



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**FRENCH (New)
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2009

Introduction

Summer 2009 is the first award of the new AS. For all specifications there have been changes to the content of the units, and in many new marking criteria have been introduced and unit weightings altered. Also in some subjects there has been the withdrawal of internal assessment. However, the biggest change in most subjects has been the reduction from a three to a two unit assessment.

In moving to the new specification awarding bodies have sought to maintain the overall United Kingdom standard for AS, as measured by the proportion of candidates achieving grade A and by the proportion achieving a pass grade in each subject. Comparability between 'old' and 'new' specifications is measured in terms of the overall subject outcome and not in terms of unit outcomes. Many of the units in the new specifications will bear little relation to those in the old specifications. Even where they are very similar, it is quite likely that outcomes will be different. The expectation is that the number of grade As at unit level will decrease in a specification where the number of units is reduced, whilst the number of passes will increase. The overall cash-in outcome, however, will be maintained. These same principles will apply to the new A level where a six unit assessment is reduced to a four unit assessment.

Statistical Information

This booklet contains summary details for each unit: number entered; maximum mark available; mean mark achieved; grade ranges. *N.B. These refer to 'raw marks' used in the initial assessment, rather than to the uniform marks reported when results are issued.*

Annual Statistical Report

The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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FN1	1
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FRENCH

General Certificate of Education 2009

Advanced Subsidiary

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FN1A - External Examiner conducted oral, and FN1B - Teacher conducted oral

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
FN1A (01)	2538	60	47.9

Grade Ranges

A	52
B	47
C	42
D	37
E	32

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
FN1B (02)	1594	60	48.0

Grade Ranges

A	52
B	47
C	42
D	37
E	32

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

AS French Oral

General

Visiting oral examiners wish to thank centres for making suitable arrangements for the oral tests. Most candidates are ready for their briefing and usually a draft timetable has been drawn up before the examiner's arrival and shared with the examiner before the examination dates. Most of the time, the examiner is informed about candidates with special needs or any other problem that may occur for some candidates. The vast majority of centres can provide a member of staff as a point of contact during the day to make sure that everything goes smoothly and that candidates do not disappear or are back on time for their examination. Examiners appreciate the kindness of that member of staff when available.

In most centres this year, the examination room was well chosen and met examination boards' requirements. Centres tried as much as possible to avoid noises from outside especially during break or lunch time.

Centres also now understand that expecting candidates to do their preparation in corridors is no longer acceptable and had allocated an additional room that allowed the candidate to prepare less conspicuously for their tests (FN1 and FR4). In many instances these preparation rooms were supervised, though this is not a WJEC requirement. This was generally very helpful as it is not the visiting examiner's role to check that candidates do not have mobile phones etc.

It is most helpful when centres ensure that:

- (a) All candidates attend the briefing session.
- (b) The preparation room is near but out of earshot of the oral examination - so that examiners do not take a long time to fetch candidates.
- (c) The oral test timetable does allow some flexibility and allows more than the minimum time gap between candidates as the process of choosing FN1 cards takes a little time and the examiner or examining teacher needs a gap for examination administration and for fetching the next candidate.
- (d) The examination room has a suitable table or area where FN1 cards can be spread out so that candidates can choose their two cards, one from group A and one from group B, one picture card (white) and one text card (green) in the recommended manner.

One or two issues did occur with centre-led tests and these are included in the remarks below.

Centre Conducted Tests (FN1B)

The vast majority of centre-conducted French AS oral tests were well conducted and met the requirements of the specifications. Centres will be sent feedback by the assistant examiners who marked the cassettes for their centre which will indicate, where necessary, aspects of conducting the tests that need improving.

Almost all centres ensured that the FN1B topic-based cards were chosen at random in the prescribed manner in order to satisfy the demands of the new specification so that candidates chose their two cards, one from group A and one from group B, one picture card (white) and one text card (green). Where centres did not do so this year, candidates will not be at a disadvantage.

Oral tests followed the guidance given on the exemplar FN1 oral DVD or in the oral INSET training days held last January. If centres have not received the exemplar DVD then this may be requested from the board. As there are no oral training sessions this year for the centre conducted oral tests, the following 'pointers' are given:

- (a) Centres need to include candidates' notes and the FN1B form where the order of candidates and the topic cards chosen are detailed in the pack sent to the examiners.
- (b) Topic cards need to be chosen as specified.
- (c) Candidates are given 15 minutes to prepare the three starter questions on both cards. They should not be allowed to recite long prepared passages in answer to these questions.
- (d) Knowledge of France is no longer assessed in the topic discussion; therefore answers need not contain a body of regurgitated facts and statistics relating to France.
- (e) The 'general conversation' is really a personal conversation and is limited to three topics, only the candidate's hobbies and interests, the subjects currently studied and the candidate's future plans.
- (f) Tests need to stick to the recommended times for the sub parts, the cassette recorder is not stopped between the topic based tasks and the general conversation.
- (g) Centres too often allow candidates to regurgitate (quite) long obviously pre-learnt, passages without interruption.

FN1A and FN1B

Candidates generally performed well in this part of the examination and centres, generally, had coped well with preparing them for the new requirements. In spite of a few mishaps in the mechanics of choosing the cards in the occasional centre, the topic based cards were well received. The photographs posed no difficulties. Some topics (either photo based or text based), however, were perceived as being more accessible than others, e.g. Education and travel were more accessible than celebrations and personal relationships, but centres will get used to the types of tasks and initial questions set as they have to the A level text based texts. It was only in a few centres that there was a noticeable difference between candidates' marks awarded for the topic based conversation and the more familiar 'general conversation'. A sigh of relief was often evident, however, when candidates started on their general conversations.

Very many candidates and centres had thought beforehand how they would like to steer the top based conversations and the candidates had the ideas and language required. Suitable examples of celebrations include personal ones such as family, e.g. birthdays, Christening (or equivalent) child naming or coming of age ceremonies, anniversaries, Christmas (or equivalent celebrations in other religions, very interesting), church, local celebrations such as the Festival of Flowers and Liberation Day in Jersey, festivals such as Notting Hill, music festivals, sports events, e.g. football clubs.

Discussions of relationships involved family, friendship groups, love, partners, children, neighbours, old, young, rich, poor, isolated people and groups, internet groups such as Facebook.

Candidates were more familiar with drugs, alcohol and youth problems and such discussions were often less laboured because they were freed from the requirements of relating the information to France or a French speaking country.

Candidates do not need to think about the general conversation and what they are going to say. Very often these lacked detail expressions of opinion, defending and justifying a view point, e.g many had little to say when challenged to say why a particular hobby was interesting.

The marking scheme for FN1 is significantly different from that of FR1. Communication has a very high weighting and the marks for accuracy and range have been halved. The configuration of marks is consequently markedly different from that of the legacy test. Very few candidates gained less than 30/60. Many candidates gained high marks.

Please note that the weighting of the oral components in the new specification have increased. The AS oral test is worth 40% of AS (20% of A level) rather than 30% (15% of A level) and the A2 oral is also worth 40% of A2 (20% of A level).

FN2

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
FN2	4142	98	58.3

Grade Ranges

A	69
B	63
C	57
D	51
E	45

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

FN2

This paper was the first paper for Listening, Reading and Writing under the new specification. Many of the topics and types of tasks are closely akin to those under the old specification. However notable differences between this and the former FR3 paper are:

- FN2 lays more emphasis on grammatical accuracy
- FN2 has a diminished listening element (13 marks out of 98)
- FN2 has fewer True/False tick box exercises.
- FN2 has an enhanced weighting of translation into English/Welsh (16/98 marks)

In the FN2 essay:

- disappearance of AO4 marks for Knowledge of French Society
- greater weighting for organisation, cogency and opinions expressed in essays than previously.

In view of the above changes slightly different kinds of candidates may end up performing better as compared with the former AS papers. Due to the augmented importance of Accuracy and the greatly reduced percentage of Vrai/Faux types of exercises as compared to the FR2 and FR3 papers, the higher marks, one might surmise, will only be accessible to candidates who have a thorough grasp of grammatical structure and syntax. The ability to write robust, accurate French using a range of vocabulary and structures as well as being able to garner opinions into a cogent essay and manipulate the language such as to avoid copying verbatim from the texts, are now pre-requisites for a good grade at AS!

Generally speaking candidates performed well as many features of the old specification had been kept. There seemed to be something for all ability ranges contained in the texts and marks awarded ranged from 7 to 95 out of 98. The main discriminating questions were those that were grammatically based and also those that required answers in French not lifted verbatim from the texts.

Listening Tasks

Q 1 There has been a change in how True/False exercises are marked- in the past a mark could be given for ticking the correct box and then a further mark for successful correction. Henceforth we can only give a mark for ticking the True box if correct and a mark for successful correction of incorrect statements, therefore no mark for ticking the False box. In this way candidates can no longer guess how many statements are True and how many are False. In spite of this change, candidates performed extremely well on this question overall with many getting full marks. Most candidates chose the 4 correct statements - (f) could be True or False).

The following were the statements to be corrected:

- (c) Idea of *Math(s)* also: *le français et les maths/les maths aussi*.
- (d) Either *10 heures maximum/8 heures minimum* or *entre 8 heures et 10 heures*.
- (f) Ambiguous question: Vrai & Faux were both acceptable. If Faux was ticked, the correction had to be right: *on donne le nombre d'heures pour toute l'année*.
- (h) *Histoire des arts/de l'art* and not *pratique artistique* or *histoire* on their own. Some wrote *histoire des arcs* and one answered *histoire du Zaïre!!*

Q 2 Grammar based listening

This is a new exercise at AS level.

Few candidates scored 5/5 here as answers needed to be free from any grammatical error. Candidates need to know verb/ adjectival endings and need to be familiar with homonyms. More dictation-type exercises would help candidates' performance here – a short dictation could be a 'stocking filler' at the end of a class and assistant(e)s could be used to provide such practice!

Non obtrusive, minor errors were tolerated here e.g. if the accent on *étudiant* was omitted, the mark could still be awarded if the verb ending was correct.

- Q 3** (i) Tick box exercise
Overall this question was well done as centres are acquainted with its format and candidates adept at discovering the correct answer from the text. Some students are still losing marks unnecessarily by not ticking the required number of boxes (if too many boxes are ticked the number of marks more than 5 is subtracted from the total of correct marks).
- (ii) Less well done. Candidates were required to change the first and second persons in the text to *Il/Elle veut* + infinitive' for the first part and for the second part *On/Il/Elle doit/ Il faut* etc. Answers that had changed the original verb from the first person to the third and the second part from a command to a third person obligation were credited. For the *conseil* an infinitive as well as a third person were accepted. This question was a definite discriminator, but many of the most able managed to gain full marks. Some performed well on this question and less well in other questions, including one candidate who gained full marks for this question and was given 36 (U) for the whole paper! Copying answers from the text was the main cause for losing marks here and many were unable to change the persons in the verbs, which was basically all that was required. As long as the person in the first part and the commands in the second part had been changed to other forms, leniency was exercised with copying from this particular text.
- (iii) Reading passage from the tourism text
There was substantial copying from the text here although the rubric clearly stipulates own words must be used as much as possible. Centres are already familiar with this requirement under the old AS Reading paper. Candidates need to be reminded that in most cases marks will not be awarded for copying from the text unless some form of manipulation of language has occurred.
As tourism is a topic that is covered well in centres, a number of candidates were attempting to answer questions based on material from elsewhere which did not always fit the particular context of this passage. Candidates need to be able to manipulate the language of the text for their answers and verbatim lifting will not normally be given credit.
1. Most managed to find something here. Two answers were needed, and many alternatives available: either *emplois saisonniers* and *emplois permanents* or any two kinds of named jobs. Specific jobs were not credited as answers.
 2. This question was not well done – the idea of *différence* was largely ignored. Either *la population est 3 fois plus* or *1/3 en plus*. An idea of increase was required with the figures 33%, 50%.
 3. Quite good – most identified some kind of traffic problems correctly. Any two answers: *problèmes de voitures* or *de circulation* or *de stationnement* or *dispute/friction due aux activités de camping-cars* (but not *camping-cars* on its own).
 4. Much lifting from text here. Any three answers, one per line: *un manque d'eau*, *un problème de déchets*, *une augmentation des prix des maisons/apparts*, *une perte d'identité*, *perte de caractère*.
 5. No attempt by some at any manipulation thus many experienced difficulties in answering this question. It needed an idea of lasting project (*tourisme/projet durable*) and improvement in the economy of the Finistère. Simple straightforward answers worked well - *trop de déchets*, *problèmes pour le paysage*.
 6. Not well answered – many did not understand the question nor what was expected in the answer. All that was expected was a reference to a seminar or meeting with a representation of different groups of interest.

In order to improve performance in this type of question candidates need practice in answering questions from a given text, always remembering that they need to change something from the original text be it a word (often antonyms are sufficient) , the verb (change of tense and/or person e.g.) or changing the personal pronoun(s) to suit the question and to give a logical answer to that question.

Q 4 Gap filling – grammatically based

Many found this grammatically-based task challenging and few gained full marks. For this exercise all spelling had to be correct as all words are given and the task is to choose the correct one. As happened in the old spec many managed to do the hardest part and choose the only answer that made both grammatical and semantic sense but they then copied out the word incorrectly and could not therefore get the mark.

There was evidence of the usual confusion between *a/à*, *sensiblement* translated as sensibly for a number of candidates. Idiomatic verbal structures such as *due aux* and *a tendance à* proved difficult for some. *que* and *qui* were another source of confusion for quite a few candidates.

In most cases the correct form of the verb was chosen, except for 5 where most went for the word they knew best *rapide* even though it was grammatically incorrect!

Q 5 Translation into English/Welsh

Candidates coped well with this question, although the sentence length was longer in some cases than has been the case under the old specification. This question now has an increased weighting and centres appear to be devoting time to develop this important skill. Almost everyone gained a few marks here but full marks were rare. Candidates continue to lose valuable marks for seemingly omitting to translate some simple words such as *mais*, *cependant*, *encore*, *trop*.

i. Was well translated by most

ii. Many got the idea of ‘skipping dessert’ but the future tense here proved difficult for some. Those who wrote ‘desert’ for ‘dessert’ were not given the mark as it is a different word and *se passer de dessert* was sometimes translated as ‘passing (round) the dessert’!

iii. Some good, highly idiomatic renderings here.

iv. *encore humide* proved challenging for many candidates. Some wrote about humid hair, whilst others translated it as ‘heat/heated rollers’. *Encore* was largely ignored, even though it was probably known by the majority.

v. *elle* on occasions was translated as ‘she’ which was a little disappointing.

cependant was sometimes omitted completely; *flux* and *habitant* were often kept the same as the French even though their English equivalents were relatively easy (prefixing the French word with ‘in’!)

vi. *forte frequentation* was a discriminator of ability in this task. Some wrote about “visitations”, ‘Frequentations’ and ‘frequencies’! *Usage* and *rovoque* were often left unchanged in English and *intérêts* for some became ‘the Internet’!

vii. Many understood the first part of the sentence although *Elles* was rendered as ‘she’ at times; *dépassant le strict cadre* proved difficult for most.

Q 6 Essay

Discrete marks for AO4 Knowledge of French Society are no longer applied to essays. In the past some less able candidates tended to plan their essays around good factual detail they had about France that was relevant to the title! Having been liberated from the AO4 requirement, candidates produced better organised and fewer irrelevant essays than in the past. Thus, well-focussed, cogent essays written in good French were awarded the best marks. Generally candidates coped well with the essay titles.

Centres should impress upon their candidates that they should indicate clearly which question that they are attempting as this is not always obvious with some attempting to address elements of all four questions; providing a word count is useful as under length essays are scaled down according to the percentage of words missing from the minimum number of words – overlong essays are marked up to 300 words and the rest ignored.

Some used the answer book to plan their essay but wrote their essays partly or wholly on a continuation sheet. Doing it the other way round would be better!

All titles were attempted, although (a) and (b) proved to be most popular, (d) being the least popular.

- (a) This title was done well by many candidates. Focus was on the question set and essays were pertinent and interesting at the top of the range. The temptation to stray into *tabagisme* and *drogues* proved too much for some though!
- (b) Another popular title - *l'importance* was well-discussed by many but some were penalised for writing an essay about sport only and not addressing *pour une vie équilibrée*.
At the lower end of the ability range lists of hobbies, often overpersonalised, were a feature.
- (c) This inspired a number to go through their grievances with parents. Generally speaking, too many lists of problems with no real analysis was written by many.
- (d) Only a minority of those who attempted this question managed to keep its central focus i.e. the purpose of education, and those who did keep the focus scored well on the Quality of Response (20 marks out of 35). Nevertheless the pre-learnt 'school' essay predominated here with very little reference to the title. Differences between France and GB, « le bac » and generalisations about the French system were very much in evidence, but again not relevant!

Grammatical and semantic elements

- *mal/bien* used for *mauvais/bon* indiscriminately and vice versa
- Present Tense forms of even very common verbs such as *faire, aller, avoir, boire, être* not known by large numbers of candidates
- Some candidates attempt to form the Present Continuous which does not exist in French e.g. *je suis parlant*
- Adjectival agreements ignored or incorrectly used by many candidates.
- *jouer du sport* often written instead of *faire du sport*
- *se conclure/ se terminer* used for *pour conclure*
- The subjunctive overused by some, even where a simpler construction would be better.
- *tu/ vous* forms used indiscriminately, often to convey what would be best rendered by *on* in French.
- Verbal agreements generally were often ignored or incorrectly used.

On a lighter note...

One candidate's opening gambit read : *Dès l'Antiquité Socrate en parlait, il y avait un conflit des générations*. How very French to mention philosophers !

Some prejudices persist however – when mentioning unwanted pregnancies, one candidate wrote: *En France il y a beaucoup de grosses non-désirées!*

Another candidate had a very strange experience with the TV as he wrote: *Quand j'avais environ 4 ou 5 ans notre télé volait !*

A budding scientist wrote: *le sport crée des liens entre les gènes !*

A disgruntled teenager wrote : *un père va dire que son fils a besoin de vêtements réels.*

A candidate wrote : *après une longue relation avec l'alcool, il y a la dépendance.*

Another extolled the virtues of drinking: *l'alcool aide a socialiser les masses.*

Some essays were truly excellent – well argued, well-organised, cogent, focussing in on the title with opinions and viewpoints well-supported and well-illustrated. This year there were fewer completely irrelevant essays and this is very pleasing.

In conclusion I would like to congratulate centres for preparing their candidates so well for this new specification. By making grammatical accuracy and the need to be able to use the language more flexibly essential in order to do well in the examination we will, hopefully, be giving the highest accolades to the best linguists, which is only right and proper.



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