

A-level

FRENCH

Unit 1 Listening, Reading and Writing
Report on the Examination

FREN1
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General

The paper appeared to discriminate well between the varying levels of ability and was accessible to the vast majority of students.

Many examiners have once again complained of illegible writing, and it is of course important for students to make clear which letter they have chosen in multiple-choice or in matching tasks. Capital letters should be used and the final answer placed in the appropriate box. If a student wishes to change an answer, the original letter should be crossed out and the new answer should be clearly written as near as possible to the original answer box. This is the first examination where the letters I, J and L were not used in the list of available answers for multiple choice questions. This practice will continue for all future examination series to avoid any possible issues of legibility.

A number of essays were difficult to read because black pen had not been used. Once again, a reminder that students should not write on alternate lines and planning sheets should not be submitted with the scripts.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There were far fewer examples of students answering in the wrong language this year.

- 1(a) This was very well answered and provided a positive start to the paper.
- 1(b) Many students scored well on this question. A small number misheard *une heure* and gave the wrong amount of time spent listening to music.
- 1(c) This was the least well answered question in this section, though roughly half of the entry scored maximum marks. The main problems surprisingly were caused by misunderstanding of the figures given, and there were many variations on *vingt minutes* and *cinquante pour cent*.
- 1(d) This was a very straightforward question and it was successfully answered by almost all students.

Question 2

Part (c) of this question was very well done, but the other parts all caused some challenges. The part which caused most difficulty was (b) where the phrase *le corps des femmes* was not connected to sexism. In part (a) *s'informer* was not always picked out and in (d) some struggled with the environmental impact of advertising. In part (e) the cost was understood by most, but many students failed to choose the *ne reflète pas la vie réelle* answer.

Question 3

This question, with answers in French, was generally well done, with most of the marks lost due to poor spelling rather than a lack of comprehension.

- 3(a) This was well done, though there were many misspellings of *un remède* and also *une manière*.

- 3(b)** Few students scored maximum marks here, and a substantial minority failed to score at all. *En plein air* caused serious difficulties and there were many variations on *sous la tente*, including *sur la tante*. The idea of carrying one's own cases was often missed because of an incorrect rendering of *ses valises*, often expressed in a single word. The point about former soldiers was seen rarely.
- 3(c)** This was successfully answered due to *repas gastronomiques* and *un massage*. Unfortunately the accommodation idea was often ruined by inaccurate spelling of *hébergement*.
- 3(d)** Most students scored at least one mark here, though there were many versions of *produits laitiers*. The students who recognized that there was a need for some manipulation of the language to answer the question correctly were more successful in gaining credit. In the light of the question – *qu'est-ce qu'on ne peut pas faire?* – *un régime végétarien* does not answer the question.

Question 4

This question caused few problems and most students scored at least three marks.

Question 5

This was very well answered, with the exception of parts (f) and (h), where many students did not spot the correct tenses in the original text and in the wording of the question.

Question 6

This proved to be a question which discriminated well. The most successfully answered part was (c) but many students struggled to find the correct verb in all the other parts, notably (e) and (h).

Question 7

This was very successfully answered by almost all students. The only difficulty came in part (f) where the link to flowers was not made, though even here well over half of students did score.

Question 8

This question was also well answered by most students. Errors tended to occur in part (a) where some did not notice the feminine form. Part (d) caused some problems when the verb *saler* was not noticed. The other part which was answered less successfully was (f) where the statistics in the text caused confusion for some.

Question 9

This question was done very well by able students and, as always, proved a good discriminator.

Q9(a) Many students used the feminine of the past participle.

Q9(b) This proved straightforward for most.

Q9(c), (d) and (e) The omission of accents caused some difficulty here.

Q9(f) The wrongly formed past participle *obteni* was often used here.

Q9(g) This caused widespread difficulty.

Q9(h) This was very well answered.

Q9(i) The formation of this form of the verb continues to cause confusion. The infinitive was often seen.

Q9(j) Those who did see the need for a subjunctive often used the wrong spelling or even the verb *être*.

Questions 10, 11 and 12

All three questions were tackled though there was a pronounced preference for Question 12 on mobile phones.

Examiners were impressed by the content of many essays and by how many students had tried to convey points. There has been a noticeable improvement in the development of points made. Inevitably, there were those whose language and grammar limited the content but there was no shortage of ideas on each of the topics and many students were able to present answers of a good length. There were few essays weak enough to warrant a mark in the “Poor” band.

Q10 There were some good answers offering in-depth treatment of both parts of the question. A few were very honest and open, referring to not wishing to discuss certain personal topics with parents because of the embarrassment factor. There was a personal angle in some essays, which gave the answers an interesting and engaging slant. However, a fair number of essays on this topic were disappointing, with examples of bad planning leading to repetition.

Q11 Whilst there were again some excellent answers here, a number of essays contained some irrelevant material where students talked for whole paragraphs about the effects of drugs or smoking on health. Similarly there were substantial sections devoted to why people drink as opposed to concentrating on the actual dangers of drinking. There were some very good answers to the second part of the question, which suggested a variety of ways to curtail alcohol consumption.

Q12 There were some outstanding and very detailed essays on this topic, dealing equally well with both parts of the question. The vast majority of answers were relevant to the title and students tried very hard to say something of value in their response.

Quality of Language

There was generally good use of topic specific vocabulary in all three essays. Appropriate linking phrases were much in evidence and there appeared to be fewer pre-learnt phrases such as *autant que je sache*. As for variety of structure, subjunctives are widely used but not always appropriately, for example frequently after *j’espère que*. Attempts at *si* clauses were not always successful, with the sequence of tenses being confused. Passives are not always well formed.

As far as accuracy is concerned, mistakes made in the past still occur and the most common errors are listed below:

- Use of present participle instead of present tense, such as *quand ils sont buvants; ils utilisent le portable quand le prof est parlant*.
- Inability to use *mal / mauvais* correctly (*un mal idée*).
- Confusion between *mieux / meilleur ; entre / parmi ; santé / sain*.
- Mis-spelling of commonly used words, such as *aujourd’hui, beaucoup, malheureuse*.
- English words, *promoter, provider, il y a beaucoup de pressure sur les jeunes, separater, éducatier, accesser* and many more.
- English style expressions are common - *S’il voit un bar il va aller dans ; les amis qu’ils parlent à ; je ne sais pas quel portable je vais pour*.

- Many students are unable to use reflexive pronouns correctly – *c’est pourquoi je ne se confier à mes parents ; si vous êtes un jeune vous ne désirez pas se confier ...*
- Use of possessives – *si vous parlez avec leurs amis; les parents adorent ses enfants.*
- Many students are unable to give the correct form of *devenir* in any tense.
- Mistakes are frequent with the position of *ne .. pas* – *les jeunes vont ne se confier pas à ses parents...*

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.