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# **GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**FRENCH  
GCSE  
SUMMER 2023**

## Introduction

Our Principal examiners' reports offer valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. They are written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and detail how candidates have performed.

This report offers an overall 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 goes on to look in detail at each question/section of each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.<sup>i</sup>

The information found in this report can provide invaluable 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 annual 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 6 months after the examination.	<a href="http://www.wjecservices.co.uk">www.wjecservices.co.uk</a> or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	<p>Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the overall subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.</p>	For unitised specifications click here: <a href="#">Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)</a>

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	<a href="http://www.wjecservices.co.uk">www.wjecservices.co.uk</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="http://www.wjecservices.co.uk">www.wjecservices.co.uk</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 invaluable 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>

	<b>Page</b>
Executive summary	4
Unit 1 – Speaking	6
Unit 2 – Listening	9
Unit 3 – Reading	15
Unit 4 – Writing	22
Supporting you – useful contacts and links	25

## **Subject Officer's Executive Summary**

Overall candidates produced some pleasing evidence in their assessments and the standards achieved are a credit to their hard work. The following information provides a summary of areas for teachers and candidates to be aware of when reviewing the assessment with key learning points to consider for future teaching and learning.

### **Unit 1 – Speaking**

#### **Role Play**

At Foundation Tier candidates found asking a question the most challenging and often struggled to cope with the unseen questions. It is recommended that students revise question words such as *qui*, *comment*, *où*, *quand* and *combien*. At Higher Tier candidates provided some good responses however they need to be aware that providing additional information or extending their responses sometimes led to the introduction of errors which would not have been present had they stuck to the bullet points. The use of the future tense was often quite weak at Higher Tier and would benefit from some revision.

#### **Photo Card**

This was the weakest element of the speaking assessment for the majority of candidates. Many were lacking vocabulary linked to personal qualities, workplace, social issues and knowledge of cities or regions in France. Teacher examiners need to take care to ensure they read the questions correctly to avoid errors which could result in the tense in the question being changed.

#### **Conversation**

A key indicator of a successful conversation was the ability of the candidate to provide opinions to justify their responses. This was evident particularly at Higher Tier where candidates were able to extend their reasoning beyond one simple sentence using compound sentences with conjunctions. Some candidates overran on this task. It is important to note that the timings for each individual task must be adhered to, as evidence which exceeds the maximum time limit will not be included in the overall mark.

### **Unit 2 – Listening**

Performance on the listening paper was pretty stable compared to previous series. The main areas of difficulty were knowledge gaps in vocabulary connected to jobs and employment and also numbers such as dates and times. Candidates sometimes missed key negative words such as *ne...pas* and *jamais* which resulted in incorrect answers.

### **Unit 3 – Reading**

One of the main areas where candidates lost marks in the reading paper was when they gave too many responses to a question, often one correct and one incorrect. Candidates should be reminded that if there is only one mark to a question or one detail required that they should adhere to this. If a candidate gives two responses and one is incorrect then they will score zero marks as it is a rubric error. For the translation, candidates sometimes struggled to recognise parts of speech other than nouns, verbs and adjectives. Many were unsure of adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions and the structure of reflexive verbs. They also found constructions such as '*après avoir ...*' and conjugated forms of '*venir de...*' difficult to translate.

## Unit 4 – Writing

At Foundation Tier most candidates gained a mark for each part of question one. Those who gained two marks had provided a conjugated verb. It is important in question three that candidates cover all the prescribed bullet points to ensure they can access the higher marks for Communication and Content.

At Higher Tier on the overlap question some candidates self-penalised by exceeding the word count and allowing additional errors in accuracy to occur. In question two, candidates don't have to use all the bullet points however those that did were able to demonstrate a range of tenses and opinions as they were guided by the questions. The translation was more successful at Higher Tier however evidence of the imperfect tense was weak and simple structures such as *Il y avait* were not used accurately.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Knowledge of vocabulary relating to work experience, professional life and personal qualities.	<a href="#">GCSE French Theme 3 - Current and future study and employment</a>	Interactive activities to support linguistic knowledge and skills to support GCSE theme 3.
Knowledge of vocabulary particularly Theme 3	<a href="#">GCSE French Knowledge organisers</a>	Bank of theme-based knowledge organisers and vocabulary linked to each GCSE French theme.
Widening vocabulary	<a href="http://wjec.co.uk">French Reading Challenges (wjec.co.uk)</a>	Range of reading challenges covering the three themes at GCSE.
Techniques for responding to Unit 1 Speaking assessment	<a href="#">Unit 1 Teaching and Learning Booklet</a>	Guidance on the expectations and requirements of unit 1 Speaking assessment.

## **FRENCH**

### **GCSE**

**Summer 2023**

#### **UNIT 1 – SPEAKING**

##### **Overview of the Unit**

This unit aimed to test a candidate's ability to communicate and interact effectively in speech for a variety of purposes across a range of specified contexts. Candidates were expected to participate in conversations of varying length while making appropriate and accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Each candidate's test covered the three broad themes and four of the sub-themes across the three questions. All broad themes and sub themes were covered across the six sets.

Overall candidates were suitably prepared and able to complete the paper successfully this year with a decrease in the number of candidates scoring low marks in both tiers.

Candidates performed best in the conversation, then the role play with the photo card being the weakest area. Pronunciation seemed to have improved. Some candidates were imaginative and resourceful in dealing with tasks but the general impression was of a narrowing of the range of vocabulary and structures used by candidates.

##### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

###### **Role play**

Each role play consisted of five tasks in the form of a dialogue between the candidate and the teacher-examiner. Candidates coped well with the format and much information was successfully communicated. Factual information was mostly conveyed successfully and the tenses were usually successful. The unseen question caused problems for some candidates and asking a question proved rather difficult for many.

Candidates would have benefited from focusing on providing only the information requested and not adding further material. The best responses were concise ones whereas some higher tier responses were very long. In particular, there was a widespread habit of adding an unsolicited opinion wherever possible. Though superfluous, as part of the candidate's response, additional content is assessed. Also, if the role play went on to ask for an opinion, this could confuse candidates who have just expressed one.

The role play was primarily a speaking test but was also a test of listening. Candidates had some time to prepare the role play beforehand and to think about possible responses. However, they should have been aware that their script gave indicative content only and they must, as well as looking at any notes, have listened to the question asked to ensure their response was appropriate. For example, in higher role play 2 candidate cue 4 said "Say when you will come back" but the teacher's cue specified "un autre jour", so a successful response needed to include a day of the week. The best candidates were alert to the interaction.

In the role play it is not permissible to change the teacher-examiner cues, they must be read out, or repeated, as printed. As well as instances of cues being omitted or misread, there was rephrasing. For example, in foundation role play 5 cue 4 changing the cue from “Qu’est-ce que tu aimes dans ton collègue ?” to “... au collègue ?” changed the emphasis. Also, a cue should not be repeated once a candidate has begun to respond.

Every role play required candidates to ask a question and it was expected that interrogative adjectives or adverbs would be used, as in the specimen material. However, these were not widely known or, if known, not fitted correctly into a sentence. “Quel” and “comment” were noticeably challenging.

On a more specific note, in foundation role play 2 dates were a weakness and in higher role play 5 cue 5 “like” often brought out an attempt with “aimer” rather than “comment”.

### **Photo card**

Whereas the role play required rather specific content, the photo card allowed for more choice of language and more detailed responses. Nevertheless, for many candidates it was the weakest part of their test.

Responses could be quite detailed, especially question 1, but should not have been overlong as the whole task is time limited. Only the four printed questions should have been used though they may be rephrased to improve accessibility but not to change the meaning. The bracketed prompts were helpful here in encouraging candidates to develop the more detailed answers needed to access the top bands of the mark scheme.

Candidates needed to understand the whole question and not focus on a single word or phrase as this could lead to some competent, but irrelevant, responses. For example, in higher tier set 5 the cue “Les opinions des autres sont importantes.” the emphasis was on the opinions though the cue was often interpreted as “friends are important” rather than their (or other people’s) views. Also, the question word played a great role here and, again, candidates’ awareness of these was generally poor. For example, in foundation tier set 1 “Est-ce que...” was often answered instead of “Qu’est-ce que...” and in set 3 “Où” was not often understood.

In all sets of photo cards the first question required a description of the photo. Candidates were expected to describe the photo objectively, as per the question, and not to recount personal experiences or reactions to the image which were irrelevant to the question. This distinction applied elsewhere too, did a question need a personal response or a general, third person, response?

Question 4 was an opportunity to shine that was often missed. Candidates should have been aware it required a tense other than the present and should have listened for this. It also offered the chance for an extended response but all too often candidates stuck at one sentence rather than showing sound knowledge of the tense.

Photo card 2 proved to be the most challenging as candidates were rarely aware of the distinction between “qualités” and “compétences”, or indeed what they were, and lacked the vocabulary to respond effectively to the questions. Photo card 6 also proved challenging due to a lack of ideas on social issues. A surprising specific confusion was in higher tier set 3 where “emploi du temps” was misheard by some as “emploi”.

Photo cards 3,4 and 5 were done somewhat better as the context was perhaps more familiar to candidates. However, candidates may still have benefited from a moment's reflection before responding to the unseen questions as candidates often struggled here, particularly when trying to justify opinions.

## **Conversation**

For the majority of candidates in both tiers this section was the most successful as they had some control over the subject matter and teachers were able to tailor questions to the candidate.

The format of this section is clearly laid out in the Teacher's Booklet and it is part of the assessment criteria that the candidate initiates part 1 but very often it was the teacher who started the conversation. Having stated their chosen theme, the candidate should then have continued immediately with a narrative statement.

Once a topic had been chosen, it was essential that the conversation remained restricted to that sub-sub-theme to avoid irrelevance (also part of the mark scheme). Hence, "career plans" as a theme should not have included information about current schooling nor should "Post-16 study" have mentioned last weekend's part time job. Candidates who chose "Social issues" often focused on environmental ones while "School life" and "School studies" were widely considered interchangeable.

As elsewhere, candidates needed to listen to the question to ensure their response was relevant and to try to say as much as possible on the topic but should also have realised when they had said all they could and not have struggled on. The best responses had a determined ending.

Candidates should have striven to use as wide a range of vocabulary, structures and tenses as possible. Candidates tended to settle for repetitive language and structures while rarely using more complex structures or syntax spontaneously, as is required to access the higher bands of the mark scheme. For example, justifying an opinion was often simply "C'est + adjective" rather than something more detailed. "C'est amusant" was a common comment that was not always suited to the context. An answer of three or four sentences, preferably compound ones in the higher tier, is a useful target.

There was generally limited ability to manipulate verb forms and tenses, especially with irregular verbs, even though the teacher may have stressed the tense and used another time indicator as well. Attempts to use continuous verb forms were noticeable. However, candidates in some centres were able to successfully use more complex verb structures, including the subjunctive. Candidates should take advantage of several opportunities offered in both parts of the conversation to demonstrate sound tense usage.

Some vocabulary issues were common. Among these was the confusion of "mauvais" and "mal", the use of "travailler" as "to travel" and "journée" meaning "a journey".

Candidates were not required to ask questions of the teacher though it would have been a way of showing a wider command of the language. If a candidate asked a question the response should have been as brief as possible to move the conversation along.

For maximum candidate benefit, the recommended times should have been adhered to and the two parts of equal duration. Short timings limited the amount of language that could be evidenced while material exceeding the 3½ minutes per part was not credited.

**FRENCH**  
**GCSE**  
**Summer 2023**  
**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. Questions that required a response in the assessed language did not differ in accessibility to questions set in English. The legibility of some responses continues to be 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 level**

**Q.1** This question is set in the subtheme of **Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans** and assesses the aspect of **Employment**.

This was a multiple-choice question and was very accessible for almost all candidates.

**Q.2** This question is set in the subtheme of **Lifestyle** and assesses the aspect of **Entertainment and Leisure**.

**(a)** Most candidates correctly matched 'patinoire' with ice rink.

**(b)** Candidates should practise differentiating between similar sounding numbers such as 'deux/dix/douze'. Generally, this question was very accessible.

(c) and (d) These questions were very accessible.

(e) Some candidates missed the negative in 'ce n'est pas possible' and chose 'it's a possibility. Practise of negative constructions is very useful for the listening paper.

**Q.3** This question is set in the subtheme of **The Wider World** and assesses the aspect of **Holidays and Tourism**.

This was a very short text about holidays in Canada.

(a) A third of candidates chose 'the sea' as an answer and missed the clue word 'neige'.

Questions (b), (c) and (d) were more accessible.

**Q.4** This question is set in the subtheme of **Global Sustainability** and assesses the aspect of **Environment**.

This was a multiple-choice photo question.

(a) A sizeable number of candidates ignored 'adolescents' and opted for 'les adultes ne font rien' in answer to 'who is most concerned by pollution.

(b) and (c) were generally very accessible.

(d) The clue 'toilettes' was picked up by many but 'éteindre les lumières' was less well known and was often not chosen as the second reason given.

**Q.5** This question is set in the subtheme of **Home and Locality** and assesses the aspect of **Local Areas of Interest**.

(a) As this is a more open-ended question (*What are they talking about?*) then consideration is given to answers that may not be covered by the mark scheme. Generally, candidates answered 'a visit to Wales/visiting Wales' and there were few issues with this question.

(b) This threw up a possible answer not previously considered. Many answered 'Cardiff' and this was accepted as an alternative answer, along with museum or science museum.

(c) The vocabulary 'maillot de bain' was not widely known. Many candidates answered 'sports clothing' having heard 'centre sportif'. or 'canoe/kayak' having heard that vocabulary.

(d) The answer required was 'at the weekend/at the end of the week'. Many candidates opted to state a particular day, such as Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Given that days of the week are easily recognisable items of vocabulary, candidates need to take care not to lose marks by making assumptions.

- (e) The mark scheme was expanded to include the fact that he was excited because Emma had bought tickets for the concert or that she was taking him to the concert, as many candidates had answered in this fashion and it was agreed as a satisfactory alternative.

**Q.6** This question is set in the subtheme of **Customs and Traditions** and assesses the aspect of **Festivals and Celebrations**.

There were not too many issues here. Candidates struggle with numbers, but it was generally accessible.

**Q.7** This question is set in the subtheme of **Current Study** and assesses the aspect of **School/College Life**.

(a) and (b) These were very accessible and usually answered correctly.

(c) 'Apprendre' was not widely known and many candidates guessed answers such as 'you get distracted', 'you could get into trouble' etc.

(d) Again, guesses around being distracted, not doing the work, helping each other, were quite common. Most points were scored in parts a) and b).

**Q.8** This question is set in the subtheme of **Youth Culture** and assesses the aspect of **Self and Relationships**.

(a) The word 'secrets' was misunderstood by many candidates as 'sucré' so there were a lot of answers about friends behaving 'sweetly' or 'kindly'. There were a lot of appropriate (but incorrect) guesses for this, within the context of the question, and this is a good strategy as they might be correct.

(b) and (c) These were generally well done.

(d) This proved to be surprisingly difficult, given that the answer was simply '6 years'. Answers varied from 16, 17, 5, 10. Many said, 'since she was 6' and quite a few candidates heard 'six ans' as 'saison' and answered 'for a season' which makes no real sense in English. Numbers always come up in the listening exam and listening practice of numbers such as 2, 6, 10, 12 would harvest more marks.

(e) This question was not well understood. Many repeated the question back in the answer (*because she puts them first*) and many claimed that she would 'choose her friends over her parents'. The idea of her making the decision as to who she is friends with, or defying her parents if they didn't like her friends was only picked up by the best candidates, so proved to be a good differentiator.

**Q.9** This question is set in the subtheme of **Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans** and assesses the aspect of **Post-16 study**.

- (a) 'le troisième pays du monde pour les étudiants étrangers' proved tricky for many candidates. 'Troisième pays' was often translated as 30 countries, which then sent candidates off at a tangent. A second (and possibly easier) answer was 'a large choice of universites' which was picked up by many candidates, although 'big universities' was also seen quite often.
- (b) 'Qualité de vie' was often misheard as 'ville' so there were many answers about 'great towns'. 'La diversité culturelle' was often translated as 'cultural universities'. 'Formation' was not widely known.
- (c) 'Une grande partie' was often missed, so candidates thought that education was free, or that the government paid for everything.
- (d) The idea of help with accommodation costs was often missed. Many just said that accommodation was cheaper in France. Only a few candidates answered that the 'same entry conditions' applied. 'Logement' was not widely known and often translated as 'lodges'. Quite a few candidates hooked on to 'grande partie' and said that it was popular because of the great parties. This text was the most challenging and proved a good discriminator as an overlap question.

### Higher Tier

**Q.1-3** See Foundation level questions 7-9. Performance was noticeably better at higher level, although higher candidates encountered the same issues with question 3.

**Q.4** This question is set in the subtheme of **Home Locality** and assesses the aspect of **Travel and Transport**.

- (a) This was successfully dealt with by most candidates.
- (b) 'Je ne fais jamais de vélo' proved tricky to translate for many candidates. In the end we accepted a number of alternative translations such as 'she has never ridden a bike' as it was felt that the main idea was communicated.
- (c) 'ma mère va nous emmener en voiture' was not well understood. Many thought Michael was visiting his mother or borrowing her car. Many heard 'on va prendre le train' and answered that they will take the train and ignored 'sauf le jeudi' which announced the answer.
- (d) Most candidates heard the word 'accident' and guessed an answer. The main thrust of this question was the need to say that she was afraid of having an accident/scared of falling off and it was decided to limit marks to this idea as most other answers were obviously guesses.

**Q.5** This question is set in the subtheme of **Customs and Traditions** and assesses the aspect of **Festivals and Celebrations**.

Grid questions are often perceived as difficult because candidates need to pick through a lot of information to identify the correct statements. A good method is to use the reading time to identify key words in the questions (especially numbers/months/seasons) and synonyms. Make notes while listening so that you can eliminate obviously incorrect answers.

Care should be taken not to tick more than four responses, as extra responses will be deducted from the final total. That said, this particular question was very accessible and many candidates scored well.

**Q.6** This question is set in the subtheme of **Lifestyle** and assesses the aspect of **Entertainment and Leisure**.

This was a target language multiple choice style question. It is clear that candidates often hang on to the first word they hear and decide their answer from that, rather than making notes and working out the answer afterwards.

- (a) 'On ne pense jamais aux groupes belges' was not picked up by the majority of candidates. About two-thirds of candidates opted for 'sont très populaires' having heard 'la musique populaire'.
- (b) Most candidates ignored 'Il y a des groupes de tous les genres', which matched the answer 'il y a des chanteurs de tous les styles'. Instead, they missed the fact that people think that the singers are French and chose 'les chanteurs sont souvent français', which was incorrect.
- (c) This was successfully understood by most candidates.
- (d) Answers for this were fairly evenly split between the 3 options. Many missed the fact that young people prefer music in English and also that you need to sing in English to be successful.
- (e) Again, this was a fairly even split between the three options.

**Q.7** This question is set in the subtheme of **Wider World** and assesses the aspect of **Holidays and Tourism**.

This question required the completion of a grid with facts taken from the text.

Section 1 – many candidates heard the words 'capitale' and 'plage' and answered that people were going to **the** capital (ie Paris) or the beach and completely missed the idea of them taking city breaks in Europe rather than going to the beach. Most candidates correctly identified that the French prefer to stay in France for the holidays, but a surprising number answered that they 'rested' in France, which changed the meaning and was not awarded.

Section 2 – most candidates correctly identified that money/finances were an issue. Many misunderstood 'à cause des problèmes de santé' and incorrectly answered that going on holiday 'causes illness', which was not accepted. For the 'help available' many candidates just wrote 'charities' rather than explain how charities helped.

**Q.8** This question is set in the subtheme of **Global Sustainability** and assesses the aspect of **Environment**.

- (a) Some candidates lost a mark here as they just answered 'climate' or 'the climate', which suggests that the article is about the weather in France, rather than global warming/climate change.
- (b) The question asks what did they *not* do. Many answered 'protest' despite the entire article being about a protest. Others wrote 'go to work', having missed the reference to 'aller en cours'.
- (c) This question asked how they expressed themselves and some reference to creative or funny messages/slogans was required.
- (d) Generally, this was well understood.
- (e) Some candidates lost a mark by misreading the question and answering 'because they are adults' instead of because they are not adults.

**Q.9** This question is set in the subtheme of **Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans** and assesses the aspect of **Employment**.

This text, about summer jobs, proved challenging for some candidates and was a good discriminator at the top end.

- (a) Many candidates misread the question, which asked which *sector* needed staff. Many wrote 'waiters', 'hotel workers'.
- (b) Many candidates gave answers about the internet or translated 'libre' as 'book' and said that they needed to read up on the jobs. The best candidates heard 'pour augmenter vos chances....' and then correctly identified that you needed to be free for 2 months.
- (c) This was usually very successfully answered, although some candidates translated 'au moins' as 'less than' and lost a mark.
- (d) Most candidates correctly identified the need to be paid/earn money for the first part but struggled with the idea of improving/consolidating knowledge or discovering a job that interest you. Many just guessed 'get experience, which was not accepted.
- (e) 'On devra vous payer 30% du salaire minimum' was misunderstood by many, who wrote that you would be paid the minimum wage. Given that this was the answer for c) it is unlikely that the same answer would appear twice.

## FRENCH

### GCSE

Summer 2023

#### 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 in French and a short translation from French into English. Two texts at each level are taken from a literary extract, adapted for GCSE. The target language questions at Foundation level required answers in French and a matching exercise. At Higher level candidates had to complete a multiple-choice exercise and answers in French on a grid.

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 seemed to be 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 (e.g. leisure and entertainment, self, family and friends). 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. This seemed less of an issue this year. Questions that required a response in the assessed language did not differ in accessibility to questions set in English. In fact, candidates are often tested on their ability to locate the answer, which can then be lifted from the text. The legibility of some responses continues to be an issue, making some responses very difficult to mark. As the paper is marked online, 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.

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 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. Candidates should be discouraged from a scatter-gun policy, writing down two or three answers, in the hope that one is correct. In the translation, candidates should take time to underline 'little' 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.

## Comments on individual questions/sections

### FOUNDATION TIER

- Q.1** This question is set in the subtheme of **Current Study** and assesses the aspect of **School/college life**.

This was a matching exercise based on school life. Generally, this was well executed and very accessible.

- Q.2** This question is set in the subtheme of **The Wider World** and assesses the aspect of **Local and regional features and characteristics of France and French-speaking countries**.

This was a text/photo match up of tourist places in Paris. Most of the vocabulary was very accessible and candidates scored well.

- Q.3** This question is set in the subtheme of **Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans** and assesses the aspect of **Employment**.

This was the first target language question and candidates were required to match a sentence talking about work experience with the ideal matching job. The comments were in very accessible language, but candidates often struggled to find the correct job match, suggesting that this topic vocabulary was not well-known. Texts about jobs are very common on this paper, so this was quite surprising.

- Q.4** This question is set in the subtheme of **Global Sustainability** and assesses the aspect of **Environment**.

This was the second target language question based on an environmental topic. Candidates were required to locate the answer and lift the vocabulary from the text as an answer. A full sentence is not required. The language used was very accessible, with frequent cognates or near-cognates. Question words need to be practised as this gives a large clue as to what they are looking for. Candidates should also be reminded that the text starts at the headline, which may contain an answer. Key vocabulary in the text was repeated in the question to help candidates home in on the correct answer. Most questions were dealt with effectively by many candidates. Question (f) was often answered incorrectly, with candidates writing 'le Maire de Nice' as their answer.

- Q.5** This question is set in the subtheme of **Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans** and assesses the aspect of **Career Plans**.

This was an article about succeeding in your professional life.

- (a)** The 'What is this article about?' question can provide several answers, but the answer should always address what the whole article is about. The title (often ignored) will give a very large clue. Many candidates picked items from the list, rather than look at the article as a whole.

Questions **(b)**, **(d)** and **(e)** were usually answered well.

Question (c) was challenging and many candidates guessed an answer. The answer required was – ‘stay up to date’, ‘don’t lose your computer skills’, ‘be open to new technology’.

**Q.6** This question is set in the subtheme of **Lifestyle** and assesses the aspect of **Entertainment and Leisure**.

This was the first literary text, adapted for GCSE and was about a group of friends enjoying a day out together.

- (a) ‘dix heures’ – this was usually known but many candidates still confuse deux/dix/douze and even six.
- (b) Some candidates lost a mark as they answered ‘gateau’, rather than cake.
- (c) For ‘Why did Arthur bring hard-boiled eggs?’, many struggled with ‘c’était tout ce qu’il avait trouvé à la maison’.
- (d) ‘Il avait inscrit le nom de chacun’ proved difficult. Some candidates said that he’d written his name on each.
- (e) The answer ‘plage’ was often translated as ‘by the sea’, ‘near the sea’, which was allowed but it is always wise to stick as closely to the vocabulary as possible, especially as ‘plage’ is a very easy vocabulary item.
- (f) Generally, candidates answered well, but a surprising number answered that she put make-up on or applied bronzer, having misunderstood ‘*pour bronzer*’.

**Q.7** This question is set in the subtheme of **Home and Locality** and assesses the aspect of **Travel and Transport**.

This was an article about travel in Wales.

- (a) Many candidates answered that parking was expensive but had more difficulty with the fact that you had to pay every day, including Sundays. Many said that it was free on a Sunday. Answering that you have to pay and that it was expensive was enough for 2 marks. Often, multi mark questions have more possible answers than required.
- (b) The construction ‘ne...que’ was not well-known and resulted in many incorrect answers.
- (c) This was mostly well done.
- (d) Many candidates simply answered ‘access national parks’, which doesn’t answer the question. Candidates need to say that there were extra buses/buses go to the national parks.
- (e) Many candidates wrote ‘access attractions’ and ignored the cognate ‘réduction’. ‘Auberge de jeunesse’ was rarely known.

**Q.8** This question is set in the subtheme of **Youth Culture** and assesses the aspect of **Self and relationships**.

This was the second literary extract, adapted for GCSE, and the first overlap question with Higher Level.

- (a) This was very accessible.
- (b) Many candidates did not understand 'des journaux' and answered that she was writing in her journal/diary. Some wrote that she was journaling, which is an 'in vogue' activity with teenagers, causing an incorrect translation.
- (c) Cécile was surprised at Ann being fully made up, (and never gives her natural face a holiday). This caused some confusion with many answering that Ann wanted to go on 'a natural holiday'.
- (d) Cécile is challenged about not eating breakfast, and the negative was required for the mark. Many candidates ignored the negative.
- (e) The question asked, 'what did she tell Cécile to go and do'. The text says 'va chercher quelque chose à manger'. Many candidates said that she should gain 3 kilos (which was just Anne's opinion). Candidates should look at the wording of the question, which should help point to the correct part of the text. Other candidates said that she should catch the train with two small girls, having totally misunderstood 'deux petites filles brunes...en train de parler'.
- (f) Some candidates continued with the train theme here and answered that she caught the train/chatted on the train.

**Q.9** This question is set in the subtheme of **Customs and Traditions** and assesses the aspect of **Food and Drink**.

This was the second overlap question about chip shops in Brussels. Candidates needed to complete a grid with information from the text.

Box 1 – some candidates correctly understood 'cook twice' but then went on to give more answers that were incorrect. 'Graisse de boeuf' was incorrectly translated as 'oil/beef juice/cow grease/beef stock' etc.

Box 2 – This was very successfully completed.

Box 3 – This proved harder than anticipated, despite some near cognates.

Box 4 – Usually successfully completed.

Box 5 – Many candidates ignored the cognate 'queue' and answered that it was in 27<sup>th</sup> place, which is not 'proof that it deserves to be on the list'.

**Q.10 Translation**

This question is set in the subtheme of **The Wider World** and assesses the aspect of **Holidays and Tourism**.

The translation is split into 6 parts and each part must be translated fully for the mark. There are no half marks.

'J'adore aller en vacances'. This was very successfully translated.

'Malheureusement, c'est très cher' – 'unfortunately' often translated as 'however'.

'donc nous faisons toujours du camping' – 'so' and 'always' often missed.

'L'année dernière nous sommes allés dans le sud' – usually successfully translated.

'J'ai passé beaucoup de temps dans la piscine' – 'passer' not well-known as a verb and often mistranslated. 'beaucoup' often omitted.

'car il faisait très chaud' – the tense was often ignored and 'very' omitted.

## HIGHER TIER

**Q.1 and 2** See remarks for questions 8 and 9 at Foundation level. Overall, these two questions were more successfully completed by higher level candidates.

**Q.3** This question is set in the subtheme of **Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans** and assesses the aspect of **Skills and personal qualities**.

This was the first target language question and candidates had to match a statement to a skill. This was challenging for some candidates, who did not seem to know the topic vocabulary.

**Q.4** This question is set in the subtheme of **Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans** and assesses the aspect of **Employment**.

This was a multiple-choice target language question about a summer job. Overall, the majority of candidates answered correctly. Questions **(b)**, **(c)** and **(d)** were the least successful, especially **(d)**, where almost as many candidates answered 'des vacances' instead of the correct answer of 'son propre argent'.

**Q.5** This question is set in the subtheme of **Home and Locality** and assesses the aspect of **Local areas of interest**.

This was a target language question about a car museum and candidates had to complete a grid in French. A number of candidates answered correctly, but in English, so scored 0.

**(a)** This is another 'What is it about?' question and all the answer required was 'un musée/un musée de voitures/une revue d'un musée. The answer needs to deal with the global idea of the text, rather than specifics (which are tested separately).

**(i)** This was usually well executed but a lot of candidates simply wrote 'gratuit' which is incorrect, as only the children go free.

**(iii)** 'L'aire de jeux' was often ignored in favour of 'notre fils y a joué', which does not answer the question.

**(v)** The question asks for the advantage of the accommodation offered, yet many candidates wrote 'le musée propose un petit camping' and ignored the advantages that immediately followed.

**Q.6** This question is set in the subtheme of **The Wider World** and assesses the aspect of **Holidays and tourism**.

This was an article about young people's holidays.

**(a)** Many candidates answered '2' or even '120' for 'un sur deux'. This would have been a very unlikely answer to the question.

- (b) Many candidates answered, 'What are young people prepared to do to reduce their spending?' with the answer 'reduce their spending'. Candidates should be encouraged to spend time reading questions properly to avoid losing marks.
  - (c) 'Loger' was not well-known and gave rise to answers about renting lodges.
  - (d) This was generally successful, but some candidates lost marks because they said 'don't go to restaurants' or 'go to restaurants less' rather than 'go to a restaurant once'.
- (e) and (f) were usually successful.

**Q.7** This question is set in the subtheme of **Lifestyle** and assesses the aspect of **Entertainment and leisure**.

This was the second literary text, adapted for GCSE, about a group of children going to the cinema. It was a challenging text for many and proved a good discriminator for the best candidates.

- (a) Many did not link 'argent' and 'pas assez'.
- (b) Many guessed that they watched the trailers as they did not know 'affiche' or did not know how to translate 'allons-y quand même'.
- (d) This question caused many issues and phrasing of answers also resulted in lost marks. The answer, that they could not put on a film just for one person, was misunderstood by many. Candidates suggested that you needed to go in as a group of 3, that you couldn't watch a film alone or that you needed to buy a group ticket.
- (e) Many candidates misunderstood 'directeur' and said that the man wanted to speak to the film director.
- (f) 'S'excuser' was not well-known, with many candidates saying that he was 'excusing a customer'. Candidates should be trained to look for reflexive verbs and how that might affect the meaning of the verb.
- (g) Better candidates perfectly understood that the manager only asked the children to pay for 2 tickets in order to let all 24 of them in. However, many candidates struggled with the vocabulary and made a guess.

**Q.8** This question is set in the subtheme of **Global Sustainability** and assesses the aspect of **Environment**.

This was an article about air pollution.

- (a) Again, candidates often failed to read the title of the article, which contained the answers to this question. Some said 'a change in temperature' without indicating which way. Some mentioned the ozone, which was not part of the answer.
- (b) There were two clue words in the text for this answer asking about restrictions – 'limitée' and 'interdiction'. Many candidates lost a mark because they simply wrote 'speed limited to 110' without mentioning where.

(c), (d) and (e) – Answered well.

**Q.9 Translation.**

This question is set in the subtheme of **Current Study** and assesses the aspect of **School/college life**.

The translation is split into 6 parts and each part must be translated fully for the mark.

There are no half marks. This translation proved challenging in parts and again, tenses were ignored, along with little words such as 'très', 'toutes' and 'plus de'.

Candidates should expect the higher translation to test expressions such as 'venir de...', 'après avoir...', 'en.....-ant', 'il faut...', 'en train de...'.

'Venir de' was only known by a small number of candidates.

'dans toutes ses écoles primaires'. 'All' was often ignored or translated as 'some'.

'Cependant, il n'est pas obligatoire de le porter' – this was usually handled well.

'et le prix sera réduit pour les familles avec plus d'un enfant' – the future tense was often ignored and some candidates wrote 'with lots of children/more children.

'On a demandé l'avis aux parents' – the past tense was often ignored.

'et ils se sont déclarés très en faveur' – the past tense was often ignored and pupils weren't sure how to translate the reflexive verb.

**FRENCH**  
**GCSE**  
**Summer 2023**  
**UNIT 4 – WRITING**

### **Overview of the Unit**

The aim of this unit is to test a candidate's ability to communicate effectively and accurately in writing across a variety of themes. Candidates were expected to produce pieces of writing of varying lengths whilst using appropriate vocabulary to produce their response. Given that this paper was the return to the full specification with the inclusion of the translation task after the adaptations of last year's series, the overall outcomes and general accessibility of the unit 4 paper was pleasing.

Overall, most candidates were matched to the appropriate tier of entry although there appeared to be more low-scoring candidates at Higher Tier who may have been better served by entry to the Foundation Tier. Most candidates were able to satisfy the word count at both Foundation and Higher although there appeared to be a higher number of candidates at Foundation Tier not attempting an answer.

At Higher Tier there were many excellent responses to the two questions on the paper this year. Candidates were clearly well prepared, knowing what to include to be able to access the higher bands of performance with regard to communication and content but there seemed to be a decline in candidates' linguistic knowledge and accuracy.

### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

#### **FOUNDATION TIER**

**Q.1** Question 1 of the foundation tier covered the broad theme of **Current and Future Study and Employment**. The vast majority of candidates attempted responses to all six headings, and many were able to score at least one mark for each. The question was accessible to most candidates and allowed for a variety of answers. Some of the prompts were better answered than others. The most successful candidates wrote short, full sentences with a secure verb for each prompt. The biggest challenge across this question for candidates was conjugating a verb correctly. Often, sentences did not contain a verb at all and consequently candidates lost marks.

**Heading 1:** This question was answered well overall with many candidates providing a variety of answers which were acceptable under the umbrella of 'A detail about your school day'.

**Heading 2:** Most candidates used 'j'aime' or 'j'adore' successfully to talk about a lesson they liked.

**Heading 3:** Correct conjugation of the verb 'préférer' proved to be problematic for many candidates.

**Heading 4:** Candidates coped well with this heading and provided a wide variety of answers regarding what they did during their lunch break.

**Heading 5:** Again, a variety of answers were provided for an extra-curricular club/activity at your school with most candidates referring to a sporting activity.

**Heading 6:** 'How you travel home' seemed to provide the most one word answers or answers that lacked a verb from candidates.

**Q.2** Question 2 assessed candidates on the broad theme of **Identity and Culture**. Most candidates were able to meet or exceed the 50-word requirement here, although some candidates did not meet the word count and consequently did not meet all requirements of the task. Successful attempts at this question were able to reference all 3 bullet points with secure verbs. Most candidates communicated the first two bullet points successfully but some candidates seemed to not fully understand the requirement of the third bullet point to refer to clothes that they like to wear. Most answers contained both information and opinions successfully.

Areas for improvement would be to encourage candidates to write simple structures accurately in order to gain more marks for linguistic knowledge and accuracy.

**Q.3** This question assessed the candidates on the broad theme of **Wales and the World**. Successful responses on this question contained a variety of opinion giving structures as well as fuller more linguistically complex and adventurous structures with a very good level of accuracy. Candidates tended to gain higher marks for communication and content providing good or very good responses but lacked the grammatical accuracy needed to attain the higher bands for linguistic knowledge and accuracy.

Candidates for this answer in the foundation paper struggled to reach the word count and to address the three compulsory bullet points fully. Some candidates were unable to reach top bands for communication as they didn't understand some of the prompts and therefore did not follow the rubric. Candidates also struggled to refer to the past tense and the conditional tense successfully and tenses and correct verb endings continue to be an area for improvement, with many candidates simply lifting the prompts within their answer for example 'tu as faites visite' and 'tu voudrais visiter'.

**Q.4** This question assessed the candidates on the broad theme of **Current and Future Study and Employment**. 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 paid close attention to the detail of the English/Welsh and were secure in their use of verb endings. Most candidates translated 'je travaille' accurately in sentence (a) and translated 'le travail est facile' accurately in (c).

Sentence (d) and (e) proved to be the most difficult for candidates, with many candidates utilising English in the middle of the sentences where they were unable to recall the French, with anglicised versions, including 'j'ai washé les dishes.'

Areas for improvement would be conjugating the future tense accurately for sentence (e).

## HIGHER TIER

- Q.1** Although this is an overlap question, the performance was 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 worked through the requirements of the task systematically and evidently checked what they had written in order to fully answer the rubric.

Candidates were confident expressing facts and opinions and most candidates conjugated the conditional tense correctly. There was a tendency for pupils to answer the “que tu as faites” part of the rubric using the present tense and accurate conjugation of the perfect tense continues to be an area of improvement. Some candidates created ambiguity within their answers by switching from one tense to another.

- Q.2** Question 2 assessed candidates on the broad theme of **Identity and Culture**. There did not seem to be a particular preference for either question and there were some excellent responses to both titles. Many candidates had evidently used pre-learned responses, but the most successful were able to adapt what they had learnt to suit the essay title. Candidates are not required to refer to the three bullet points for this question but have to ensure that the content is relevant to the title chosen. Candidates that did follow the bullet points 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 overlooked this.

Some answers exceeded the word count and although candidates are not penalised for this, lengthier answers tended towards a deterioration of accuracy and a repetition of structures and errors and candidates would consequently lose marks.

Areas of improvement would be to ensure that candidates write in more than one time frame when not following the bullet points.

- Q.3** This question assessed the candidates on the broad theme of **Current and Future Study and Employment**. The translation task really differentiated between candidates that had repeated pre-learnt answers for questions 1 and 2 to those who could manipulate language accurately to convey meaning.

Many candidates coped well with conjugation of the present tense for the first two sentences although some candidates need to ensure that they read the English/Welsh fully to ensure that they have translated the sentence fully. The third sentence and the need to use the imperfect tense for ‘il y avait’ proved to be challenging for many candidates. Again, conjugation of the present tense in the fourth sentence was mostly correct with the need to translate the future tense a more challenging task for candidates. The latter half of the final sentence proved to be the most challenging element of the translation for many candidates and knowledge of adverbs a clear area of improvement for most candidates.

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<sup>i</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.*