

FRENCH

<p>Paper 0520/03 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- The format of the test remained as in 2016 and was usually well understood in centres.
- The standard of work heard was very similar to that heard in November 2016.
- Candidates had usually been well prepared for the role play tasks. Efficient Examiners did not deviate from the script and set tasks and prompted candidates appropriately.
- Timings in most centres were correct but, in some centres, candidates were disadvantaged as the tests were far too short or very long in the conversation sections. In some cases, a conversation section was missed out. Marks can only be awarded for sections if they are attempted.
- Topic coverage was satisfactory in most centres. A few centres needed to cover a wider range of topics across their candidature in the Topic Conversation section.
- Most Examiners are well aware of the need to ensure that past and future tenses are tested in **both Conversation sections**. There are still some centres where this is not the case. In such cases, the mark for Language is limited. All centres need to ensure that questions to test different tenses are included in **both** conversation tests.
- The best work was heard in centres in which spontaneous and natural conversations developed.
- In centres in which Internal moderation had taken place, this had usually been carried out correctly.

General comments

This paper was common to all candidates. As in 2016, the general standard of work heard was good and covered a very wide range of performance. Most Examiners were familiar with the format of the test and conducted the examination appropriately. Candidates were generally aware of the demands of the test and had usually prepared well. Examiners were usually sympathetic to their candidates and helped them to work for the marks and gave them the opportunity to show what they knew and could do.

In the Role Plays, candidates had usually made good use of the 15 minutes preparation time. Centres are reminded that Examiners may have access to the confidential test materials (Teachers' Notes Booklet and Role Play Cards) in the four working days before the first Speaking test is conducted in order to prepare the Role Plays. **Centres are reminded that the contents of these materials are confidential and must not be shared with candidates. The confidential test materials must be returned to the secure storage facility after preparation has taken place and after each session of examining.** Once started, in the interest of security, the speaking tests should be completed as soon as possible within the centre. There should not be a long interval of time between different groups taking the test within a centre. Once the last Speaking test has been conducted, the sample should be checked and then sent as soon as possible after the tests have been completed.

Centres are reminded that candidates must not be allowed to do any writing during their preparation time and must not be allowed to bring any written materials with them into the preparation area. **Please also ensure that candidates do not bring mobile phones into the examination area and that Examiners' phones are switched off.**

Examiners usually understood the requirements of the mark scheme and, consequently, asked the right sort of questions which stretched candidates and gave them the opportunity to fulfil the descriptors in the higher mark bands. For example, Examiners who included unexpected questions and went beyond the straightforward 'closed' questions gave candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on Table B, Communication. 'Safe' very straightforward questions which did not give candidates the opportunity to develop their answers did not enable candidates to score marks in the highest bands. It was also essential to include questions to elicit past and future tenses in both Conversation sections as candidates needed to show they could use both of these tenses for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on Table C, Language.

- **Clerical checks**

In most centres, the clerical work had been completed efficiently and centres are thanked for this. Usually, the addition and transfer of marks was accurate but in some centres, cases of clerical errors were found. It is essential that all clerical work is checked with great care to ensure that all candidates receive the correct mark. On the Working Mark 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. The lozenge should be shaded in and also the mark written in numerals in the column. A few centres did not complete the mark column.

In larger centres with several Examiners and in which Internal moderation has taken place, **please ensure that any marks amendments for the samples of internally moderated work are applied to the whole of that Examiner's group and not just the sample candidates.** If Internal moderation has taken place, please ensure that the final centre mark has been entered correctly on the MS1.

- **Cover sheet for moderation sample**

Nearly all centres remembered to complete and submit the Cover Sheet for Moderation Sample. This form allows centres to check that their moderation sample is correct before they despatch it to Cambridge. **Please remember that this is a form which must be completed and submitted to the Moderator with the sample.** It is intended that this sheet serves as a checklist for the Examiner. If there is more than one Examiner per centre, please remember to tick the relevant box on this sheet.

- **Sample size**

As in 2016, most centres had understood the sample requirements well and submitted the correct sample. It was very helpful, in large centres, for the Moderators to receive a list of the sample candidates and in which examination group they could be found.

- **Recording quality**

A high proportion of the recordings received were of a good clear quality and centres are thanked for this. Most centres submitted digital recordings which enabled Moderators very easy access to the sample. Centres are reminded that whatever the method chosen for recording, if an external microphone is used, this should be positioned to favour the candidate. Centres should note that the recording **must not be paused between different sections of the test nor should the recording be paused at any stage during an individual candidate's test.**

Please use widely recognised recording programmes. **It is sometimes difficult to open files when they are not put on CDs as .mp3 files.** All files should be labelled correctly. There should be a separate sound file for each candidate. It is essential that each candidate's recording is labelled with the candidate name and number on the box for the CD and that the sound file is correctly labelled. On the CD, the recording for each candidate must be saved individually and named as follows: Centre number_candidate number_syllabus number_component number. Moderators found that, in several Centres, samples were labelled incorrectly. Please remember to avoid sticking labels on CDs and do not write on the surface of the CD without using a CD friendly pen.

The Examiner must introduce the candidate by name and candidate number and also give the Role Play Card number. **This announcement must not be made by the candidate.**

- **Internal moderation in centres**

The standard of Internal moderation in centres which had been given permission to use more than one Examiner was usually good. New centres are reminded that where more than one Examiner is used, Moderators need to be able to check that all Examiners have adopted a uniform approach to the test and applied the mark scheme consistently. **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.** A copy of this permission should be enclosed with the centre sample. Permission is normally granted, on the understanding that Internal standardisation/moderation takes place at the centre **before a sample is chosen** for final 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.

Centres are reminded that 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 marks of the candidates whose work was in the sample checked.

- **Timings of tests / missing elements**

Most centres conducted tests of an appropriate length, but some centres persist in going under or over the 5 minutes prescribed for the Topic Conversation and/or the General Conversation test. **Each of these two sections must last for approximately 5 minutes.** This year, Moderators reported an increase in the number of centres with very short Conversation sections, or missing sections. Centres are reminded that the presentation of the topic should last no longer than 2 minutes and that the remaining time of this 5 minute section should be spent in conversation on this topic.

Where conversations are short or missing, candidates can be greatly disadvantaged as marks cannot be awarded for tasks which are not attempted. In the Topic/Conversation section, Examiners need to keep questioning focused on the topic in question and then introduce the final General Conversation section of the test. This is helpful to both the candidate and the Moderator. **In some Centres, marks had been awarded for missing sections which resulted in marks being reduced by Moderators.**

- **Application of the mark scheme**

Examiners in centres usually applied the mark scheme fairly and consistently. Some large centres had adjustments made just to part of the mark range in cases of lenient or harsh marking. Some centres had larger adjustments made to their marks. **This was often due to short or missing sections, or the generosity of marks awarded in centres on Table C when there was no evidence of past and future tenses evident.**

Centres are reminded that the **Examiner should stick to the script of the role plays.** If cues are missed out, candidates will be disadvantaged. Short responses in the role plays, 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 uses a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2 and not 3 is appropriate. 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 material given by the Examiner which is then repeated by the candidate.

In the Conversation sections, as in 2016, the marking tended to be generous in a number of centres. In such centres, marks were often awarded in the higher bands 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. Moderators also reported that, in some centres, high marks had been awarded when candidates could not go beyond a series of short responses to very straightforward questions. It remains crucial that Examiners 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

Please remember to check the number of the candidate's card before starting the test and to enter the number of the card on the Working Mark Sheet.

Centres usually encouraged candidates to attempt all parts of each task and many Examiners did prompt when appropriate. Examiners should prompt candidates to try to attempt all tasks. If only one part of a two-part task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. As last year, two part tasks were split into (i) and (ii) on the candidate Role Play Cards. Most Examiners kept well to their script and did not change the cues. Examiners who changed or missed out cues disadvantaged their candidates.

Overlong answers should not be encouraged as marks can only be awarded for the set tasks. Indeed, should candidates go on and add material extra to the set task it may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates should be reminded that it is always important to listen to the Examiner carefully as on all the Role Play A situations, there is always a task which requires them to listen and choose from the two options offered by the Examiner. If one of these options is not chosen by the candidate the appropriate mark to award is 0. Likewise, there is always one task which requires candidates to respond to an unexpected question on the Role Play B cards. It remains vital to read the cues as printed in the Teachers' Instruction booklet.

Centres are reminded that the Examiner must choose the Role Play Card to give to the candidate. Candidates must not be involved in choosing the card.

Role Plays A

Role Plays A were found to be of equal difficulty and appropriate for the candidature. They posed very similar challenges to those of 2016 and Moderators found them to be a fair test at this level.

Role Plays A are designed to be easier than the Role Plays B and are set using vocabulary from Topic Areas A, B and C of the Defined Content. All of the Role Play A 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. It is essential that the Examiner sticks to the script as printed.

Candidates generally found these Role Plays to be accessible and even the weakest candidates were usually able to score at least 1 mark on each task. Centres had 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 of the utterance is unclear due to mispronunciation.** Moderators reported a tendency in centres to accept poor pronunciation too readily.

Examiners should introduce Role Play A and start off the conversation. English should not be used to introduce the test. It is always helpful to read out the introduction to candidates.

At the butcher's shop

This Role Play was attempted well by candidates. On **Task 1**, nearly all candidates could greet and say they wanted to buy some meat. On **Task 2**, most were able to opt for one of the choices offered by the Examiner but those choosing *agneau* rather than *poulet* often pronounced this poorly. Most were able to express a quantity with ease and on **Task 4** were able to say that they were doing a barbecue with friends. Good attempts were also made on the last task but some still persist in asking *Combien de prix ?* when asking the price.

In a clothes shop

Candidates generally approached this situation well. Nearly all candidates could greet and say they wanted to buy trousers. The next task required candidates to choose one of the options provided in the cue by the Examiner. This was usually well done. On **Task 3**, candidates were required to give a size. Most opted for *petit/grand*. Candidates offering a number also gained the marks. **Task 4** posed few problems and most candidates were able to convey a colour with ease. Nearly all remembered to thank but some still found difficulty in asking the price.

At the tourist office

This Role Play caused candidates few problems. Nearly all greeted appropriately and were able to say what they wanted to buy. On **Task 2**, candidates needed to choose one of the options offered by the Examiner. Most chose *concert*. Those who chose *cirque* often mispronounced it. The next task required a specific evening. Those answering *demain soir* also gained the marks as this was a specific evening. The last task was generally approached well and most were able to formulate an appropriate question.

Role Plays B

Role Plays B were deliberately more demanding than the more straightforward Role Plays A in that they required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, to apologise, express disappointment and justify their opinions. The level of challenge was well balanced across the Role Plays and a similar performance across the cards could be seen. As in previous sessions, they differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score some marks on some of the tasks when prompted appropriately.

It is important that Examiners know their own role and stick to the script and 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. Candidates 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. They should also be reminded that each card will always expect candidates to ask a question.

A phone call to a friend about being unable to go out

Candidates usually made a fairly confident start to this role play but not all expressed clearly that they could not go out with Alex. On **Task 2**, some gave the required answer that they were ill but some missed this task out and went on directly to **Task 3** as they gave specific symptoms. If candidates did not express the general notion of being ill and gave instead a specific symptom which was different from any expressed in **Task 3**, they could still gain marks. Most were familiar with symptoms but they were often expressed with verbs which were inappropriate or incorrectly conjugated. On **Task 4**, candidates were required to make an apology. Again, some gave a list of excuses as they did not understand the need to make an apology. Some also forgot to say when they could go out but sympathetic examining recued them with a question in many cases and most were able to say when they could next go out. On the final task, candidates needed to formulate a question to ask Alex what kind of excursion he/she would like to do. Some candidates chose to say what they wanted to do instead of formulating a question. A suggestion rather than a question did not fulfil the set task.

At a hotel reception

Candidates made a good attempt on this card and managed to greet the receptionist and ask to change their room. The next task required candidates to respond to the unexpected question which asked for the number of the room. This was usually well done. **Task 3** required an explanation as to why the candidate wanted to change his/her room. Two details were required but some candidates only gave one detail which meant they could only score 1 for partial completion of the task. **Task 4** proved to be the most challenging and only the best were able to express that they were disappointed. Most were able to express a negative opinion about the hotel. The last task required an appropriate question to be put concerning the possibility of being reimbursed. The pronunciation of *remboursement* proved difficult for many. Examiners need to remember to query poor pronunciation as candidates may correct themselves.

A phone call to a restaurant

Most were able to cope well with the first task but some weaker candidates confused the possessive adjective and did not transpose the *votre réservation* to *ma réservation* in their answers. In such cases, the mark for that part of the task could not be scored as the correct meaning was not there and the message was lost. Some just said they were late and did not say they wanted to change the time of their reservation. In the second task, all were able to give their name but some confused when they had actually made the reservation with giving a new reservation time. This meant the marks could not be scored as the task was incomplete. **Task 3** required candidates to make an apology. Some candidates still misunderstand this cue and consequently try instead to list excuses. It is well worth reminding candidates that the rubric *Faites vos excuses* is the standard cue for giving an apology. The next prompt required candidates to respond to an unexpected question about when they would be arriving at the restaurant. On the last task, candidates were required to formulate a question about being able to eat outside on the terrace. Again, this was usually well done with most able to formulate an appropriate question.

Topic Presentation/Conversation

The general standard heard this year was very similar to that heard in 2016. There was again a full range of performance and candidates had usually prepared their material well. The best presentations were presented at a reasonable speed, were clear to understand and they showed something about the candidate in a very personal way. Most candidates did not go over the maximum time of 2 minutes for the presentation part of this section of the test. The remaining time of the 5 minutes allowed here should be spent conversing on the topic. The best examining did not require candidates to repeat material already heard in the presentation.

Many candidates were able to do themselves justice on their presentation but it was often the case, and especially so with weaker candidates, that there was a drop in the level of performance in the Topic Conversation section. The most able candidates were usually capable of sustaining a consistent performance in the Topic Conversation part of this section of the test. Such performances were characterised by opinions, justifications and routine explanations which made use of a wide range of vocabulary, structures and accurate language.

A good range of subjects was usually chosen by candidates. Many talked about a pastime, life at school, the environment, their ambitions, life in another country or a holiday. Moderators reported that this year there were fewer cases of candidates preparing *Moi-même* as a topic. This topic is to be avoided as this can replicate the General Conversation section. This part of the test is intended to give them the opportunity to go into depth on one topic rather than cover several topic areas. **Centres should also ensure that they cover a good range of topics across the centre.** The range of topics in a few centres was rather narrow. A variety of topics across a centre enables spontaneous and natural examining to take place, ensures good syllabus coverage and avoids repetition of similar questions from candidate to candidate.

Candidates usually presented their topic at a comprehensible speed and did not rush. This is important so that the message is not lost. Examiners are reminded not to interrupt candidates too early as this can be disconcerting for candidates. In the conversation on the topic, Examiners need to avoid asking questions which ask candidates to repeat material already heard in the presentation. The best performances heard were ones in which an interesting lead was followed up by the Examiner which allowed the conversation to develop in a natural way. Some Examiners asked very few questions in this part of the test and sometimes did not ask questions to elicit past and future tenses. **Centres are reminded that past and future questions should be asked in both of the Conversation sections. To score a mark of more than 6 for Language candidates must show that they can use not just the present but also past and future tenses.**

It was helpful to both candidates and Moderators at the end of this part of the test when Examiners made a clear transition in French to the next part of the test. There was this year an increase in the number of centres who did not make a clear transition between the two conversation sections.

General Conversation

Examiners usually were well aware of the need for questions to be put to elicit tenses but timings were again often inconsistent in this section. This section of the test should last for a full 5 minutes. Some General Conversation sections were very long and others very short. This disadvantaged candidates who, in the case of short sections did not have the time to develop their ideas and show what they knew and could do.

Most centres covered an appropriate range of topics and are reminded to try **to cover only two or three examination topics with each candidate in this final section. The General Conversation topics must differ from the topic chosen by the candidate for the presentation.** It is understood that with candidates who are less able, it may be necessary to cover more topics in less depth in order to keep the conversation going. There were still some centres in which too many topics were covered very briefly with all candidates. In such cases, candidates could not see a logical order in the questioning when questions become unrelated and, at worst, it was confusing for them to change topics frequently when the questions appeared to be unlinked or featured questions which appeared to test general knowledge. The best examining featured an announcement as to which topic was going to be discussed and then at the end of this topic, an indication as to which topic was being moved onto next by the Examiner. Concentrating on two or three topics enables the Examiner to go into depth on fewer topics rather than cover more topics superficially. Centres are reminded that candidates must not be aware of which general conversation topics will be examined before the test. In some centres, Moderators reported that the range of topics within the centre was too narrow.

Questions which are very straightforward and which require simple short responses do not give candidates access to the upper mark bands for both Communication and Language. The best examining gave candidates logically related questions on a topic and featured some open ended questions such as *parle-moi de* or asked candidates to develop or explain an answer or reason for an opinion. This meant that candidates could try to develop their answers in a natural way. As in the Topic Conversation, candidates need to be able to develop their answers, give and explain opinions and be able to respond to unexpected questions in a spontaneous way in order to gain high marks. **A few centres made use of too few questions or the same questions in the same order on each conversation topic from candidate to candidate: this approach should be avoided.** It is also important to give candidates the opportunity to respond to unexpected questions which arise naturally and Examiners should follow up interesting leads presented by the candidate.

A very full range of performance was heard by Moderators in this section of the test and the standards heard were very similar to those heard in 2016. Many candidates communicated well and in an interesting way on topics such as holidays, daily routine, festivals, future plans and ambitions, the environment, their town/country, school, family life, leisure activities, food and drink and healthy lifestyle. A good number of candidates were able to communicate their message clearly, often thanks to sympathetic and patient examining. In so doing, they also showed that they had a good control of a range of linguistic features. The better candidates were able to work confidently and express themselves in a good range of tenses. The more able could go beyond working in the first person and conjugate verbs with different subjects. The work of such candidates showed that they could speak accurately in tenses appropriate to the questions asked. The very best work in terms of linguistic content featured longer, more complex utterances which made use of structures such as *si* + imperfect + a conditional tense, perfect infinitives, *avant de* + infinitive and, occasionally, compound tenses.

Many candidates heard by Moderators were enthusiastic about the relevance and importance of learning a foreign language and were positive about their experience of learning how to communicate in French.

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<p>Paper 0520/11 Listening</p>
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Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in November 2016. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- Candidates performed better on this paper than in the comparable paper for November 2016. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to overwrite answers in pen but in so doing, they left first attempts at ticks or words. This was often very difficult to read and candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Poor handwriting again made some scripts difficult to read.
- Many candidates appreciated 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 may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension

General comments

The candidature overall performed very well on the first two sections of the paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with weaker candidates being able to be successful on a few questions in each of the two exercises.

The candidature was usually familiar with the rubrics and was aware of the requirements of the test types. There was some evidence, however, that a few candidates were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple-choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were 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 was tested in the first two sections of the test was drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates in many centres had appreciated the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates were usually aware of the need not to add extra material which was not on the recording and were also usually aware of the need not to answer or infer from general knowledge.

This year, Examiners reported some cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly. Any material which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should be clearly crossed out.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is **not** extra reading time before the examination starts. It is very important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they will 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. The extracts were short and straightforward. Candidates performed very well in this opening exercise which is intended to give candidates a confident start to the paper. Candidates understood the rubric well and the visuals caused no problems of interpretation. In **Question 4**, a small number of candidates did not understand *et demie* in the extract and incorrectly answered with option **B** instead of **D**. In **Question 7**, a minority of candidates could not identify *raisin* and incorrectly chose option **C** or **D**.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard an advertisement for a youth hostel. Candidates were mostly required to show their understanding by selecting one from three visual options or, in **Question 12**, writing the month of the year. As in previous years, candidates answered the vast majority of these questions correctly and many scored full marks on this exercise. A relatively small number of candidates could not distinguish *gare* in **Question 10** and chose option **A** instead of the correct answer **B**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Candidates heard four young people talking about food and drink. The vocabulary was taken from the Defined Content and extracts included some opinions. The topic area was very accessible to candidates and large numbers achieved high marks. No particular option seemed to be more difficult than another and no pattern of incorrect answers was discernible. This exercise was successfully attempted by the vast majority of candidates, many of them scoring 5 or 6 marks.

Candidates now appear to be very familiar with the requirement to tick six boxes on this exercise. Teachers should advise candidates to indicate the six true statements with either a tick or a cross. Examiners did report, however, a small number of candidates who only used three or four ticks and candidates should be encouraged to use all six ticks, making an intelligent guess where they are uncertain.

Some candidates answered first in pencil and then went over their answers in ink but unfortunately did not completely remove their pencil answers. This meant that on occasion, there were more than six ticks present and the candidates lost marks as a result.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In the first part of this exercise, candidates heard an interview with Bruno who lives on the island of Corsica. Candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements by supplying the correct word in each case. Candidates scored well on this exercise and many candidates were able to identify *musique* in **Question 21**. Surprisingly, candidates found **Question 19** the most difficult question, with many finding *bruns* a difficult concept to communicate, despite many variations in spelling being allowed on the mark scheme.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

The second part of this exercise featured an interview with Cécile, who also lives on the island of Corsica. 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. Candidates found **Question 22** and **Question 24** the more accessible questions but a significant minority found the number *300 000* difficult in **Question 23**. The least accessible question was **Question 25**, where, despite many variations allowable, many candidates wrote answers which communicated the idea of *bouteille* rather than *beauté*. Only the most able candidates scored full marks on this part of the exercise but the majority of candidates were able to score at least 1 or 2 marks on the exercise as a whole.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

The extract featured a longer interview with Véronique who described Togo, the country in Africa where she lives. Candidates coped well with this multiple-choice exercise which required them to follow a narrative that featured different time frames and in which feelings and opinions were expressed. In this exercise, candidates had to listen to and process more information than in the previous section.

Candidates understood the rubric well. No candidates omitted this exercise and they were able to gain at least 2 or 3 marks. It is worth reminding candidates to use the longer reading time available at the beginning of this exercise, and the pauses, to read the questions and options very carefully. Reading the questions will also help to give them an overall plan of the content of the recording and help them to sequence the information which they will hear.

The first three questions were correctly answered by the majority of the candidature but, in **Question 29**, candidates often chose option **C** or **D** (*dynamiques* or *honnêtes*) instead of the correct answer **A** (*chaleureux*). Only a small minority of candidates scored less than 3 marks out of 6 on this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–39

The extract featured a longer interview with Abdul, a young footballer. In this section, answers did not need to be lengthy but some required a verb and some required more than two words in the acceptable answer.

In **Question 32**, many candidates answered correctly but many heard *il y a douze ans* and assumed, incorrectly, that was the age at which Abdul started playing football. There was a considerable variety in the spelling of *ans/années* which were catered for in the mark scheme.

In **Question 33**, many candidates answered with *habitation* which they did not hear in the extract and unfortunately invalidated the answer. The correct answer required the concept of playing for/in or with the team.

Many candidates found the answer to **Question 34** hard, often responding with *major/mayor/mayer moment* rather than the correct answer *meilleur moment*.

The more able candidates found **Question 35** accessible but found **Question 36** more demanding with less than half the candidates scoring a mark here. The vast majority of candidates attempted to answer both of these two questions.

In **Question 37**, there were many correct answers of *plus calme* but less able candidates omitted the *plus* and could not be awarded the mark.

In **Question 38**, many candidates were able to supply two correct parts to the answer (*gagner la Coupe du Monde*) but at the lower end of the mark range, mistakes in spelling *Coupe* (*cup/cop/cope*) meant that the mark could not be awarded. Many candidates scored the mark in the second part of the question, correctly identifying the concept of *marier*.

A large number of candidates correctly answered **Question 39**. In this question, the less able candidates correctly identified *famille* but were unable to add the first required part of the answer: *vie*.

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<p>Paper 0520/12 Listening</p>
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Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in November 2016. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidates' performance on this paper was similar in standard to that of November 2016. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- There were more cases this year of candidates ticking an incorrect number of boxes on **Question 16**. Candidates should be reminded to tick six boxes on this exercise.
- Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to overwrite answers in pen but in so doing, they left first attempts at ticks or words. This was often very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Poor handwriting again made some scripts difficult to read.
- Many candidates appreciated 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 may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

General comments

This paper was found to be generally in keeping with the demands made in November 2016. The candidature overall performed quite well on the first two sections of the paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with weaker candidates being able to be successful on a few questions in each of the two exercises.

The candidature was usually familiar with the rubrics and was aware of the requirements of the test types. There was some evidence, however, that a few candidates were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple-choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were 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 was tested in the first two sections of the test was drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates in many centres had appreciated the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates were usually aware of the need not to add extra material which was not on the recording and were also usually aware of the need not to answer or infer from general knowledge.

Examiners reported some cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly. Any material which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should be clearly crossed out.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is **not** extra reading time before the examination starts. It is very important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they will 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 them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested numbers, places in a station, food and drink, rooms in the house, leisure activities, weather and food utensils. Rubrics and visuals were generally well understood by candidates.

Question 1 was usually very well attempted with nearly all candidates being successful. On **Question 2**, many candidates could successfully identify *omelette*, but incorrect answers were often given as option **B**. **Question 3** was done very well but some candidates found it hard to identify the very common word *pain* on **Question 4**. **Questions 5** and **6** were well done. Fair attempts were made on **Question 7**. The hardest question on this exercise was **Question 8** with only half the candidates correctly identifying *cuillères*.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured an advert for a hotel. Questions tested months, souvenirs, leisure activities and accommodation details. Candidates approached this exercise confidently and generally did well with very good numbers being successful on **Questions 9, 10, 12, 13** and **15**. **Question 9** required candidates to write the month *novembre* and most were able to offer an acceptable spelling. On **Question 11**, weaker candidates chose option **A**, the musical concert, which was the activity for adults rather than the children. This showed a need to read the question more carefully. Some candidates were unaware of the meaning of the fairly frequently occurring *demi-pension*.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was quite good with the majority of candidates scoring well. Candidates are, mostly, well accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still, however, cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates should also be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks **or** crosses are both acceptable, but are likely to cause confusion when used together. They should not attempt to put a tick and a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

Candidates heard four young people talking about the environment. The topic area was accessible to candidates with a fair number scoring at least 3 or 4 marks. Even the weaker candidates were able to score 1 or 2 marks here. There was no discernible pattern of incorrectly placed ticks.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates heard an interview in two parts in which a young French girl, Julie, talked about her stay in Japan. In the first part of the interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists 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.

Candidates this year generally found the first part of this exercise quite demanding. Candidates made a good start to this exercise and nearly all answered **Question 17** correctly. On **Question 18**, fair attempts were made by most candidates but many incorrect attempts at *culture* were made such as *couture*. On **Question 19**, some confused *joli* with the name *Julie* which was seen in the statement to be corrected. Such candidates had not read the statement clearly and had not realised that they were looking for a word to describe the flat. On **Question 20**, some candidates confused *matériel*, the correct answer, with *matière*. Candidates fared better on **Question 21** and good numbers were able to produce *parler*.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

The second part of the exercise was generally well attempted. On **Question 22**, over half the candidates gained the mark for an acceptable spelling of *mercredi*. Some invalidated their answers by adding *lundi à vendredi* (which they had heard on the recording before *mercredi*), and others wrote *lundi* or *vendredi*. In order to be successful on **Question 23**, candidates needed to write both *beaucoup* and *examens*. Some just wrote that they studied a lot but did not realise that students had to work hard as they had a lot of exams. Better attempts were made on **Question 24**, with good numbers able to express that the students were stressed. **Question 25** was very well answered with nearly all candidates able to offer an acceptable rendering of *technologie*.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Amélie who talked about her holidays with a friend in France.

The topic area was generally accessible and usually candidates made a fair attempt at questions with even the weakest candidates being able to score 1 or 2 marks. Only the very best candidates scored 5 or 6 marks here and the exercise discriminated well at this stage of the examination. Candidates generally found the last three questions easier than the first three questions on this exercise. On questions answered incorrectly, there did not appear to be any pattern of incorrect answers with options which had proved more attractive than others. The question type used was multiple-choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events in the past.

The questions found to be most challenging were **Questions 26** and **28**, both of which required not just an understanding of one specific detail but more in terms of global skills in listening to several statements before deciding on an answer. Candidates need to be reminded to use the longer reading time well on this exercise in order to read the questions and all the options thoroughly before attempting an answer. The question which candidates answered best on the exercise was **Question 27**. About half the candidature scored the mark on **Question 29** and could identify that Amélie was afraid of having an accident. On **Question 30**, the better candidates were able to identify that the advantage Amélie found when holidaying with parents was that she had more time to relax. This depended upon candidates being able to understand *quand on part en vacances en famille... les parents font tout le travail et c'est plus reposant pour les enfants*. Incorrect answers here often featured option **D**. On **Question 31**, about half the candidates understood that Amélie's parents trusted her.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

As in November 2016, this was found to be an appropriately demanding and challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Some questions were only answered well by the very best candidates. Many weaker candidates did however make commendable efforts to answer at least some questions and were usually able to score a few marks. Candidates heard an interview with Jérémy who had lived in several different countries. There was a mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise.

The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. Candidates should be reminded not to write long answers as sometimes they add extra detail which is not on the recording. This can distort and invalidate an otherwise correct answer. It is appreciated that candidates may try to write quickly but they do need to be aware that if writing is unclear or incorrect, and if spaces appear in and split words inappropriately, that this may also invalidate their answers. Examiners need to be able to see an answer clearly as the addition (or the omission) of a letter can change the meaning of a word. Candidates also need to be reminded that they should not require the Examiner to choose from two options or a list of answers in which the correct answer may feature. Such answers count as invalidation

and do not score the mark. Candidates also need to be reminded to make good use of the reading time and to make sure they read the questions carefully and understand exactly what is being asked rather than trying to write down too much detail from the recording. The questions are phrased in such a way so as to keep their written input to a minimum.

Candidates attempted the first and last parts of this exercise with the most confidence. **Question 32** required candidates to understand that Jérémy's father worked in a bank or was a banker. Spellings of *banquier* were often incorrect. To gain the mark on **Question 33**, it was necessary to give an acceptable rendering of part of the verb *découvrir* and a correct spelling of the word *pays*. This proved to be beyond all but the more able candidates. Better attempts were made on **Question 34** with fair numbers identifying *États-Unis*. Incorrect answers often featured *Paris* here. **Questions 35** and **36** were the most challenging on this exercise. On **Question 35**, candidates needed to be able to identify *vie sociale*. On **Question 36**, some found it difficult to express the verb *sortir* and *souvent*. Answers here were often invalidated as many candidates thought it was the parents going out. The most able candidates understood that it was the young people going out often and not their parents. Better attempts were made on **Question 37**. Examiners accepted as the correct answer synonyms for the verb *venir*, such as *aller*, *arriver* and *partir*, together with the word *France*. The last part of the exercise was attempted more confidently. On **Question 38**, good numbers were able to identify that the school programme was different. Many were also able to identify that Jérémy was bilingual on **Question 39(ii)** but weaker candidates were often unable to give an acceptable spelling of *bilingue*. Answers such as *il parle deux langues* also gained the mark. Just over half the candidates gained the mark on **Question 40**, which required them to identify the concept that Jérémy was adaptable.

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<p>Paper 0520/13 Listening</p>
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Key messages

- The format and question types of the Listening test remained as in November 2016. Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.
- The candidate performance on this paper was similar in standard to that of November 2016. As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was found to be the most challenging but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.
- There were more cases this year of candidates ticking an incorrect number of boxes on **Question 16**. Candidates should be reminded to tick six boxes on this exercise.
- Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Some candidates wrote first in pencil and then appeared to overwrite answers in pen but in so doing, they left first attempts at ticks or words. This was often very difficult to read. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.
- Poor handwriting again made some scripts difficult to read.
- Many candidates appreciated 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 may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.
- Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

General comments

This paper was found to be generally in keeping with the demands made in November 2016. The candidature overall performed quite well on the first two sections of the paper. Nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with weaker candidates being able to be successful on a few questions in each of the two exercises.

The candidature was usually familiar with the rubrics and was aware of the requirements of the test types. There was some evidence, however, that a few candidates were unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple-choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were 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 was tested in the first two sections of the test was drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates in many centres had appreciated the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates were usually aware of the need not to add extra material which was not on the recording and were also usually aware of the need not to answer or infer from general knowledge.

Examiners reported some cases of poor handwriting which, at times, made it very difficult to read answers whether they were brief or long. Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly. Any material which a candidate does not wish the Examiner to consider should be clearly crossed out.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous.

Centres are reminded that reading time for each exercise is included in the pauses throughout the paper and there is **not** extra reading time before the examination starts. It is very important to give candidates practice on past papers to ensure that they are familiar with the rubrics and when the pauses occur. It also helps to remind candidates that they will 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 was intended to give them a confident start to the paper. The extracts were straightforward and short. The vocabulary areas tested times, places, transport, food and animals. Candidates coped well with the first four questions. On **Question 5**, about three quarters of the candidature knew *pâtes*. The last three questions were also well done by nearly all candidates. Rubrics had been well understood and cases of ticking more than one box were rare.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured information about a hotel near a theme park in France. Candidates generally made a good attempt at this exercise. Nearly all candidates answered **Questions 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15** very well but some were unsure about the correct time (*23 heures*) on **Question 9**. Some answered *20 heures* or *3 heures*. **Question 13** was the least well answered question on this exercise. Only half the candidature was familiar with the word *consigne*.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was generally good. Most candidates were accustomed to the exercise type and its requirements. There were still however cases of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates must be reminded to use a consistent method to indicate their answers: ticks or crosses are both acceptable, but are likely to cause confusion when used together. They should not attempt to put a tick and a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

Candidates heard four young people talking about their meals and eating out. This exercise was well done and good numbers of candidates scored at least 3 or 4 marks here. The topic area was clearly very accessible to candidates. On questions answered incorrectly, there was no clear pattern of incorrect ticks.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–21

In this exercise, candidates first heard an interview with a young gymnast, Émilie, and then an interview with Alex, a tennis player.

In the first interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists 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.

About half the candidates answered **Question 17** correctly. Incorrect answers frequently gave *participer* rather than *copier*. **Question 18** was well done by candidates who were clearly familiar with the word *devoirs*. The next question, **Question 19**, was found to be more difficult with only about half of the candidature correctly identifying *droit*. Better attempts were made on **Question 20** where candidates had to identify *passionnant*. **Question 21** was the most challenging with only about a third able to express *gagner* or the equally acceptable *faire de son mieux*.

Exercise 2 Questions 22–25

Candidates scored quite well on this second part of the exercise. On **Question 22**, nearly all candidates were able to answer *tennis* but found **Question 23** harder with only about a third of the candidates being able to identify the word *fort*. Better attempts were made at **Question 24** which required candidates to identify *5 ans*. Incorrect answers often featured attempts to write *50 ans*. Good numbers went on to score the final mark in this exercise and were able to express an acceptable rendering of *changer de club*. Incorrect attempts featured answers such as *exchanger de club* and *échanger de club*. Candidates need to be reminded to use the words in the question to help them listen very carefully as the key words often appear as cues in the recorded extract.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Gabrielle who talked about a trip she had recently made. The question type used was multiple-choice with written options. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events in the past. Performance was much in line with the performance seen on the comparable exercise in November 2016. The topic area was generally accessible and candidates made a good attempt at this exercise. Even the weaker candidates were usually able to score a few marks here. This was a suitably demanding exercise for this stage of the examination and candidates performed in much the same way as in the last series. A full range of marks was evident with a fair number scoring 3 or more marks. The questions least well done were **Questions 28** and **31**. On **Question 28**, candidates had to identify the concept of *pauvreté*. Incorrect answers often showed an assumption that Gabrielle had been shocked because her hotel was expensive. There was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers on other questions in this exercise. Good attempts were made on other questions.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

As in November 2016, this was found to be an appropriately challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Many weaker candidates made commendable efforts to answer at least a few questions and were usually able to score a few marks. Candidates heard an interview with Bertrand, whose son Pierre had saved the life of a young girl. There was a good mix of harder and more accessible questions on this last exercise. Most candidates scored some marks with some questions only being successfully answered by the most able, as intended. The questions were designed to make short responses possible and only a few candidates seemed unaware of this. Candidates should be reminded not to write long answers as sometimes they add extra detail which is not on the recording. This can distort and invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Candidates made quite a good start to the exercise on **Question 32** with good numbers being able to convey the correct season *hiver*. Less successful attempts were made on **Question 33** which required candidates to understand *il avait neigé*. The wording of the question started *Pendant la nuit* and this was a careful cue for candidates. Some answered incorrectly *glace* as they had heard this later in the recording and did not realise that it referred to the river being covered in ice. Attempts to spell *nager* were also seen on some incorrect answers showing a need to make sure that questions are read carefully. Candidates also found **Question 34** difficult. About a third of candidates did render an acceptable version of *cris* but some invalidated their answer by adding *le jeune fils*. **Question 35** proved to be one of the most challenging on the exercise with only the most able candidates correctly expressing the concept of slipping. The word *glisser* was not commonly known. On **Question 36**, many found it difficult to identify the word *blouson* but better attempts were made on **Question 37** with the majority of candidates able to give an acceptable rendering of the concept that Bertrand did not or could not swim. On **Question 38**, the word *tirer* was known by only the very best candidates. A slightly better attempt was made on **Question 39** with a fair number being able to identify the word *lentement*. Candidates fared better on **Question 40** with about half of them scoring the mark and giving an acceptable spelling of *courageux*.

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<p>Paper 0520/21 Reading</p>
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Key messages

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

- select carefully the information from the text that answers the question, in particular in the last two exercises,
- check which tenses are used in the questions,
- remember that the questions follow the order of the text.

General comments

Candidates appeared to have sufficient time to complete the paper and almost all candidates were appropriately entered for the examination. Where candidates change their mind about an answer in a multiple-choice question, it is important that they make it clear which tick is to be regarded as their final answer.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

This exercise proved accessible to almost all candidates, although **Question 2** (*la pêche*) and **Question 5** (*rasoir*) were not universally known.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Again, scores for this exercise were generally high and full marks were common. Some candidates had difficulty with **Question 8**.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This exercise was accessible for candidates, although **Question 13** proved challenging for some, with option **C** being selected instead of **A**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Some candidates appeared to make use only of perceived meaning of the option words and the text, and did not use the grammatical markers in the sentences to assist with narrowing down their options. Some candidates reversed the order of the first two answers. *Carte* was sometimes chosen for **Question 20**.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of a blog from Élodie on the subject of a recent change in her life. The text was mostly straightforward and the vocabulary was familiar. Most candidates were able to cope with the demands of the task. Although long answers are not required, and often only a few words would answer the question, many candidates chose to copy a couple of sentences from the text for each question. For this exercise, extraneous material and incorrect tenses are often ignored as long as they do not, in some way, invalidate the candidate's correct response.

For **Question 23**, some candidates went back to the beginning of the text, often writing the identical answer they had already put for **Question 21** (*au début de l'année*). The questions follow the order of the text. The omission of *me/se* in **Question 27** changed the meaning for some candidates. However, the majority of candidates performed very well on this exercise.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

In **Section 3**, examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail, and for candidates to be more selective of the information they take from the reading texts when correcting the false statements. Candidates are reminded that they should not merely write the opposite of the statement and need to look for the alternative information.

Most candidates were able to identify successfully the false statements and were able to correct **Question 31**. With **Question 32**, failure to mention the storms was a common problem. A straight lift was all that was required here.

Question 34 proved difficult and very few candidates were able to cope with the manipulation of the direct speech needed to correct the statement.

Exercise 2 Questions 35–41

This final exercise was intended to be the most challenging part of the paper. Where candidates lost marks it was often through writing too much and including information that was not necessary to answer the question.

Some candidates left answers blank in this segment, and only a small minority scored full marks.

In **Question 35**, some candidates wrote as part of their answer that the girls wanted to finish their studies, which demonstrated that the question had not been fully understood. Candidates need to realise that towards the end of a Reading paper, the questions must be read in detail and not just for gist.

Almost all candidates were able to answer **Question 39**, but **Question 37** and **Question 38** proved particularly difficult. In both cases, candidates tended to write answers that contained the correct information, but did not answer the question posed. This is acceptable in **Section 2**, but in **Section 3** more emphasis is placed on the understanding of the question as well as the text, and merely locating the answer is not sufficient.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 0520/22 Reading</p>

Key messages

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

- select carefully the information from the text that answers the question, in particular in the last two exercises,
- check whether any manipulation is required in order to answer the question in **Section 3**,
- attempt all questions, especially the multiple-choice questions.

General comments

Almost all candidates completed the paper, so candidates appeared to have sufficient time, although some candidates did leave questions unanswered. Examiners saw a full range of performance and almost all candidates were appropriately entered for the examination. Scripts were mostly legible but there were instances where candidates had crossed out work and it was not always clear what their intended response was.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

The opening exercise posed few difficulties for many candidates. *VTT* in **Question 2** was not universally known and **Question 5** (pile) gave problems, with options **B** and **D** being the most frequent incorrect answers given.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

Scores for this exercise were generally high and full marks were common. **Question 10** appeared to be the most difficult for candidates.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

Although **Questions 11** and **13** posed particular problems for candidates, most were able to show their understanding of the text.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Although most candidates were able to answer **Questions 17** and **18**, the other three questions gave problems. It was noticeable that candidates frequently selected a distractor that fitted grammatically (such as *semaine* for **Question 20**), which perhaps shows that a greater number of candidates are making use of grammatical markers than in the past, rather than concentrating solely on the perceived meaning of the option words and the text.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–29

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of a blog about Laure's recent horse-riding course. The text was mostly straightforward and the subject matter was familiar. Most candidates were able to cope with the demands of the task. Although long answers are not required, and often only a few words would answer the question, many candidates chose to copy a couple of sentences from the text for each question. For this exercise, extraneous material and incorrect tenses are usually ignored as long as they do not, in some way, invalidate the candidate's correct response.

In **Question 23**, some candidates saw *car* in the text and picked this as the mode of transport rather than *train*. With **Question 25**, a significant number of candidates wrote about the young people travelling by minibus, rather than chatting in it. Where candidates got **Questions 27** and **28** wrong, they had usually selected material relating to horse-riding and horse health.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30–34

In **Section 3**, Examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail and for candidates to be more selective of the information they take from the texts when correcting the false statements. Candidates are reminded that they should not merely write the opposite of the statement and need to look for the alternative information.

Although most candidates correctly identified **Questions 31** and **34** as being false, only about half of candidates realised that **Question 30** was false, frequently choosing **Question 32** in its place. As a justification can only be credited if *Faux* has been ticked, this inevitably affected the mark for justifications too.

In terms of the justifications, for **Question 30**, a straightforward lift was enough, and for **Question 31**, many candidates realised that a simple substitution into the original sentence corrected it. **Question 34** required candidates to see that a straightforward manipulation was necessary, and not all were able to do that.

Exercise 2 Questions 36–41

This final exercise was intended to be the most challenging part of the paper and at least some of the questions required candidates to manipulate their selected information from the text. Where candidates lost marks it was often through writing too much and including information that did not answer the question. Candidates are advised to think very carefully whether the information they are writing is needed to answer the question. It is not enough for the answer to contain the correct information: the format of the answer should fit the question from a grammatical point of view so that candidates are demonstrating clear understanding of the question.

Question 35 was the least well answered and, in many cases, it was a case of candidates not fully thinking about what was being asked. The question asked what Émilie often did *whilst eating her lunch*. Clearly, answers stating that she ate her lunch did not show understanding, even if they also contained the information looked for.

Similarly, many candidates wrote *il n'arrivait pas à nager* for **Question 36**. **Question 38** was generally well answered, but a number of candidates thought that the boy had helped Émilie from the water in **Question 40** and that the boy had left without giving his name and address in **Question 41**.

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<p>Paper 0520/23 Reading</p>

Key messages

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

- ensure that all questions are answered,
- make any alterations to an answer unambiguous,
- tick no more than two sentences as *Vrai* in **Section 3**,
- ensure that the wording of answers follows logically from the question,
- avoid trying to include too much information.

General comments

The majority of candidates dealt confidently with the variety of reading comprehension exercise types on this paper. The paper offered an appropriate challenge and gradient of difficulty and a range of performance was observed. Standards of legibility and presentation were generally good. All candidates appeared to have ample time to complete the paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1

Questions 1–5

This exercise was handled with a high degree of success by the majority of candidates. Occasionally in **Question 2**, option **A** was chosen instead of **D**. In **Question 5**, *timbre* was unfamiliar to some candidates.

Exercise 2

Questions 6–10

This exercise was very well done. Errors were rare.

Exercise 3

Questions 11–15

This final exercise in **Section 1** was generally well understood. Occasionally *internat* in **Question 11** was not chosen, *stade* being the favoured alternative. In **Question 12**, option **C** was commonly chosen instead of **B**. The remaining three questions in this exercise were usually answered correctly.

Section 2

Exercise 1

Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. The majority of candidates handled this task with a fair degree of success. Candidates should be aware that the list contains words which can fit the structure of the statements grammatically but which do not show comprehension of the text. Most candidates did choose vocabulary items which fitted grammatically and many showed clear understanding of the text and the statements by completing all the statements accurately.

Exercise 2

Questions 21–30

For this exercise, candidates read an email from Lucas on the topic of his fifteenth birthday celebrations. This was a straightforward exercise requiring candidates to understand questions in French, select the appropriate information from the text and to write down an appropriate response. Most candidates scored very well on this exercise, showing good understanding of the question words (e.g. *où*, *combien*, *pourquoi*, *quand*) and of the text. It is to be remembered that long answers are not required and the space allocated to the answer is normally sufficient. Full sentence answers are not required and often very brief answers are the best, for example **Question 21** (*15 ans*), **Question 23** (*une vingtaine*) and **Question 25** (*en ville*). Sometimes a slightly longer answer is needed but it can be a selective 'lift'. For example, for **Question 29** (*il a dit à tout le monde de partir*).

Section 3

In this section, Examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail and for candidates to be more selective of the information they take from the texts. For certain questions, some manipulation of the language may be necessary, for example by changing from first to third person.

Exercise 1

Questions 31–35

For this exercise, candidates had to read a longer text about tourism in France. The rubric instructs candidates to read the text, tick *Vrai* or *Faux* against five statements about the text and to write corrected version of the statements they have picked out as false. There is a reminder that three of the five statements are false. This was helpful information for the majority of candidates. Selection of the true/false statements was generally successful. Only the false statements need to be corrected. Candidates should be reminded that it is not enough to make a false statement negative to correct it.

Question 32 was normally correctly chosen as false. For the correction of this statement it was necessary to select the information from the text, e.g. *Vanessa devait visiter des centaines de restaurants pour contrôler les cuisines*. Many candidates were successful with this.

Question 33 was also a false statement and the short answer *ces restaurants devaient fermer* was sufficient.

Question 34 was the third false statement. The simplest valid answer would have been *son travail était de surveiller les forêts à cheval*. The inclusion of the *donc* from the text would have been seen as an invalidating addition.

Exercise 2

Questions 36–42

This final exercise required the reading and understanding of a longer passage about Mathieu who planned and undertook a long cycle tour through Europe. Comprehension was tested by means of questions and answers in French. Most candidates attempted answers to all questions.

Question 36 was best answered by the selective lift from the final sentence of the first paragraph (i.e. *qu'il ne connaissait pas très bien l'Europe*).

Question 37 was more challenging in that it required some manipulation of the language to be answered.

Question 38 was generally well answered, though some candidates added invalidating extra information which showed disregard of the word *surtout* in the question.

Question 39 was less well answered as it demanded manipulation of the text from first person speech to an appropriate third person statement.

Question 40 was generally successfully answered.

Question 41 was successfully answered by those who resisted the temptation to say too much. *Il avait 35 kg de matériel* was sufficient here.

Question 42 required a precise answer to the question so copying the whole final sentence of the text was wrong here. Selected text, with slight manipulation, for example *un homme pauvre lui avait donné son lit*, would have been rewarded.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/41
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should read the whole task carefully before starting to write their answers.
- Candidates are advised to highlight or underline key words in questions and sub-tasks.
- Candidates should ensure that they respond in the same time frame as used in the question.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation. When candidates write in pen over an initial draft in pencil their work is often difficult to read.

General comments

The full ability range was represented. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1

One mark was awarded for each noun which identifies something represented by the illustrations. Candidates should be reminded that if they cannot recall a particular word, they are free to add different nouns which fit the context of the question. Definite/indefinite articles are not required.

Question 2

Communication

One mark was awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Candidates are not required to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks. Candidates should remember that the most effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

Candidates are reminded that the maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

Language

The published Mark Scheme offers a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use basic sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, a blog, a story line to be continued.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns: this session there was clear evidence of candidates not taking advantage of the vocabulary and structures provided in the rubric.

In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance. Candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs. There were instances again this session of candidates who were able to maintain control of verbs and who exceeded this total.

Candidates should be reminded of the correct use of verbal structures such as *avant de* and *après avoir / après être*. These constructions can only be used when the action refers to the subject of the main verb, e.g. *en arrivant en ville, il a commencé à pleuvoir*, there is no reward for the first element.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses (e.g. *quand, si, parce que, car, qui*), object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions, (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (*ne...jamais, ne...plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions (e.g. *depuis, pendant, pour*) and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter.

It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Au camping

Candidates were asked to write a list of 8 things which can be found on a campsite.

To maximise their chances of scoring the 5 marks available, candidates are well advised to provide a list of eight items. The eight pictures only serve as a guide and candidates are free to use different items provided that they fit the context of the question. *Mer, plage, piscine, glaces* and *restaurant* were well known by the vast majority. Some candidates were not so secure with the correct spelling of *douche, tente* or *caravane*

Question 2: À la maison

For this exercise, candidates were asked to write an essay of 80–90 words. It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates kept to the recommended word count.

The vast majority of candidates scored 8 marks or more for Communication.

To ensure that they score the 10 marks available, candidates are advised to:

- check that they have addressed every task and sub-task,
- produce clear and concise answers which remain focused on the task,
- offer a variety of choices,
- write in well-defined paragraphs.

Task 1 was very well done as candidates were able to state *dans ma famille il y a... personnes*. Those who listed who the people were scored extra communication points.

Many candidates gave a long list of what they like to have for breakfast in **Task 2** and were able to score up to 3 Communication marks. The use of *j'aime manger* and *j'aime boire* increased the number of ticks which could be awarded as two verbs had been used. Some vocabulary items could not be rewarded as they did not communicate a clear message, e.g. *juice, poison, coffe, aeu*.

Task 3 was often misunderstood by candidates as they had not noticed the key word *aider*. Some candidates listed activities they do at home during the day instead of what they do to help. *Vaisselle* and *repassage* were often misspelt.

Task 4 was very well done and many candidates gained many Communication marks as they listed all the activities that keep them busy/entertained in the evening. The most popular activities were doing homework and watching television. Many also mentioned eating with their family or doing some sporting activity.

In **Task 5**, an idea of future had to be communicated. The use of *le week-end prochain* followed by a verb in the present tense was rewarded for Communication. *Le week-end prochain, je vais aller au cinéma avec mes amis* or *le week-end prochain, je vais aller à une fête* were common choices. Candidates were also expected to explain why. Explanations were rewarded even when the activity was not clear.

An appropriate verb needs to be used for a Communication mark to be awarded. The use of *pour le petit déjeuner, j'ai du pain* or *le soir, je joue du sport* could not be rewarded.

The vast majority of candidates scored 4 or 5 for the Language mark. They produced pieces of work which were coherent, showed that they could use relevant verbs and vocabulary with a fair degree of accuracy. Some candidates were not secure in the use of the future tense. The use of a past tense with *le week-end prochain*, distorted the meaning of the message being conveyed and also affected the Language mark.

Section 2

Candidates have to choose one essay out of three options: a letter, a blog and a story line to continue. There are 10 marks for Communication, 8 marks for Verbs and 12 marks for Other linguistic features.

It was pleasing to see that most candidates kept to the recommended word count.

Question 3 (a): Le club des écologistes

This option was the least popular of the three.

Communication

For the first two tasks, candidates were expected to use a verb in a past tense. However, many candidates used verbs in the present tense, reducing their Communication mark to a maximum of 1 instead of 2.

Many candidates were very ambitious in terms of what they wanted to include, unfortunately they did not have the adequate language skills to carry it off. Those who simply stated *nous avons nettoyé le parc* or *nous avons recyclé le papier* in **Task 1** easily scored the 2 marks available.

In **Task 2**, the head teacher's reaction could have been straightforward, e.g. *le directeur/la directrice était ravi(e)*. To maximise their chances of communicating a clear message, candidates may need to move away from the actual words contained in the task in favour of a more basic approach.

Task 3 was a double task as candidates were expected to state what ecological problems there are in their area and why. Some candidates were able to explain that pollution was a major problem. In response to *pourquoi*, reasons or consequences were rewarded. A sentence such as *dans ma région, la pollution de l'air est un problème car il y a trop de voitures* was sufficient to score the 4 Communication marks available. Candidates who stated *le principal problème est la contamination* without defining what was contaminated, could only score 1 mark, as their sentence did not communicate fully.

Question 3 (b): Les études, l'emploi et le futur

This essay was, on the whole, very well done and many candidates scored 7 or more for Communication.

As in **Question 3(a)**, there was confusion in terms of which tenses were required. Many candidates used a verb in the present tense for the first two tasks where a past tense was expected.

For **Task 1**, candidates were expected to name at least two subjects that they had studied at school. Many candidates were able to give a long list of subjects. Some candidates could not score the 2 Communication marks available as they used the noun *étude* as a verb.

Many candidates successfully fulfilled **Task 2** as they produced a very straightforward *j'ai décidé de continuer mes études après mes examens*. Some candidates were rather unsecure with their use of possessive adjectives and retained *vos études après vos examens*. In **Section 2**, candidates need to demonstrate an appropriate use of *mon/ma/mes*.

For **Task 3**, candidates had to explain why/why not they would continue studying after their exams. Many stated that they would like to go to university in the future or that further studies would enable them to get a better job.

In **Task 4**, whilst many candidates scored the 2 marks available for stating what jobs young people do to earn some money, they often used the noun *travail* rather than the correct form of the verb *travailler*. Some misunderstood the task and wrote about state projects or what they will do after their studies. Some highlighted the lack of employment in their country.

For the last task, candidates were expected to say what their dream job would be. The use of a verb in the conditional was, therefore, required. *Je voudrais/j'aimerais devenir/travailler/être...* were all acceptable ways of communicating the required message. There was some confusion with the spelling of some of the careers chosen and some candidates were unable to produce an acceptable form of *médecin*, *architecte* or *avocat*.

Question 3 (c): Des vacances de neige

This question was, by far, the most popular option.

Candidates need to be reminded that their essay should start from the given introductory sentence *les premiers jours, il n'y avait pas de neige, alors...*

The beginning of a letter to a friend or making general comments about winter holidays are irrelevant and gain no credit for Communication or Verbs.

In **Task 1**, most candidates could successfully describe the different activities they did during the days without snow.

Task 2 was just as successful as candidates could accurately mention *j'ai fait du ski* or *j'ai joué dans la neige*. Candidates who had given more than one activity for **Task 1** or **Task 2** could score another 2 Communication marks.

In **Task 3**, candidates who simply stated *la station de ski était belle* easily scored the 2 marks available. Some candidates were a bit more ambitious and wrote *j'ai pensé qu'il y avait trop de monde dans la station de ski*. The use of varied subordinate clauses is expected if candidates want to achieve a satisfactory mark for Other linguistic features.

For **Task 4**, candidates had to express an opinion about the holidays. Most wrote how much they had enjoyed their stay in the mountains.

It is important that candidates increase their ability to use a good number of adjectives to describe their opinions and reactions in both a positive and negative way. The use of the very basic *bien*, *super* or *intéressant*, does not add any interest to the writing. It was pleasing to see that some candidates had been well trained to use more sophisticated vocabulary (*époustouflant*, *merveilleux*, *incroyable* or *désastreux*) when expressing their feelings.

To score in the top three mark bands for Other linguistic features, candidates need to show that they are in control of what they write. They need to demonstrate that they can use a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary, and avoid basic errors with common words, genders, adjectival agreements and prepositions.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/42
Writing

Key messages

- There was some improvement in the manipulation of verbs: this must be maintained.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must respect the tense requirement in the final task.
- The recommended word count for both **Question 2** and **Question 3** is not mandatory; candidates should not feel obliged to remove significant detail to meet the word count.
- Candidates should read carefully each of the options in **Question 3** and choose the one which best allows them to demonstrate the linguistic knowledge they have.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should make sure that they can use common vocabulary and structures accurately.
- In **Question 3**, to access the top bands for Other linguistic features, candidates must demonstrate that they can use the complex structures which are detailed in the specification.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation. When candidates write in pen over an initial draft in pencil their work is often difficult to read.

General comments

The full ability range was represented. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1

One mark was awarded for each noun which identifies a food item represented by the illustrations. Candidates should be reminded that if they cannot recall a particular word, they are free to add different nouns which fit the context of the question. Definite/indefinite articles are not required.

Question 2

Communication

One mark was awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Candidates are not required to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks. Candidates should remember that the most effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

Candidates should remember that the word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If they write over 90 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Unfortunately, some candidates again crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

Language

The published Mark Scheme offers a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use basic sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, a blog, a story line to be continued.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns: this session there was clear evidence of candidates not taking advantage of the vocabulary and structures provided in the rubric.

In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance. Candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs. There were instances again this session of candidates who were able to maintain control of verbs and who exceeded this total.

Candidates should be reminded of the correct use of verbal structures such as *avant de* and *après avoir / après être*. There were many who seemed not to be aware that these constructions can only be used when the action refers to the subject of the main verb, e.g. *en arrivant en ville, il a commencé à pleuvoir*, there is no reward for the first element.

When some conjunctions are used, grammar rules require strict observance of a sequence of tense, e.g. *si j'ai le choix, j'habiterais à la campagne* is incorrect by these rules. The candidate should have written either *si j'avais le choix, j'habiterais à la campagne* or *si j'ai le choix, j'habiterai à la campagne*.

There is increasing evidence of candidates using the subjunctive. This is not always an indicator of linguistic competence, especially when the verbs carrying the details demanded by the tasks are incorrect. Some candidates used the subjunctive mood numerous times, often clumsily to convey ideas which would normally be expressed by a more simple verbal structure. Examiners reported frequent use of *autant que je sache*; again, this was not always appropriately used, e.g. *autant que je sache j'aime vivre en ville*.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses (e.g. *quand, si, parce que, car, qui*), object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions, (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (*ne...jamais, ne...plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions (e.g. *depuis, pendant, pour*) and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. This session, there was less evidence of many of these structures, particularly object pronouns.

It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

There were many inconsistencies in work seen this session, e.g. confusion between *dernier* and *derrière*, the misspelling of *maintenant, beaucoup, par exemple*, the lack of adjectival agreements, e.g. *une grand ville*, the lack of elision in, for example, *parce qu'il y a* were all frequently seen.

Candidates showed that they were familiar with *à mon avis* and *selon moi* when communicating their opinions. However, too many candidates used these inappropriately: *selon moi, je pense que...* or *à mon avis, j'aime...*

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Au café

This straightforward question provided candidates with an opportunity to establish a base for further success.

The pictures gave clear guidance of what type of food items were required. Candidates had little difficulty naming five. For the most part, candidates used the words for the items illustrated. The published mark scheme gives full coverage of the range of words which candidates also chose to offer. There were no notable difficulties but the spelling of *glace* and *fromage* were not always secure and the final 'e' in *frite*, *salade*, *soupe*, *viande* was often missing.

Question 2: Mon cousin/Ma cousine

Communication

Candidates were successful in conveying many relevant details. The individual tasks offered much opportunity to give a range of information. Full details of acceptable answers are in the published Mark Scheme.

Some candidates crossed out valid information and did not therefore achieve the maximum mark. The guidance which recommends a piece of 80–90 words is not a requirement.

Candidates were able to follow the suggestions in **Task 1**, giving the name and age of their cousin. Other pieces of information such as the cousin's birthday and nationality were also rewarded. Examiners commented that candidates lost marks because they could not provide the correct verb form *elle/il s'appelle*. A high proportion of candidates offered the inaccurate *elle/il est 15 ans*: this incorrect usage is tolerated at this level, however more candidates should be using the correct form.

There was only one opportunity to gain a mark in **Task 2** and most candidates gained that mark. There were a very small number of candidates who confused *habiter* with *habiller*.

In **Task 3**, candidates consistently gained many marks for information such as *il a les yeux verts / elle étudie à l'université au Canada*, etc. In fact, almost any detail about the cousin's physical appearance, character, interests and work was rewarded. It is important to note that there was much evidence of uncertainty over the spelling of *cheveux* often rendered as *cheveaux*. This is a recurring error which continues to deprive candidates of marks.

In **Task 4**, most candidates appreciated that they needed to write about how they spent time with their cousin. There were various acceptable ways of conveying this information, e.g. *nous jouons au foot / je fais du shopping avec ma cousine*, etc. Extra marks were available for the reasons, e.g. *parce que nous adorons le sport / nous aimons les vêtements*, etc. Some candidates did not respond to this second part of the task; however this omission did not incur a penalty nor did it have an impact on the overall mark, as there were so many other opportunities for gaining marks.

Task 5 required reference to their future holiday with their cousin. Candidates who did not take note of the tense used in the question and who responded using the present tense also gained a mark (e.g. *je pars au Canada avec mon cousin*).

Language

Most candidates could formulate sentences, a requirement for the award of marks for Communication. However, although the verb forms were not always secure, the intended meanings were conveyed effectively enough, which meant that most candidates scored at least 3 marks. It is important that candidates remember to use the tense indicated in the task: this especially applies to the final task of this question. It is a regular requirement that candidates use an acceptable form of the future tense, e.g. *nous allons partir / nous partirons*. More candidates would have achieved 5 marks here if they had respected that rule.

Section 2

Candidates must look carefully at each of the three options and choose the question which they are best equipped to answer.

Question 3 (a): La visite d'une personne célèbre

This question attracted about 39% of candidates. The interests of young people were well reflected in the choice of visitor. Sports people, especially footballers, were the most favoured. There were also a number of accounts of visits by female singers and actors. There were a few who chose to write about scientists, doctors and those with a background in humanitarian work.

Communication

For **Task 1**, candidates were required to convey the idea of how the guest had achieved success. Not all candidates understood that this information needed to be in a past tense. Those who communicated the notion using a present tense gained only 1 mark.

Answers to **Task 2** also required a past tense. Some chose to say what the guest did, whilst others chose to refer to more social activities or even to mention something they did for the guest.

In **Task 3**, most candidates were able to convey at least a simple explanation for their admiring the visitor; usually this was related to their character or appearance. Others focused on the person's achievements. Some gave evidence of the person's humanitarian work. For others, their admiration was something more personal (e.g. *elle me motive*).

For **Task 4**, candidates needed to use a future or conditional tense to say who they would like to invite to their school in the future. Marks were awarded for identifying a person and their field of activity and, for **Task 5**, giving a reason for this choice. The most successful candidates neatly linked both tasks. It should be remembered that the mark for the explanation was available to candidates even if they did not communicate effectively the information required in **Task 4**.

Verbs

It was possible to respond to this question using a range of very familiar verbs. However, the marks in this category were generally less good than for **Question 3(b)**.

Candidates who recognised the need for a verb in the past tense were not always careful in writing. Common errors included the omission of the acute accent on the past participle of *-er* verbs, the omission of the auxiliary and the use of the wrong auxiliary.

Other linguistic features

The marks for the majority of candidates were drawn from the lower bands. The spelling and gender of common nouns were not sufficiently secure; this was true also of the associated adjectives.

In explaining their admiration for the guest there was an opportunity to use a more complex sentence pattern, e.g. *j'admire ce footballeur parce qu'il donne de l'argent aux pauvres*. Too often candidates do not remember the need for elision and write *parce que il donne*. Candidates could have used an object pronoun in this same context, e.g. *je l'admire*, but too frequently candidates wrote *j'admire lui*.

Question 3 (b): Un tour en ville

This was the most popular choice with more than 55% of candidates choosing this option. As candidates realised, it was possible to respond to each of the tasks in a straightforward way, using largely very familiar vocabulary and structures.

Communication

In **Task 1**, candidates were required to say what they did with their French friend during a visit to their town/city.

As with the first task, a past tense was needed in **Task 2** for the information about where they ate at midday with their friend. Many relayed simple information. Some did not gain a mark here because they thought they had to mention what they ate rather than where.

In **Task 3**, candidates were required to explain why their friend liked or disliked the town. The marks were awarded for any information in either a present or past tense. Again, many gained the marks for quite simple but valid information.

Task 4 and **Task 5** invited candidates to mention what they would like to do when they visited their friend in France. A future or conditional tense was required for the first element. Successful candidates linked the two tasks. It should be remembered that the mark for the explanation was available to candidates even if they did not communicate effectively the information in **Task 4**.

Verbs

The performance here was a little better than in **Question 3(a)**, partly because candidates found it easier to use a range of verbs to refer to their activities during the visit.

It was possible to respond to this question using a range of very familiar verbs.

Candidates who recognised the need for a verb in the past tense were not always careful in writing. Common errors included the omission of the acute accent on the past participle of *-er* verbs, the omission of the auxiliary and the use of the wrong auxiliary. The errors in the spelling of *visiter* are still common and these have an impact on the overall mark (e.g. *nous avons visté*).

Other linguistic features

There is some evidence to suggest that candidates showed a little more control of language generally in answers to this question. It was a familiar topic and the necessary vocabulary was well known; control of such basic vocabulary, gender, spelling, number is vital if they wish to progress beyond the lower bands. *Après avoir visité la ville, nous avons pris le déjeuner dans un petit restaurant où on peut manger des repas traditionnels / mon amie aime ma ville parce que c'est plus animé que chez elle* illustrate the kinds of more complex sentences expected. An example of a common problem might be the noun *les vacances*: too many candidates think that it is a singular rather than a plural noun, that it is masculine rather than feminine. Errors in the spelling are frequent too (e.g. *vancances*).

Question 3 (c): La tente était vide

Approximately 3% of candidates attempted this option: this marks a further decline in interest in this narrative option. It is expected that candidates recount a story prompted by the introduction in the rubric. Few of those who chose this option were able to maintain the story as required to produce a coherent account.

Communication

The question required candidates to write throughout in the past tense. There were a limited number of convincing accounts; consequently there are few examples of successful responses. There is a particular skill in writing a narrative of this kind: the answers offered this session suggest that few candidates have been prepared for this type of question.

In **Task 1**, candidates needed to explain where they spent the night given that their own possessions had disappeared.

Task 2 and **Task 3** invited details of what happened on the following day: most candidates were able to provide at least one such detail.

Task 4 was a regular feature of the narrative option and candidates were able to convey some relevant reaction to the events.

In **Task 5**, a summative comment about the holiday in general was required. Again candidates were capable of attempting a statement, positive or negative, about the experience.

Verbs

The few candidates who had wisely chosen this option demonstrated some consistent control of verbs in past tenses. The narrative allowed them to introduce a wide range of verbs: candidates who could use past tenses with confidence established good scores.

It was possible to respond to this question using a range of very familiar verbs.

Candidates were not always careful in writing. Common errors included the omission of the acute accent on the past participle of *-er* verbs, the omission of the auxiliary and the use of the wrong auxiliary. There were some problems with the imperfect form of *être*, e.g. *j'été surprise / les vacances était*.

Other linguistic features

With the freedom to introduce the timescale and the activities they wish in recounting what happened, candidates have the chance to show off a good range of clause types, prepositional and adverbial phrases and adjectives with appropriate agreements. The types of problems mentioned in **Questions 3(a)** and **3(b)** were prevalent here too.

FRENCH

Paper 0520/43
Writing

Key messages

- There was some improvement in the manipulation of verbs: this must be maintained.
- In **Question 2**, candidates must respect the tense requirement in the final task.
- The recommended word count for both **Question 2** and **Question 3** is not mandatory; candidates should not feel obliged to remove significant detail to meet the word count.
- Candidates should read carefully each of the options in **Question 3** and choose the one which best allows them to demonstrate the linguistic knowledge they have.
- Candidates aiming for the highest grades should make sure that they can use common vocabulary and structures accurately.
- In **Question 3**, to access the top bands for Other linguistic features, candidates must demonstrate that they can use the complex structures which are detailed in the specification.
- Candidates should always aim for a high standard of legibility and presentation. When candidates write in pen over an initial draft in pencil their work is often difficult to read.

General comments

The full ability range was represented. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Question 1

One mark was awarded for each noun which identifies an object represented by the illustrations. Candidates should be reminded that if they cannot recall a particular word, they are free to add different nouns which fit the context of the question. Definite/indefinite articles are not required.

Question 2

Communication

One mark was awarded for each relevant detail. It is a requirement that candidates use a verb for each piece of information in order to gain a mark. Candidates are not required to provide the same amount of information for each task, however candidates should be advised that marks for Communication are awarded only to information directly required by the tasks. Candidates should remember that the most effective way of gaining full marks is to address each task in a new sentence and where possible to add extra relevant detail.

Candidates should remember that the word count is a recommendation and not an absolute requirement. If they write over 90 words, they should not indiscriminately remove parts of their response. The act of editing a piece on completion is quite difficult, especially if there is little time available. Unfortunately, some candidates again crossed out details which were vital for the successful completion of the task.

Candidates are also reminded that the maximum of 10 marks for Communication cannot be accessed if they omit a task.

Language

The published Mark Scheme offers a clear guide to what is expected. Candidates should use basic sentence structure, using appropriate verb forms, definite/indefinite articles, adjectives, time phrases and prepositional phrases.

Question 3 offered a choice of three options: a letter, a blog, a story line to be continued.

A crucial decision for candidates is: which question will allow me to show best the French that I know? This is particularly important given the method by which marks are awarded across the three categories. Candidates are advised therefore to read all three options before making their choice. A close reading of the tasks within the questions is recommended: this will allow candidates to think about the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed in order to respond effectively and fully to the question.

Frequently the rubric provides key vocabulary. Candidates should always copy correctly key vocabulary items from the rubric and also look for clues of the gender of any significant nouns: this session there was clear evidence of candidates not taking advantage of the vocabulary and structures provided in the rubric.

In the very best work, the language flowed naturally.

Communication: to gain the 2 marks available for each task, candidates must respond to each of the tasks using a tense which is appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to answer each task in the tense used in the rubric. The use of a different tense will distort the meaning and invariably lead to the loss of marks. Whilst it is always a good idea to add an extra detail or opinion where possible, it must be remembered that excessive length often leads to error, repetition and irrelevance. Candidates should be advised to be selective when they are planning their responses.

Verbs: ticks are awarded to correct verbs. The maximum mark of 8 is awarded for 18 verbs. There were instances again this session of candidates who were able to maintain control of verbs and who exceeded this total.

Candidates should be reminded of the correct use of verbal structures such as *avant de* and *après avoir / après être*. There were many who seemed not to be aware that these constructions can only be used when the action refers to the subject of the main verb, e.g. *en arrivant en ville, il a commencé à pleuvoir*, there is no reward for the first element.

When some conjunctions are used, grammar rules require strict observance of a sequence of tense, e.g. *si j'ai le choix, j'habiterais à la campagne* is incorrect by these rules. The candidate should have written either *si j'avais le choix, j'habiterais à la campagne* or *si j'ai le choix, j'habiterai à la campagne*.

There is increasing evidence of candidates using the subjunctive. This is not always an indicator of linguistic competence, especially when the verbs carrying the details demanded by the tasks are incorrect. Some candidates used the subjunctive mood numerous times, often clumsily to convey ideas which would normally be expressed by a more simple verbal structure. Examiners reported frequent use of *autant que je sache*; again, this was not always appropriately used, e.g. *autant que je sache j'aime vivre en ville*.

Other linguistic features: the published table of grade descriptors highlights the range of language structures expected. The ablest candidates were able to demonstrate, among other things, varied sentence patterns using subordinate clauses (e.g. *quand, si, parce que, car, qui*), object pronouns, linking words/conjunctions, (e.g. *donc, cependant*), strong negatives (*ne...jamais, ne...plus*), comparative/superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, prepositions (e.g. *depuis, pendant, pour*) and be familiar with some less common vocabulary, pertinent to the subject matter. This session, there was less evidence of many of these structures, particularly object pronouns.

It is important for all candidates to show control of basic structures, including correct spelling, gender, adjectival agreement, possessive adjectives, expressions of quantity and common prepositions. Without this they will not access the top most bands.

There were many inconsistencies in work seen this session, e.g. confusion between *dernier* and *derrière*, the misspelling of *maintenant, beaucoup, par exemple*, the lack of adjectival agreements, e.g. *une grand ville*, the lack of elision in, for example, *parce qu'il y a* were all frequently seen.

Candidates showed that they were familiar with *à mon avis* and *selon moi* when communicating their opinions. However, too many candidates used these inappropriately: *selon moi, je pense que...* or *à mon avis, j'aime...*

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: Ma nouvelle chambre

This straightforward question provided candidates with an opportunity to establish a base for further success.

The rubric and the pictures established what type of items were required. Candidates had little difficulty providing five nouns, for the most part using the words for those items illustrated: the published Mark Scheme gives full coverage of the range of acceptable words.

There were no notable difficulties and it was pleasing to see that some knew *armoire*. Candidates were not always sure about the spelling of *miroir* and *glace*, the latter often rendered as *glasse*. Examiners reported that the final 'e' was often missed in *chaise*, *douche* and *lampe*.

Question 2: Ma ville/Mon village

Communication

Candidates found the tasks very accessible. Some candidates crossed out valid information and did not therefore achieve the maximum mark. The guidance which recommends a piece of 80–90 words is not a requirement.

In **Task 1**, the majority were successful in naming their home town/village. Those who did not gain the mark were not able to give an acceptable form of *ma ville s'appelle*. Errors with the verb *s'appeler* continue to be an issue.

In **Task 2**, any description of the town or village expressed using a verb was rewarded. A range of detail was offered. Many candidates gave several pieces of information, thus boosting their marks.

Task 3 provided many candidates with another chance to gain a number of marks. The information had to be precise. There was no reward for *on peut faire beaucoup d'activités* because this was too vague. Some candidates clearly thought that they were answering this task with statements such as *il y a une piscine* or *il y a un marché*. These were rewarded for **Task 2**. It is important to answer in the manner suggested by the question.

In **Task 4**, candidates gained marks for both positive and negative comments. Answers such as *j'aime mon village, tous mes amis y habitent mais je déteste mon village parce qu'il n'y a pas de piscine* earned 4 marks, one for each piece of information. Some suggested *je n'aime pas ma ville parce qu'il pleut beaucoup* and gained 2 marks. Those who offered a reason related to the weather did not always gain the mark because they did not know the weather expression: at this level, it is expected that candidates can use accurately the straightforward patterns describing weather conditions.

For **Task 5**, marks were awarded separately for the mention of where candidates would like to live and for the reason.

Language

Most candidates could formulate sentences, a requirement for the award of marks for Communication. Although the verb forms were not always secure, the intended meanings were conveyed effectively enough, which meant that most candidates scored at least 3 marks. There were very few problems with the general vocabulary required for this question. It is important that candidates remember to use the tense indicated in the task: this especially applies to the final task of this question. It is a regular requirement that candidates use a form of the future or conditional tense, e.g. *je voudrais habiter*. More candidates would have achieved 5 marks here if they had respected that rule.

Section 2

Candidates must look carefully at each of the three options and choose the question which they are best equipped to answer.

Question 3 (a): *Ma première visite à l'étranger*

This option attracted about 77% of candidates.

Communication

For **Task 1**, candidates were required to state which country they had visited, when and with whom. Marks were awarded for a statement in a past tense mentioning the country and either when they went or with whom.

In **Task 2**, candidates gained marks for a simple indication, in the past tense, of one thing which they did during this visit.

Marks were awarded in **Task 3** for any observation, positive or negative, about the place and for **Task 4** to give a reason for this impression. Not every candidate gained both sets of marks but there was often a valid positive or negative statement which could be rewarded.

In **Task 5**, candidates gained the marks for explaining why they wanted to visit the country they mentioned.

Verbs

The performance here was a little better than in **Question 3(b)**, partly because candidates found it easier to use a range of verbs to refer to their activities during the visit to the country. It was possible to respond to this question using a range of very familiar verbs.

Candidates who recognised the need for a verb in the past tense were not always careful in writing. Common errors included the omission of the acute accent on the past participle of *-er* verbs, the omission of the auxiliary and the use of the wrong auxiliary. The errors in the spelling of *visiter* are still common and these have an impact on the overall mark (e.g. *nous avons visté*)

Other linguistic features

Candidates must show that they can control basic vocabulary, gender, spelling, number. If they cannot demonstrate this, then the mark is limited. An example here might be the noun *les vacances*: too many candidates think that it is a singular rather than a plural noun, that it is masculine rather than feminine. Errors in the spelling are frequent too, e.g. *vancances*.

Question 3 (b): *Un chien perdu*

This option attracted 17% of candidates.

Communication

For **Task 1**, a simple description of the dog in the present tense was all that was required for 2 marks. This was a straightforward task which most candidates managed successfully.

In **Task 2**, candidates were expected to use a past tense to state when the dog disappeared. This required simple manipulation of the verb in the question, thus making it a straightforward task and more candidates should have gained both marks.

A past tense was needed in **Task 3** to explain how they helped their grandparent to find the dog.

In **Task 4**, candidates were invited to state why the dog is important to their grandparent. Marks were awarded for a relevant explanation in any tense.

In **Task 5**, the marks were awarded for a reason for having or not having a pet in the future.

Verbs

It was possible to respond to this question by manipulating the verbs in the rubric and by using a range of familiar verbs. However, the marks in this category were generally less good than for **Question 3(a)**.

Candidates who recognised the need for a verb in the past tense were not always careful in writing. Common errors included the omission of the acute accent on the past participle of *-er* verbs, the omission of the auxiliary and the use of the wrong auxiliary.

Other linguistic features

The marks for the majority of candidates were drawn from the lower bands. The spelling and gender of common nouns were not sufficiently secure; this was true also of the associated adjectives, e.g. *le chein a les yeux bleu*. At this level candidates should be able to copy the noun *le chien* from the question paper. The expression of the time/date when the dog disappeared was sometimes compromised, even though the vocabulary is commonly used, e.g. *hier soir* rendered as *heir soir*.

In explaining the importance of the dog there was an opportunity to use a more complex sentence pattern: *pour mon grand-père, le chien est important parce qu'il habite tout seul*. Too often candidates do not remember the need for elision and write *parce que il habite*.

Question 3 (c): Une invitation surprise

Approximately 5% of candidates attempted this option: this marks a further decline in interest in this narrative option. It is expected that candidates recount a story prompted by the introduction in the rubric. Few of those who chose this option were able to maintain the narrative as required to produce a coherent account.

Communication

The question required candidates to write throughout in the past tense. There were a limited number of convincing accounts, consequently there are few examples of successful responses. There is a particular skill in writing a narrative of this kind: the answers offered this session suggest that few candidates have been prepared for this type of question.

Task 1 and **Task 2** required candidates to say how they spent the evening.

Task 3 invited a statement explaining why they were late arriving home. This was either rather poorly done or omitted.

Reactions are a standard element of this option but again not many candidates were able to convey an acceptable idea in **Task 4**.

For **Task 5**, a summative comment about this surprise evening out was required.

Verbs

The few candidates who had wisely chosen this option, demonstrated some consistent control of verbs in past tenses. The narrative allowed them to introduce a wide range of verbs. Candidates who could use past tenses with confidence established good scores.

It was possible to respond to this question using a range of very familiar verbs.

Candidates were not always careful in writing. Common errors included the omission of the acute accent on the past participle of *-er* verbs, the omission of the auxiliary and the use of the wrong auxiliary. There were some problems with the imperfect form of *être*, e.g. *mes parents était / j'éété content*.

Other linguistic features

With the freedom to introduce the timescale and the activities they wish in recounting what happened, candidates have the chance to show off a good range of clause types, prepositional and adverbial phrases and adjectives with appropriate agreements. The types of problems mentioned in **Questions 3(a)** and **3(b)** were prevalent here too.