



A-level French

7652/3 (7652/3V and 7652/3T)

Report on the examination

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Administration

As examiners can only listen to and mark tests once all the accompanying paperwork has been checked, it is important that all material related to the speaking tests is uploaded to the Media Portal in a timely way, in order to avoid any delays in the marking process. Most centres were very efficient in the way that they did this, but some had to be reminded of the need to upload Candidate Record Forms and examiners were prevented from marking tests until these had been received.

There were still some problems with timings which impacted on the marks students could be given. The most significant of these was in the Part 1 discussion of the stimulus card which must last between 5 and 6 minutes and where both of the student's questions must be asked within that time. Questions asked after the 6 minutes' cut-off point had to be considered invalid and this put a cap on the mark that could be awarded for AO2 – a maximum mark of 4 if only one valid question was asked and a maximum mark of 3 if no valid questions were asked.

The quality of the recordings is a matter of great importance and, in particular, the audibility of students' responses to questions. There were some centres where, either because of background noise or because of the volume level of the recording, students' responses were difficult to hear. That said, very many students approached the test with confidence and were well prepared for both the Part One discussion and the Individual Research Project.

Stimulus Card Discussions – AO2 and AO4

As in previous reports attention is drawn here to the need for supplementary questions to be asked about the material on the card if a student's response to the first printed question is brief and lacking in detail. This still occurred in too many cases where students seemed to be unaware that the first two questions were directly linked to the content of the card. The first question invited students to demonstrate their understanding of the material on the card and the second required a personal response or reaction to this material. It was these responses that determined the mark awarded for AO2, and where brief responses were left unchallenged, only a mark reflecting very limited or limited understanding could be awarded.

The discussion that the third printed question leads into must be one that explores, in a sustained way for the entire discussion, the sub-theme of the card in the context of France and/or the French-speaking world. Again, there was evidence that this principle was not fully understood with examiners, having asked and had a response to the third printed question, choosing to discuss the sub-theme from the student's own, personal perspective...relationships within the student's family; use of technology; participation in voluntary work, and so on. The content of responses to such questions could not be awarded marks for AO4 as they had no relevance to France and/or the French-speaking world.

Stimulus Card Discussions – Performances on individual cards

Card A

Most of the content of this card was understood and where students were relying on guesswork to interpret the term *papa-poules*, most made a very good attempt at it. Some detailed points were missed such as the significance of the word *veufs*, and the fact that teenage children of single-parent families where the parent is the father often displayed fewer behavioural problems than children of two-parent families. Those students whose research into the topic of the changing nature of the family in francophone context had been thorough and detailed were able to demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding throughout the discussion.

Card B

Of all of the sub-themes, this was the least successful in terms of the knowledge and understanding demonstrated. There was not much evidence of detailed knowledge specific to France and/or the French-speaking world but rather students were relying on making general observations about their own and their peers' use of technology and stating this was also the case elsewhere. As suggested in previous reports, if students had visited francophone websites and had some knowledge of the content or services they provide, this would give them more specific knowledge and understanding which could be demonstrated in the discussion of the cyber-society card.

Card C

Much of the content of this card was understood in terms of the provision of food and the nature of the recipients. Only a small percentage of students opting for this card understood and mentioned the second objective of the organization which was that of reducing the amount of food wasted by supermarkets. Knowledge of the sub-theme relied in many instances on the "name-dropping" of such organisations as the *Croix Rouge* and *Restos du Cœur*, and many examiners did not use this opportunity to explore further the student's response and so increase the mark for AO4.

Card D

The sub-theme of cultural heritage was one with which students engaged in a very positive way, and there was evidence of aspects of the sub-theme that had been researched in detail in either a French or francophone context. It was encouraging to see less reliance on references to Lascaux 2 or the Mont Saint Michel. The stimulus card text itself was well understood.

Card E

Again, there was evidence of some detailed knowledge, understanding and appreciation of francophone artists and performers from across a wide spectrum of styles and genres. The approach taken by students on this sub-theme of exploring and discovering for themselves specific examples within the sub-theme could be very profitably replicated across other sub-themes in the specification. Contemporary francophone music was shown to be a topic on which many students had put their individual stamp.

Card F

Cinema, likewise, was a topic that showed a high level of personal engagement and appreciation. The content of the card was dealt with very effectively where students had been guided on the need to summarise as much of the detail as possible, and the ensuing discussions covered a wide range of films. However, this was not always in evidence and, as with other sub-themes, there were cases where passing reference was made to, for example, the *Frères Lumière*, or *La Nouvelle Vague*, with little evidence of any real understanding of their significance.

Card G

In general terms, students opted for cards dealing with sub-themes covered in Year 13 rather than those related to Year 12 sub-themes, and among these Card G proved a popular choice. The text was generally quite well understood and summarised with a good understanding of the importance of inclusion and tolerance, though the status of Senegal as a francophone country was not usually mentioned. In the discussion more could have been made of opportunities to cover other positive aspects of a diverse society.

Card H

This was not a particularly popular choice of card and some elements in the text posed problems. The point that the organisation was seeking to offer something other than an emergency solution to the problem of homelessness and that this was its unique characteristic was often overlooked. In the discussions, the possibility of moving beyond the homeless as an example of the marginalised was rarely taken. This card was therefore a good example of where meaningful discussions should be developed by taking the broader sub-theme of the card rather than keeping to the narrower focus of the content of the card itself.

Card I

Those students that opted for this card showed a good understanding of the text and appreciated that the prison in Bordeaux had opened its doors to the television cameras. The references in the text to efforts made by the prison staff to reduce the number of suicides among the prison population prompted students to demonstrate their knowledge of the state of prisons in France. Broader discussions invited students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of alternatives to prison and how or why these were or were not being used.

Card J

This was not a popular choice of card possibly because the information on the card was slightly technical in terms of the legal measures that would need to be put in place for the voting age to be changed. Those students that did choose this card showed a good understanding of the opinions and views among political parties in France on the question of the right to vote at 16 as well as an appreciation of the attitudes of young people themselves on this issue.

Card K

In the more general discussion of this sub-theme, there was evidence that some specific conflicts leading to demonstrations and strikes had been researched and some very good knowledge and understanding were demonstrated. These included references to the *gilets jaunes* movement but also to demonstrations against the raising of the retirement age. Where

such research had not been carried out, students relied on quite vague references to May 68 and here marks for AO4 were not high.

Card L

This was a popular choice of card and one that prompted some very lively and engaged discussions, with students expressing strong views against the content of the press communication in particular and, more generally, the anti-immigration, racist stance of Marine Le Pen and her party. There was evidence too of an up-to-date knowledge of Marine Le Pen's position as a prospective candidate in the next presidential elections because of her party's involvement in the misuse of funds.

The Individual Research Project

Students were generally very well-prepared in terms of their presentations. Few exceeded the 2 minutes allowed and most presentations were delivered with clarity and confidence, covering a range of developed points that placed them in the reasonable to thorough bands of marks.

The approaches to be avoided when it came to the presentation were:

- Trying to deliver too much material in the time available and so rushing the pace in such a way that a full understanding of the content was lost for the person listening.
- Explaining at length reasons for choosing a particular topic and/or outlining in detail the sources used for the research.
- Using the presentation to outline those aspects the student wanted or intended to be covered in the ensuing discussion.

It is appropriate here to remind students and staff that although the scope of the project is expected to be covered in the presentation and discussion taken together, it is also anticipated that the presentation itself will have a direct link to the title of the project. This was not always the case. So, for example, if the title of the project was the influence of Coco Chanel on French fashion but the presentation concentrated solely on the life of Coco Chanel, then the presentation was deemed not to relate to the project title and the mark awarded was adversely affected.

IRP discussions were generally well-conducted, but it is necessary to remind students and teachers that meaningful discussions are those where students were invited to think on their feet and respond to challenging questions that had not been anticipated or, indeed, rehearsed. Marks for AO1 were very often adversely affected, and quite significantly so, by question-and-answer exchanges where students were allowed to deliver uninterrupted and unchallenged mini-presentations as their responses.

Assessment Objective 3

Points of language that would benefit from being targeted specifically for speaking test purposes could be identified as:

The use of relative pronouns *qui, que, dont, le quel, laquelle.*

la raison pour laquelle ; le problème dont je vous ai parlé ; la raison que j'ai mentionnée

Distinguishing between direct and indirect object personal pronouns

le gouvernement doit les aider ; le gouvernement doit leur donner de l'aide ; on ne devrait pas les punir

Expressing as much/as many so much so many

Students tended to say *aussi beaucoup* when they should have used *tant... (de)* or *autant (de)...*

Je trouve triste qu'il y ait autant de (tant de)sans abris (not aussi beaucoup de sans abris)

Je ne savais pas qu'il y avait tant de familles monoparentales

Ils n'aiment pas la musique pop autant que le jazz

Concentrating on pronunciation

La hausse not l'hausse

Le revers de la médaille (not le riverse)

Le (un) discours (silent s)

The need to differentiate between the pronunciation of:

la faim/la femme e.g. cette femme a faim

Jeune/gens e.g. les jeunes gens adorent la musique rap

Gène/gens

Gène/jeune

La mort/l'amour e.g. la mort de la musique traditionnelle l'amour de la musique traditionnelle

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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