GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

FRENCH

SUMMER 2011
Statistical Information

The Examiners' Report may refer in general terms to statistical outcomes. Statistical information on candidates' performances in all examination components (whether internally or externally assessed) is provided when results are issued. As well as the marks achieved by individual candidates, the following information can be obtained from these printouts:

*For each component:* the maximum mark, aggregation factor, mean mark and standard deviation of marks obtained by *all* candidates entered for the examination.

*For the subject or option:* the total entry and the lowest mark needed for the award of each grade.

Annual Statistical Report

Other information on a centre basis is provided when results are issued. The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.
Listening and Responding

General Comments

- Many candidates seemed to have made good use of the 5 minute reading time before the tape begins and the rough notes pages of the question paper and they should be encouraged to continue to do this. They circled/underlined/highlighted the mark allocation and noted key vocabulary under pictures etc. These examination techniques demonstrate the very good practice taking place in most centres.
- Fewer examples of candidates ticking more boxes than needed and, as a result, fewer marks lost.
- Very few candidates made the mistake of answering in the wrong language!
- At both levels, the majority of the questions requiring a written answer were either too detailed, not clear in English or not attempted at all.
- The Higher level candidates had as much if not more difficulty in answering the overlap questions as the later questions on the paper.
- While some of the topics/information may have been difficult and challenging, it was basic information such as time, numbers etc. that lost a number of marks.
- A small number of centres demonstrated that candidates had not covered all the themes. This could be attributed to early entry in Year 10 by some centres.
- Candidates were for the most part entered at the correct level.

Administration

Generally centres are using the correct procedures for forwarding scripts to examiners. However there are instances where problems have been encountered. Examples of the problems encountered include:

- No information on the outside of the packet other than the Centre Number. The front should also indicate the title and paper number of the scripts inside.
- No indication of the total number of scripts in the packet.
Foundation Level

Q.1 The vocabulary on this question posed more problems than in previous years when most candidates have been able to score the full 8 marks. While section 1 was correct for the most part, candidates had difficulty with *chaussures* and in deciding what sort of DVD and /or book was mentioned.

Q.2 This question seemed to pose problems for many candidates. The time was often wrong in (a), the venues were wrong in (b) and the prices were incorrect in (c) with many candidates selecting €12 instead of €2 in (c) and €12 or €2 instead of €0 in (d). *Gratuit* not generally recognised.

Q.3 This was usually well done with no outstanding errors.

Q.4 This question posed many problems, mainly concerned with lack of vocabulary knowledge.

Most candidates chose the pen in (a) but fewer seemed to know the names of countries and very few indeed knew “parapluie”, choosing the necklace or bracelet in equal numbers. The word for “daughter” also posed problems in (b).

In (c) the answer was often in French (Madame Rouge) or incorrect in English (Mrs Red, green, orange) and the direction in (d) was often incorrect. Confusion between right and left.

Q.5 This question was usually well done.

There was some difficulty in interpreting if a candidate had written “a” or “d”.

However, in the Welsh version, some candidates lost marks by not using the correct letters (ch, dd) but a mixture of English and Welsh alphabet, thereby causing ambiguity.

Q.6 This question posed a few difficulties for candidates, again mainly concerned with lack of vocabulary knowledge or wrong spelling in English. The usual answers for (a) were “chef” and “mechanic”; few candidates attempted “Disney characters”. In (b) there were some interesting guesses; “good with children”, “happy” and “tall” were often chosen.

Q.7 This question produced a mixture of answers.

Section 1

In (a) the date was usually correct (apart from a few 14 instead of 15 and / or *June* instead of *July*) but very few candidates at this level answered (b) correctly, usually putting “church” instead. Most candidates managed to answer (c) correctly with a mixture of 12 and 24 hour clock being noted.
Section 2

(d) While many understood that it had something to do with being a dad, they failed to express it correctly, opting for going to be a dad / his dad has had a baby. There was a variety of wrong answers — many indicating present family set-ups — such as his dad has a new girlfriend/ his girlfriend is pregnant/ his girlfriend is moving in etc.

(e) Mostly correct if (d) had been answered although a wrong answer in (d) sometimes led to further mis-understanding eg his dad's baby i.e his brother

(f) Those who attempted this were able for the most part to pick out one appropriate adjective although kind and small were also frequent wrong answers.

Higher Tier

Q.1, 2 & 3 See notes for questions 5, 6 and 7 at foundation level (overlap). It is interesting to note that at this level Mairie was known better by candidates!

Q.4 This question posed problems for candidates, especially with regard to numbers!

Section 1

(a) The idea of global warming/ weather change and/ or oil reserves etc was understood although some opted for a more general term such as the environment/ pollution etc.

(b) Candidates gave 14 or 41 as an answer instead of 40.

(c) Various answers, ranging from 0.5 – 105 degrees but very few mentioned the range 2-5 degrees.

(d) In most cases it was assumed that this was imminent — by the end of the year/ by 2012 / very soon if we do nothing etc. Those who understood siècle did not always qualify it with before / by the end of this century.

Section 2

Boxes were usually ticked correctly although some candidates chose (c) instead of (d), and (g) and (h) instead of (f) and (g).

In the Welsh version papers (e) was frequently ticked whereas in the English version it was rarely ticked. This is likely to be due to a mis-understanding of the Welsh word persawr (perfume) which has perhaps been confused with petrol.

Q.5 Most candidates answered (a) and (b) correctly, with “horse riding”, “swimming” and “running” being the most popular answers for (b) although a few candidates did recognise “fencing”.

(c) Usually well done but (d) posed some difficulties with many candidates answering that they were “happy” or “nervous”.

(e) Proved a problem. The idea that it is hard / difficult was sometimes grasped but exhausting/ tiring were often given as answers. Dur seems to have occasionally been mixed up with the verb dure to wrongly suggest the answer long.
Q.6

Section 1

Section 1 was usually well done

   (a) “12” instead of “2”

   (b) Most made the connection with TV although not necessarily that it was her first appearance. Some however mis-understood télé for Italie and suggested she had gone there to live.

   (c) Most understood that she had made / released an album. Other answers included she met Victoria Beckham and she played for Queen Victoria.

Section 2

   (d) Musical mostly understood

   (e) Very few were able to express the answer to this correctly. Some merely wrote Isabelle or young people in love etc but few referred to the life and loves of an innocent young man

   (f) Most candidates were able to gain the mark by mentioning the name Isabelle, we accepted a lot of different ways to spell this first name

Section 3

   (g) The idea of a rebel was understood by some. Often the wrong answer horrible was given.

   (h) Not well answered. Various times given including since it started.

   (i) She likes it was not sufficient to convey passion. Some added information such as she likes Paris/ she likes the people/ it’s good but tiring etc.
Speaking

General Comments

Administration

The samples were sent on time by the majority of centres which is to be commended. Centres must remember to follow the guidelines set for this exam by the WJEC, there were several centres which did not:

- say the name of the candidate at the start of the track,
- place candidates from a complete centre in rank order from highest to lowest marks
- send the correct sample size
- fill in the total entry box correctly (total in cohort not in sample is required)
- send the correct pieces of work (we only need either a Presentation or a Structured Conversation for a candidate included in the sample)
- send a variety of tasks and marks (we need to moderate a selection of Presentations and Structured Conversations and a selection of marks – from high end to low end within a centre)
- ensure that all candidates signed the authentication signatures. This is a requirement.
- Send clear recordings on a CD.

More administrative errors:

- All candidates from the centre listed on the composite sheet
- Composite mark sheet not included
- Individual mark sheets for all candidates included
- Individual mark sheets for both tasks included
- Concept web and notes included
- More than 30 words for notes
- Incorrect transfer of marks from individual sheets to composite sheet
- Incorrect totals
- Wrong task ticked on composite sheet
- No need to mention the date of the exam and the name of the teacher recording

Make sure that CDs indicate the track number of each candidate as the order of recordings on the CD did not always (in fact rarely) followed the order of the candidates on the composite mark sheet.

Where teachers had commented on the individual mark sheets, this was really useful to moderate how closely staff had followed the mark scheme and this is recommended in future. On the whole centres marked fairly and consistently. There were many centres also that followed the guidelines perfectly and that made moderation a far easier task.
Structured Conversations

Most Centres followed the guidelines and used the suggested Concept Webs for the structured conversations so the topics were the expected school/ area/ environment etc. Because of the nature of the task and the preparation allowed prior to the test, there was a lack of spontaneity in the conversations and with the more able pupils in particular some of the conversations were more like a presentation, with long pre-learnt answers to questions which were obviously expected. While extended sequences of speech are necessary to access the top range of marks for communication and content, interaction between teacher and candidate is also required and answers should not resemble monologues/ presentations.

On the other hand many candidates failed to access the higher marks for communication and content because they did not show adequate evidence of longer or extended sequences of speech or did not develop conversations sufficiently.

Again, due to the preparation etc. most were able use appropriate but simple range of vocabulary and use different tenses although there was less evidence of idioms and complex items so marks for range generally fell between 3/4. Likewise with accuracy marks tended to fall between 3/4.

Some conversations fell short of the recommended time of 5 minutes although few were inordinately long.

There were some tasks of a very high standard and some teachers used excellent questioning technique to ensure that candidates were given every opportunity to show their linguistic skills and to access the whole range of marks. Others, unfortunately, did not encourage the candidates to develop their responses sufficiently.

Presentations

Topics for the presentations were for the most part similar to those for the structured conversations with holidays, school and healthy eating frequent. There were some interesting and some challenging topics.

The suggested timing of 5-7 minutes for the presentation and follow-up discussion was not adhered to in many cases. Some presentations were too long and did not leave time for sufficient questioning whereas others completed both parts of the task in 3-4 minutes.

Most candidates were well prepared and were able to deliver their presentation at least competently (4) and teacher prompting was minimal. If a candidate is struggling, it may be in his / her interest to prompt a little – some teacher prompting might result in a mark of 3 for delivery – no worse and possibly better than the mark if the candidate fails to continue.

In the responding to questions some candidates were obviously well prepared and their responses at times suggested that the questions may have been known in advance. Others however had difficulty in answering the questions even if they were based directly on the information given in the presentation.

Range of language was generally good in the presentation but more limited in responding to questions. Accuracy was likewise better in the presentation than in responding to questions although there were also some examples of presentations which had been learnt but pronunciation and intonation were poor and impeded comprehension.
Assessment by Centres

On the whole, centres adhered to the mark scheme and the majority of those sampled fell within the tolerance of 2 marks. There may have been a slight tendency to be more generous at the higher end and be more severe with weaker candidates.

In the structured conversations, candidates were awarded higher marks for communication and content when there was insufficient evidence of longer or extended sequences of speech or responses were not developed and poor pronunciation was not always penalised.

It is difficult to prescribe what is meant by *more sophisticated language such as idioms and more complex items* but some candidates were awarded the 5 for range of language when there was little to make it stand out.

In the Presentations, many centres failed to allocate the marks for accuracy and range for the overall performance of the two elements of the task. If the candidate had made a good presentation, they were often correctly marked down on their response to questions but the marks for accuracy and range did not always reflect the candidate’s overall performance – they were given 4/5 for accuracy and range even if there were frequent errors and if range was simple or limited in their responses.

Finally some topics chosen by centres did not allow candidates to access the higher range marks and the WJEC Task Bank is recommended. Sometimes teachers could have asked better questions to candidates in order for the candidates to reach higher marks, it is appreciated however that teachers know their candidates and may have chosen the questions and topics accordingly.
Reading 4223/01 and 4223/02

General Comments

The exam was the second year of the new syllabus and, by and large, incorporated elements from both the Specimen Assessment Material and the 2010 paper. Thankfully, in contrast to last year, very few candidates used the “wrong” language to answer the overlap C grade questions. As this is entirely a paper with instructions and answers in English or Welsh it is now incumbent on candidates to communicate their responses clearly and unambiguously in their mother tongue and as this is a writing exam there is a special danger where homophones might occur cf FT Q6 (v)/HT Q2 (v).

In general there was a noticeable lack of knowledge of some basic core vocabulary which candidates might rightly be expected to know in the Foundation Tier paper. Candidates may not be aware that all answers to questions in the FT paper – including both F and C grade sections – are taken from the Grammatical Structures p18 – 30 and the Minimum Core Vocabulary p31 – 45 of the specification http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/4470.pdf

The assessment tasks at Foundation Tier will be based on the minimum core Vocabulary List, but candidates should also expect to encounter unfamiliar vocabulary which may occur in the listening and reading papers. This vocabulary will not be tested. All rubrics are also now in English/Welsh so it is imperative that candidates observe them strictly if they wish to be sure of securing full marks.

FOUNDATION TIER

Q.1 This was answered very well with many candidates gaining full marks. The most common mistakes were to put A [Librairie] for (iv) a librarian and I [Boucherie] for (vi) a baker. Some candidates left blanks which was a shame as any answer is better than none and at least has a chance of being right.

Q.2 Another question which was very well answered. Candidates only needed the basic vocabulary in bold as the rest of the text merely described the product already named.

Q.3 This was answered well though some candidates seemed unfamiliar with some of the expressions for frequency and time many of which are clearly stated on p 26 of the specification http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/4470.pdf under the General Notions section (c) Time 5. Frequency.

Q.4 This question proved more demanding and was a good discriminator of F grade candidates. As in previous years there were many candidates who did not know car or who were misled by the presence of voiture. Candidates who ticked (i), (ii) and (iii) were clearly throwing away marks as were those who did not observe the rubric by ticking more than 6 boxes.
FOUNDATION TIER Q5/HIGHER TIER Q1

At both levels there were some good answers with many at HT gaining 6 or 7 marks.

(i)  *Chauffeur* was frequently given as an answer while some sought to give it an “English” spelling with *chofer* or *shofer*. Others recognised that *driver* was not enough but, not knowing *camion*, gave *boat driver*, *limo driver* or *plane driver*.

(ii) This was almost always correct though some candidates invented subjects such as *computering*.

(iii) Many candidates recognised the *treizième* but not the passé composé of *a fête* so thought he was 12 or soon to be 13/30.

(iv) Many gave *hotel* as an answer and some *beautiful mother*. A number of candidates gave *stepmother* or, depressingly often, *stepmom*, which reflected, perhaps, their more usual encounter with the word.

(v) Many candidates did understand either or both of *jambe* and *bras* but not many qualified the arms as being both *left* and *broken* [of which there was a bewildering array of spellings including *brocken*, *bracking*, *brook* and *braken*].

(vi) Very many candidates repeated all or part of their answer to (v).

(vii) Most candidates knew *mois* though some chose to give its meaning as 4 weeks or 28 days rather than a simple translation.

(viii) Very few candidates answered this correctly which is a little surprising as *jumeau* is, of course, found in the Minimum Core Vocabulary and was normally encountered and became current when pupils learnt the Zodiac signs in order to read horoscopes in French. It was understandable that candidates chose to give answers relating to the Olympics though they must have forgotten that the summer and winter Olympics are never held in the same year. The closest “wrong answer” was probably given by the candidate who wrote *to win* and others who wrote *twin medals*.

FOUNDATION TIER Q6/HIGHER TIER Q2

As with the previous question this was done better by HT candidates but the highest marks here tended to be at 5 or 6.

(i) The Minimum Core Vocabulary does not list towns, countries or nationalities separately but candidates are expected to be familiar with those in common use. *France* was a very popular answer.

(ii) Once again this year *en panne* was not well known though some who did know its meaning gave the same range of *broken [down]* as encountered in Q5 (vi). Many recognised that something was indeed wrong with the car but tried to link it with the weather so *stuck in the snow* or similar was common. Some thought the car was *in pain*.

(iii) Once again candidates showed invention with many trying hard to make a link between *un taxi* and *occupés*. One candidate wrote *No tax is available*. 
(iv) A huge array of answers here which included sausage plait!

(v) The mis-spelling of pears cost many a candidate a mark, particularly where the variation was actually another legitimate word such as pairs and pares. One, perhaps frustrated, candidate wrote des poires (please translate)!

(vi) Many candidates clearly understood at least part of aller en ville à pied but not all could convey the idea of getting to or reaching the town so go for a walk around the town/village/city was quite common. Courses was often appended to an otherwise correct or sometimes already incorrect answer as lessons, running or courses. Nearly all candidates managed to understand that le lendemain de Noël referred to Boxing Day.

(vii) Answered correctly infrequently.

(viii) Many candidates gave answers such as great or brilliant but few managed to convey the idea of the superlative. There was a striking number, however, who did but who went the other way with worst ever and some who wrote both but crossed one out. As well as being in the Minimum Core Vocabulary for Foundation Tier meilleur is specifically noted in the Grammatical Structures – Adjectives, section 8 (page 18) of the Specification.

Q.3 This question was very well answered with most candidates easily spotting the reference to the “generic” terms of luxury goods and works of art in the text. By and large candidates realised that each of the six names would fit into one answer each so few names were repeated but there were candidates who inexplicably left blanks.

Q.4 This question type should not have been unfamiliar to candidates as it had appeared in the FT SPAM and the 2010 paper and the Examiners’ Report for the 2010 papers stated:

As this question proved a good discriminator, testing as it did the candidates' knowledge of both vocabulary and grammar, it would appear to be a suitable test type for the examination at both FT and HT.

This advice was also explicitly stated at INSET sessions. Whichever way they arrived at their answers – through plain knowledge of the vocabulary, lexical (e.g. l’ would only be followed by a vowel), logical or grammatical deduction – a great number of candidates did manage to write 3 or 4 correct answers.

Q.5 Once again some candidates lost marks by ticking more or fewer than six boxes with some choosing obviously contradictory statements such as (vi), (vii) and (viii).

Q.6 Very few candidates answered the entire question correctly.

(i) Despite the number of statistics in the piece it was surprising that it was a word – quinzaine – which features in the Minimum Core Vocabulary for Foundation Tier which seemed to be unfamiliar to the majority of candidates. Some who did seem to know it then inflated it up to 15,000km!

(ii) Very few knew heure d’affluence and, of those who did understand the concept, peak time was a more common answer than rush hour. Some candidates, probably misled by à bord, said that many travellers were on their way to the seaside.
(iii) There was a multitude of attempts at conveying the succession of events which led to this tragedy with many candidates doing so correctly. Those who did not tended to connect respecté with the trains themselves or to completely misunderstand the role of the red light/fire. The two trains were the same colour would be an unlikely cause of an accident of this scale.

(iv) In spite of the “signpost” of seriously for gravement few candidates recognised the near-cognate douzaine.

(v) Most candidates picked up the explosion de gaz and, although s’est effondré was a true A* test immeuble, yet another word taken straight from the Minimum Core Vocabulary for Foundation Tier, seemed equally unfamiliar to very many candidates.
Controlled Assessment Writing

It is not possible to provide individual feedback to centres for Controlled Assessment Writing so the comments here will be of a general nature in terms of the administration, wholly the responsibility of teachers, the choice of questions, largely the responsibility of teachers, and the standard of work submitted by the candidates.

Administration

The homepage for WJEC GCSE French provides links to all the documents necessary for completing the administration relating to this paper. Chief among them are the pro-formae on

http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/12495.doc

which is a live document and was updated during the two years of the examination from September 2009 to May 2011. Centres are urged to check these pages regularly and to use only the most up-to-date pro-formae. The document of FAQs on


contains at least 35 questions and answers which were the most common relating to the Controlled Assessment Writing raised during the two years from September 2009 to May 2011 and teachers are strongly recommended to check these pages regularly.

Many thanks to those teachers who

- sent the original of every candidate’s work [not just a sample of 10] in exam number order which was appropriately labelled and packaged with registers and which arrived on time
- included all the relevant forms, signed where appropriate
- ensured that crib sheets contained no more than 40 words and no pictures or codes
- sent two answers without annotation which were of more or less equal length with the word count noted
- ensured that candidates remained within the word limit
- chose two titles from different Contexts which enabled all their candidates to display their language skills to the best of their ability.

Task Setting

1. Some candidates chose or were given titles such as “My Daily Routine” or even “Me”. While “Self” is certainly a valid topic and is explicitly listed in the Specification in the Context “Personal and Social Life”, it requires a particular treatment by a candidate to turn it into a piece capable of being awarded 10/5/5 marks. On the other hand comparing a small market town with Paris or even writing a history of the French Revolution is unlikely to be completed successfully and to meet the necessary criteria for full marks within the time limit of one 60-minute session. Some tasks had no titles at all so could not possibly gain full marks for Communication “as complete an answer as can be expected”. Titles such as “Home, Area and School”, as well as clearly coming from more than one of the four Contexts, led candidates to spend far too much time relating countless facts of information in a narrow range of language [see also Task Taking 1 below]. The two titles for the two tasks must be from separate Contexts. Also the Context is not the Title.
2. Only three sheets are required for each task and it would help enormously if all centres were to use the stationery provided by the WJEC on the website. This includes the crib sheet even if it is not used. Not sending a crib sheet may raise the suspicion that one has been used that does not comply with the requirements and has therefore been retained by the centre. Some crib sheets appear to have been filled in retrospectively and others simply had a dismissive line drawn through them. Many candidates who wrote comments such as “Didn’t need to use” really should have made proper use of the facility. The crib sheet should not be Post-It notes and the answer sheet should not be A5 or of varying sizes for the same task. Words on a crib sheet which have been crossed out or Tipp-Exed still count towards the 40 maximum.

3. The titles on some cover sheets did not match up with those on the crib sheets or on the answers. In one case a title had been changed by a different hand so that it no longer matched the answer given and thereby rendered an otherwise appropriate answer irrelevant. The dates given for completion of a task on the cover sheet did not always match those on the answer sheets.

Task Taking

1. From 2012 onwards no credit at all will be given for anything written beyond 300 words. This year some examiners received tasks that were over 700 words long. The criterion of “…presented in an organised fashion” for 10 marks for Communication will be rigorously applied from 2012 onwards. Generally speaking one or two examples of a particular structure such as “On peut + infinitive”, “On doit + infinitive”, “Il y a…”, “Je joue + sport” or their negatives or in other tenses will suffice to prove that a candidate is capable of handling that structure. If a candidate uses these structures more than two or three times in a piece then the word limit will very soon be reached and the mark for Range will be in the middle band at best. Candidates would often be better advised to concentrate on making sure that they can handle a wide range of structures accurately than on recalling every last bit of information about e.g. their garden before they run out of space and time. “As complete an answer as can be expected” [Communication 10/9] does not mean “Write as much as you can/all you know about…”. Very few candidates enhanced their case after about 275 words i.e. they had either done everything they could or needed to be awarded certain marks and/or by carrying on they actually damaged their case and lost marks by including language which was of a poorer quality.

2. It is the responsibility of candidates to ensure that their answers are legible and pencils, light-coloured pens, highlighters and Tipp-Ex should not be used neither do lots of asterisks and arrows add to the overall impression.

3. Where a title is given a candidate must answer it so a tale about a holiday in Cornwall does not answer “A Holiday Abroad” if the candidate lives somewhere else in the UK.

4. Centres may need to give greater guidance as regards to the use of the crib sheet. Given that they have access to dictionaries it would seem superfluous for candidates to simply list vocabulary they think might come in useful. However examples such as salopette mon stage en enterprise était une bonne experience, mon pansement table, and elle est 5 pieds de haut highlight the danger of relying on a dictionary without the necessary skills to use it properly. Cochon micro was an interesting addition to the 21st century glossary of pets.
Marks to Grades

Below are the marks needed to gain each of the grades available at foundation and higher tier in each component of the 2011 French examination. It must be emphasised, however, that those marks are relevant only to that examination. As the difficulty level of papers cannot be known precisely in advance, the marks needed for each of the grades may vary from year to year. (The total marks are given in brackets after the index of each component).

Foundation Tier

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Higher Tier

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Controlled Assessments (untiered)

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*N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.*
Cumulative Percentages of candidates achieving Grades A* - G (Provisional figures).

Total number of cash-ins 13,030

Grade

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Please refer to the GCSE Unit Directory for details of UMS unit weightings.