



GCSE

FRENCH

8658/WF: Writing Foundation
Report on the Examination

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General Points

The overall performance of students this year was encouraging. The vast majority of students were able to attempt all the questions and it was extremely rare to see blank responses. The increase in choice for Question 4 provided all students with the opportunity to produce more confident responses in which they could demonstrate their skills and knowledge. As in previous series, the vast majority of students had been entered appropriately for this tier. Students were able to refer to different time frames and express opinions, which enabled them to meet the demands of the assessment criteria for Questions 2 and 4. As in previous series, where students failed to score marks was where inaccuracy caused a delay in communicating messages. The main reasons for this continue to be inaccurate verb formations, omissions and students writing much longer responses than the suggested word count, thereby creating more scope for error. Other barriers to achievement were due to a lack of knowledge of key vocabulary and the inability to respond to the targeted rubrics and bullet points.

Question 1

Teachers are reminded that students are required to write four sentences about what is in the photo, i.e. a phrase that contains a verb or a construction using *voici* or *voilà*. Each sentence is marked separately and is worth a maximum of two marks. The best responses included successful use of simple phrases such as *'il y a* or *'voici/voilà'*. Where students failed to score marks, it was mainly for the following reasons:

- Ambiguous use of numbers e.g. *'il y a un quatre personnes'*.
- When students attempted longer, more complex responses e.g. *'il y a deux garçons et ils amusant'*
- Not including a verb or issues with verb formation which caused delay in communication e.g. use of the infinitive form of a verb or use of an auxiliary verb with an infinitive.
- Although it is acceptable for the students to put themselves in the photo and sentences such as *'je regarde mon ordinateur'* are credited, giving an opinion e.g. *'j'aime mon ordinateur'* does not describe what is in the photo and is not credited.
- Incomprehensible spelling of key vocabulary and English words that do not exist in French.

Advice to students

- Keep the sentences simple to ensure that a clear message is being communicated.
- Avoid adding a variety of details to individual sentences.

Question 2

Teachers are reminded that there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 40 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points are compulsory and must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

Content

The criteria for assessment refer to both the coverage of the bullet points and clarity of communication. The vast majority of candidates understood the need to address all bullet points with some development. The first two bullet points '*la musique*' and '*la télévision*' were topics that were widely known and were successfully addressed. The third bullet point '*votre santé*' was less widely known, although many students were able to address the bullet point effectively by including information with an opinion that communicated. The final bullet point '*votre dîner préféré*' was addressed successfully in general although some students wrote sentences using '*votre*' for this bullet point and the previous bullet point '*votre santé*' which could not be credited.

Quality of language

The majority of students were able to include a good variety of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. Students demonstrated an ability to include different ways of expressing opinions, different persons of the verb and the use of intensifiers and connectives. The majority of students were also able to produce responses that were generally accurate and were able to access the top band of marks. Where students failed to score highly was when they omitted verbs or key vocabulary.

Advice to students

- Mention all the of the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points in the rubric once they have been addressed.
- Try to include the words in the bullet point but change *votre* to *mon/ ma* (e.g. *ma santé, mon dîner préféré*) in order to ensure that the bullet point is addressed effectively.
- Express simple opinions by the use of different verbs and adjectives e.g. '*j'adore, j'aime, je n'aime pas, je déteste*' and '*c'est super/génial/fantastique*'.

Question 3

For this question, there are 5 marks for *Conveying key messages* and 5 marks for *Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures*. Teachers are reminded that the key messages are designed to include a level of demand aimed at covering Grades 1 to 5 and that all students should be able to communicate some messages despite minor errors. The question differentiated well with all students being able to score some marks.

Conveying key messages

I do my homework in the kitchen.	The vocabulary here is widely known by students. The main issues were the use of the infinitive <i>faire</i> , the possessive adjective <i>mes</i> and the preposition <i>dans</i> . However, the vast majority of students were able to convey the messages and score marks here.
At school there is a big sports ground.	Despite the widely unknown vocabulary item ' <i>terrain de sports</i> ', the messages 'at school' and 'there is' were successfully conveyed, although again, the preposition 'at' caused problems for some students.
My aunt has a job in a café every Monday.	The key message 'in a café' was successfully conveyed, but other messages were less successful with 'aunt' being unknown by many, the conjugation of <i>avoir</i> causing issues and 'every Monday' being translated as ' <i>lundi/tout lundi/tout le lundi</i> '.
Usually I find the Internet useful.	'Usually' was often successfully conveyed given that <i>normalement</i> and <i>en général</i> were accepted, but <i>je trouve</i> and <i>utile</i> were less well-known with the word 'utilise' often used for the latter.
Today I ate a lot of vegetables.	This sentence contained high demand elements, and the most able students coped well. However, where students were less successful, it was because of the following issues: The vocabulary item 'today' proved challenging, the perfect tense <i>j'ai mangé</i> was not always well produced and some students could not remember <i>légumes</i> .

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor errors did not prevent the award of marks for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. However, when awarding marks for application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures, the notion of accuracy has to be taken into consideration. For example, inaccurate spellings of *devoirs*, *beaucoup*, *collège*, *légumes* and *cuisine* and incorrect, wrongly spelled versions or omissions of *je fais*, *mes*, *dans*, *au*, *travail*, *je trouve* and *j'ai mangé* had to be taken into account when marks were awarded for application of grammatical knowledge and structures.

Advice to students

- Practise high frequency words and phrases e.g. prepositions, days of the week, rooms in the house.
- Practise frequency and time expressions e.g usually, today, tomorrow, yesterday, last, next etc. and practise writing sentences using them e.g. *Aujourd'hui je....Hier j'ai/je suis.....Demain je vais.....*
- Remember to conjugate the verb where required rather than leaving it in the infinitive.
- Check carefully that all aspects of the translation have been addressed.
- Proofread your work by looking out for specific issues e.g. verb endings, plurals/genders, spellings, omissions.
- Do everything that you can within the task, even if only a few words, in order to gain access to some marks.

Question 4

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 90 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be addressed, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. As stated earlier, the increase in choice for this question provided all students with the opportunity to produce more confident responses in which they could demonstrate their skills and knowledge. All students approached this question well, with many able to produce extended pieces of writing with developed responses. They were aware of the need to produce three time frames and express at least two opinions and, for the most part were successful in achieving this. As in previous series, students were less successful if they incorrectly interpreted or omitted bullet points.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: Coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Students need to be reminded that coverage of bullet points is key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one means that the award of a mark above 6 is impossible, given that for the award of marks in the range 7 – 10, all aspects of the task must be covered. In addition, inaccuracy and therefore lack of clarity of communication (referred to as 'lapses') can impact negatively on marks awarded. Students also need to be aware that in addressing the bullet points, they should avoid using the possessive adjectives *votre* or *vos* in their responses, as this can negate the message. Although students are now aware of the need to produce three time frames, there was occasionally some mismatch between the time markers in bullet points three 3 and 4 and the time frame produced in the response, which also negated the message.

Question 4.1

This question was generally completed well. It was a topic with which students are familiar and they were able to produce extended pieces of writing. Bullet point 1 '*vos rapports avec vos ami(e)s*' provided many students with the opportunity to develop detailed responses, although some students did not understand the word *rapports* and wrote generally about activities with friends with no mention of their relationship which meant that they had not addressed the bullet point effectively. Similarly, some students wrote about their family rather than their friends, which could not be accepted as a successful response to the bullet point. Bullet point 2 '*votre réseau social préféré*' was

well covered. Most students responded well to bullet points 3 and 4. Where there were less successful responses, this was because some students used inappropriate verb formations with the time markers '*hier soir*' and '*le week-end prochain*' and therefore did not successfully refer to the required time frames.

Question 4.2

This choice was by far the most popular with students as the task covered topics with which students are very familiar. Bullet points were often fully addressed and rarely omitted, leading to some very impressive responses. Where a minority of students were unsuccessful, it was because they did not express an opinion in their response to bullet point 2 '*votre transport préféré pour aller en ville*' or as in question 4.1, they used inappropriate verb formations with the time markers '*samedi dernier*' and '*le week-end prochain*' and as a result did not successfully refer to the required time frames.

Question 4.3

The majority of students who attempted this question were able to address all four bullet points successfully. However, some students did not always effectively address bullet point 1, mainly due to their misunderstanding of the phrase '*règlement scolaire*'. This often led to students describing the school itself, the subjects they enjoyed and/ or their favourite teachers and did not address the concept of school rules. Bullet point 2 was well covered. Most students were able to understand that a past time frame was required for bullet point 3, although some students confused the word *journée* for 'journey' and wrote about travel. However, those students who contextualised this by making a reference to school, demonstrated that they had addressed the bullet point effectively and were awarded the task. Most students understood that a future time frame was required for the fourth bullet point and addressed it well. Where students were less successful, was if they wrote about future studies without mentioning a profession or if they used a construction such as '*je voudrais un avocat*', which could not be seen as addressing the bullet point effectively.

Quality of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy. As in previous series, the following was seen relating to the successful inclusion of variety and complexity of language: different persons of the verb, synonyms *j'adore*, *j'aime*, *j'apprécie*, *je préfère*, infinitive constructions, a variety of adjectives, connectives, intensifiers, negatives, use of subordinate clauses, relative pronouns, and a variety of tenses including subjunctives. However, at this level, simple expression was often the clearest because when some students attempted more complex expressions, there were often issues of clarity which impacted on marks awarded. Less successful language included inaccurate tense formation (particularly perfect tense, where the auxiliary verb was often omitted or the past participle was replaced by an infinitive) and the inappropriate use of the infinitive. There was also the occasional use of *votre/ vos*, *préféré* used as a verb (e.g. '*je préféré Instagram*') and *scolaire* used as a noun from the bullet points. There was also confusion of the following adjectives: *fatigué/fatigant* and *mal/mauvais*.

Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words.
- Mention all the of the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points in the rubric once they have been addressed.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate. Use the time markers in the bullet points and include them in your response e.g. *'hier soir, samedi dernier, le week-end prochain'*.
- Practise manipulation of possessive adjectives *votre/vos* to *mon/ma/mes*.
- Practise manipulation of the bullet points when writing your answer to ensure you have provided the information required e.g. *Mon transport préféré est... / Mon club scolaire préféré est ...*

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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