



General Certificate of Secondary Education

French 3651 Full Course *Specification A*

3651/R Reading

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - June series

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Reading

Foundation Tier

Examiners felt that this paper was more demanding than last year's. Whereas the grammatical challenge of the later questions was similar, weaknesses in lexical knowledge affected candidate marks throughout the paper and especially on Questions 3 and 6.

Questions 1 & 2

These were well done and provided the anticipated gentle easing into the paper.

Question 3

Coming so early on, this caused unexpected problems. Clearly very few candidates knew *pêche*, and many took articles to refer to newspapers or magazines.

Questions 4 & 5

The remaining 'answers in English' question was well answered and the picture question posed few problems to candidates who knew school subjects well.

Question 6

This exercise involved matching words. Three of the five items proved demanding: *camion*, *maillot*, *salon*. This is a very good way of testing vocabulary not easily tested through other question types and of testing vocabulary across the specification. Teachers might consider ways to devise similar questions as an exercise in testing vocabulary.

Question 7

After some difficulties in previous years, candidates coped quite well with this item on the weather. Only *pluie* caused problems, possibly because candidates are more conversant with the verb than the noun.

Question 8

This question, requiring grammatical knowledge, albeit at a basic level, posed the usual problems and lead to a lot of guesswork. Part (a) discriminated well, whilst part (c) was done worst, with the correct letters often transposed, confirming that candidates were unable to distinguish between a past participle and an infinitive.

Question 9

Only parts (a) and (d) were answered correctly by more than half of the candidates. The text was fairly brief, so most candidates failed to score marks because they did not fully understand the questions, especially key words such as *toujours*, *moins*, *chômage*, *compris*, as well as negatives. A smaller number than in previous years failed to use the PM alternative, although all three choices are included.

Higher Tier

Standards overall appeared very similar to those of previous years. The paper presented similar demands. A significant minority of candidates failed to score marks in Questions 7 to 9 by answering in the wrong language.

Question 1

Surprisingly, the very first question proved to be one of the most demanding on the paper. This was not intended, but 75% of candidates were unable to equate *faire des économies* with *mettre de l'argent de côté*. The other three parts were well done, especially part (b).

Questions 2 & 3

These were the overlap questions and were, as expected, done much better at this level. They discriminated well and produced a much different and more even pattern of correct answers than at Foundation Tier in Question 3. Candidates displayed greater knowledge of sentence structure at this level and more awareness of the nuances in the questions.

Question 4

Candidates showed very good knowledge of lexis used in ecological and health-related issues, presumably reflecting strong emphasis on such issues in teaching. Parts (b) and (e) were particularly well answered. The comparatively low rate of success in part (d) again suggests that *chômage* is not well known.

Question 5

Candidates understood the task and most gained two or three of the marks on offer, though only one fifth scored all four marks. Candidates were comfortable with the topic of pop music.

Question 6

Generally well done, with almost half of candidates gaining all three marks for understanding which three pupils prefer not to have school on Saturdays. Where candidates scored no marks at all, they presumably failed to register the impact of the negative highlighted in bold in the question.

Question 7

There were extreme differences in the levels of performance on the six parts of this question. As usual, those who wrote lengthy answers in the limited space made available were most likely to fail to score marks. Even where they included the correct information from the text, they added words before or after which rendered their answers non-sensical. On the other hand, examiners did not credit the very common *(la) tradition* for part (d), needing to know what is behind the tradition of throwing coins in the fountain. Similarly, candidates who realised that part (f) was about food, but only wrote *(les) spaghettis*, gained no mark. Parts (a) and (e) were very well answered. In part (b), the word *ensuite* was inappropriately used, either by itself or in conjunction with other words, and clearly not understood. In part (c) some candidates suggested that the Coliseum is *nouveau*!

Question 8

Parts (b) to (d) were well answered, albeit too often in English which severely stretched the powers of examiners to understand what candidates intended. Part (a) was more demanding for this very reason, with correct answers hinted at rather than stated, and an amazing number concocting the idea that Jérôme thought he was in the wrong place. Too many candidates allowed one word, *chef*, to adversely influence the whole pattern of their responses, which were then all about working in a restaurant rather than the town hall.

Question 9

As expected, this shorter text proved more demanding than Question 8, precisely because there is less language involved. Far too many candidates made up fanciful reasons for the school's complaint, probably based on their own experiences and also ignored the rubric, which told them this was about a summer school. Consequently, notions about taking pupils out of school were discounted, as were less than definite threats in part (b), that is the use of 'can/may/might' rather than 'will'.

It is absolutely essential that teachers instruct candidates not to write outside the spaces provided. This applies also to the habit of arrowing answers given in the wrong place. Candidates must be encouraged to think carefully before putting pen to paper. There was an increase in the incidence of indecipherable hand-writing and the use of pencil or faint ink, again causing problems for examiners.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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