

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/11

Listening

Key messages

- The performance on this paper was very similar to that of 2013. Candidates showed good levels of both specific and general understanding, especially on the first two sections of the paper. The last section was, as intended, found to be more challenging.
- Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite in pen as this can make answers very difficult to read.
- Candidates must cross out any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Candidates need to take care when writing their answers. Poor handwriting was more apparent this year making some scripts hard to read.
- Many candidates appreciate the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details will be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.
- It is important that candidates understand the need to indicate the correct number of ticks in multiple choice and box ticking exercises.

General comments

This demand of this year's paper was found to be very similar to that of the 2013 paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section, with even weaker candidates managing to gain a few marks on the easier questions which are intended to keep concentration going until the end of the test. The candidature was familiar with the requirements of the paper, and rubrics were usually well understood. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were very accessible to all candidates.

As last year, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the defined content.

It is clear that candidates in many Centres appreciate the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understand that they are not required to write their answers in full sentences. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as they help candidates avoid the inclusion of extra, distorting, material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should also not infer or answer questions from general knowledge as they run the risk of invalidating a correct answer by including material which is not on the recording. Examiners reported that there were more cases of poor handwriting this year which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers. Centres must stress the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt, and then overwrite in pen.

The listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clearly conveyed. If the answer sounds and reads like French, it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous. Candidates must cross out any material they do not wish the Examiner to consider.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and not before the examination starts. It is important to give candidates practice on past papers so as to ensure that they are

familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple-choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed extremely well in this opening exercise which is intended to give candidates a confident start to the paper. Candidates understood the rubric and the visuals caused no problems of interpretation. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested were numbers, places, food, weather, shopping illness.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-16

Candidates heard a longer extract featuring information about a campsite. Candidates were required to write one word for the first question. All other questions were multiple choice and required candidates to select one from three, usually visual, options.

The majority of candidates did very well on this exercise. **Question 9** proved difficult for those who could produce an acceptable rendering of the word *juillet*. There were many spellings offered, most of which were recognisable as the correct month and were accepted. On **Question 12**, candidates sometimes opted for the incorrect option A (the barbecue) instead of the correct option B (towels). On **Question 13**, some did not recognise *oeufs frais* and instead chose C (bread).

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 17

Although, the format of this exercise is now well understood, Examiners did report that there are still occasionally cases of candidates ticking too few or too many boxes. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: **either** ticks **or** crosses are acceptable, but they are likely to cause confusion when used together.

Candidates heard four young people talking about music. The topic area was found to be very accessible to candidates and many scored at least 4 or 5 marks. The section on Régine was perhaps the least well done with some candidates ticking option **d** (*Régine achète les dernières chansons en ville*) instead of option **e** (*Régine trouve les concerts très chers*). No other patterns of incorrect ticks were discernible.

Exercise 2 Questions 18-22

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview in two parts with Sébastien, a dancer. In the first part of the interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, by supplying the correct word(s). The missing words could all be found in the core vocabulary of the defined content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise.

Marks were usually high for this part of the exercise. In **Question 20** some did not recognise the word *fort*. On **Question 22** some rendered *temps as dents*.

Exercise 2 Questions 23-27

On the second part of this exercise, candidates heard the continuation of the interview with Sébastien. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French to the questions. All of the questions could be answered briefly without using a verb, apart from **Question 27**. **Question 23** was very well done. Good attempts were made at the next three questions but candidates found these harder than the opening question. Some found it difficult to give an acceptable spelling of *qualités de danseur* on **Question 24**. A fair attempt was made on **Question 26** but some were unfamiliar with *meilleur*. The last question on this exercise proved to be the most demanding with many finding it difficult to express the concept either that Sébastien liked the same things, or that his friends say that he has not changed.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

Candidates coped well with this multiple-choice exercise and the vast majority were able to gain at least two or three marks even if they went on to find the last exercise difficult. Candidates had to listen to and process more information than in the previous section and had to be able to follow a narrative that featured different time frames and in which feelings and opinions were expressed. Candidates understood the rubrics well. It is worth reminding candidates to use the longer reading time available at the beginning of this exercise, and the time available in the pauses, to read the question and options very carefully. Reading the questions will also help to give candidates an overall plan of the content of the recording and help them to sequence the information which they will hear.

Candidates heard an interview with Sophie who had recently moved to a large town. The first two questions were not done as well as the final four. **Question 29** was found to be the hardest question on the exercise with many incorrectly opting for D rather than the correct option A. Sophie did refer to music in shops but candidates needed to understand her opinion of it, ...*ce que j'aime le moins en ville, c'est la musique dans les magasins*. It is important on questions testing for opinions that the question is read carefully and that candidates listen for a complete concept before selecting their answer.

Exercise 2 Questions 34-42

This was a very appropriate final exercise and, as intended, the most demanding on the paper, including questions to challenge the most able candidates. Some very accessible questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and many weaker candidates made commendable efforts to answer at least some questions. The performance on this exercise was, again, very much in line with the standard of work seen last year.

Candidates heard an interview with Martin who talked about his work experience in Morocco. Candidates generally found the topic accessible. Questions had been phrased in such a way as to try to encourage candidates to answer as briefly as possible rather than to have to write a lot. Full sentences were not required but some questions did require verbs so as to give a complete concept.

Question 34 boosted the confidence of weaker listeners and many candidates made good attempts at *directeur*. The next two questions proved more demanding. On **Question 35**, only the very best candidates could identify that Martin's problem was a flat tyre. Either *pneu* or *crevé* constituted an acceptable answer, but neither was widely known. On **Question 36**, the word *lampe* was sufficient to score the mark. However, candidates heard *lampe de poche*, which some misheard for *argent de poche*. Others ran the words together in a variety of ways: Centres are reminded that incorrect word combinations indicate a lack of comprehension and do not score the mark. Although on **Question 37(a)** only the best candidates were able to render the idea that Martin noticed *les odeurs de la nourriture*, on the next part of the question many were able to identify that everything was different. On **Question 38**, a good number of candidates answered correctly that Martin had got the wrong bus or that he was late. Better candidates were also able to identify that his students wanted to learn for **Question 39** – some seemed unfamiliar with the verb *apprendre*. For question **40**, although **paysages** was often misspelt, renderings were recognisable as the correct word and could be rewarded. Answers to **Question 41** were often also successful: candidates could either refer to the idea of a traditional meal or to cous-cous. The final question was a challenging end to the test. The comparative **plus** in *plus riche de caractère* had to be included for the mark to be scored.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/12

Listening

Key messages

- The performance on this paper was slightly better than in 2013. Candidates showed good levels of both specific and general understanding, especially on the first two sections of the paper. The last section was, as intended, found to be more challenging.
- Centres should remind candidates to write clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should not write first in pencil and then overwrite in pen as this can make answers very difficult to read.
- Candidates must cross out any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Candidates need to take care when writing their answers. Poor handwriting was more apparent this year making some scripts hard to read.
- Many candidates appreciate the need to write as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details will be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.
- It is important that candidates understand the need to indicate the correct number of ticks in multiple choice and box ticking exercises.

General comments

Although the demand of this year's paper was found to be broadly similar to that of the 2013 paper, the first exercise in **Section 3** proved easier than in previous years. The candidature was familiar with the requirements of the paper, and rubrics were usually well understood. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were very accessible to all candidates.

As last year, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

It is clear that candidates in many Centres appreciate the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understand that they are not required to write their answers in full sentences. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as they help candidates avoid the inclusion of extra, distorting, material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should also not infer or answer questions from general knowledge as they run the risk of invalidating a correct answer by including material which is not on the recording. Examiners reported that there were more cases of poor handwriting this year which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers. Centres must stress the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt, and then overwrite in pen.

The listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clearly conveyed. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous. Candidates must cross out any material they do not wish the Examiner to consider.

Candidates need to use the pauses on the recordings to read the questions carefully. Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and not before the examination starts. It is important to give candidates practice on past papers so as to ensure that they are

familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they can expect to hear all recordings twice.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed well in this opening exercise which is intended to give candidates a confident start to the paper. Candidates understood the rubric and the visuals caused no problems of interpretation. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested were household activities and situations, shopping and leisure activities.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-16

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured a teacher addressing candidates on a school skiing trip. Candidates were required to write one word for the final question but all other questions were multiple choice and required candidates to select one from three visual options.

The majority of candidates did very well on this exercise. On **Question 12** some were unfamiliar with the word *lavabo*. Likewise, some had difficulty identifying *à la terrasse* on **Question 13**. Most were successful in identifying the correct month on the final question: spellings of *février* were varied, but could usually be identified as the correct month by Examiners.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 17

Although, the format of this exercise is now well understood, Examiners did report that there are still occasionally cases of candidates ticking too few or too many boxes. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: **either** ticks **or** crosses are acceptable, but they are likely to cause confusion when used together.

Candidates heard four young people talking about food. The topic area was found to be very accessible to candidates and many scored at least 4 or 5 marks. No pattern of incorrect ticks was observed by Examiners.

Exercise 2 Questions 18-22

In this exercise candidates heard an interview in two parts with Ingrid who talked about her life in France and Australia. In the first part of the interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, by supplying the correct word(s). The missing words could all be found in the core vocabulary of the defined content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise.

Marks were usually high for this part of the exercise. On **Question 21**, although many spellings of *jolie* were presented, these were often judged to communicate the message clearly.

Exercise 2 Questions 23-27

On the second part of this exercise, candidates heard the continuation of the interview with Ingrid. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French to the questions. All of the questions could be answered briefly without using a verb, apart from **Question 27**. Candidates found **Question 23** demanding, with only the best able to state that Ingrid was *loin de sa famille*. It was common here for candidates to confuse Ingrid's family with the host family. For **Question 24**, candidates needed to state that Ingrid was in a girls' school. Many offered the opposite concept. **Question 25** was done much better. Candidates needed to refer to the word *uniforme* and most were successful in this. Good numbers were also successful on **Question 26**. Those who communicated the idea of *classes de petites* did not gain the mark. The last question proved to be demanding. For the last question *l'art dramatique* was frequently expressed as *l'art grammatique*.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

Candidates coped extremely well with this multiple-choice exercise and the vast majority were able to gain at least four marks even if they went on to find the last exercise difficult. Candidates had to listen to and process more information than in the previous section and had to be able to follow a narrative that featured different time frames and in which feelings and opinions were expressed. Candidates understood the rubrics well. It is worth reminding candidates to use the longer reading time available at the beginning of this exercise, and the time available in the pauses, to read the question and options very carefully. Reading the questions will also help to give candidates an overall plan of the content of the recording and help them to sequence the information which they will hear.

Candidates heard an interview with Sandra in which she talked about her reasons for becoming a vet, her studies and her work. The most difficult question in this exercise was found to be **Question 31**. No pattern of incorrect answers was observed by Examiners.

Exercise 2 Questions 34-42

This was a very appropriate final exercise and, as intended, the most demanding on the paper, including questions to challenge the most able candidates. Some very accessible questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and many weaker candidates made commendable efforts to answer at least some questions. The performance on this exercise was, again, very much in line with the standard of work seen last year.

Candidates heard an interview with Drissa, who talked about his life and work in Quebec. Candidates generally found the topic accessible. Questions had been phrased in such a way as to try to encourage candidates to answer as briefly as possible rather than to have to write a lot. Full sentences were not required but some questions did require verbs so as to give a complete concept.

On **Question 34** some referred to Drissa studying maths rather than to his first job and did not gain the mark. The verb *enseigner* proved difficult to spell accurately, but the mark scheme allowed for a number of approaches. *Professeur* was also acceptable. On **Question 35**, the most common error was to include reference to *culture* instead of, or as well, as *température*. This invalidated the answer. A fair number successfully offered *étudiants* (or an acceptable spelling of the word) for **Question 36**. **Question 37** proved difficult because *animer* was not well known. The verb *déménager* was successfully rendered by a fair number of candidates in answer to **Question 38**. Only a few offered the alternative answer *aller habiter en banlieue*. For **Question 39**, many were successful in picking out the concept of a regular service as one of the reasons Drissa liked to take the boat. A second reason was also required and here the spelling of *vue* often caused problems for candidates. There were a good number of correct answers to **Question 40**, but **Question 41** proved more difficult. *Encourager tolérance* was not produced by many, who instead answered *encourager les gens/jeunes*. The final question was a challenging end to the test. Only the best candidates included both the word *mieux* and the idea of understanding each other.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/13

Listening

Key messages

- The performance on this paper was very similar to that of 2013. Candidates showed good levels of both specific and general understanding, especially on the first two sections of the paper. The last section was, as intended, found to be more challenging.
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- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.
- It is important that candidates understand the need to indicate the correct number of ticks in multiple choice and box ticking exercises.

General comments

This demand of this year's paper was found to be very similar to that of the 2013 paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with even weaker candidates managing to gain a few marks on the easier questions which are intended to keep concentration going until the end of the test. The candidature was familiar with the requirements of the paper, and rubrics were usually well understood. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were very accessible to all candidates.

As last year, the French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. Vocabulary which is tested in the first two sections of the test is drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the defined content.

It is clear that candidates in many Centres appreciate the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understand that they are not required to write their answers in full sentences. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as they help candidates avoid the inclusion of extra, distorting, material which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should also not infer or answer questions from general knowledge as they run the risk of invalidating a correct answer by including material which is not on the recording. Examiners reported that there were more cases of poor handwriting this year which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers. Centres must stress the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt, and then overwrite in pen.

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Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple-choice questions with visual options. Candidates usually performed well in this opening exercise which is intended to give candidates a confident start to the paper.

Candidates understood the rubric and the visuals caused no problems of interpretation. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested were time, numbers, places, hotel information, food and transport.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-16

Candidates heard a longer extract featuring tourist information about a French town. Candidates were required to write one word for the first question but all other questions were multiple choice and required candidates to tick a box. **Question 9** proved difficult for many candidates who could not produce an acceptable rendering of the word *mai*.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 17

Although, the format of this exercise is now well understood, Examiners did report that there are still occasionally cases of candidates ticking too few or too many boxes. Candidates should be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: **either** ticks **or** crosses are acceptable, but they are likely to cause confusion when used together.

Candidates heard 4 young people talking on the subject of school uniform. The topic area was found to be very accessible to candidates and many scored at least 4 or 5 marks. The section on Chloë was perhaps the least well done with some candidates ticking option i (*C'est Chloë qui achète ses vêtements*). No other patterns of incorrect ticks were discernible.

Exercise 2 Questions 18-22

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview in two parts with Jean-Paul, a baker. In the first part of the interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, by supplying the correct word(s). The missing words could all be found in the core vocabulary of the defined content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than that heard in the previous exercise.

Marks were usually high for this part of the exercise. **Question 20** proved difficult with only a few candidates able to identify the word *four*.

Exercise 2 Questions 23-27

On the second part of this exercise, candidates heard the continuation of the interview with Jean-Paul. Candidates were required to give short written responses in French to the questions. All of the questions could be answered briefly without using a verb, apart from **Question 25**. To answer this question correctly, candidates needed to identify the fact that Jean-Paul cleaned the shop at the time given, but many stated instead that he finished work at that time.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

Candidates coped well with this multiple-choice exercise and the vast majority were able to gain at least two or three marks even if they went on to find the last exercise difficult. Candidates had to listen to and process more information than in the previous section and had to be able to follow a narrative that featured different time frames and in which feelings and opinions were expressed. Candidates understood the rubrics well. It is worth reminding candidates to use the longer reading time available at the beginning of this exercise, and the time available in the pauses, to read the question and options very carefully. Reading the questions will also help to give candidates an overall plan of the content of the recording and help them to sequence the information which they will hear.

Candidates heard an interview with Béatrice about her life and the challenges she had faced while studying at an agricultural college. The final two questions proved to be the most difficult. Only the best candidates were able to answer **Question 32** correctly. This question required candidates to understand what the other students at the agricultural college were like. Candidates needed to listen to several statements from Béatrice before deciding, and careful reading of the distractors was required so as to eliminate the incorrect options. The final question was attempted a little better but still found to be demanding by weaker candidates.

Exercise 2 Questions 34-41

This was a very appropriate final exercise and, as intended, the most demanding on the paper, including questions to challenge the most able candidates. Some very accessible questions were also included to help maintain concentration and motivation and many weaker candidates made commendable efforts to answer at least some questions. The performance on this exercise was, again, very much in line with the standard of work seen last year.

Candidates heard an interview with Eric who talked about being part of an anti-stress group at school and how a healthy life style could help to reduce stress for candidates. Candidates generally found the topic accessible. Questions had been phrased in such a way as to try to encourage candidates to answer as briefly as possible rather than to have to write a lot. Full sentences were not required but some questions did require verbs so as to give a complete concept.

On **Question 34(a)**, candidates often did not know the word *endroit*, and very few were successful here. Much better attempts were made on the next part of the question and many scored the mark by producing an acceptable version of the verb *travailler*. For **Question 35**, a high proportion were able to identify *chocolat* and score the mark. The phrasing of the question meant that the word *chaud* was not needed in the reply. Many were able to identify *fruits* on **Question 36**. Incorrect answers often featured attempts at the word *frites*. **Question 37** proved to be the hardest question on the paper with only the very best answering correctly with *bien-être*. Good attempts were made on the next question where candidates needed to identify two concepts: less homework and more time. Candidates often answered **Question 39** with *une fois par semaine*. This did not answer the question and underlined the need for careful reading of the question. The correct answer *la récréation* was given by a fair number of candidates. The required concept on **Question 40** was that of improving concentration. The verb *améliorer* proved very hard to render for many candidates. The final question was a challenging end to the test. This tested the concept of not spending too much time on Facebook and answers which did not feature *trop* were incomplete.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/21
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions (especially question words, e.g. *où, qu'est-ce que, qui*) and texts very carefully.
- answer comprehension questions with brief but focused answers – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected.
- write relevantly, and no more than the required amount, for the writing tasks.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to answers clear.
- allow themselves time to check their work, particularly spellings, verb agreements, and words copied from the text.

General comments

Candidates had been well-prepared for the paper and were generally able to cope with the type of exercises found. There were no obvious problems with the length of time allowed to complete the paper. Although a very few candidates had omitted **Question 25**, they nevertheless completed the rest of the paper.

Once the paper has been completed, any spare time can profitably be spent in checking their work. Candidates should make sure that where they change their mind about the final answer to a question, it is clear which answer the Examiner is intended to mark – once a final decision is made, any answer not to be considered should be crossed out. Standards of legibility and presentation were generally acceptable but candidates should be advised that answers written in pencil then rubbed out and/or overwritten in pen can be difficult to read when scripts are scanned for marking.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

This exercise was usually well done and many scored the 5 marks available. Performance on **Questions 2** and **5** showed *pont* and *fauteuil* to be the least familiar items of vocabulary: for **Question 2**, B (*tour*) was often offered as the answer, and for **Question 5** either C (*étagère*) or D (*miroir*).

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise tested the vocabulary for various places in town. Most candidates scored full marks for this exercise. Very occasionally the matching of *prendre le car* and *gare routière* or of *traverser la rue* and *passage pour piétons* was not managed.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a longer piece of connected text in the form of an email from Stéphane, writing about his school. They then answered a series of five multiple choice sentence completions. The exercise was very well done.

Exercise 4 Question 16

For this piece of writing, there are 3 marks available for the communication of three pieces of information, indicated by illustrations, and 2 marks for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write an e-mail to a friend, saying:

- (a) where they are (*au camping*);
- (b) what they are doing (*nager, la natation*);
- (c) what the weather is like (*il pleut*).

For (a), candidates were expected to write *Je suis au camping* and credit was also given to those who said they were *à la campagne* or *sous la tente*. For (b), many candidates were able to score, either using part of *nager* or saying *je vais à la piscine*. For (c) many alternatives were accepted (*il fait mauvais, le ciel est gris, il y a des nuages, le ciel est couvert*) and many candidates achieved the mark. Credit was also given where candidates combined tasks (for example, *il pleut à la campagne* was awarded a communication mark for task (c) plus one for task (a) and a language mark for the correct verb). The spellings of *camping/campagne* and *natation/nager* showed a lot of variation, but minor spelling errors were tolerated throughout.

In order to score the 2 marks available for appropriateness of language, candidates had to use two correct verbs in appropriate tenses.

The vast majority of candidates scored 4 or 5 marks.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a longer text, an e-mail from Monique to a friend, talking about working in a hotel for the month of July. The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. All that is required is to be able to locate the information needed, which can sometimes be rendered in just one or two words, rather than complete sentences. For example, **Question 19(i)** could be answered with *...seule...* and **Question 19(ii)** with *...ennuyée...* Most candidates coped extremely well with this exercise, with many scoring the maximum 10 marks. For **Questions 20** and **22** some gave incomplete answers – **Question 20** needed *...mal au dos...* and **Question 22** *...aider clients*.

Exercise 2 Question 25

For this longer piece of writing, candidates were given the topic of their town. The three tasks given were:

- (a) a description of their town;
- (b) whether they liked it, together with why or why not;
- (c) where they would like to live in the future, and why.

10 marks are available for the communication of relevant points, spread flexibly across the tasks. Candidates clearly found this task very accessible and had no difficulty finding plenty to write about. There were many maximum scores for communication, and almost all candidates dealt with all three elements, though making more points in the first and third parts. There were many detailed descriptions of towns, dealing not just with the buildings, but also with problems such as pollution and safety. Most also liked living in their towns, for a variety of reasons, ranging from the activities available to the fact that their family had lived there a long time, or they had many friends there or that it was a peaceful or vibrant and pleasant place to live. Many said that in the future they would like to stay in exactly the same town, and often even in the same house, though others thought they would like to live perhaps on the French Riviera, or in New York, or in a smaller, quieter town, or in the country.

For accuracy, 5 marks are available, using a banded mark scheme. Many candidates also scored the maximum here. They used straightforward vocabulary and structures and were able to use a range of verbs with some success, writing reasonably accurately and coherently, though not all candidates could use *...je voudrais...* accurately. Candidates could usefully spend any spare time when they have finished the rest of the paper checking through their work for spelling, genders and adjective agreements, and subject and verb accord, which sometimes presented problems.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In **Section 2** they are rewarded for being able to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they must be more selective in their choice of answer in order to score marks, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and will often prevent it from scoring.

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

The text here concerns Morgane and her successful career as a chef. The rubric gives the information that 2 of the statements are true, and 4 are false, and candidates can score 6 of the 10 marks by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 4 marks are scored by correcting the 4 false statements.

Most candidates correctly identified the true/false statements, although some thought that **Questions 26 and 31** were *Vrai* and that **Question 27** was *Faux*.

In some cases candidates invalidated their otherwise correct answers by including too much detail, for example in **Question 26**, adding *...Son père et sa mère travaillaient mais...* or in **Question 29** adding *...Elle pouvait donc enfin faire des économies...* **Question 30** was answered very successfully, but the correction to **Question 31** often included the additional material *...Morgane a alors eu l'idée...* which did not score.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-40

For this last exercise, candidates were given a text about a homeless man and the cat who adopted him. Questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. Candidates need to make sure that they read each question with care, and that their answer is focused on what the question actually asks.

It was clear that most candidates understood the text, and were able to locate the answer needed within it but were not always able to structure their answer precisely. For **Question 32(i)** the answer needed was simply *...chez des amis...* and for **Question 32(ii)** *...dehors / dans la rue...* but many lifted the whole of the second and third sentences without thinking about just the detail needed.

The majority of answers to this exercise needed a finite verb, and though candidates had located the correct information, they sometimes used an infinitive, or a verb without a subject, leaving their answer ambiguous. Some misread the questions from time to time, notably **Questions 37 and 38** and referred their answers to Michel rather than to Tom.

Many were able to manipulate the language successfully, but some found pitfalls with the possessive in trying to express *...aux pieds / sur l'épaule de Michel*. There was frequent misplaced use of *...il y a...* often in place of *...il a...*

Question 39 was generally answered well, although a number of candidates chose *...Michel a réussi à trouver un travail permanent...* as part of their answer to the last question. Almost all candidates scored at least one of the 2 marks available there.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/22

Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions (especially question words, e.g. *où, qu'est-ce que, qui*) and texts very carefully.
- answer comprehension questions with brief but focused answers – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected.
- write relevantly, and no more than the required amount, for the writing tasks.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to answers clear.
- allow themselves time to check their work, particularly spellings, verb agreements, and words copied from the text.

General comments

Candidates had been well-prepared for the paper and were generally able to cope with the type of exercises found. There were no obvious problems with the length of time allowed to complete the paper.

Candidates should make sure that where they change their mind about the final answer to a question, it is clear which answer the Examiner is intended to mark – once a final decision is made, any answer not to be considered should be crossed out. Standards of legibility and presentation were good. Any time left after finishing the paper could be profitably spent checking that all questions have been answered, that where material from the text has been used, it has been copied correctly, and that where an answer to a question has been changed, the final answer is clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Most candidates scored quite well on this exercise, although for **Question 3** *boucles d'oreille / bijouterie* did not seem well known. Almost all answered **Questions 4** and **5** correctly.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise tested the vocabulary for various places in town. Candidates often scored the maximum 5 marks on this exercise. *Renseignements* was perhaps not a well-known vocabulary item, as **Question 8** was sometimes answered with E (*musée*).

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a longer piece of connected text in the form of an email from Frédéric, writing about his return to school after the holidays. They then answered a series of five multiple choice sentence completions. The first two questions of this exercise were not generally well done: candidates were perhaps not familiar with *la rentrée* and opted for the more familiar mention of *grandes vacances*, giving B as their answer to **Question 11**. Some seemed to connect *côte* with the countryside rather than the coast and offered either A or C as their answer to **Question 12**. Most candidates were much more successful with the other 3 questions.

Exercise 4 Question 16

For this piece of writing, there are 3 marks available for the communication of three pieces of information, indicated by illustrations, and 2 marks for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write an e-mail to a friend, saying:

- (a) where they are (*à la montagne*);
- (b) what they are doing (*faire du vélo, du VTT, du cyclisme*);
- (c) what the weather is like (*il fait froid*).

For (a), candidates were expected to write *Je suis à la montagne*. Mention of being in the Alps was also accepted. For (b), many candidates were able to score, using some form of *faire* or *voyager* or even *jouer*, though some struggled to come up with an appropriate verb here. For (c), many candidates achieved the mark. Credit was also given where candidates combined tasks (for example, *il fait très froid dans les montagnes* was awarded a communication mark for task (c) plus one for task (a) and a language mark for the correct verb). The spellings of *montagne* and *froid* showed some variation, but minor spelling errors were tolerated throughout.

In order to score the 2 marks available for appropriateness of language, candidates had to use two correct verbs in appropriate tenses.

The vast majority of candidates did quite well.

A number of candidates expanded on the required 3 elements: there is no need to add any extra material and there is **no additional credit** available for this, since marks are only awarded for completing the prescribed tasks in line with the illustrations provided.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a longer text, an e-mail from Claire to her pen friend, Jessica, talking about the holidays. The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. All that is required is to be able to locate the information needed, which can sometimes be rendered in just one or two words, rather than complete sentences. For example **Question 17** could be answered with *...vacances...* and **Question 18** with *...grands-parents...* The addition of *famille* for this question sometimes invalidated the answer.

Overall, this exercise was very well done. **Questions 20** and **21** were very well answered. For **Question 22**, some thought that Claire had done her shopping with her mother, rather than with her *copine du collègue*, but most did well with both parts of **Question 23** and also with the second part of **Question 24** – some gave an ambiguous answer to the first part, suggesting that she didn't like to eat, rather than that she had to eat food she didn't like.

Exercise 2 Question 25

For this longer piece of writing, candidates were given the topic of the weekend. The three tasks given were:

- (a) a description of a typical weekend;
- (b) the weekend activities they like and don't like, with reasons;
- (c) what they would like to do next weekend, and why.

10 marks are available for the communication of relevant points, spread flexibly across the tasks. Candidates were clearly comfortable with this topic, and could find plenty to say on their activities, so there were many maximum scores for communication. Eating (pizza) would seem to be the weekend activity that is the most popular among our candidates, closely followed by shopping and going to the cinema. Reading and tidying bedrooms were far less frequently mentioned. There were some very well constructed pieces of writing dealing with all the tasks in order and giving reasons when required.

Some candidates gave lists of activities for the first two tasks, without giving any reasons, and for the third task some talked about a previous weekend rather than one in the future.

For accuracy, 5 marks are available, using a banded mark scheme. Many candidates also scored the maximum here. A number of candidates were able to cover all three tasks with some fluency and good language levels, and there were some colourful, interesting answers. Common verbs were usually handled well, especially *j'aime* + infinitive, although reflexive verbs (*je me lève*, *je me lave* etc.) presented a few problems. There were some very good examples of correct verbs and tenses and candidates mostly coped well in the Present and Future tenses.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In **Section 2** they are rewarded for being able to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they are asked to be more selective in their choice of answer in order to score marks, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and will often prevent it from scoring.

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

The text here concerns Christine, and her job as a close protection operative. The rubric gives the information that 2 of the statements are true, and 4 are false, and candidates can score 6 of the 10 marks by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 4 marks are scored by correcting the 4 false statements.

The majority of candidates correctly identified the true/false statements, and were able to locate the pieces of information needed to correct the false statements, but in **Question 26**, for example, a number of candidates stopped short at the information that Christine *...travaillait pour la police...* and didn't add the necessary detail that it was for the *police de quartier / de banlieue*. Those who chose *...la sécurité dans les rues...* were able to score. For **Question 28**, many opted for the mention of *...en pleine forme physique...* or lifted in its entirety the final sentence of the third paragraph, but the emphasis needed to be on the fact that Christine found the foreign language and psychology examinations the most difficult. The correction of **Question 29** was most often invalidated by mention of *...la seule femme...* **Question 31** was generally well done by the majority of candidates.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-39

For the final exercise of the paper, candidates were given a text about Raoul and his travels. Questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. Candidates need to make sure that they read each question with care, and that their answer is focused on what the question actually asks.

For **Question 32**, it was possible to lift the complete phrase *...sans argent, c'était impossible...* to score the mark, provided that candidates did not include *Mais...* at the beginning of the sentence. Some opted for *...c'était impossible...* which did not answer the question, since it did not mention the lack of money, and *...il n'y a pas d'argent...* which did not make it clear who was the subject.

For the next question, many left out the idea of travelling without luggage, just lifting *...c'était de voyager...* and did not score. A good number of candidates managed to score for both parts of **Question 34**.

The answer to the next question needed to make clear what Raoul considered *nécessaires*. Many candidates located the correct answer for **Question 36**, *...c'était bizarre pour Raoul d'être sans valise...*, but some then added *...et ça le rendait nerveux...* and invalidated their answer.

Questions 37, 38 and 39 were generally quite well done, although answers to **Question 38** were occasionally invalidated by the addition of *...donc il n'a eu aucun problème...* or the miscopying of *...linge...* Weaker candidates tended to begin their answers to the last question with *...Non seulement...* or had problems with the correct pronouns.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/23
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper candidates should:

- read all instructions, questions (especially question words, e.g. *où, qu'est-ce que, qui*) and texts very carefully.
- answer comprehension questions with brief but focused answers – where only a single line space is provided, short answers are expected.
- write relevantly, and no more than the required amount, for the writing tasks.
- make sure that they have answered every part of every question, including multiple choice.
- make any alterations to answers clear.
- allow themselves time to check their work, particularly spellings, verb agreements, and words copied from the text.

General comments

Candidates had been well-prepared for the paper and were generally able to cope with the type of exercises found. There were no obvious problems with the length of time allowed to complete the paper.

Once the paper has been completed, any spare time can profitably be spent in checking their work. Candidates should make sure that where they change their mind about the final answer to a question, it is clear which answer the Examiner is intended to mark – once a final decision is made, any answer not to be considered should be crossed out. Standards of legibility and presentation were generally acceptable but candidates should be advised that answers written in pencil then rubbed out and/or overwritten in pen can be difficult to read when scripts are scanned for marking.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

These questions were generally very well answered, though for **Question 3**, B (*électroménager*) was sometimes given rather than A (*jouets*) and for **Question 5**, C (*miroir*) was given rather than B (*étagère*).

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise tested the vocabulary for various places in town. Most candidates scored at least 4 marks on this exercise. *Mairie* appeared to be an unfamiliar item of vocabulary for some, who offered B (*mairie*) rather than C for **Question 6** (*lac*).

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a longer piece of connected text in the form of an email from *Émilie*, writing about her brother. They then answered a series of five multiple choice sentence completions. Most managed to score very well, with many achieving the maximum 5 marks.

Exercise 4 Question 16

For this piece of writing, there are 3 marks available for the communication of three pieces of information, indicated by illustrations, and 2 marks for accurate use of language. Candidates were asked to write an e-mail to a friend, saying:

- (a) where they are (*à la plage*);
- (b) what they are doing (*jouer au volley*);
- (c) what the weather is like (*il fait du vent*).

For (a), candidates were expected to write *Je suis à la plage* and credit was also given to those who said they were *à la côte* or *au bord de la mer*. For (b), many candidates were able to score, using part of *jouer* or *faire* with an attempt at volley. For (c), several alternatives were accepted (*il fait mauvais*, *il fait de l'orage*, *il ne fait pas beau*) and many candidates achieved the mark. Credit was also given where candidates combined tasks (for example, *il fait du vent à la plage* was awarded a communication mark for task (c) plus one for task (a) and a language mark for the correct verb). Minor spelling errors were tolerated throughout.

In order to score the 2 marks available for appropriateness of language, candidates had to use two correct verbs in appropriate tenses.

The vast majority of candidates scored 4 or 5 here.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

For this exercise, candidates are asked to read a longer text, an e-mail from Julie to her friend Louise, about holiday work in the hotel belonging to Julie's parents. The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. All that is required is to be able to locate the information needed, which can sometimes be rendered in just one or two words, rather than complete sentences. For example **Question 21** could be answered simply with *...bon (salaire)...* and **Question 24** with *...baigner...* and *...plongée / plonger*. Most candidates scored very well on this exercise. For **Question 17**, some did not make it clear that the hotel belonged to Julie's parents, and some did not mention *...parler français...* for **Question 22** and *...touristes étrangers...* for **Question 23**.

Exercise 2 Question 25

For this longer piece of writing, candidates were given the topic of clothes. The three tasks given were:

- (a) a description of the clothes they wear to school;
- (b) whether clothes are important to them / their friends, together with reasons why or why not;
- (c) what clothes they would wear for a friend's birthday the following weekend.

10 marks are available for the communication of relevant points, spread flexibly across the tasks. There were many maximum scores for communication. In response to task (a) some candidates said just that they wore a school uniform, without providing a description of it, and therefore limited the marks they could score for this particular task. Others listed every item, showing a generally good knowledge of clothing vocabulary, though the spelling of *chaussures* almost invariably proved problematic.

For accuracy, 5 marks are available, using a banded mark scheme. Many candidates also scored the maximum here. They used straightforward vocabulary and structures and were able to use a range of verbs with some success, writing reasonably accurately and coherently.

Section 3

In this section, candidates are asked to read two longer texts and answer questions appropriately. In **Section 2** they are rewarded for being able to locate the required answer in the text, but here, in **Section 3**, they are asked to be more selective in their choice of answer in order to score marks, excluding irrelevant details and possibly manipulating language from the text to show that they have really understood what is required. Extra details copied from the text, where candidates are trying to make sure they have covered every possibility, sometimes make an answer ambiguous and will often prevent it from scoring.

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

The text here concerns the *Lycées d'excellence* set up to benefit certain young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The rubric gives the information that 2 of the statements are true, and 4 are false, and candidates can score 6 of the 10 marks by correctly ticking the true/false boxes. The other 4 marks are scored by correcting the 4 false statements.

Most candidates scored quite well identifying the true/false statements, though **Question 26** was often seen as true and **Question 27** as false. Candidates often located the area of text needed to correct **Question 29** but just lifted *...loin des banlieues où ces jeunes ont grandi ...* without the addition of 'in the country', and some did not manage a correct finite verb, lifting *...nous avons mis ...* from the text. The corrections to **Questions 28** and **30** were the most successful.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-39

For this last exercise, candidates were given a text about Alaric and his project of crossing the Atlantic in a self-built sailing boat. The questions on the text are in French, to be answered in French. Candidates need to make sure that they read each question with care, and that their answer is focused on what the question actually asks.

Most candidates seem to have understood the text, and those who kept their answers short and to the point tended to score quite well.

Some found it difficult to manipulate the language appropriately and, for example, in **Question 34** could not explain that the boat was lost, and Alaric needed to escape as soon as possible, or he, too, would be lost! Many scored 1 of the 2 marks for this question. For **Question 36**, they needed to make it clear that Alaric could not steer his *petit bateau de sauvetage*, and for **Question 37**, to explain that Alaric lost all hope when the cruise ship sailed away out of sight without seeing or hearing him. The last two questions were generally very well done.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/03
Speaking

Key messages

- Candidates had usually been well prepared for the Role play tasks. Good Examiners did not deviate from the script/set tasks and were willing to prompt candidates when necessary.
- In most Centres, timings were appropriate. In some Centres, the conversation sections were too short or too long and this affected candidates' marks.
- Although many Examiners were aware of the need to elicit past and future tenses in both conversation sections, there were a number of Centres where this was not the case. All Centres must ensure that questions to test different tenses are included in both conversation sections. The omission of different tenses will limit a candidate's language mark.
- Topic coverage was satisfactory in most Centres. A few Centres needed to cover a wider range of topics across their candidature and/or a wider variety of questions each time a topic was covered.
- The best work was heard in Centres where the style of examining allowed spontaneous and natural conversations to develop.
- **Recorded samples for this Speaking test must not be submitted on memory stick.**

General comments

This paper was common to all candidates. The standard of work heard was very similar to that heard in 2013 and was, on the whole, good. Most Examiners were familiar with the format of the test and conducted the examination efficiently. On the whole, they were sympathetic to their candidates and helped them by making them work for the marks available and by giving them the opportunity to show what they knew and could do. Candidates were generally aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well.

In the role plays, Examiners usually kept to the given cues, prompting where necessary and encouraging candidates to work for the marks. Examiners who did veer away from the script and changed the tasks, or who did not prepare fully, made this section of the test harder for the candidates. Candidates were usually aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well.

Centres are reminded that while Examiners should be granted access to the confidential test materials (Teachers' notes booklet/Role play cards) in the four working days before the first Speaking test is conducted, so that they can prepare the Role plays, **it is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that the contents of these materials remain confidential and are not shared with candidates.** The Teachers' notes booklet and Role play cards must be returned to the Centre's secure storage facility whenever preparation is not taking place and after each session of examining. Once started, the Speaking tests should be completed as soon as possible within the Centre – there should not be a long interval between different groups taking the Speaking test within a Centre. Once the last Speaking test has been conducted, the Teachers' notes booklet and Role play cards must be returned to the Centre's secure storage until the date specified in the Teachers' notes booklet. Centres are also reminded that candidates must not be permitted to write during their preparation time or in the examination and must therefore not be allowed to bring any pens/pencils etc with them into the preparation area. Candidates must not bring mobile phones into the preparation/examination area and Examiners' phones must remain switched off.

After the Centre's tests have been conducted, **the sample for external moderation must be checked and then sent to Cambridge as soon as possible.** The work from some Centres arrived very late this year and this delays the moderation process.

Examiners need to understand the requirements of the mark scheme in order that they ask the right sort of questions which will stretch candidates and give them the opportunity to fulfil the descriptors in the higher mark bands. For example, Examiners who included more open-ended 'unexpected' questions and went beyond straightforward 'closed' questions gave candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or

above on scale (a), Comprehension/responsiveness. 'Safe' straightforward questions which do not give candidates the opportunity to develop their answers will not enable them to score marks in the highest bands. It is also essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in **both** conversation sections as candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on scale (b), Linguistic content. Centres are reminded that although in 2015 the descriptors in the Speaking mark scheme will change, candidates will still be required to show they can use past and future tenses to score above 6 for language.

Centres are reminded that the full requirements of the Speaking test for 2015 can be found on the Cambridge website. All Centres are strongly advised to read through these well in advance of the test so that they have plenty of time to clarify any uncertainties. A French language version of these requirements also exists and is available on the Cambridge website.

- **Clerical checks**

In most Centres, the clerical work had been completed efficiently and Centres are thanked for this. It is essential that all clerical work is checked carefully so as to ensure that candidates receive the correct mark. In some Centres, large clerical errors were found. On the working marking sheet, the addition of the individual marks for each candidate should be checked to ensure that the total mark is correct. Then, for each candidate, the transfer of the marks from the working mark sheet to the MS1 mark sheet (or the electronic marks file) must also be checked.

- **Sample size**

Centres generally understood the requirements for sample size and nearly all Centres submitted a correct and representative sample. Centres are reminded that for an entry of 17 or more candidates, a sample of 16 candidates should be sent. Centres with more than one Examiner had clearly gone to some trouble to ensure that a good range of marks and Examiners were represented on the sample. New Centres are reminded to check the instructions on sample size carefully and to ask for advice from Cambridge if they are unsure how to proceed. Several Centres helpfully included a list of their sample candidates together with a separate mark sheet which showed the marks awarded for the sample candidates.

- **Recording quality**

A high proportion of the recordings received were of a very good quality and Centres are thanked for this. Most Centres submitted digital recordings which were clear and easy to access. Centres submitting recorded samples on cassettes are asked to check sound levels prior to recording as recordings on cassette were often muffled. Centres are reminded that whatever the method chosen for recording, if an external microphone is used, this should be positioned to favour the candidate.

In some cases, it was difficult or impossible to access the recorded sample provided by the Centre:

- Several Centres sent blank CDs or CDs of recordings that were barely audible: Centres must check the CD to ensure that their recorded sample is clearly audible before despatching it to Cambridge. This check should be carried out on a different machine to the one on which the recordings were made. If there is a problem, the Centre should get in touch with Cambridge immediately. Centres are reminded of the need to check all recording equipment prior to the live exams.
- Some recordings had not been saved as .mp3 files and could not be accessed by the moderator: **it is essential that files are saved as .mp3**. If new Centres are considering ways to record, it is worth obtaining a digital voice recorder (IC recorder). These are easy to use and the sound quality is excellent. Because the device is small, it helps make the experience less intimidating for candidates.
- **Some Centres sent their recordings on a USB/memory stick. Only CDs/cassettes are accepted by Cambridge.**
- Some CDs were damaged when they arrived at Cambridge: CDs/cassettes must be carefully wrapped in some form of protective packaging before they are placed in the envelope with the moderation paperwork. The appropriate label (which includes the Centre name and a bar-code) should then be placed on the envelope. The envelope containing the recordings and paperwork should then be packaged in another parcel/envelope and one of the return labels with the Cambridge address should be attached before it is returned to Cambridge.
- In some cases, poor labelling made it difficult for the moderator to establish which recordings had been sent as part of the sample and/or to find the particular recordings required. Please note:

- The cassette/CD must always be accompanied by a list of the featured recordings (candidate name and number). For cassettes these must be presented in order of play.
- **On CDs, it is essential that each recording be saved as a separate file.** The recording for each candidate must be saved individually and named as follows, Centre number_candidate number_syllabus number_component number.
- Each CD/cassette must include a recorded introduction by the Examiner, listing the cassette/CD number, Centre number, examination number, examination name, name of Examiner and date. (For CDs, this introduction can be saved as a separate file (named 'recorded introduction'.))
- Whether Centres are submitting samples on cassette or CD, the Examiner must introduce each candidate on the recorded sample by name and number, and also state the Role play card number. This announcement must not be made by the candidate.

In addition to the above, Centres are reminded to avoid sticking labels on CDs and to only write on the surface of the CD with a CD-friendly pen.

- **Paperwork for external moderation**

Several Centres did not enclose the Working Mark Sheet with the sample for external moderation. Several Centres did not enclose the MS1 form (or a print-out of total marks from CIE Direct). These documents must be enclosed as per the instructions.

- **Internal moderation in Centres**

All Centres wishing to use more than one Examiner to conduct the Speaking tests for their candidates are reminded of the need to apply to Cambridge for permission well before the start of **each** Speaking test period. Permission is normally granted, on the understanding that internal standardisation/moderation takes place at the Centre before a sample is chosen for external moderation by Cambridge. In order to assist Centres that have been given permission to use more than one Examiner, Cambridge has produced guidelines for internal standardisation/moderation.

The standard of internal moderation in those Centres where more than one Examiner was used was usually high. The Coordinating Examiner in such Centres had approached the process of internal standardisation/moderation conscientiously and care had been taken to ensure the consistent application of the mark scheme across the different examining groups. Documentation of the procedures followed in Centres was usually very clear.

Where more than one Examiner is used, Cambridge needs to be able to check that all Examiners in the Centre have adopted a uniform approach to the conduct of the test and have applied the mark scheme consistently so it is important that examples of the work of each Examiner are included in the sample for external moderation.

Please note, if internal moderation procedures find only minor differences between the marking of an Examiner and the agreed Centre standard, the marks of candidates in that particular Examiner's group **should not be changed** in the Centre, but should be submitted as they are. In other words, if no adjustment to an Examiner's marks as a whole is necessary, the marks of the specific candidates sampled must not be changed in isolation. However, if after checking the sample for a particular Examiner the decision is taken to adjust that Examiner's marks, **that adjustment must then be applied to the marks of all the candidates who were examined by that Examiner**, and not just to the work of those candidates who were part of the internal check. Likewise, if an Examiner is judged to be out of line over part of the mark range, the marks of all the other candidates s/he examined with a mark in that range should be adjusted. Where a particular Examiner is judged to be out of line, it is good practice to select some more of that Examiner's candidates for a further check.

- **Duration of tests / missing elements**

Most Centres adhered to the timings stipulated in the syllabus and the Teachers' notes booklet. The prescribed timing of the topic presentation/conversation is 5 minutes. Up to two of these five minutes are for the candidate to present his/her chosen topic and the remainder of the 5 minutes will be taken up by a natural and unprepared conversation on this topic. The general conversation section must last 5 minutes. **If the conversation sections are short this will disadvantage candidates and will affect the mark given.** There were cases where one or both of the conversation sections were missing. Candidates cannot be awarded marks for missing sections.

- **Transition from the topic conversation to the general conversation**

Examiners should announce the transition from the topic conversation to the general conversation.

- **Application of the mark scheme**

Examiners in Centres were, on the whole, consistent and fair in applying the mark scheme. In such cases, no adjustments were made to marks. In some cases, large adjustments were required to the marks awarded in Centres, often because sections of the test were very short or had been omitted. Some Centres had adjustments made just to part of the mark range.

In the Role plays, some Examiners did not realise that a short response (in some cases, just one word), if appropriate, can earn a mark of 3. If there are two parts to a task, then Examiners are free to split the task, but should only one part of a task be completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 1. If a candidate chooses to use a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2, and not 3, is appropriate. Examiners are reminded that poor pronunciation can be queried if it prevents clear communication of a task. Apart from the task in Role play A which requires the candidate to listen to two options and then choose one, candidates cannot be awarded marks for merely repeating an 'answer' supplied by the Examiner.

Where marking in the conversation sections was generous, this was usually because marks in the higher bands had been awarded when there was no evidence that candidates could respond **in a spontaneous way to unexpected questions or that they could communicate consistently and accurately in past and future tenses**. High marks are not appropriate when the candidate does not do more than provide a series of short responses to straightforward questions. It is for this reason that Examiners must pitch the level of questioning at a different level for candidates of different abilities. Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in Centres.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

This year, Examiners in Centres generally prompted candidates when necessary but there are still cases where Examiners do not prompt candidates to complete tasks they have missed. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. As in previous series, two-part tasks were split into (i) and (ii) on the candidate Role play cards. This is intended to help candidates to remember to attempt both parts.

Overlong and/or complicated answers are not to be encouraged as marks are only awarded for the set tasks. If candidates add material which is extra to the set task, it may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct utterance. Candidates should be reminded that it is important to listen to the Examiner as on all the A Role plays there is a task which requires them to listen and choose from the two options offered by the Examiner. Likewise, there is always a task which requires a response to an unexpected question on the B Role plays. Examiners are reminded not to change the cues for these tasks in the scripts.

A Role plays

The A Role plays were found to be of equal difficulty. They posed similar challenges to the 2013 situations and were a fair test at this level. They are designed to be easier than the B Role plays and are set using vocabulary from Topic Areas A, B and C of the Defined Content. All of the A role play situations featured a task which required a question to be asked and one task which required candidates to choose an option from two provided by the Examiner. (These options should not be changed by the Examiner and should be read as on the script.) Candidates generally found the tasks to be accessible and even the weakest candidates were able to score at least 1 mark on each task. Centres had usually trained candidates well to include a greeting and thanks where required. Centres are reminded that often a short response (perhaps one word) will be appropriate and in such cases a mark of 3 can be awarded. Examiners should query pronunciation if the meaning is not clear due to mispronunciation. Examiners should introduce the A role play and start the conversation off. English should not be used to introduce any part of the test.

At the post office

On the first task, many mispronounced *paquet* which prevented a mark of 3 from being awarded. On the second task, any destination was accepted. Most were able to give a good response concerning what was in the packet – candidates had clearly made good use of their preparation time. The fourth task required candidates to listen and make a choice. This was again well done. The last task presented few problems to candidates familiar with the format of the paper.

Buying vegetables

Tomates was often mispronounced on the first task. For the second task, most were able to choose between the two options presented. The third task proved harder for some who, instead of choosing another vegetable, selected a fruit. There were few problems encountered in naming the quantity desired. The last task was well done.

Buying an item of clothing

Candidates generally approached this role play well. On the first task, some chose to buy a specific item rather than rephrase the rubric. For task two, nearly all could state the amount they wanted to pay, though some used local currency denominations rather than euros. Many were successful on the third task which required them to listen to the two options and choose one of them. They were also successful in choosing a colour for task four. The last task was also usually well done with many able to ask a simple appropriate question. Those who left out the thanks limited their mark to 1.

B Role plays

The B Role plays were deliberately more demanding in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, give an opinion, apologise or express displeasure. The level of challenge was balanced across the Role plays. As last year, they differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score marks on most tasks. It is important that Examiners know their own role and stick to the set tasks. Candidates should be reminded that there will always be one task in which they have to listen to the Examiner and reply to an unprepared question. They should be advised to consider likely questions in the 15 minutes preparation time, immediately prior to the Speaking test, and to listen carefully in the examination room.

Phoning a language school

Most approached the first task well and were able to say they were phoning the language school to ask about taking lessons there. For the second task, a response such as *Depuis 3 ans... Au collège* was sufficient to score 3 marks. Candidates who gave a fuller response and included incorrect verbs limited the maximum mark they could gain to 2. For task three, most were well able to say when they wanted to go to France. For task four, some did not state that they had already spent a holiday in France before they went on to give an opinion about this experience. Some positive experiences did not seem very enthusiastic: it is well worth spending time on general notions such as pleasure, displeasure, enthusiasm, apology as these occur very frequently. For the final task, only the better candidates could ask about the possibility of staying in the language school.

At a first aid post

Some candidates complicated things by trying to give far too much detail in the first task. This task is always intended to start off the role play with a simple rephrasing of the rubric/introduction. Candidates should not try to include too much extra detail here. For task two, most were able to say where they had a pain but many made grammatical errors here which prevented a mark of 3 from being scored. The third task required the candidate to say both when and how the accident happened. Weaker candidates often made incorrect conjugations of verbs in the perfect tense. Task four was well done. Although candidates approached the last task confidently, only the more able were able to ask an accurate question.

Discussing a trip to France

Candidates usually coped well with the opening task. A few weaker candidates thought they were inviting Pascal(e) to stay with them rather than the other way round. For task two, candidates found it difficult to *Faites/Présentez vos excuses*. This is a standard rubric used to elicit an apology and it is important to ensure candidates know how to respond to it in the examination. Nearly all candidates were able to state what they liked and hated eating on the fourth task and scored good marks. On the last task, candidates could either ask about a specific place to visit or could approach the task more generally.

Topic presentation and conversation

Candidates had usually prepared well for this part of the test and were enthusiastic about their chosen topic. The best presentations were delivered at a reasonable speed, were clear to understand and reflected the interests and/or personality of the candidate. Often, candidates used a variety of tenses and structures. It is worth impressing upon candidates that material heard in the opening presentation does contribute to their marks for both content and language for this section of the test.

A wide range of topics was again heard by Moderators. *Mes vacances, mes projets d'avenir, mon école, le sport, mes ambitions, mes loisirs* continue to be popular choices and many candidates did themselves justice on these topics. There were also interesting topics on traditions and festivals. Given the very international nature of this candidature, there continue to be fascinating accounts about life in other countries. As in 2013, many candidates chose to speak about *mon pays*. This is an appropriate topic which was often presented in a very interesting way, but Examiners are reminded of the need to avoid questions which test precise geographical or statistical knowledge. It is better instead to ask candidates to say what they find most interesting/like/dislike etc. about their country and why. Centres generally understood the need to avoid 'Myself' as a topic in this section of the test. New Centres should note that this is not a suitable topic for this section of the exam as it is too general and leaves little material to explore in the final section of the examination. It should also be noted that it is not in the spirit of the syllabus for all candidates in a Centre to prepare the same topic.

Centres must keep to the timings stated. Some candidates were allowed to present their material for much longer than the stipulated maximum of two minutes. A few did not present enough material and their presentation did not last for the minimum one minute. Candidates should also be advised not to race through their prepared material – sometimes it was difficult to follow a candidate's presentation because of the fast pace at which it was delivered. Once the candidate has delivered his/her one to two minute presentation, the Examiner must spend the remainder of the five minutes allocated to this section discussing the topic of the presentation with the candidate. It is essential that this Topic conversation is not omitted and that it lasts the correct amount of time. If there is no Topic conversation, or if only one or two questions are asked, the candidate's marks for this section of the test will be affected.

In the Topic conversation section, Examiners need to focus their questions on the topic area chosen by the candidate and they need to ask questions to elicit information that has not already been heard. Although it is expected that teachers will have prepared candidates for the Topic conversation, if candidates are to score highly, this must not consist of a series of pre-learnt questions and answers, with both Examiner and candidate knowing what is coming and in which order. Questions should instead arise spontaneously as the conversation develops. It is important that Examiners remember to include 'unexpected' questions in this section of the test, in order to allow more able candidates to show that they are capable of 'thinking on their feet' and manipulating their prepared material, in terms of ideas, vocabulary and structures, according to the needs of the Examiner. The more natural the style of questioning used in this section, the more interesting it becomes for both the candidate and the Examiner. The best performances were ones in which the questions and answers developed into a natural conversation.

Although, Examiners were often aware of the need to elicit both past and future tenses, in a few Centres questions to test different tenses were not asked in the Topic conversation. In such cases, the mark for language is limited to 6 as indicated in the mark scheme.

At the end of the Topic conversation the Examiner should introduce the final General conversation section of the test. This is helpful to both the candidate and the Moderator.

General conversation

A wide range of performance was heard by Moderators. Good numbers showed that they could communicate well across a range of topics. In many instances, candidates not only communicated their message clearly but were also well able to do so in accurate language showing a good control of structure and lexis and accurate uses of tenses. Candidates who could go beyond straightforward responses in a natural way and who could develop their answers to include opinions and justifications scored high marks for communication.

Many Centres had understood the need to cover only **two or three** topics from the syllabus with each candidate in the general conversation section and to cover these topics in some depth. However, there were still Centres in which far too many topics were covered, each very superficially, and in the worst cases where

each question was on a different topic area. It is understood that with candidates who have less French at their disposal, it may be necessary to cover more topics in less depth in order to keep the conversation going, but where many topics are covered in quick succession by the Examiner, it is confusing for the candidate

A few Centres made use of the same questions in the same order on each conversation topic from candidate to candidate: **this approach is not acceptable**. While it is common practice to make use of banks of questions in the classroom, reliance on such banks in the live Speaking test will result in stilted conversations which do not flow naturally and where the candidates seem to be delivering a series of pre-learned mini presentations. Once in the examination room, it is far better if the Examiner listens to what the candidate is saying and responds as spontaneously as possible. The descriptors in the Mark scheme state clearly that there should be the opportunity for candidates to respond to both straightforward **and** unexpected questions in both conversation sections.

In some Centres, Examiners did not ask questions to elicit responses in a variety of tenses. The Examiner should routinely include questions in different tenses on each of the two/three topics examined in the general conversation. Such questions should not be left until the final topic is covered. Centres are reminded that if candidates only produce statements in the present tense, and do not show evidence of being able to work in past and future tenses, the language mark will be limited to a maximum of 6.

It was clear from the work heard in Centres that oral work is central to foreign language learning activities in many IGCSE classrooms. In addition, many candidates were enthusiastic about the relevance and importance of learning a foreign language.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/41
Continuous Writing

Key messages

The work of more successful candidates was characterised by the following features.

- The demands of the rubric were observed.
- The length of each answer was between 130 and 140 words, as directed.
- The answers were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates balanced ambition with the need for linguistic accuracy.
- Presentation was good.

General comments

As readers of this report will be aware, from 2015 onwards this component will have a different format. However, there will still be a free composition element similar to the kind of questions set in this year's papers, and the advice contained in this report will be largely relevant.

The quality of performance by large numbers of candidates remains high. There was outstanding work from the best of the entry and the majority made a commendable attempt to meet the challenges of continuous writing in French. A number did not make the most of their opportunity and it is to those candidates in particular that the following advice is directed.

Marks are awarded for conveying the information required by each task in the rubric. The omission of required tasks means that candidates deny themselves access to the maximum marks available. It is important to observe the tense or time frame contained in each task and to employ a similar tense in the response. In **Question 1**, candidates were directed to use three tenses or time frames, the present, the past and the future. In **Question 2** the narrative must be related in past tenses, as indicated in the rubric. Tasks involved relating incidents which occurred and the narrator's reactions or impressions.

Successful candidates planned answers to conform to the recommended length. Short answers ran the risk of not accessing the full number of marks awarded for the use of language. Long answers did not always include all the required communication elements within the word count.

The better candidates composed each sentence with care, paying special attention to verbs, the tenses used and regular and irregular verb formations. They made good use of subordinate clauses and the contrast of tenses. They were able to handle object pronouns, negatives and reported speech. They showed knowledge of a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. They avoided the constant repetition of certain words and phrases. Those of more modest capacity are urged to stay within their limitations, and not to over complicate things. Free composition offers the opportunity for candidates to show the Examiner what they can do and what they know. 'If you don't know it, say something else' should be the watch word.

It was noticeable that many candidates had a wide vocabulary, but lacked the precision of spelling and genders necessary to score well for linguistic accuracy.

Presentation is very important. Writing must be clear and legible, and crossing out and the alteration of letters kept to a minimum. Some handwriting this year was minuscule to the point of being unintelligible. On some scripts many letters were ambiguous.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a) You have won tickets for a sporting event and a weekend in a hotel.

Candidates were required to write a letter to a friend to say they had won this marvellous prize and to invite their friend to join them.

Candidates tackled the topic with some enthusiasm and the question was the more popular option. The informal letter had been well prepared and the etiquette was usually handled briefly and efficiently. Most addressed the friend appropriately as *tu*, but the more formal *vous* was also accepted, provided that its use was consistent throughout the letter. The question was accessible and gave candidates the chance to show their knowledge of everyday vocabulary.

Most began the letter by saying they had won the prize, *J'ai gagné deux billets pour un match de football etc. et un week-end dans un hôtel*. They then invited the friend. Better candidates managed object pronouns effectively, in saying *Je t'invite à m'accompagner* or *Je voudrais t'inviter à m'accompagner*. Less able candidates were often unable to avoid grammatical errors in their attempt to express this. The more resourceful side-stepped potential difficulties by simplifying the task, saying instead: *Veux-tu... or Peux-tu... venir avec moi?* Some mentioned at this point the kind of event which was on offer. All kinds of sports were mentioned, including skiing, hockey, rugby, cricket, marathons, swimming and basketball. The favourites by far were football and tennis. Some tried to say they would attend a tournament, but few knew *tournoi*. Candidates are urged to keep to vocabulary they do know when writing free composition. Some put *attendre* for the verb *assister* when saying they would attend the event.

The next task was to say what they had done to win the prize. Some had won a lottery or a tombola. Some had written the 'best letter' or 'the best article' for a magazine. Some sent in the best picture or photograph. Some responded to an on-line game or questionnaire. Others won sporting events themselves or were members of a successful team. Some won for their cooking, singing or dancing. Some responded to a radio quiz. Many tried to say they had won a competition, but did not know the word *concours*. Full credit was given for saying that father or a generous relative had given them the tickets and offered to pay for the hotel as a reward for working hard at school. The communication mark for this task was often lost through an inability to use the perfect tense in saying *J'ai gagné*.

Next they were required to give details of the sporting event. Some said the match was between celebrated teams (*Brésil contre Argentine*) or between certain sports stars (*Federer contre Nadal*). Either a present tense or a future was appropriate. Candidates gave the time and date of the event. They stated the location of the venue, but many did not know *stade*. Otherwise, this was a straightforward task, and most were able to secure the communication mark.

'Why you like the sport' was the next task. Some candidates said they liked football, hockey or basketball because they were team sports. They were members of a team or a sports club themselves and they enjoyed the shared experience. Some loved the spectacle of watching professional sportsmen and women. Alternatively the communication mark was secured for a simple statement such as *J'aime le tennis parce que c'est passionnant/ amusant/ rapide/ compétitif*. Also their sport was a healthy activity: *C'est bon pour la forme/la santé*.

The final task was to say what they would do during the rest of the weekend. Responses were prefaced by *Je voudrais...* or *On pourrait...* followed by an infinitive as in *...visiter le centre commercial*. Some phrased their response as a question, as in *Veux-tu...* Activities varied widely. Some would spend the time in the hotel, either swimming in the pool or playing computer games. Some would go shopping or to see the sights. Some would go to a *parc d'attractions* or a cinema. Candidates found plenty to say in this section. Some had already used 140 words before they addressed the final task, and could not access the communication mark.

Letters ended with the usual signing off phrases, which were well known.

Question 1(b) Imagine you are famous

Although fewer candidates chose this option, some creditable answers were received.

Firstly, candidates had to describe their life as a celebrity. Readers of celebrity magazines were well qualified for this task. They worked terribly hard of course. Sports stars had to train daily and perform well

on match day. Singers and dancers had to practise hard and keep fit for their demanding schedule. Actors prepared their roles and travelled widely for their careers. They met the fans and signed autographs. They answered fan mail and were active on the social media. They met other celebrities and were invited to major events. On the other hand, some had a very easy life as a result of being famous and rich. They employed servants. They had large houses, expensive cars and beautiful clothes. The present tense was usual, which simplified matters for the writer. A minority wrote about how life would be if they were famous, and replied in conditional tenses.

The next task was to say what they did to become famous. Many were 'spotted' when they performed in concerts or plays when quite young. Sport stars excelled in their games at school. Some won competitions. Full credit was given for responses such as *Je suis acteur* or *J'ai joué pour Real Madrid*.

The advantages and disadvantages of celebrity produced some interesting responses. Advantages included: being admired by the public, having unlimited wealth and possessions, travelling the world and frequenting film stars and other heroes. The major disadvantage was a lack of privacy. They could not live a normal life without being chased by newspaper reporters and unwelcome fans. Scandalous stories were fabricated about their personal lives. Also, the life was not all glitter. They found the demands on themselves to be excessive and they were often exhausted and stressed. Past tenses and the present were appropriate.

Finally candidates were asked if they wished to continue to be famous and why? A communication mark was obtainable for *Je veux...* or *Je ne veux pas... continuer à être célèbre* and a further mark for a reason. Answers included: 'Yes, because I love all the attention. I have an easy life. I am free to do as I please'. Others said: 'No, because I wish to be a normal person and have a home and a family'. These concepts were not always easy to express, but candidates usually made a creditable attempt.

As in **Question 1(a)**, the subject matter was mostly related to familiar themes and everyday vocabulary could be used to fulfil the tasks.

Question 2 Your tent disappears in a storm

As is often the case, the narrative proved to be more difficult than the more structured **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)**. Candidates had to cope with using past tenses throughout and the added challenge of providing their own 'story'. Better candidates rose to the occasion but a number did not do themselves justice. The key to success in free composition is to concentrate on showing one's strengths and to avoid unnecessary complexities which might expose weaknesses. 'Write what you know to be correct French and do not guess'. This is advice the average candidate should endeavour to follow. In the case of the narrative, a succession of simple incidents related using common, well known verbs in perfect tenses would score well for language and ensure a number of communication marks.

This episode concerned a camping holiday in the course of which bad weather and violent winds occur. The camper returns to the campsite to discover that his/her tent has disappeared. The task was to say what happens next and how the narrator resolved the problem.

Most candidates correctly began their anecdote at the moment the camper saw that the tent had disappeared. No credit was given for communication of what had already happened. Panic, fear and shock were the first reactions and the first communication mark was gained for an impression. This was related as *J'étais choqué(e)*, *J'avais peur* or *J'ai paniqué*. The narrator then said how s/he explored the campsite and the surroundings in search of the tent. *Chercher la tente* was not always known. S/he asked other campers if they had seen the tent. Better candidates employed the pluperfect tense. Often they replied saying they had not seen the tent, which required a negative expression with a compound tense (*Je n'ai pas vu...*), which was not always correctly rendered.

At this point, the stories proceeded in a variety of ways. Some gave up and went home. Others persisted and recovered the tent suspended from a nearby tree. Others sensibly sought the help of the site staff. Even if the tent was found, the problems had not always ended as it was perhaps damaged or all the belongings which had been in the tent were lost. These were commonly referred to as *mes choses* rather than the correct *mes affaires*. Missing items included money, passports, keys, food and other valuables. The candidate had not been separated from his/her mobile phone and s/he was able to call parents for advice. Parents often came to the rescue in their car, or provided another tent for the rest of the holiday. In other cases, people in neighbouring tents or friends offered to share their tent and offered food and drink. Those who did not lose their money were sometimes able to buy another tent. It was probably wise to keep events as realistic as possible. Some related dramas about being lost in the woods, being pursued by wild

animals and spending the night, lost, cold and alone. These stories tended to become over complicated and frequently presented unnecessary linguistic difficulties.

Some narrators summed up by saying they were sad and disappointed and would never go camping again. Others found the tent, the sun came out, the wind ceased and the rest of the holiday went splendidly. There were opportunities to give plenty of *réactions* to ensure communication marks and many candidates scored the maximum of five marks for communicating what happened and how the problems were resolved.

As stated above, it is important that answers to the narrative question are expressed in past tenses and an ability to use the perfect tense in particular is a necessity to obtain a high overall mark. Better candidates were able to use the imperfect tense effectively too and the pluperfect, especially in reported speech. Low marks were often the result of multiple inaccurate attempts at past tenses. Some weaker candidates used a mixture of tenses while others confined their answers to the present tense. Some omitted to give any reactions at all. This was a pity as communication marks for reactions could be achieved simply by the use of *J'étais...* or *C'était...* with an appropriate adjective

Some outstanding work was presented by the best candidates in answer to **Question 2** and they are to be commended for their linguistic skills and the range and precision of their written French. Many, however, were prone to make mistakes with basic items or to overstretch themselves in attempting complexities which were beyond their compass. Many errors might have been eliminated by a more painstaking approach to composing the piece, and a more thorough re-reading of the work at the end, in search of careless slips. Common errors included faulty spellings and genders of everyday nouns, and faulty agreement of adjectives and past participles of reflexive and *être* verbs. Inconsistency of the gender of recurring nouns was common and the narrator's gender tended to vary according to the agreements made. *Mes amies* became *ils*, often in the same sentence. The basic *avoir* and *être* were confused. The spelling of *malheureusement* was routinely wrong. Confusion of the following was widespread: *regarder* was used for *voir*, *écouter* for *entendre*, *rester* for *se reposer*, *retourner* for *rentrer*, *plusieurs* for *beaucoup de*, *chercher* for *trouver* and *joli* for *heureux*.

Having said all that, all but a few candidates did their very best to present an interesting anecdote and they are to be commended for the enthusiasm they showed in embracing the task.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/42
Continuous Writing

Key messages

The work of more successful candidates was characterised by the following features.

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- The answers were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates balanced ambition with the need for linguistic accuracy.
- Presentation was good.

General comments

As readers of this report will be aware, from 2015 onwards this component will have a different format. However, there will still be a free composition element similar to the kind of questions set in this year's papers, and the advice contained in this report will be largely relevant.

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The better candidates composed each sentence with care, paying special attention to verbs, the tenses used and regular and irregular verb formations. They made good use of subordinate clauses and the contrast of tenses. They were able to handle object pronouns, negatives and reported speech. They showed knowledge of a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. They avoided the constant repetition of certain words and phrases. Those of more modest capacity are urged to stay within their limitations, and not to over complicate things. Free composition offers the opportunity for candidates to show the Examiner what they can do and what they know. 'If you don't know it, say something else' should be the watch word.

It was noticeable that many candidates had a wide vocabulary, but lacked the precision of spelling and genders necessary to score well for linguistic accuracy.

Presentation is very important. Writing must be clear and legible, and crossing out and the alteration of letters kept to a minimum. Some handwriting this year was minuscule to the point of being unintelligible. On some scripts many letters were ambiguous.

Question 1(a) Buying a bike

This question inspired some interesting responses, as young people addressed a topic which was probably within their personal experience, namely buying a bicycle or a motorbike. The majority dealt efficiently with the informal letter etiquette and stated their intention or wish to buy either a bicycle or a motorbike. *Je veux acheter...* was the usual response. Most opted for the bicycle. Some misread the question and assumed that they had already bought it. The past tense did not score the communication mark.

Next they were required to state a reason for the purchase. Some said it would be more convenient and less expensive than taking the bus to school or to town and it would be quicker and less tiring than walking. Some would appreciate the independence that a bike would bring. There would be no need to rely so much on parents. Some simply said they liked cycling or *VTT*. Others compared the bicycle to the motorbike and explained their preference. The bicycle was cheaper, the motorcycle was faster. Others said their old bike was lost or damaged or too small. This task was handled well by most candidates who found plenty to say. Either the present or the future tense was appropriate.

The next task was to say how they had earned the money to buy the bike. Many said they took part time employment (*J'ai pris un job le week-end*). They worked as a waiter/waitress in a café or a restaurant. Some worked at a garage or a shop. Some helped on farms. Others earned money from parents for working at home doing household tasks such as cooking and cleaning (*tâches ménagères*). A minority thought that *vous avez gagné* referred to winning the money and said they won the lottery. Full credit was given in such cases. The tense of the question was past (*comment vous avez gagné de l'argent*) and the natural response was to use a perfect tense. However, it was accepted that the writer was possibly still engaged in this 'work' and therefore the present tense was rewarded too. Similarly, the next task (*Avez-vous aimé gagner cet argent?*) could conceivably be fulfilled with either a past or a present tense.

Reasons for liking/disliking earning the money were varied. Most did like it. It was fun or interesting and gave one the chance to meet other people. It was good experience for future employment. Some did not like working, and of these a number were unable to handle the negative with a perfect tense (*Je n'ai pas aimé...*). Others went so far as to say they hated the work (*J'ai détesté...*). It was boring (many could not spell *ennuyeux*). It was tiring or difficult. It involved getting up early.

The last task asked what outings they would like to do on the new bike. Comprehension of the task was usually good but some had already used 140 words and they did not gain the communication mark. The usual response began *Je voudrais...* which mirrored the tense of the question, but Examiners also accepted *Je veux...*, and *J'espère...* with appropriate infinitives such as *...faire des promenades* or *...aller* with a place. The simple future was also credited. They would ride the bike to the town centre, to the park, to the cinema or to the country. They would visit friends and relatives. Some would take a cycling holiday with friends. Several even felt inspired to enter the Tour de France.

Most were able to close their letter to their friend with an appropriate 'signing off' phrase.

In response to **1(a)**, successful candidates were able to handle a variety of different time frames, but as usual verbs proved to be the biggest challenge for those of more modest ability. Most candidates had sufficient vocabulary to fulfil the tasks as these were focused on everyday experiences.

Question 1(b) Moving house

This was the more popular option. Like **Question 1(a)** it was a topic within the direct experience of many candidates. Even those who had perhaps never moved house had little difficulty in finding things to say, as the tasks were relevant to everyday life.

As in **Question 1(a)**, the informal letter etiquette was usually dealt with briefly and efficiently. Candidates went on to say that they had recently moved house and then proceeded, as directed, to describe the new house. A minority thought they had not yet moved. The descriptions were normally expressed in the present tense, which was of course appropriate to the task. Houses were almost always to the candidate's liking. They were large, often palatial. They were *très belle* or *magnifique*. Above all they were nearly all modern, unlike the old house. The comparative *plus... que...* was much in evidence. Some candidates laboriously listed every kind of room they could think of, preceded by the all purpose *Il y a...* There were not only the obvious rooms such as kitchens, bathrooms, dining rooms and numerous bedrooms. There were also games rooms, TV rooms, gyms and even libraries. Excessively long lists gained little reward as simple nouns gain minimal reward for language. The house had several floors and in some scripts each floor had its own list of rooms. Nearly all houses seemed to come with a large pool and a spacious garden. The mass

of detail devoted to the first task often meant candidates reached 140 words before they had addressed the later tasks. A small number wrote about moving from a large country house to a town flat. Only a minority disliked the new house. It was old and small, without luxuries and not as pleasant as the former home.

Next, were they glad or sad to move house and why? Most (but not all) could respond *Je suis... content(e)* or *...triste d'avoir changé de maison*. The mark was also given for *J'aime beaucoup la nouvelle maison* which implied that the candidate was happy. Reasons were varied. Those who were happy to have moved often said they had their own room now and did not have to share. *Partager* was widely known. Others were glad because now they did not have so far to travel to school or to the town centre. Others were glad to live nearer to friends or family. Others enjoyed the pool and features they did not have before, such as a tennis court. On the other hand (*par contre* was frequently used) some had left all their old friends and they missed the old house where they grew up. *La vieille maison* (rarely correctly spelled) was used when *ancienne* would have been more apt.

In the next task, nearly all understood *pourquoi votre famille a déménagé* and attempted a sensible reason, although not all could find the language to express it in correct French. Some needed the extra space to accommodate all the children. Some stressed the importance of the location. They were nearer to the parent's work place, or closer to a better school for the candidate and his/her siblings. Father or mother had had a raise at work and they could afford a better home. Or a parent had changed his/her job which forced the move. The latter concepts did not prove easy to express. Sometimes the arrival of a new baby or grandparents moving in created a need for more rooms. Weaker candidates could have gained the communication mark for a simple statement, such as *La famille a déménagé parce que la nouvelle maison est très belle/plus grande que l'autre*.

The last task, *Comment serait votre maison idéale?*, could have been answered by *Ma maison idéale serait...* with a suitable adjective or a situation, such as *...au bord de la mer*. Instead of a simple response, some complicated the answer to the extent that the communication mark was lost. The conditional of the verb *être* was most commonly used but credit was also given to answers in the present or future tenses. Some said *Ma maison idéale... serait une villa* or *...un appartement*. On some scripts the description of the ideal house was similar to their own new home, a point made sometimes by the candidate himself/herself. In many cases the ideal house was even more exotic. There would be every possible facility. There would be large rooms to accommodate the computers and games, extensive gardens, inevitably with a pool to relax in. It would be near a city for the shopping. In a minority of cases, the ideal house would be a quiet cottage in the country, where the candidate could raise a family and escape the bustle of city life.

The letters were closed with the usual 'signing off' phrases, which had been well prepared.

As with **Question 1(a)**, the best answers were those which displayed control of verbs in a variety of tenses and avoided the constant repetition of certain phrases such as *Ma nouvelle maison...* and *Il y a...* which spoil the general impression on many scripts.

Question 2 A School excursion

As is often the case, the narrative proved to be more difficult than the more structured **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)**. Candidates had to cope with using past tenses throughout and had the added challenge of providing their own 'story'. Better candidates coped admirably and rose to the occasion but a number did not do themselves justice. The key to success in this kind of exercise is to concentrate on showing one's strengths and to avoid unnecessary complexities which would expose weaknesses. 'Write what you know is correct French and if you do not know how to say something, say something else' is the advice a candidate should endeavour to follow when doing free composition. In the case of the narrative, a succession of simple incidents related in common well know verbs in perfect tenses would score well for language and ensure a number of communication marks.

This question concerned a school excursion organised by the narrator for the benefit of members of the class to celebrate the end of the school year. The rubric instructed candidates to begin at the moment they set off. No communication marks were awarded for saying what happened prior to the departure, such as preparing sandwiches etc. Most outings were by coach or bus, though a minority travelled by air to distant destinations. Happy candidates sang en route to pass the time. It was a fine day. (Many had difficulty in describing the weather.) After the journey (not *journée* in French) the bus, which had sometimes been delayed by accidents or burst tyres, arrived at the destination. The locations varied widely. They included seaside resorts, cities such as Paris or Cairo and the countryside. The party visited historic sites, went shopping, bought souvenirs, ate ice creams, enjoyed a *parc d'attractions* and played all kinds of games, including, inevitably, football. A major part of the day involved lunch. Some went to a restaurant and had

fast food, while others made do with a picnic. Unnecessarily long lists of food items were given. As mentioned above, lists of unqualified nouns gain only small reward for use of language and they are not recommended. Some days out were ruined by unfortunate incidents, such as accidents, illness and getting lost and these were related with relish. There is nothing like a good drama for creating a memorable school event! The return to school was followed by yet more celebrations as candidates rounded the day off with a party.

Many chose to leave their reactions until the end, but full credit was given for reactions which were included in the course of the excursion. They were nearly always happy with the outing which they enjoyed hugely. Some had trouble in saying *Nous nous sommes bien amusés* and offered attempts, such as *Nous avons eu un bon temps*, which were not correct French. Most were tired at the end of a long day. A number confused *fatigant* with *fatigué*. The narrator was often thanked and praised for his/her efforts in organising such great entertainment. S/he was proud of the achievement and promised to organise another outing next year. Some were sad at the end as they would now be leaving school and their classmates. Despite the rubric, some omitted to include any reactions at all.

While a party at the end of the day was quite allowable, some candidates failed to score full communication marks for omitting the excursion altogether and relating instead a party held at school.

As stated earlier, it is important that answers to the narrative question are expressed in past tenses and an ability to write in the perfect tense in particular is a necessity to obtain a high overall mark. Low scores were often the result of multiple inaccurate attempts at past tenses. Some weaker candidates wrote in a mixture of different tenses while others confined their answers to the present tense. This was a pity, as very often *J'ai...* or *Nous avons...* followed by the past participle of a number of regular 'er' verbs ending in *é* would have been enough to secure some communication marks and several ticks for language. The use of *J'étais...* or *C'était...* with an appropriate adjective was normally sufficient to score a communication mark for giving a reaction or an impression.

Some outstanding work was presented by the best candidates in answer to **Question 2**, and they are to be commended for the high quality of their linguistic skills and the precision of their written French. The majority, however, were prone to make mistakes with basic items or to overstretch themselves in attempting ambitious structures. Many inaccuracies might have been eliminated by a more painstaking approach while composing the piece and a thorough rereading of the work at the end, in search of careless slips. Common errors included faulty spellings and particularly genders of common nouns. Inconsistency of gender of recurring items was common and the gender of the narrator tended to vary throughout the piece according to adjectival and past participle agreements. *Les amies* were referred, to as *ils*, often in the same sentence. Definite and indefinite articles were used indiscriminately. The basic *avoir* and *être* were confused, particularly when used as auxiliaries. *Tout le monde* was followed by plural verb forms. The spelling of *malheureusement* in particular was rarely correct. Confusion of the following items was widespread: *regarder* was confused with *voir*, *écouter* with *entendre*, *joli* with *heureux*, *attendre* with *assister*, *rester* with *se reposer*, *plusieurs* with *beaucoup de*, *parler* with *dire*, *retourner* with *rentrer*, and *plus* and *trop* with *très*.

Having said all that, all bar a few candidates did their very best to respond to the challenge of writing an extended piece of French and they are to be commended for their enthusiasm in embracing the task.

FRENCH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0520/43
Continuous Writing

Key messages

The work of more successful candidates was characterised by the following features.

- The demands of the rubric were observed.
- The length of each answer was between 130 and 140 words, as directed.
- The answers were well structured and showed signs of thoughtful planning.
- Candidates balanced ambition with the need for linguistic accuracy.
- Presentation was good.

General comments

As readers of this report will be aware, from 2015 onwards this component will have a different format. However, there will still be a free composition element similar to the kind of questions set in this year's papers, and the advice contained in this report will be largely relevant.

The quality of performance by large numbers of candidates remains high. There was outstanding work from the best of the entry and the majority made a commendable attempt to meet the challenges of continuous writing in French. A number did not make the most of their opportunity and it is to those candidates in particular that the following advice is directed.

Marks are awarded for conveying the information required by each task in the rubric. The omission of required tasks means that candidates deny themselves access to the maximum marks available. It is important to observe the tense or time frame contained in each task and to employ a similar tense in the response. In **Question 1**, candidates were directed to use three tenses or time frames, the present, the past and the future. In **Question 2** the narrative must be related in past tenses, as indicated in the rubric. Tasks involved relating incidents which occurred and the narrator's reactions or impressions.

Successful candidates planned answers to conform to the recommended length. Short answers ran the risk of not accessing the full number of marks awarded for the use of language. Long answers did not always include all the required communication elements within the word count.

The better candidates composed each sentence with care, paying special attention to verbs, the tenses used and regular and irregular verb formations. They made good use of subordinate clauses and the contrast of tenses. They were able to handle object pronouns, negatives and reported speech. They showed knowledge of a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. They avoided the constant repetition of certain words and phrases. Those of more modest capacity are urged to stay within their limitations, and not to over complicate things. Free composition offers the opportunity for candidates to show the Examiner what they can do and what they know. 'If you don't know it, say something else' should be the watch word.

It was noticeable that many candidates had a wide vocabulary, but lacked the precision of spelling and genders necessary to score well for linguistic accuracy.

Presentation is very important. Writing must be clear and legible, and crossing out and the alteration of letters kept to a minimum. Some handwriting this year was minuscule to the point of being unintelligible. On some scripts many letters were ambiguous.

Question 1(a) An article on your best friend

This question was the more popular option as candidates were drawn to a familiar topic, a personal description. This was only a part of the task however, as there were other elements too, which were not usually handled so well. Often, candidates wrote too much on the first part of their answer and had already reached the maximum number of words when they addressed the later tasks.

A straightforward description of the friend was the first task and simple sentences expressed in present tenses were enough to fulfil requirements. Details given included age, stature, colour of hair and eyes and general appearance. Simple adjectival agreements were commonly missed as with *Il/elle a les yeux vert* (sic) and *les cheveux* was commonly rendered as *les chevaux*. Candidates wrote of their friend's interests, such as sport, music and computer games. Others referred to his/her sterling character. S/he was friendly, generous, intelligent and amusing. Other friends were shy or calm. The friend was similar or sometimes very different to the writer. All this was deserving of credit.

Next, candidates were required to say when and where they met the friend for the first time. The task was almost universally understood, but a large number were unable to find a perfect tense, as in *J'ai rencontré...* and the communication mark was lost. Some ambitiously attempted to answer with an object pronoun, but this created difficulties, especially when the friend was a girl. The past participle agreement in *Je l'ai rencontrée...* was seldom made. The verb *rencontrer*, although given in the rubric, was frequently misspelled. Those who managed the verb were rewarded for saying that they first met the friend at school, when they were six, ten years ago, in 2005 etc. A number described the first meeting at some length.

There were some interesting responses to the next task (*quelle est l'importance de votre ami(e)?*). Some said the friend was helpful, especially with homework or personal problems. *Mon ami(e) m'aide* was usually handled well, similarly *Il/elle me comprend*. Others said s/he was happy or good natured, and therefore a source of good spirits in their relationship. Others referred to the constant presence of the friend in all the writer did, in and out of school. The word *ensemble* was well known. Normally this task required only present tenses, which simplified matters.

As stated above, many had given such a long and detailed response to the earlier tasks that the final task could not be credited. Candidates were asked to say how they would spend an ideal weekend with their friend. The conditional was the tense of the question (*comment passeriez-vous?*) but not all were able to offer a correct verb in this tense. Credit was also given for such statements as *Un weekend idéal avec mon ami(e) est de passer du temps...* followed by an activity or a location. Some said they would enjoy sports or other pastimes together (football, tennis and computers being the most popular), while others would share a meal out or a trip to the cinema or a disco.

The question was within the compass of average to good candidates and some very creditable answers were presented. As ever, weaker candidates were limited by an inability to handle verbs other than in the present tense.

Question 1(b) Tourism

Although less popular than **Question 1(a)**, the topic of tourism also offered scope for writing simple answers in basic language.

The first task required a straightforward account of the tourist attractions in the writer's local area. A minority misunderstood and wrote about a visit to a distant location. Most said what their own home town or region had to offer the tourist. The phrases *Il y a...* (given in the rubric) and *On peut...* followed by an infinitive were heavily used and ensured a safe communication mark to start. Cultural attractions were often mentioned, including museums, churches, castles and galleries. There were amusement parks, swimming pools and beaches which offered opportunities for sailing and volleyball. Shopping was a major attraction and regular mention was made of the *centre commercial* where the tourist could buy elegant clothes and souvenirs.

The next task was to say what tourist activity the candidate had enjoyed recently. This involved the use of the perfect tense, which was not recognised by large numbers of candidates. The task was sometimes overlooked, as the candidate moved directly to the pros and cons of tourism. Some were able to say they played tennis or went shopping. Others visited a historic site or the seaside. Some replied in the present tense and did not gain the communication mark.

The 'advantages of tourism' brought a better response. Some said the local population benefited from the money tourists spent in the shops and hotels. Public transport was good as it served tourists and locals

alike. The presence of visitors in the area was to be welcomed as it enhanced the ambience of the place. Disadvantages included the inevitable references to pollution, overcrowding, noise, unwanted traffic and high prices. Some understood the question from the tourists' point of view and wrote of the benefits and problems encountered by tourists themselves. Full credit was given to this alternative interpretation.

The final task was to say where the writer's ideal tourist location would be and why?

As in the last task of **Question 1(a)** (the ideal weekend), the tense in the question was the conditional and some candidates began *Ma destination idéale serait...* The present tense was an acceptable alternative. Successful answers included such responses as: ... *les Alpes parce que j'aime beaucoup le ski* or ... *Nice, parce que j'adore me baigner dans la mer*. A number attempted unnecessarily complex language which proved to be beyond their competence.

Question 2 The stolen bag

As is often the case, the narrative proved to be more difficult than the structured **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)**. Candidates had to cope with using past tenses throughout and had the added challenge of providing their own 'story'. Only better candidates coped with these demands and many weaker ones struggled. For candidates, the key to success in this kind of exercise is to keep within their linguistic limitations and to simplify as necessary. Candidates should be advised to use only what they know to be French and to avoid over complex language. A succession of incidents related in common well known verbs in the perfect tense would gain rich rewards. In this question the more competent candidates were able to 'show off' their French and display a range of structures and vocabulary, but these were in a minority.

The story this time concerned the narrator witnessing the theft of a woman's bag and describing what ensued. It was important to read the rubric carefully as communication marks were not given for saying what had already happened. The usual opening was to say that the thief ran off with the bag. Few knew the verb *se sauver* but credit was given for *Il a couru le long de la rue* etc. The narrator usually gave chase and a number were able to say *J'ai essayé d'attraper le voleur* or *Je l'ai suivi dans la rue*. This chase was usually in vain. The woman who had been robbed was described as being distressed by the episode (usually *triste* although *fâchée* or *furieuse* might have been more likely in the circumstances). The narrator bought her a drink in a café or comforted her. She explained how important the bag was as it contained number of valuable items, such as money, phones and papers. Sometimes she had suffered injuries and the narrator phoned for a doctor or an ambulance. More commonly the police were called. Many candidates were unable to use indirect objects after *téléphoner*. The word *police* regularly gave difficulty, and *agent* and *gendarme* were not well known. More able candidates managed to say ...*pour dire ce qui s'était passé* (*pour ...expliquer la situation* was a simpler way of expressing the idea). The need for the pluperfect to say what had occurred was not often recognised. Weaker candidates often used *parler* (to speak) rather than the correct verb *dire* (to say). The description of the culprit was a source of easy language marks, as most were able to describe his appearance and the clothes he wore. The story went on and the narrator sometimes encountered the thief (frequently referred to as *le vol*) some time later and seized the bag. Alternatively this heroic feat was carried out by the police. Finally the bag and its owner were reunited and the narrator was warmly thanked. The anecdote regularly ended with reactions to the above events (*J'étais fier/fière/heureux/heureuse* etc.) but marks for communicating reactions were awarded at any point in the story.

The performance on this exercise varied in quality. Stronger candidates were able to shine in their control of more complex language and in their use of particularly apt vocabulary. However, many lost out through multiple errors which seemed due to haste or carelessness. The gender of nouns varied. The narrator was either gender according to agreements of adjective and past participles. Everyday words were misspelled. Verb forms were routinely faulty. Candidates are urged to use the time allowed wisely and to revise their work thoroughly at the end to eliminate as many of these routine mechanical errors as possible.