore, candidates should be aware that linguistic accuracy can influence marks awarded for Communication and Content, as responses in the highest band must communicate ideas clearly and with little or no ambiguity.

Question 3 (Translation) Higher Tier

The majority of candidates attempted most elements of this question and overall, the vocabulary seemed accessible to candidates. The more complex language within the translation proved effective in differentiating between candidates, with only a small number demonstrating accurate knowledge of more complex vocabulary and structures.

To improve performance, candidates would benefit from developing a broader range of topic-specific vocabulary and ensuring regular revision of core language. Greater attention should also be given to the accurate formation and use of verbs, particularly '-ir' verbs in the past tense, as weaknesses in verb conjugation frequently affected the accuracy of responses.

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