GCE Examiners' Report

French

GCE

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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Executive Summary

Candidates were well prepared for the 2026 suite of examinations.

Unit 1 and 3 assessments are teacher-examiner conducted and centres should be commended on the way they have delivered these for candidates. There is useful guidance for centres available on the website to aid in conducting assessments. The Principal Examiner offers the following key observations and recommendations for improvement in the conduct of the assessments. In Unit 1; on Task A, candidates should be encouraged to defend and justify their opinions rather than simply agreeing with the teacher-examiner's viewpoint. In both Unit 1 and Unit 3, candidates who were more successful in AO4 tended to use a greater range of examples relating to France or francophone culture, rather than general observations.

In Unit 2, many candidates showed evidence of sound knowledge of their chosen film, together with a well-planned response to the question. Accuracy, particularly in vocabulary specific to the film studied, can impact the clarity of the response for some. In Unit 4, as in previous sessions, the productive questions provided more of a challenge than the non-productive and candidates need to remember the rubric, which does not allow for lifting whole phrases. In Unit 5, there is evidence of increasing use of anglicised constructions which should be avoided. Examiners enjoyed reading the responses to the chosen texts and all works were chosen across this session's cohort.

Exemplar material for this qualification, available on the WJEC portal, may be useful for centres and candidates in preparing for future sessions.

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UNIT 1 - SPEAKING

Overview of the Unit

The AS Speaking examination for the French GCE Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced level requires candidates to undertake a 15-minute oral test, conducted by the centre's teachers. The test is divided into two tasks: the argument task (Card A) and the discussion task (Card B). Each task evaluates different skills and has unique requirements.

Overall, candidates demonstrated good engagement with the topics and many were able to sustain discussion confidently. The strongest candidates combined fluent communication with detailed cultural knowledge and a broad range of language. They responded spontaneously to questions and were able to justify their opinions using relevant examples from France and the francophone world.

Performance was generally strongest in AO1, where many candidates interacted confidently with the teacher-examiner. AO3 performance was often limited by recurring grammatical and pronunciation errors, particularly in spontaneous responses. AO4 remains an area for development, as many candidates provided generic responses or insufficient reference to France and the francophone world.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Card A: The Argument Task

AO1 (4/24)

Most candidates engaged well with the task and were able to express and justify opinions on the issues raised. Stronger candidates responded confidently to counterarguments and sustained the discussion effectively. However, some candidates did not fully understand the requirement to defend their position and readily accepted the teacher-examiner's viewpoint rather than maintaining and developing their own argument. In a minority of cases, discussions became overly conversational and did not fully reflect the argumentative nature of the task.

AO3 (8/24)

Language performance was generally sound. Stronger candidates demonstrated a range of tenses, more complex structures and a degree of spontaneity. Common weaknesses included inaccurate verb conjugations, particularly of high-frequency verbs such as *avoir* and *être*, agreement errors and inconsistent pronunciation. Some candidates relied heavily on memorised language, limiting opportunities to demonstrate flexibility and spontaneity.

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AO4 (12/24)

Many candidates demonstrated an awareness of contemporary issues relating to France and the francophone world. Stronger candidates incorporated relevant examples, statistics and cultural references naturally into their responses. Less successful candidates offered general observations with limited cultural grounding or relied on superficial references to French cities, traditions or customs without further development.

Card B: The Discussion Task

AO1 (4/24)

Most candidates engaged positively with the discussion and responded appropriately to questions. Stronger candidates expanded their responses and sustained interaction with confidence. Some candidates, however, were hesitant and required significant prompting. In a small number of cases, lengthy responses to individual questions reduced opportunities for meaningful interaction.

AO2 (8/24)

Most candidates demonstrated a secure understanding of the stimulus text. Stronger candidates paraphrased information effectively and used the text as a springboard for further discussion. Less successful candidates relied heavily on wording from the stimulus or referred to it only superficially. Some candidates struggled to interpret or develop ideas beyond those explicitly stated in the text.

AO3 (8/24)

As in Card A, stronger candidates demonstrated a broad range of language and adapted effectively to the direction of the discussion. Common errors included verb conjugations, agreement errors and inconsistent pronunciation. Many candidates demonstrated a good range of tenses, although the most complex structures were often confined to prepared material.

AO4 (4/24)

The strongest candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of French-speaking culture and society and were able to support their views with relevant examples. However, many discussions became overly generic and lacked sufficient reference to France or the francophone world.

Recommendations

Overall, candidates showed varying levels of performance across the assessment objectives. Here are the key observations and recommendations for improvement:

- AO1 (Interaction and Communication): Candidates should be encouraged to defend and justify their opinions rather than simply agreeing with the teacher's viewpoint. Centres are encouraged to provide regular opportunities for spontaneous discussion and debate to familiarise candidates with this AO.

- AO2 (Understanding and Interpretation): Candidates should practise paraphrasing and interpreting information rather than lifting phrases directly from the stimulus text.

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- AO3 (Language Quality): Centres should continue to focus on grammatical accuracy, particularly verb conjugations, agreements and pronunciation. Candidates should be encouraged to use a wider range of complex structures and idiomatic expressions spontaneously.

- AO4 (Knowledge of Francophone Contexts): Candidates should develop detailed and specific knowledge of France and the francophone world. Generic responses should be avoided in favour of examples, statistics and cultural references that demonstrate genuine understanding.

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

Overview of the Unit

Unit 2 assesses Listening, Reading and Translation skills, in sections A, B and C. Section D is the Critical Response in Writing which assesses both AO3 and AO4.

Series 2026 was received well as it was accessible whilst offering a good level of challenge. Candidates responded well to the topics and managed the requirements of each type of question very well.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Listening

Question 1: Multiple choice

- Most candidates coped well with the task. No active use of French was required.
- Theme, context and lexis were accessible.
- Some statements proved challenging for some candidates.
- The most common incorrect answers were (3) and (6).
- Unknown or misunderstood vocabulary by a few candidates: “étrange/étranger”.

Question 2A: True or false/correction of incorrect statement

- Most candidates coped well with the task. Some active use of French was required.
- Theme, context and lexis were accessible.
- Successful responses used the statement provided to very good effect, by changing one or two words.
- The most common incorrect answers were:
  (d): idea of focus on one topic not understood by all
  (e): idea of irregular income not conveyed clearly by some.

Question 2B: Gap fill

- Most candidates coped well with the task.
- The most common incorrect answers were 1 and 3.

Section B: Reading

Question 3: Summary task

- Most candidates coped well with the task. No active use of French was required.
- The theme and most of the lexis were familiar. The context presented a challenge.
- The most common incorrect answer was 1.

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Question 4: gap-fill

- This was completed well, however some candidates did not make sufficient use of the translation paragraph for context.
- Answers 3 and 5 were the most common errors. There was confusion between "*habitations* and *habitudes*" and "*accessibles* and *ouverts*".

Section C

Question 5: Translation

- Although this is traditionally the most challenging task it was completed fairly well.
- There were a lack of vocabulary knowledge and some errors in spelling and sentence construction.
- Some candidates did not check that sentences rendered in English were coherent and logical.
- The most common issues were as follows:

PART	ORIGINAL TEXT	INCORRECT TRANSLATION
1	• inquiètude • grève	• *issue/crisis* • *grief*
2	• quotidien • ainés	• *quoting/quote* • *peers*
3	• peu d'entre eux • trier	• *little between them* • *throw*
4	• seront • multimédia	• *incorrect tense* • *multi-use*
5	• les campagnes • actuelles	• *the countryside* • *actual*

Section D

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

***Un long dimanche de fiançailles**:*

Fewer candidates answered questions on this film. They opted for question (b) and provided good responses focusing on Mathilde, Tina Lombardi and a number of soldiers who may inspire sympathy.

Le Havre:

Both questions produced successful responses.

Question (a) was very well received and understood. Candidates used pertinent scenes to explain changes in Monet's behaviour.

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Question (b) produced responses where candidates argued that the film presented many versions of a family unit.

***La Classe**:*

Candidates responded to both questions.

Question (a) produced responses focusing on the many aspects of real life presented by the film.

For Question (b), pertinent answers argued that monsieur Marin and his pupils experience success.

***La Rafle**:*

Question (a) elicited successful responses focusing on Annette's motivations being driven by the events of that time.

Question (b) produced good responses on the behaviour-mostly negative- of people in authority. A few candidates referred to some positive behaviours demonstrated by the firemen.

- Most candidates manipulated persuasive literary language well and showcased extensive knowledge of their chosen film.
- Most candidates endeavoured to produce a critical response; there was evidence of planning. These aspects are firmly embedded.
- Generally, a lack of accuracy meant that the knowledge of the film was impaired, and this impacted the quality of the response as a whole.

Issues were as follows:

- common grammatical errors, specifically structures involving the infinitive:
  - *pour montre que…*
- anglicised constructions:
  - overuse of "avec" in mostly anglicised structures
  - incursion of English lexis: "experiencé/facé
  - incorrect film specific vocabulary: plombier used for pompier in a few responses
- responses referring to "les Juives" or "les Françaises" in La Rafle, effectively excluding men and impacting clarity of argumentation in AO4. Eg: *les Françaises ont raflé les Juives* (many permutations and incorrect spellings thereof)
- spelling of basic vocabulary/characters/places/ themes
- basic punctuation and neatness.

Overall, candidates were well prepared to deal with the challenges of this paper. For future series, increased accuracy is essential to improve overall performance.

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UNIT 3 - SPEAKING

Overview of the Unit

The A Level French Unit 3 Speaking examination requires candidates to undertake an Independent Research Project (IRP) presentation followed by a discussion of their chosen topic. The task continues to provide valuable opportunities for candidates to explore aspects of French-speaking culture and society that interest them and to demonstrate independent research skills.

Overall, candidates performed well and many demonstrated a high level of engagement with their chosen topics. Presentations were generally well structured and reflected significant research. Discussions were often lively and sustained, allowing candidates to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding. The strongest candidates moved beyond description to analyse and evaluate their findings critically.

AO3 remained the area in which candidates were most likely to lose marks, particularly when moving from prepared presentation material to spontaneous discussion. AO4 performance was generally strong, although some candidates relied too heavily on description and personal opinion rather than critical analysis.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Questioning Techniques

Teacher-examiners are reminded to use questioning to allow candidates to demonstrate their skills in the following assessment objectives:

AO1:
Understand and respond in speech to spoken language, including face-to-face interaction. This involves asking appropriate questions, listening actively, rephrasing if necessary, and ensuring the candidate stays on topic.

AO2:
Understand and respond in speech to written language from various sources. Questions should enable candidates to showcase their understanding of their research topic.

AO3:
Manipulate the language accurately in spoken form, using a range of lexis and structures. Questions should encourage the use of diverse grammatical structures, vocabulary, idioms, and constructions.

AO4:
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of culture and society where the language is spoken. Candidates should be encouraged to reference cultural and societal contexts relevant to their topics.

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Presentation (20 marks)

The presentation is assessed on three objectives: AO2 (4 marks), AO3 (8 marks), and AO4 (8 marks).

AO2:
Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of their chosen topic and delivered well-structured presentations. A broad range of topics was seen, including contemporary social issues, architecture, cinema and cultural identity. Stronger candidates demonstrated clear evidence of independent research and referred explicitly to a variety of sources. In some cases, however, candidates failed to acknowledge sources despite evidence of substantial research.

AO3:
Many candidates demonstrated a secure command of grammar and used a range of tenses and structures. Stronger performances included successful use of complex syntax and idiomatic language. Some candidates spoke too quickly, which affected clarity and pronunciation. While prepared language was often impressive, the use of complex structures was sometimes limited to memorised material.

AO4:
The strongest candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic and its significance within French-speaking society. Successful presentations moved beyond description and drew conclusions from the evidence presented. Less successful candidates remained descriptive or selected topics that limited opportunities for critical analysis.

Discussion (52 marks)

The discussion, lasting 9-10 minutes, evaluates all four assessment objectives:

AO1 (12 marks)
Most candidates sustained discussion confidently and responded appropriately to questions. Stronger candidates demonstrated spontaneity, flexibility and the ability to develop ideas in depth. A small number of weaker candidates struggled with highly specific questions, but overall, interaction was strong.

AO2 (8 marks)
Most candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of their chosen topic and were able to expand effectively on their research findings. Stronger candidates critically engaged with evidence and considered different perspectives. Less successful candidates relied on personal opinions or descriptive information and demonstrated limited evidence of genuine research.

AO3 (16 marks)
There was a noticeable difference between the language used in presentations and that used in spontaneous discussion. While many candidates displayed a good range of vocabulary and structures, accuracy often declined in less prepared responses. Common weaknesses included verb conjugation errors, agreement errors and limited use of idiomatic language. Pronunciation was generally improved compared with previous years, particularly when discussing numbers and dates.

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AO4 (16 marks)
Many candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of French-speaking society and culture. The strongest candidates analysed the implications of their research and drew thoughtful conclusions. Less successful candidates relied on factual description, personal anecdotes or comparisons with the UK, limiting opportunities for critical evaluation. In some cases, references to France or the francophone world lacked sufficient depth and specificity.

Recommendations:

AO1:
Continue to develop candidates' confidence in responding spontaneously to probing and unexpected questions.

AO2:
Encourage candidates to undertake wide-ranging research and refer explicitly to sources during both the presentation and discussion.

AO3:
Greater emphasis should be placed on the accurate use of complex structures and idiomatic language in spontaneous speech. Centres should continue to focus on verb forms, agreements and pronunciation.

AO4:
Candidates should move beyond description and personal opinion to analyse the significance and impact of the issues they study. Projects should remain firmly rooted in France or the francophone world and provide opportunities for critical evaluation.

Summary of key points:

The 2026 cohort demonstrated strong engagement with the Independent Research Project and produced many thoughtful and well-researched presentations. Candidates showed confidence in discussion and a genuine interest in their chosen topics. Centres are encouraged to continue developing candidates' analytical skills, cultural knowledge and spontaneous use of language. Greater emphasis on critical evaluation, detailed cultural understanding and linguistic accuracy will enable future candidates to access the highest mark bands.

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UNIT 4 - LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

Overview of the Unit

Unit 4 assesses Listening, Reading and Translation skills, in sections A, B and C.

Series 2026 was accessible whilst offering a good level of challenge. Candidates responded well to the topics and managed the requirements of each type of question well.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A – Listening

Question 1: Multiple choice

Theme, lexis and context were accessible.
Many candidates scored high marks.
Incorrect answers were as follows:
2 -some candidates selected option (c)
4- some candidates selected option(a)
7-some candidates selected option (c).

Question 2: Summary task

Theme, lexis and context presented some challenge.
Many candidates scored highly, some a full mark.
Incorrect answers were as follows:
1 and 10.

Question 3: Question and answer

Many candidates coped well with this question however some found it challenging as a response in the language of study was required. The assessment objective used for marking this question is AO2 (understanding) rather than accuracy - though the French must be accurate enough to give a correct, understandable answer.

(a) answered fairly well though “symbolise/signifie” was often missing.
(b) answered well though there was some confusion between Russe and rousse.
(c) answered correctly by candidates. Some candidates rephrased the same idea twice.
(d) answered well despite some misspelling of “succès”.
(e) The answer required the idea of translating the lyrics into French which was problematic for some candidates.
(f) Few candidates understood or responded correctly.
(g) Few candidates managed to manipulate the language to respond correctly.
(h) Completed well by most candidates.

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Section B – Reading

Question 4 (a): Gap-fill

Completed well. Most of the vocabulary was familiar however context proved challenging for some. Gaps 2 and 4 were the most often incorrect.

Question 4 (b): Summary

Answered well by most candidates. Most frequent errors were 1 and 7.

Question 5 (a)- Synonyms

Most of the vocabulary in the text was familiar however the context proved a challenge for some.
The task was done well however some candidates lifted more than the answer required. This was most frequent with items (b) and (d).

Question 5 (b)- Multiple choice

Completed well by most, with answers 4 and 5 being the most common errors.

Question 5 (c)- 5 correct statements

Completed well by most candidates with (c) and (g) being the most common errors.

Question 6

In this exercise, reading comprehension was tested by means of a traditional question and answer task. Although AO2 rather than AO3 was the assessment objective applied for assessing this question, the French had to be clear enough to be understandable. Some candidates demonstrated limited understanding of the item, some lifted whole sentences, some were unable to manipulate the language to formulate clear responses.

Issues were as follows:

(a) answered well by most candidates although there was some lifting. *"Un homme du moyen-age"* was a popular incorrect answer.
(b) answered fairly well however some candidates did not focus on the correct ideas.
(c) proved a challenge for most. Answers mostly lifted. Frequent errors in language.
(d) understood and conveyed by most candidates however there was confusion between *défavorable* and *défavorisé*.
(e) answered fairly well.
(f) answered well by most candidates.
(g) answered fairly well. Some candidates lifted the answer, some did not understand the question.
(h) answered fairly well however poor language skills impacted the clarity of the responses.
(i) proved very challenging for most candidates and led to whole sentence lift.
(j) proved challenging for many candidates who either failed to manipulate the language correctly or lifted heavily from the text.

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Section C – Translation

Question 7

Accuracy (AO3) is the key assessment objective used in evaluating this task. Only a few candidates scored high marks. There were the usual problems of vocabulary, incorrect use of verb forms/tenses, pronouns and possessive adjectives, genders, adjective agreements and so on.

Issues were as follows:

PART	ORIGINAL TEXT	INCORRECT TRANSLATION
1	• we have been told • migrants • work • past • came from	• *on a été dit* • *les migres/migrés/immigres* • *travail/travaille* • *la/le passe* • *venait/viennaient*
2	• figures • described • facing • average	• *les figures* • *décrivé* • *façaient/facé* • *le moyen*
3	• degree • has doubled • recent • better • mobility	• *degré/diploma/certificate haut* • *a augmenté/est plus grand* • *recentement* • *mieux* • *mobilitié*
4	• this means • will no longer • policies • valuing • achievements • minority groups	• *donc* • *incorrect tense* • *les policies/polices* • *value/valué* • *achèvements/ success* • *groups minoritie*

Summary of key points

Overall, candidates were well prepared to deal with the demands of this paper though time proved a challenge for a few, especially in relation to more productive tasks.
In order to address issues relating to productive question, i.e. Q3/4/6/7, increased accuracy, by way of competence in basic grammar, and knowledge of theme specific vocabulary are essential.

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UNIT 5 - CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

Overview of the Unit

This paper offered four texts for analysis and a choice of two titles per text. The most popular choice was ***Un Secret***. Second in popularity were ***Kiffe kiffe demain*** and ***Le Bal***.
There were a few responses for ***Les Amants d'Avignon,*** which was pleasing.

The assessment objectives AO3 and AO4 carry an equal weighting of 20 marks each. AO3 assesses linguistic accuracy and the quality of the language in relation to the title set. AO4 assesses the knowledge of the text studied in the context of the question set. It also evaluates the essay as an evidence based analytical and critical response.

Candidates engaged well with their title of choice and demonstrated good knowledge of the text. Although the manipulation of the language as assessed in the AO3 element was a challenge for many candidates, there were some outstanding responses where the French and critical analysis were of a very impressive standard. They were a pleasure to read.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1: *Le Bal*

Candidates opted for question **(b)** and produced good responses. They were able to analyse a range of characters, situations and behaviours to justify opinions and viewpoints on the theme of jealousy. Most candidates convincingly argued that Antoinette's jealous behaviour destroyed her family.

Question 2: *Kiffe kiffe demain*

Candidates responded to both questions and showcased a good understanding of the themes and issues within the text. Some responses contained irrelevant or generic material.

(a) Candidates were able to analyse how Doria overcomes obstacles relating to age, prejudice, economic and personal circumstances. Responses were generally critical and well supported.

(b) Candidates focused on characters such as Hamoudi, Yasmina, tante Zohra, amongst others, to analyse the treatment of immigrants in France. Responses were generally critical and well supported, demonstrating a clear understanding of the theme in question.

Question 3: *Un Secret*

Candidates responded well to both questions and demonstrated knowledge and insight, making it the most popular text.

(a) This question produced very good responses, arguing that all aspects of the human body are crucial to the plot and by extension to the narrator's healing journey.

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(b) Candidates examined all characters to draw the conclusion that any one of them could be viewed as a victim.

Question 4: *Les Amants d'Avignon*

This text produced a few answers on question **(a)**. Responses focused on the importance of towns such as Lyon and Avignon within the plot.

Issues were as follows:

- Misspelling of characters/places/themes
- Basic grammar and conjugation.

Widespread misspelling and misuse of language:

- *Ce/ cette montre que - cela montre que*
- *Grace à*: followed by a negative concept eg: *grace à l'action des Nazis*…
- *Dans la façon/ manière* used for *d'une façon*…
- Un Secret: misuse of *les juives* instead of *les juifs* which implies that only Jewish women were targeted by the Nazis. This may affect the argumentation and therefore the mark for AO4.

Widespread and increased use of anglicised vocabulary and sentence structures:

- sentences ending with *avec*- eg: *les difficultés Doria fait face avec*
- *experiencer/acter/provider* used as verbs.

Summary of key points:

- Candidates would benefit from learning the vocabulary specific to their text and to the expression of the themes and issues within it.
- Candidates should refrain from using anglicised lexis and sentence structures.
- Most importantly in this task of sustained writing, accuracy needs attention. All aspects of grammar are involved: tenses, all agreements, pronouns, verbal structures and prepositions.

Fewer errors will improve the mark for the AO3 element and therefore impact AO4. Careful consideration of both assessment objectives could be useful to guide teaching and learning. Candidates who can sustain a balance of both AO3 and AO4 within this task produce successful responses.

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