



General Certificate of Secondary Education

French 3651 Full Course *Specification A*

3651/WC Written Coursework

Report on the Examination *2007 examination - June series*

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2007 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Coursework

General Comments

This year the quality of work was even better than in 2006, when results were the best since the introduction of coursework. As expected, and just as in other skill areas, there were far fewer less able candidates entered for the component, but there were also, in this component, far more examples of really impressive scripts.

Given the nature of coursework, one would expect a steady increase in performance standards, but this year moderators commented regularly on the high standard of written French, and there were many references to excellent scripts. Centres are to be congratulated on careful choice of assignment titles and thorough preparation, such that candidates were able to reach their full linguistic potential. As stated in last year's report, it would seem that teachers are succeeding in motivating their candidates to produce written French to the very best of their ability and especially in terms of range of vocabulary and structures.

Assessment by centres was again of a high standard, with the vast majority of centres this year awarding marks which were broadly in line with the AQA standard. As always, most centres erred towards generosity. There was again evidence of effective internal standardisation within centres. The time and care devoted by teachers to both the preparation and assessment of coursework is very much appreciated by AQA.

Nevertheless, regrettably, and despite detailed advice in last year's report, administrative efficiency has shown no improvement. Centres are reminded that the deadline for submission of coursework marks is 5 May each year. They should set internal deadlines for completion of coursework well in advance of this date, so that there is plenty of time to assess the work and carry out any final internal standardisation. This would then perhaps allow teachers to adhere to deadlines and complete all the necessary paperwork as carefully as they follow assessment procedures. Again this year, centres regularly disadvantaged their candidates by failing to carry out administrative procedures correctly and they were reliant on moderators noting and pursuing their errors and omissions. It must, as always, be stressed that centres which read this report are likely to be those whose administration was exemplary and greatly facilitated the moderation process. Although these centres will have received positive comments on their feedback forms issued with examination results, AQA would like to thank them most sincerely for enabling the coursework component to continue so successfully.

It is hoped that all centres will, however, find the Appendix to this report relating to administrative procedures useful.

Assessment

Although the vast majority of centres marked to agreed AQA standards, where adjustments had to be made these tended to be for reasons explained in previous reports. Centres were again often reluctant to send copies of 'templates', 'banks' of structures/key phrases to moderators. As has been stated in the past, the supplying of these will not affect adversely the ultimate outcome, but will simply enable the moderator to ensure that all candidates gain the marks deserved. On occasions, this year, as in the past, somewhat severe marks were awarded to certain candidates, but in the absence of worksheets or comments written under 'Teacher's Supporting Statement' on the Candidate Record Form, moderators are obliged to accept the centre's judgements.

Overall, where problems have arisen this year in terms of assessment this has occurred in the following areas:

General

- a) Assessment in the upper bands of marks tended to be generous, with some centres awarding marks for the length of the assignment without due regard for clear communication of relevant material and evidence of the various mark descriptors. AQA provides commentaries to accompany exemplar materials at all levels of ability. Centres are advised to use these, if this year's feedback form suggests they were particularly lenient or severe in their judgements.
- b) Some candidates were writing excessively long assignments. Provided the assessment criteria are displayed, there is simply no need to produce assignments which significantly exceed the length suggested in the specification. Indeed it is often to the candidates' disadvantage to write at length, as they find it hard to maintain a high level of accuracy in a long assignment.
- c) Marks of 1+0+0, 1+1+0, and 1+0+1 were again seen this year. A mark of 1 for Communication automatically results in marks being awarded for Range/Complexity and Accuracy e.g. 1+1+1. It should be noted that the descriptors for 1 mark for Communication require the communication of a little basic information, which in practice means some complete messages are conveyed to a native speaker.
- d) The use of IT again disadvantaged all but the most able candidates, but a few centres tended to overlook typographical errors and marked such pieces generously, even though these errors prevented the communication of intended messages. It should be noted that the controlled piece should not be word-processed, unless there is a specific reason for this, as one cannot guarantee the security and authenticity of such work.

Communication

- a) Marks of 7 and 8 were often awarded to candidates who failed to demonstrate all the mark descriptors. If marks are to be awarded in the top band, there should be evidence of a lot of relevant information which has been communicated clearly, narration of events, full descriptions and ideas/opinions which are justified. Failure to include 'narration of events' and to justify opinions was again the main stumbling block, although there was a tendency this year for centres to overlook the need for clear communication. Long assignments, where intended messages are not always conveyed because of linguistic errors, cannot be deemed to have satisfied this descriptor.
- b) Clarity of communication is also required for the award of marks in the 5-6 bands. Centres are again reminded of the relationship between marks awarded for Communication and Accuracy. Marks of 5 and above for Communication require clear communication but candidates cannot be deemed to have communicated clearly if, for example, many sentences contain major errors, as these, by definition, interfere with communication.
- c) Centres awarded generous marks when candidates had not addressed the assignment title adequately. One cannot reward irrelevant material under Communication. As has been stated before, it is good practice to insist on candidates writing the title, as it appears in the specification, at the top of their work, in order to ensure the correct focus is not overlooked.

Range/Complexity

The main problems here lay in the award of higher marks.

- a) Generally, centres did not award 4 marks for Range and Complexity unless there was evidence of two or more time frames, but sometimes this mark was awarded simply because the time frame requirement had been displayed without the candidate having fulfilled the other requirements for 4 marks. A mark of 4 requires evidence of some variety in the use of vocabulary, some successful attempts at a variety of structures, successful attempts at longer sentences and expression of personal opinions, in addition to the time-frame requirement.
- b) 5 marks were again awarded this year when the necessary precision was lacking. Additionally, when awarding 5 marks, centres should be certain that there is regular and successful use of longer sentences, incorporating a wider range of structures and subordinate clauses. A long list proceeded by *il y a* is not a longer, more complex sentence.
- c) When awarding 6 marks, some centres overlooked the need for an overall impression of fluency and coherence, with confident use of longer, more complex structures.

The Assignments

- a) The range of assignment titles chosen this year seemed to have diminished. Most centres seemed to have found assignment titles which integrated well with their schemes of work and motivated candidates, so very many candidates opted for the same assignments. Centres' familiarity with the titles and understanding of approaches likely to ensure effective outcomes resulted in very creditable results at all levels of ability. More able candidates were able to integrate pre-learnt phrases and expressions successfully into their work, whilst the very best candidates produced scripts which were a pleasure to read.
- b) Unfortunately a large number of candidates again did not focus adequately on the prescribed assignment titles, although this has been highlighted in recent reports. This was especially the case in assignments 1.2 'My favourite leisure activity' and 2.2 'Account of a holiday'. Communication marks often had to be adjusted because of failure to address the title, but in most instances, this reflected teachers' failure to ensure that their candidates were aware of the necessary focus. Teachers are again urged to stress this at the preparation stage, and if drafts are produced, should indicate on the Coursework Comments sheet when the title has not been addressed adequately.

The following titles were seen most often:

1.1 Profile of a famous person or group of people

This was handled well by candidates of all abilities and a wider range of personalities were seen this year. Although less able candidates tended to include similar types of information such as date and place of birth and physical description, there were some excellent assignments by the more able. Some candidates still copied whole phrases and sentences from source material, which were clearly not their own work, but there seemed to be less reliance on the Internet this year.

1.2 My favourite leisure activity

This was a common submission with some very successful outcomes by more able candidates, with a clear focus on one favourite activity. Indeed a number of moderators felt that more candidates were aware of the need to discuss only one preferred activity this year.

Nevertheless, most moderators felt that this title was the one most frequently containing irrelevant information, as candidates simply gave a general account of what they did in their free time. In these centres the assignment was usually over-rewarded for Communication, which suggests that the teachers themselves were unaware of the need to focus on **one** activity.

1.3 Advertising my local area

This title continues to be very popular and there were some very good responses. More able candidates produced detailed and imaginative work and again moderators were very complimentary about the work of the more able. As has been the case in the past, there were still too many negative comments about the area, which is inappropriate to the title and affects marks for Communication, whilst some candidates were denied access to the top band of marks for Communication, as they had failed to include narration of events.

1.5 Advertising my school/college

This was perhaps even more popular than in the past, with the quality of work ranging from very good to poor. The topic of school becomes an easy target for candidates to vent their feelings negatively, and many candidates did! As negative comments are inappropriate, this affects the mark for Communication, but centres regularly overlooked this when awarding marks. The work of many candidates was dominated by their own daily routine, their likes and dislikes rather than providing an overview of the school. Very few original pieces were seen, as centres tended to approach the title in a formulaic manner. As always, the need to incorporate narration of events was a stumbling block for some more able candidates.

1.6 My ideal school uniform

Fewer examples of this were seen this year, usually submitted by less able candidates. As in the past, there was too little focus on the ideal uniform and too much description of uniforms worn currently or in the past. Once again marks for Communication had to be reduced by moderators, to reflect how much of the submission related to the title. The trend towards discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of school uniforms continued, with heavy reliance on source material and failure to link the material to the title. As stated last year, such centres could perhaps have considered writing a 'For and against' assignment on school uniform.

2.2 Account of a holiday

This was the most commonly submitted title and the one which was used most frequently for the controlled assignment. The most able candidates wrote excellent assignments, using an impressive range of structures and many able candidates had little difficulty in scoring full marks for Communication. However, in contrast to previous years, where the assignment has been handled well by candidates of all abilities, this year saw an increase in candidates failing to focus on a **past** holiday. Too many candidates wrote far too much about where they usually spend their holidays and future holiday plans, to the detriment of writing an account of a past holiday. Centres are again reminded that only one sentence, which uses a future tense appropriately, is required to fulfil the requirement of a future time frame. Equally, as in the past, some candidates tended to write about holidays in general and to cover lots of different holiday experiences. If candidates do not focus on the account of one particular holiday, Communication marks will suffer. This was often not appreciated by centres.

2.4 My dream holiday

This was occasionally submitted instead of 2.2 and where candidates could manipulate tenses, some interesting, original and successful pieces were seen. As with the previous title, however,

some candidates wrote about a number of holidays, rather than focusing on one destination or comparing various holidays and stating why one represented the dream holiday.

3.3 Am I fit and healthy?

This was again the most popular piece from Theme 3. Candidates performed well across the ability range, but the content tended to be restricted to eating and drinking habits and sports practised. More able candidates also added information about smoking and drugs. The ability to refer back to the title was often lacking with some centres still allowing their candidates to write generally about healthy eating or their daily routine, without addressing the title. Some candidates failed to include narration of events and so failed to score marks for Communication.

3.4 My work experience

This assignment was also seen often but although there was less evidence of the use of a template this year, moderators regularly commented on a formulaic approach. The following information was covered: who set up the work experience; when and where it took place; travel to place of work; activities and hours of work; lunch arrangements; description and opinion of the work colleagues; an overall opinion of the experience; future career plans. Some candidates placed too much emphasis on their lunch, where they ate it and what they ate with irrelevant opinions on foods they like and dislike – this had the possibility of affecting their mark for Communication. Elsewhere writing frames had been used, but the centre's mark for Communication did not reflect this. It was rare to see an original response.

3.2 My part-time job

This was submitted less regularly this year and with mixed results. Where problems arose it was because candidates still included too much material pertinent to 3.4 or references to daily routine, with limited discussion of actual activities undertaken at the place of work.

3.6 Review of an article/book/film/play/TV programme

Although seen infrequently, able candidates produced interesting and well-written assignments but it proved a difficult choice for many. There was a tendency towards inclusion of irrelevant material about going to the cinema and the candidates' favourite types of film with a consequent lack of focus on the actual title.

3.8 A day that went wrong

This was less popular than in the past. Able candidates showed a good grasp of language and structure resulting in interesting pieces but assignments from less able candidates were disappointing.

Theme 4

Once again few titles from this theme were seen regularly.

4.2 Publicising an environmental or social issue

Although this appeared infrequently, there was often a lack of originality and little fluency. The pieces were rather an amalgam of stock phrases with minor amendments and it was felt that the candidates were not always in command of the ideas expounded.

4.3 Letter to a newspaper on a social or environmental issue

The few centres that submitted this assignment had prepared their candidates well, such that both vocabulary and structures were appropriate. A good standard was achieved, although some candidates discussed environmental issues in general rather than focussing on one in particular.

4.4 My ideal future job

This was quite popular, but yielded very different outcomes. Well prepared candidates produced individual and interesting responses, which displayed the appropriate focus. Candidates in the upper ability range were able to use the Conditional effectively. However, as in the past, many candidates included much irrelevant material relating to jobs of other members of the family, school subjects and work experience, with insufficient focus on one ideal, future job. This was possibly because candidates find the content of the assignment quite demanding. Where such approaches were used, marks tended to be generous for Communication.

4.6 I've won

The few candidates who submitted this assignment this year produced good work which was interesting to read as all answers were totally different from each other. Responses ranged from winning a car or holiday to winning a sports race. The candidates would obviously have liked to have won the prizes, judging from the depth of knowledge displayed.

4.7 Letter to a problem page

This was offered only by a few candidates. The letters concerned problems with brothers and sisters, parents, drugs and money. In the main, the problems were well explained, using suitable vocabulary and structures and there was a good level of individuality.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

Appendix – Coursework Administration Good Practice

1. Centres with more than 20 candidates should send the top copy of the Centre Mark Form to AQA and the second (pink) and third (yellow) copies to be received by the moderator **by 5 May**.

The yellow copy is returned to the centre, indicating which candidates' work has been chosen as a sample. Those centres using EDI are required to send one copy of the printout to AQA and two copies to the moderator. The moderator will then return one copy to the centre, showing the candidates chosen as the sample.

2. Centres with 20 or fewer candidates should send the work of all candidates, together with Candidate Record Forms, a Centre Declaration Sheet and the pink and yellow copies of the Centre Mark Sheet to their moderator to be received **by 5 May**.
3. When the centre receives notification of the sample chosen, the following should be sent to the moderator **within five working days**:
 - The complete work of candidates identified by 'S' on the yellow copy or EDI printout. These should be original copies and there should be no marks or annotations on the assignments themselves
 - The fully completed and signed Record Form, attached to the work of each candidate.
 - The completed and signed Centre Declaration sheet
 - The work of any candidates flagged by the centre as 'PAR', 'PRI' or 'EDE'.

This material should be sent by first-class post and a Certificate of Posting obtained.

4. Completion of the Centre Declaration Sheet

One form is required per centre and this must be signed by all of the teachers who have submitted coursework marks (not simply those whose candidates have been chosen as a sample). In addition, all centres must indicate which one of the two procedures they have adopted for Internal Standardisation and the teacher responsible for this must sign again. Finally, all centres are required to provide the signature of the Head of Centre or their nominee. Centres are reminded that this is a requirement of the Code of Practice and without the appropriate forms results cannot be issued.

5. Presentation of portfolios

All of the work of each candidate **MUST** be attached securely by means of a treasury tag or string **IN THE ORDER** in which it is entered on the Candidate Record Form. Candidates should also ensure that each sheet that they use bears their own name. **PLASTIC WALLETS MUST NOT BE USED** as their use only adds time and an additional unnecessary task for moderators.

Individual portfolios should be presented in the following order:

1. Candidate Record Form

a) Page 1:

- The top right hand corner should give the total mark
- Section 3 should give precise information relating to sources. A reference to, for example, 'Tricolore', Viel Erfolg or Mucha Suerte is not of help to the moderator. Information of the type 'Encore Tricolore 4, Unit 1' is of much greater use. If the

candidate refers to work sheets, and has used these extensively in the preparation of assignments, the teacher should supply a copy of these to the Moderator. Where the internet has been used, website addresses must be provided

- The candidate must sign the declaration.

b) On the reverse of the form:

- The assignment codes (e.g. 3.1, 1.2, etc) should be given and NOT 1, 2, 3, representing the order in which the assignments have been written
- Teachers should indicate the piece(s) produced under controlled conditions by ticking the boxes on the right hand side of the form
- Under Teacher's supporting statement, it is recommended that the teacher explain why individual marks have been awarded, especially in the case of borderline judgements. If no comments are made and the marks seem severe, moderators will generally assume that the teacher has a good reason for awarding such marks and may not adjust the centre's marks. If no drafts have been prepared this should be indicated under Teacher's supporting statement
- Under 'Concluding comments' teachers could include here information about source materials. However, if all candidates within a group have used the same materials, teachers may wish to list these on a separate sheet of paper, to be sent with the sample. The box entitled 'Concluding comments' should be used if teachers wish to draw the attention of the moderator to any assessment issue (e.g. if the mark for the controlled piece is significantly lower than the marks for the other pieces and there is a reason for this.) Comments about candidates' personal qualities are not appropriate.
- Centres are advised to check arithmetical additions carefully and also to ensure total marks are correctly transferred to the Centre Mark Sheets.

2. **First assignment**

The same as the first one shown on the Candidate Record Form. In the case of a controlled assignment, and if a draft has been produced, this first assignment should be labelled 'Final version'.

3. **Coursework Comments sheet**

If a draft has been produced, centres are reminded that feedback on drafts can only be made by ticking the boxes on the Coursework Comments Sheet. Any extra guidance offered by teachers constitutes malpractice and will be referred to AQA.

4. **Draft version of first assignment (if a controlled piece)**

Where a draft has been produced, it should be clearly labelled 'Draft'. If the assignment is a non-controlled piece, the draft should not be submitted to the moderator.

5. **Second assignment**

The same as the second one shown on the Candidate Record Form.

6. **Coursework Comments sheet**

If a draft has been produced, this should be enclosed.

7. **Draft version of second assignment, if a controlled piece**

As explained above.

8. **Third assignment**

The same as the third one shown on the Candidate Record Form.

9. **Coursework Comments sheet**

If a draft has been produced, this should be enclosed.

10. **Draft version of third assignment, if a controlled piece**

As explained above.

New centres, those that require guidance and those that have received adverse comments on the feedback forms issued at the time of results are reminded that AQA provides considerable assistance and support for the Coursework option.

- Marked exemplar candidate portfolios can be obtained via the MFL Department, AQA Harrogate – Tel: 01423 840015
- regional coursework teacher support meetings are held in the Autumn and Spring terms (details available from the MFL Department)
- Each registered centre has been allocated a Coursework Adviser, whose telephone number or e-mail address is available within the centre or from the MFL Department. These Advisers are senior Coursework Moderators, who can assist you with queries.