

FRENCH

Paper 9779/01
Speaking

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reaction(s) to it
- in Part II, choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where the target language is spoken
- in Parts I and II, be prepared to take the lead in the conversation
- in Parts I and II, be ready to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion.

General comments

Centres are again to be thanked for the efficiency with which they dealt with the administration for the examination and for ensuring that everything ran smoothly.

In a few instances, the receipt of candidates' topic forms was slightly delayed: Centres are reminded that receipt of the topic forms is required at least a fortnight before the Examiner's visit and in hard copy by first class post. It is also helpful wherever possible to receive the timetable in advance.

Discussion of Article

Of the four articles, the one on Health and Fitness was the most popular. Those who did not choose it divided themselves fairly evenly between the remaining three topics, namely the Environment, Sport, and Law and Order. Candidates are reminded that their choice should be based not just on how accessible they find the article itself, but also on the wider thematic area: in a few cases, the broader thematic discussion was an area of relative weakness.

Most candidates were very well prepared for engaging in a spontaneous discussion in this part of the examination. A few candidates attempted to read out notes that they had made during the preparation time. Whilst candidates are permitted to use notes as a prompt during the examination, it is important to avoid reading out prepared material to the Examiner.

1. Sport

Most candidates agreed on the economic benefits of sport, though a number were less convinced by the social good it does. The negative as well as the positive influence of sporting celebrities was highlighted, as was the increasingly unwelcome involvement of companies such as Canal+ and Sky. Racism, homophobia and performance-enhancing drugs all featured in the general discussion.

2. The Environment

Many candidates were sceptical of Sarkozy's green credentials, expressing the view that he had done little in this respect during his term of office, and commenting on his endorsement of nuclear power. A significant number of candidates struggled to differentiate between passenger transport and freight, leading to some confusion in responses to questions about the rail v road debate. Other terms which caused difficulties for some candidates were *péage urbain* and *transgénique*. Examples of areas covered in the general discussion include energy-saving measures (both domestic and industrial), recycling, renewable sources and green politics. Candidates seemed for the most part to have a sound knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary relating to these areas.

3. Health and Fitness

Not only was this article the most popular, but it was also the best handled. Responses to the article were usually articulate and informed, both in terms of the causes of obesity and possible remedial and preventative measures. Issues raised in the general discussion ranged over areas including private medical care, doctors' salaries, adolescent health and concerns, euthanasia, contraception, abortion and drug addiction. Very few candidates could pronounce *alcool* correctly and many sounded the final c in *tabac*.

4. Law and Order

Candidates who chose this article usually presented their views on CCTV with clarity and conviction. They were generally supportive of the points raised in the article, taking the line that if you have nothing to hide, then you have nothing to fear. They were, however, less clear on what a *loi caméra* might achieve. The "Big Brother" society, social psychosis, police over-reactions, Internet pornography and the function of prisons were among subjects covered in the general discussion.

Topics

All candidates referenced their personal topic to French or French-speaking culture. Quite patently, the spirit of independent research abounded and shone through in the enthusiasm with which the majority of candidates displayed their interest in their chosen topic. Perhaps the most important point to be stressed as far as the topic is concerned is the importance of the choice of subject. In particular, candidates need to consider whether their chosen subject gives sufficient scope for the expression of ideas, opinions and reactions. In the discussion, the Examiner will seek to go beyond the factual in order to assess the depth of the candidate's understanding of the field which he/she has investigated and submitted to a certain degree of analysis. It is harder to do this if the chosen topic is too factual in nature, and this can make it difficult for candidates to access the highest marking bands for the content of the discussion. Topics that proved especially successful were those that focused on an author or a particular literary work, on a film director or a particular film, on a composer, on an artistic movement or a particular artist, or on socio-political aspects of a target language country. The following gives an idea of the impressive range of topics chosen this year:

Literary: Rimbaud, Les Chansons de geste, Camus, Sartre, Molière, Balzac, Frantz Fanon, Zola, Flaubert, Maupassant, Radiguet, Perec, Saint-Exupéry, Rabelais, Prévert, Gary, Alain-Fournier, Rousseau, Descartes

Artistic: Piaf, Bardot, Offenbach, Marcel Duchamp, Matisse, French Surrealism, Dada, Antoine-Jean Gros, David, Monet, Manet, l'Impressionisme, Toulouse-Lautrec, Godard, Truffaut, Dany Boon, Jean Réno, Jean Vigo, la Grande Illusion, Amélie, les Trois Couleurs, Monsieur Batignole, Ravel, Brel, Cartier-Bresson

Historical: la Guerre algérienne, les relations franco-britanniques 1815-1904, Napoléon, la Révolution française, la Guerre d'Indochine, la Première Croisade, l'Occupation, Jeanne d'Arc, la Première Guerre Mondiale, la Romanisation de la France, Louis XIV, Louis XVI, la Guerre de Cent Ans, la Résistance, Marie Tussaud, Haussmann

Social/Political: Sarkozy, le nucléaire, SOS Racisme, la laïcité, la burqa, Charlie Hebdo, l'euthanasie, les Roms, DSK, le Front National, les banlieues dans le cinéma français, la Guerre franco-algérienne, l'affaire Karachi, les DOM TOM

Language

Generally speaking, in both the discussion of the article and in the topic conversation, a high degree of sophistication was in evidence both in terms of lexis and syntax. Aside from a certain amount of hesitation in the use of the subjunctive, most candidates were able to produce complex sentences with very few lapses in register or gender.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/02
Reading and Listening

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
- pay particular attention to conveying the required information to the examiner in unambiguous language.

General comments

In general, candidates' performance on the Listening exercises was stronger than in the Reading Comprehension part of the paper. In the best scripts, candidates had taken care to target the information required by the questions and to demonstrate clearly that they had understood the comprehension passages. In good answers to the Reading Comprehension exercise with answers in French, candidates avoided straight 'lifts' from the text and, in the exercise with answers in English, they avoided the temptation to transliterate sections of the French text. In good answers to the Listening Comprehension exercise with answers in French, many candidates were able to identify the pertinent material and transcribe it accurately or provide an appropriate paraphrase. Candidates performing successfully in the other Listening exercises conveyed the detail of the information in the recordings clearly and concisely.

Texte à lire 1

This exercise was the least well done of the five exercises in the paper. In a number of scripts, there was a tendency to copy out lengthy sections of the original text without tailoring the response to the specific question asked.

Question 1

Most candidates scored the mark, but a number did not explain how *Rebel* is of help to young people in a festive mood. A number of candidates simply repeated the information given in the second part of the question to which they added a few words copied from the text: *Il aide les jeunes à faire la fête jusqu'au bout de la nuit.*

Question 2

The majority of candidates saw that the essential point here was Dimitri's choice of name for his drink. Others copied out the original text without addressing the specific details of the question asked: such answers as *L'idée de révolte a toutes les chances de séduire un public jeune* were quite frequently given.

Question 3

The question asks what happens when a client's stock of *Rebel* runs out. The best answers were concise and to the point, e.g. *Dimitri lui livre un nouveau stock en moins d'une heure.* Some candidates responded by lifting directly from the text, and this did not give a satisfactory answer to the question.

Question 4

Overall, candidates performed well on this question. However, some scripts showed evidence of misunderstanding: a few, for example, confused *souris* and *sourire*, which resulted in incorrect explanations.

Question 5

Stronger candidates had no difficulty in explaining the arrangement targeted by the question. Quite a number of candidates, however, thought that the competitor was giving his drinks away for nothing.

Question 6

In response to this question, there were frequent instances of lifting from the text, such as *Ils voulaient se faire voler le sponsoring d'une grosse soirée disco*. In other responses, it was not always made clear that the sponsorship that the competitors wanted to steal was for a disco where *Rebel* was the recognised sponsor.

Question 7

In general, candidates performed less well on this question: there were many instances of wholesale lifting. Fewer candidates attempted to explain what they had understood by the last sentence of the passage.

Texte à lire 2

There were some high scores in this part of the test: candidates performing strongly in this exercise successfully picked out the essential concepts which they set out to convey clearly and usually concisely. In weaker scripts, candidates tended to write down the English equivalents of the French words, and this approach did not always succeed in demonstrating comprehension.

Question 8

The vast majority of candidates scored the point attached to *instruire le peuple*. *To instruct the people* was accepted here but *to constitute reservoirs (constituer des réservoirs)*, which figured in a number of scripts, could not be rewarded. This question required candidates to demonstrate clear understanding of the idea of providing a stock/bank/collection/reserve/archive of pictures.

Question 9

The idea of suffering budget cuts was sufficient to score the point but many scripts also contained the information, which was also pertinent and a sufficient answer in itself, that was contained in the following sentence, notably that conservation became the sole object of museums and that museums had to abandon their innovative and creative roles. Some candidates missed the point here and thought that museums had abandoned conservation and were now focusing on creation and innovation.

Question 10

Quite a number of candidates fell at this fence either because they provided partial answers (e.g. *it puts on temporary exhibitions, it is innovative*) or because they relied on transliteration, which resulted in such answers as *it renovates itself...* and *... thanks to temporary expositions*. A significant number of candidates gave *temporaires* as *contemporary*.

Question 11

A certain number of candidates paid insufficient heed to tense here and gave information about what some French museums are planning rather than about what they have already been able to do. *Pour partager les frais* was quite often interpreted as meaning *to share profits*.

Question 12

L'intégralité de l'argent figured quite a lot as *some of the money* or as *the integrality of the money*.

Question 13

Most candidates had understood the criticism that the plan had been put forward for financial and not artistic reasons. However, the other criticism was sometimes distorted by misunderstanding of one or more items contained in the final paragraph, e.g. *the 7 million visitors to the Louvre had paid for the majority of the pictures (... payants pour la majorité)* and *why should these works be private for so long? (pourquoi... devraient-ils être privés de ces oeuvres si longtemps?)*

Texte à lire 3

There were some commendable performances in the translation exercise: the candidates in question experienced little or no difficulty with the structures and vocabulary required and the detail of concordances, prepositions, articles and the like bore witness to a high level of grammatical awareness. Common incorrect renderings that figured quite widely in weaker scripts included *plus qu'un million, qui est beaucoup, Il y a des plans pour le musée d'ouvrir, une partie du nuit, il n'est pas sûr qu'il y aura, un prix d'admission, être dans une position de, l'importance desquelles est sans doute* and *y voyager*. Generally speaking, candidates made good use of words and phrases that they found in the previous passage. However, *chef d'oeuvre* was sometimes made to do duty for *the director* and *se borner* for *to bother to*.

Texte à écouter 1

Generally speaking, this exercise was quite well done. Candidates were usually able to pick out the pertinent information from what they had heard. In a few scripts, errors of transcription were such that comprehension could not be deemed to have been demonstrated.

Question 15

Most candidates identified and correctly transcribed *elle s'est mise dans la peau d'une travailleuse pauvre*.

Question 16

There were two items, either of which qualified for the mark. Minor spelling errors in the transcription of *casserole* were tolerated but when it was written as two words and when *bonne à rien* was contracted to two words or fewer, the mark could not be awarded.

Question 17

- (a) Most candidates were able to transcribe *boulot* successfully. A minority of candidates provided transcriptions which did not communicate, such as *bulo* and *bulow*. A few candidates gave answers which were wide of the mark, e.g. *Ils ont dit qu'il est difficile pour ton avenir*.
- (b) Almost everyone understood that Florence had accepted work cleaning toilets.

Question 18

Where candidates scored fewer than 2 marks here, it was often as a result of an unsuccessful attempt to transcribe the word *recurer*, for example *recueillir* and *réguler*. Most candidates avoided the problem by using the obvious synonym *nettoyer*.

Question 19

Both marks proved to be very accessible to candidates.

Question 20

The vast majority of candidates were successful in conveying one of the four possible points without distortion. The commonest pitfall proved to be problems with the transcription of the two numbers heard, i.e. 700 and 350.

Question 21

There were few problems here.

Texte à écouter 2

Scores on this exercise tended to be quite high: scripts that scored full marks or almost full marks were fairly common, and most candidates gained at least half of the marks available.

Question 22

The majority of candidates successfully demonstrated comprehension of *a financé son mariage grâce au sponsoring*. A few candidates distorted the last part of the first sentence of the text. The word *facture* caused problems for some, e.g. *10 sponsored couples have reduced the factor of a half and reducing the factor of "moitié"*. Candidates who had difficulty with *a réduit la facture de moitié* sometimes resorted to invented answers of the sort *in order to reduce the cost and work of weddings, to overcome financial limits due to their jobs and because of financial difficulties*.

Question 23

The commonest misunderstanding here was that of seeing the extension needed to plan the wedding as a desirable factor rather than one that was imposed on them because of the need to secure the necessary sponsorship e.g. *it gave them longer to plan the wedding*.

Question 24

Few problems were encountered here.

Question 25

Many candidates answered this question correctly. In a number of scripts, however, candidates invalidated their answers by directly attributing the decision of some members of the older generation not to attend the wedding to the presence of cameras at the door of the church.

Question 26

Most understood that the designer had offered his services free of charge but quite a few omitted to mention the condition that Aurore provide the material. A number of candidates alighted on the information given about the reasons why the designer accepted the arrangement rather than on the details of the arrangement itself, e.g. *she had to make the designer well-known in her region*.

Question 27

Numbers again proved a problem here – *dix-sept* was often given as *16* – and a number of other distortions also crept in, for example: *he got 30 times more customers, a woman called him to Bordeaux and 17 customers decided to buy a dress from him*.

Texte à écouter 3

The summary exercise was quite well done in the main: candidates identified the key points which they expressed both precisely and, in most cases, concisely. This year, there were more cases than in previous years of candidates going beyond the maximum word limit for the task. In the interests of fairness, where this happened, excess words were not allowed. For some candidates, this made a difference of as many as 3 or 4 marks to their overall score for the exercise.

Most candidates got off to a good start and detailed both the secret that Michelin wished to keep and the measures taken to ensure that that goal was achieved. A certain number did not demonstrate comprehension of *elle fait croire que la nouvelle machine peut fonctionner dans la vieille usine du centre-ville* while others omitted to refer to the coming and goings of the trucks which were central to Michelin's strategy. Some candidates included invented material, particularly when it came to detailing the information given in the passage about the reasons for keeping research secret. Only stronger candidates tended to recognise the item *leur part du marché*, for which *their part of the market* was frequently given.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/03
Writing and Usage

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, choose a title on which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and lexis
- in Part I, plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments
- in Part I, write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- in Part II, read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence(s)
- in Parts I and II, carefully proofread their responses.

General comments

The selection of essay titles in this year's paper covered the role of marriage in the modern world, government subsidies for cultural activities in times of austerity, education and lifelong learning, health issues in contemporary society and the relationship between religion and science. The usage section of the paper tested knowledge of verb forms in Exercise 1 including use of the future tense, subjunctives, sequence of tenses with a *si* clause, preceding direct object and a past infinitive of a reflexive verb. Exercise 2 tested candidates' ability to manipulate language and included a time clause using *pendant*, use of pronoun, use of passive voice, subjunctive formation, and use of *aussitôt*. Exercise 3 provided candidates with a newspaper article about rental of property in big cities in France. Candidates were given a choice of four possible words or phrases to fill in the gaps in the text. For the Discursive Essay, 24 marks were awarded for language and 16 for content. Exercises 1 and 2 were worth 5 marks each and Exercise 3 was worth 10 marks.

Overall, candidates performed well on this paper, and, at the top end, a significant number gained high marks. Candidates across the whole of the ability range demonstrated that they had studied the topics well and that they had been exposed to the French language in a variety of forms.

Common errors in the essay section involved:

- incorrect genders of common words such as *public, crime, pays, manque, crise, musée, problème, mode de vie, service, exercice, programme*
- confusion of *penser à* and *de*
- confusion of *ou* and *où*
- misspellings such as *existence, chacun, personnellement, agressif, néanmoins, environnementale, renouvelable, aujourd'hui, traditionnel, gouvernement, constation, alcool, mariage*
- numerous accent errors such as *société, menace, existé, créés* (past participle), *achété, religions, technologie* and random accents on words such as *univérse* and *pérmet*
- anglicisms such as *actuellement (en fait), place (endroit), change (changement), stage (étape), définitivement, à l'autre main, par faisant qch*
- use of *aider à (une personne)* and *regarder à (quelque chose)*
- use of *mieux* for *meilleur*, *mal* for *mauvais*, *bien* for *bon*
- problems with discriminating between the forms of *leur* and *leurs* such as *leur enfants, leurs donner*

- phonetic spellings as in *car* for *quand*, *ce* for *c'est*, *ses* for *ces* and vice versa
- difficulty with forming reflexive verbs correctly, particularly *se rendre compte* in *nous* form, and *se marier* in the past tense
- paragraphs starting with inappropriate link words such as *aussi*, *ensuite*, *alors*.

Comments on Specific Questions

Part I: Discursive Essay

The essay question gives candidates the opportunity to discuss the topic in any way that they wish and there is no single correct answer or viewpoint. The argument should be convincing and with a degree of balance. Most candidates had written a plan and adhered to the instructions in the rubric about the suggested number of words. All demonstrated that they had understood the implications of the questions set and, having acquired a good knowledge from their reading of French texts and articles, were able to offer some genuine personal discussion of the topics. In general, candidates need to consider carefully their opening paragraph as it is this which sets the tone and parameters of the argument. A definition of the terms involved in the question also helps to set the essay off in the right direction. Many candidates planned their essays in English and then translated the ideas with limited success. Some candidates, instead of preparing a plan for their essays, made a list of pre-learned phrases to incorporate into their essays. In such essays the argument tended to be rather thin and less well executed.

1(a) « Le mariage est une institution démodée qui n'a aucune valeur dans le monde moderne. » Êtes-vous d'accord ?

This was the third most popular question. Candidates were encouraged to consider the nature and role of marriage in the modern world. It was, on the whole, well answered. Candidates generally understood the implications of the question and demonstrated some clear views. They recognised that marriage has changed over the past fifty years and that, as an institution, it has its supporters and its detractors. Many candidates pointed out that in an increasingly secular society such as that in France or the UK the link between the church and marriage had been largely lost. Some candidates expressed the view that marriage in church these days is more about the pretty location than any desire to have one's union blessed by God. Some candidates argued that the current disputes between the Church and the state over civil partnerships and same sex marriages were leading to the whole institution of marriage being tainted. In some essays it was pointed out that divorce rates are very high and that this shows that people do not respect marriage as they might have done in the past when it was seen as a union for life. Points made in favour of marriage included the idea that it was a testament to true love and a perfect environment in which to bring up children, providing them with a stable and moral framework to prepare them for life. Some candidates discussed the importance of marriage in other countries, particularly in the developing world, presenting it as a firmly upheld tradition and one which is often central to religious belief. Some candidates were keen to point out that a couple's wedding day was the best day of their lives, and stag and hen parties received praise from some candidates. Overall, candidates had strong views on the subject of marriage and provided balanced arguments as to whether it was an outdated institution or whether it could be still be relevant to modern society.

1(b) Même en période de crise économique, le gouvernement doit continuer à financer les activités culturelles. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

This was the second most popular question with candidates, offering them the chance to explore the ramifications of the economic crisis. The question encouraged candidates to think particularly about the government's priorities for spending in times of austerity and to consider whether money should be allocated to cultural activities at this time. There were some good answers that gave a very balanced view of the issues. In the best answers, candidates explained what they understood by cultural activities; in weaker responses, the phrase was frequently quoted but without explanation of whether it meant concerts, museums, sport, festivals or other activities or institutions. It was a generally held view that the Olympic Games constituted a cultural activity and it was felt that it was a good idea to be financing such an event even in times of austerity as it would create a massive tourist boom and bring money to the UK economy. Tourism was also mentioned with reference to France as its museums are some of the most visited in the world and bring foreign money into the country. For these reasons it was felt to be appropriate that governments fund culture and the arts. Another important factor mentioned in favour of funding the arts and culture was the need to create an escape for people suffering from the downturn in the economy. It was felt to be very important to keep the population happy by continuing to support access to museums, galleries, concerts and sporting events. This argument was balanced by the need for the country, be it France, UK or anywhere else, to provide support for those most affected by the *crise économique* – low paid workers, the homeless, those on benefits and the sick. It was suggested that government money might better be spent on job creation programmes, health and education rather than cutting back in these areas. For all candidates it was a matter of weighing up the arguments, and most came to a firm conclusion one way or the other. There were some very impressive and well informed essays at the top end which stated clearly the dilemma for governments in economic policy. The less convincing essays were rather superficial and tended to be limited to a discussion of the benefits of tourism and of people having a good time in times of difficulty.

1(c) La fin des études universitaires est-ce la fin de l'éducation ?

This question gave candidates the chance to consider the difference between formal education and lifelong learning. Most of the candidates who chose to answer this question appreciated the difference between learning and study at School and university and the more informal style of learning that we are undergoing throughout all of our lives. They agreed that we need to begin with a wide variety of subjects in order to gain a corpus of knowledge. They also recognised that university, in particular, gives candidates the opportunity to learn in depth about a subject area but also the opportunity to learn how to think and present ideas, a skill which will be relevant at all stages of life. It was pointed out that people learn in a range of different ways depending on their own experience and learning style and also in a range of different contexts. These can be anything from learning a new job, talking to other people, travelling, reading or the multiple experiences we have every day. The best essays discussed the respective roles of formal and informal education and gave many examples of the ways in which people learn throughout life. The candidates were all able to make some significant contribution to the argument which showed that they had fully engaged with the topic and considered its implications.

1(d) Rester en bonne santé dans la société du 21^e siècle devient de plus en plus difficile. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

This was by far the most popular question and it was attempted by candidates across the whole of the ability range. The essay title gave candidates the chance to explore the health issues current in society. There were some very sophisticated answers which pointed out the historical context and explained that on one level we may lead unhealthy lives but in real terms we are living much longer and the advances in medicine and medical care mean that we are able to enjoy a much better standard of health than in previous centuries. A number of weaker responses presented the view that we are no longer able to be in good health because of the rise of fast food restaurants and the increasing use of technology. Such essays were often rather one-sided, making the assumption that fast food and technology necessarily mean that we are unable to be in good health. These essays also tended to be rather superficial, often going down the route of explaining that modern life means that we have to eat fast food because it is cheap and quickly prepared. Other matters mentioned included the eating disorders created by the culture of super thin models seen in magazines and on the TV and Internet and the lack of exercise as people become increasingly addicted to technology and cars. Candidates felt that the pressure and temptations of modern life meant that there was no alternative but to eat unhealthily and lead a sedentary life. Added to this was the thought that people are protected by medicine and therefore have less interest in staying healthy for themselves.

Stronger responses stressed that it is a matter of personal choice and *volonté*. There are many options for those wishing to stay healthy such as an increase in the amount of organic and cheap food offers in

supermarkets and the number of gyms available. Health warnings are regularly put out by the government about the dangers of eating unhealthily, smoking and drinking to excess so people have no excuse. Those essays that were well planned, used appropriate examples and arrived at a suitable conclusion were well rewarded.

1(e) Selon vous, la religion est-elle incompatible avec la science ?

There were fewer answers to this question, but it was well answered overall with candidates having strong views but largely managing to provide balanced arguments which were appropriately illustrated. The question was approached from the religious and the scientific angle with the discussion focusing on whether it is possible to be a scientist and hold religious views and whether belief in God can be squared with the developments and discoveries of modern science. Candidates generally expressed the view that religion and science can be seen as complementary as religion concerns the *pourquoi* and science the *comment*. Candidates made reference to the evolutionary theories of Darwin and his modern day disciple, Richard Dawkins and explained how in the US, fundamental Christians hold opposing views taken from the stories in the Bible. A number of candidates expressed the view that the Bible contains stories which are to be taken on a symbolic level and that these stories can be interpreted in such a way as to be relevant to today's world. They pointed out that religion can bring about morality although some felt that society would work out its own rules if religion did not exist. They saw science as representing comprehension and knowledge and as providing a framework for how the world works. Religion was seen as a way of interpreting the world so that it makes sense to live in as a society of human beings. It brings a set of rules to live by and a sense of community for those adhering to its code. Overall, candidates viewed religion as belonging to the past and science as representing the future with its drive to investigate, discover and understand. Essays were varied and interesting with candidates trying very hard to balance the two elements of the question with some considerable success.

Part II: Usage

Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well understood by candidates with most achieving between 3 and 5 marks. The discriminating questions were **Question 5** and **Question 6**. Many candidates missed the preceding direct object in **Question 4**. Incorrect answers to **Question 5** included:

Avoir s'asseyes

S'asseoions

Nous être asseoir

Avoir s'asseoit

Être s'assoits

S'avoir asseye

S'être asseois

Exercise 2

This exercise tested a range of grammatical points. Few candidates achieved full marks but most achieved 3 or 4 out of 5. The following incorrect answers were seen:

Question 7 – *a visité, visitait à la cathédrale*

Question 8 – *la maison de lui a été échappé avant, la maison duquel*

Question 9 – *avait ouvert, a ouvert, a été ouvert*

Question 10 – *bien qu'ils sont, bien qu'ils aient*

Question 11 – *aussitôt j'ai arrivée, aussitôt que je suis arrivé, aussitôt que j'arrive*

Exercise 3

Candidates mostly achieved good marks on this exercise, showing that they had a good understanding of the content and grammatical structure of the passage. **Questions 23, 25 and 31** were some of the clearer discriminators although incorrect answers were spread across the whole piece.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 9779/04 Topics and Texts</p>

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- read the question with care and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close attention to the question
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid simply retelling the story.

General comments

Candidates should plan their essays before setting pen to paper. A well-structured essay will be sensibly paragraphed, and the discussion will lead from an introduction to a conclusion.

In responding to the question on a literary text, candidates should reflect on the whole question, not just focus on one specific word.

For the Cultural Topics section, it is recommended to write on two sources rather than three.

For both parts of this paper, a good level of understanding and knowledge of the texts and films is required, expressed in well-argued responses with relevant illustration. The topics section invites the acquisition of a broad cultural knowledge of the topic studied through the material chosen. For answers in French, candidates should strive to achieve a high level of accuracy and determine to use a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns; a sense of idiom would be a bonus.

In both parts of the paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully
- plan their answer keeping the question in mind throughout
- define the terms of the question in the introduction
- support any assertions with close references to the text and/or film
- make sure quotations, if used, support the argument
- make sure all quotations are accurate
- use paraphrasing and allusion as an alternative to overlong quotations
- make sure to include analysis and argument, and avoid narrative
- demonstrate knowledge by using it as supporting evidence for the argument
- exclude information that is irrelevant to the question.

Part I: Cultural Topics

Candidates should:

- make sure that they learn the necessary vocabulary to write about their topic, when preparing for this part
- remember that the rubric requires reference to only two of the works. Writing about all three may lead to a lack of depth
- try to demonstrate their knowledge of underlying themes, and mention comparisons and links between the two works
- proofread carefully after writing, paying special attention to verb forms and agreements.

Part II: Literary Texts

In context questions candidates should:

- make sure they analyse the extract showing how its content is related to the rest of the work
- avoid using the passage as a springboard for a general essay
- be careful to analyse, rather than re-tell the story of the extract.

Candidates' responses: general comments

This was the third year of the examination, and candidates once again demonstrated impressive preparation for and engagement with the paper. The quality of answers indicates that teachers and candidates have established a good grasp of the requirements of the syllabus, and more particularly, the demands of this paper. The candidates' scripts confirm that the aim of the syllabus to raise cultural awareness and to develop critical faculties is being fulfilled, often impressively so. Both candidates and teachers are to be congratulated on their hard work and on the effectiveness of their preparation for the examination.

The majority of candidates planned their answers before starting to write their essays. Many candidates chose to write in excess of the recommended word limit: the length of answers indicated that candidates desired and were able to communicate a variety of good ideas in structured paragraphs and cogently argued prose, and anchor their assertions with close reference to the text or film. The success of their enterprise was generally good or very good, with some exceptional answers which demonstrated an impressive acuity of insight. The effectiveness of the essays varied according to the quality of discussion and the development of argument. Examiners also noted some very concise essays which comprised closely argued and thoughtful analysis: these essays scored highly.

The Examiners felt that there was an overall improvement in the structuring and effectiveness of essays, particularly in Part II. The answers on cultural topics indicated a good knowledge of the source material, and there were fewer examples of candidates taking a narrative approach. The quality of language ranged from satisfactory to very good, indicating that candidates had built up the requisite vocabulary and were comfortable writing extensively in the target language. All candidates answered the questions in the correct language.

The Cultural Topics section of the paper enabled candidates to develop their cultural awareness alongside their French language skills, and Centres had once again been imaginative in their approach to some of the topics. A few scripts showed that all three elements of a topic had been studied (usually topic 4); others demonstrated that a certain amount of additional background material had enriched the teaching programme, notably for *La France pendant la guerre* and *Regards sur la guerre d'Algérie*. This material was often deployed sparingly to good effect in answers. A few candidates, in their eagerness to show their breadth of knowledge, referred to all three elements of a topic; Examiners noted that the additional source references and comparative analysis were not always marshalled effectively, and that the inclusion of the third source tended to weaken, rather than enhance, the underlying argument of the essay.

The vast majority of answers engaged well with the terms of the questions, with the best answers revealing detailed knowledge of the texts and films used as supporting evidence in a cogent and coherent line of argument. The overwhelming majority of candidates managed to strike a good balance when approaching two texts and/or films and also showed the ability to draw considered comparisons between the two works according to the terms of the question, either in the conclusion or in the body of the essay. The paramount wish of a few candidates, though, was to demonstrate their knowledge of the film and text, and the answers here tended to be driven by narrative rather than argument.

The best answers to the second part of the paper, Texts, showed an excellent ability to organise material in direct reference to the terms of the question and also showed great command of the detail of the text studied, making cogent and considered arguments. Most candidates were well practised in structuring their answers, notably in defining the terms of the question with a clear introduction and conclusion. All scripts showed a good acquaintance with textual detail. The Examiners noted the generally high quality of English and the use of appropriate register in the vast majority of scripts.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1A

Candidates clearly enjoyed engaging with the question and were able to illustrate their knowledge freely from the sources. Whilst there were some answers which took a heavily narrative approach to the subject, the

majority of candidates were able to analyse the differences or challenges that various characters faced in moving from childhood towards adult life. Good essays were not only effectively argued, but gave sensitive psychological pen portraits. There was impressive work on the film, and in particular, awareness of the importance of its structure on the presentation of Thomas's mind-set. Many candidates drew a contrast between moments of childhood bliss and the interplay of affection and jealousy and traced the corrosive guilt following his sister's death and its effects on Thomas's behaviour. Answers on *Le Blé en herbe* were generally sound, but tended to focus on Phil's relationship with Mme Dalleray and his subsequent treatment of Vinca. Good answers showed broader awareness of the text, and examined both Phil's emotional innocence as a child at the beginning of the story and compared the emotional maturity of the female figures to answer the question fully. Discerning answers made mention of the adult role that he was destined to fulfil within the context of the family and the readiness or otherwise with which he was prepared to take this on. The discussions on *La Vie devant soi* tended to dwell on Momo's life in a socially deprived area and the challenges he faced in looking after Mme Rosa. Some answers were heavily narrative, displaying good knowledge of the text, but not marshalling this knowledge effectively and using it to develop analysis. Good answers were able to point to Momo's resilience and initiative, and compared his development to that of those around him.

Question 1B

Answers to this question were generally thoughtful and well argued, and candidates were well-equipped to discuss the evocation of childhood in these works. A number of candidates wanted to agree with the affirmation and illustrate that the happiness of childhood is presented with a charming naivety without considering evidence to the contrary in the texts. In *Le Blé en herbe* good answers examined the innocence and happiness of the early part of the book, and contrasted Phil's outlook and emotional immaturity before and after his meetings with Mme Dalleray. Candidates were keen to point out that the period of childhood bliss is coloured by Phil's psychological development and that emotional turmoil and disappointment are as much features of the novel as the evocation of happiness. The film produced some perceptive analysis of Thomas's development and self-analysis, and telling references (such as his reaction to his father going to work, or the leitmotif of the song 'Boum') were included in good answers. Candidates were aware that childhood was not represented as an exclusively happy time of life, and mention was made of the tragedy of the death of his father and sister, for example. Some, perhaps accepting the narrator's viewpoint, argued that these childhood tragedies overshadowed any discussion of happiness and took a more pessimistic line. Discussion of *La Vie devant soi* produced a variety of responses. Whilst attention was sometimes focused on the problems surrounding Momo (poverty, racism, immorality), good answers pointed to the evocation of the child's world (Super, Arthur, the clowns, the dubbing studio episode). There were very discerning comments on the tragicomedy of the novel and of the naivety of style mirroring the child's point of view. A few candidates discussed quite pertinently the degree to which the naiveté of childhood is portrayed with *charme*.

Question 2A

This was a popular question, and many candidates were able to demonstrate good knowledge both of the film and of the Vercors text. The second half of the title was dealt with quite well, and there was appropriate analysis of resistance in various forms, collaboration, especially the *milices*, and, in many responses, the effect of the war on French daily life (e.g. food shortages, black market, propaganda). There was sensitivity to the portrayal of the war, in particular the lack of violence in the film, and sensitive answers appreciated the dramatic contrast of seeming normality in the School with the sudden and emotive departure to concentration camps at the end. The focus on the first part of the question was less sharp; a number of candidates wrote about the appearance of German soldiers, but did not relate this to a wider context of the occupying regime. Indeed, it was surprising that the presentation of Germans was often taken on a superficial level: the presence in the film of an army patrol in the forest or the dining soldiers in the restaurant was interpreted in the most positive tones; little mention was made of the regularity of patrols, curfews, the occupation of France by Hitler's troops, the collaborators with the Nazis or the policy of deportation and extermination of Jews. Good answers did point out how the film evoked wartime conditions. On the other hand, a good number of candidates were more effective in pointing out the malignancy of the regime in *Le Silence de la mer*, particularly in evoking the seeming naivety of von Ebrennac on meeting his friends in Paris and mentioning that the Nazi objective was to crush France. Some responses described von Ebrennac's reaction, but did not develop any analysis from it. The most astute answers showed that both the German guest and the niece should not be taken at face value, but pointed to their symbolic or metaphorical roles. It was pleasing to note that many candidates were aware of the role of the publication of the novel during the war and were able to blend this knowledge into their discussion.

Question 2B

This question was in the main answered well and with plenty of references to the two works studied, exclusively *Le Silence de la mer* and the film. There was a variety of approach by candidates, but there was good engagement with the title, and candidates showed that whilst survival was the overriding objective for some Frenchmen, the picture painted of wartime France was certainly more complex. Different levels of survival were alluded to in *Au revoir les enfants* in essays: matters of life and death for the Jews taking refuge at the School and Père Jean sheltering them, while the nurse informed on one; attempting to live above a poverty line for Joseph in his black market and collaborationist dealings; and creature comforts for François when he buys cigarettes from Joseph. Stronger essays pointed out that in *Le Silence de la mer* Werner von Ebrennac forewent the desire to survive when he decided to leave for the Eastern Front. Good answers pointed out the courage and humanity of, for example, le père Jean, and contrasted the stance taken by the uncle and the niece in the text to the invasive presence of von Ebrennac. Some answers weighed up the roles of friendship and patriotism and how the wavering morality or scruples influenced behaviour (e.g. the nurse's denunciation of the Jewish boys). Very good answers showed awareness of the threat of the occupation to ordinary Frenchmen, as well as consideration of survival on a national, cultural level in addition to examining individual circumstances. In general, essays were well structured and the conclusions demonstrated sensitivity to and understanding of the complexity of human reactions to war.

Question 3A

Quite a number of candidates expressed unqualified agreement with the proposition, asserting that the works presented neutral and factual positions, but in some cases they were able to present some key illustrations in support of their view. In contrast, some candidates dismissed the suggestion and put forward material entirely to disprove it. Other candidates maintained that, while the statement was true of the film, there were arguments for and against Camus' balance and objectivity. In stronger answers, candidates generally ranked Camus as more objective than Pontecorvo, but considered supporting and contrary evidence for the question, considering the nature of the works: documentary film, correspondence and fiction. Occasionally reference to 'positive' and 'negative' aspects did not seem so relevant, but overall there were some excellent answers. The answers to this question were of a generally high quality and displayed excellent background knowledge of the Algerian conflict as well as a good command of detail of books and film.

Question 3B

Generally, responses to this question provided very balanced comments on positive and negative aspects of the morality of both parties, covering the injustice of repression and horrors of violence.

Question 4A

Candidates engaged well with this question and distinguished between the rather darker social commentary of *La Haine*, the satirical depiction of provincial society in *La Vie est un long fleuve tranquille* and the struggle for identity in *C.R.A.Z.Y.* The answers mentioning *La Haine* had plenty of ammunition to exemplify the bleak outlook of the film, and credit was given to those answers which successfully integrated evidence into the discussion; a few essays were narrative in approach and did not sustain focus on the question. Most candidates identified elements which were used to take issue with the title, and successfully demonstrated that the picture painted of *banlieue* youth was not irremediably negative. Evaluation of evidence from Chatillez' film was less trenchant; some candidates identified with the characters and put forward plausible arguments for sympathising with and understanding the actions of Maurice and Mme Groseille's (emotional) blackmailing of the Le Quesoy. Inclusion of the satirical aspects of the film would have led to a stronger analysis. Answers on *C.R.A.Z.Y.* were based on Zach's coming to terms with Catholicism and sexuality, and on Zach's relationship with his father. Less consideration was given to the resolution of his struggles or to the other members of the family. In overview, candidates were generally able to structure their essays well and to offer a balanced conclusion.

Question 4B

Answers to this question showed good knowledge of the films, but tended to have difficulty incorporating good arguments. In some answers, there was a tendency to lose focus. Many candidates agreed with the title that the protagonists refused to understand society, but did not analyse sufficiently the elements in their surroundings, frame of reference or mind-set which brought about this position. Answers on *La Haine* tended to focus on the violent conflict with the police as justification of behaviour and outlook. Greater insight was afforded by reference to the telling episode in the art gallery where the lack of communication between the representatives of two social strata, or Said's misunderstanding of social norms, underlines both

the violent assertiveness of the three central characters and their desire to see things in their own terms. A number of answers mentioned the setting of the film but could have gone on to discuss the portrayal of the soulless housing estate as barrier to integration and civilised behaviour; society, through its urban planning, is in effect excluding those who live there. Analysis of *C.R.A.Z.Y.* was more successfully handled, and answers included useful discussion of religion, homosexuality, social norms and adolescent rebellion. Discussion of Chatillez' film focused mostly on Maurice and his continuing loyalty to the Groseille family through theft, deception and subversive influence. Good answers mentioned the satirical nature of the film and that both families are blind to the needs of others.

Question 5A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 5B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Part II: Literary Texts

Question 6A

Answers to this question displayed not only a good knowledge of the play and its background, but also indicated that candidates had been well-trained in commentary technique. The best answers were able to relate the significance of the conversation between Oreste and Hermione for the play as a whole, and how it prepares for a tragic outcome. There was acknowledgement of the enormity of the suggested crime of regicide and of Oreste's choice between remaining ambassador or becoming assassin. Good answers went on to develop the concept of duty versus passion and the moral dilemma posed in Racinian tragedy. Hermione's frustration, hurt pride and rage were identified by candidates, and the more discerning scripts recognised the emotional blackmail to which she has recourse in convincing Oreste to kill Pyrrhus.

Candidates set about this question in original ways, giving a variety of appreciations and drawing different conclusions. For example, some emphasised the use of first person pronouns, particularly in the opening lines of the passage, while others put an emphasis on second person pronouns in the same section, yet both could be done convincingly. Concise use was made of literary terminology such as polyptoton (assassins/assassinat; aimai/amour/aimer) and anaphora (Ne vous suffit-il pas...?), and the repetition of *juste* was indicated and commented on. Some referred to the ellipsis as Oreste's break in uncertainty, while others maintained that it was Hermione's interruption. A number of candidates showed an impressive level of sophistication and powers of analysis.

Question 6B

There was lively engagement with this question. Some candidates seemed so keen to uphold the title that the essays almost appeared to suggest that Hector and Astyanax controlled the action because they did not appear. In other responses it was proposed that the action was controlled by fate rather than by the characters.

Question 6C

Candidates effectively communicated why we may feel pity for Hermione as well as reasons for which our pity might be tempered or overwhelmed.

Question 7 A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 7B

Those candidates who chose to answer this question showed a good knowledge of the play and were able to trace Clitandre's interaction with other characters and evaluate his importance in the play. Some answers saw the role of Clitandre as a catalyst and commentator, and argued that Molière's comedy lampooned archetypal human characters and relationships, such as the bullied husband. Good answers explained how Clitandre represents a balanced view of intellectual pursuits, and that Molière's target was pretentious and pseudo-intellectual posturing. They might profitably have pointed out that the role of the *raisonneur* is a

theatrical device deployed to point out the absurdity of extreme attitudes and behaviour. All essays brought out the vanity and/or stupidity of other characters, and also made mention of Trissotin's pecuniary interests in wishing to marry Henriette, comparing the fraudulent, self-styled poet with the man of sincerity, Clitandre.

Question 7C

Essays on this question showed a good grasp of the play, and candidates were able to draw on plenty of material to illustrate predictability. In less strong answers, there was a tendency simply to list examples of where predictable things took place. Good answers examined how predictability could contribute to the comedy of the play. There was analysis of the interaction of different types of character (e.g. Philaminte and Chrysale). Much was made of the domineering personality of the one and the weakness of the other. Fewer essays dealt effectively with their comically obsessive and diametrically opposed preoccupations. A number of candidates recounted the dismissal of Martine and the argument over Henriette's marriage, but only the best answers focused on the comic contrast between Chrysale's confidence before the event and his predictable collapse in his wife's presence. There was awareness of the comedy of language as part of the characters' armoury. Again, the comedy over Martine's language howler eclipsed Philaminte's exaggerated disapproval of Chrysale's attitudes and his disregard for refinement. Few essays went beyond these points to mention notions of comic inflexibility, predictability and incongruity; these would have raised the evaluative content of their analysis.

Question 8A

The commentary exercise was generally well handled by candidates. Answers showed a very good grasp of the context of the extract, and analysis was thoughtfully developed with appropriate reference to the broader context. Some answers were less disciplined in their analysis of detail, but rather tended to use the extract as a springboard for more general comments on characters and themes in the book. Good answers worked their way through the extract systematically, and anchored their points with pertinent illustrations from the passage. Whilst there was ready understanding of Pangloss's teaching and Voltaire's satirical intent, candidates did not always successfully link these to the words and actions of the Protestant preacher; good answers recognised the irony of the cause and effect *leitmotif*. There was, too, a ready perception and analysis of intolerance and religious hypocrisy. The 'what Candide says at the end' part of the question was overlooked in some cases, and in others, candidates encountered difficulty identifying more than one misunderstanding. It was rare for candidates to make clear that Candide and the *orateur* meant different things by the word *cause* and that this, and the significance of whether the pope was considered to be the Antichrist, basically constituted the misunderstandings. Stronger answers made links to other parts of the text.

Question 8B

This was a popular choice of question on *Candide*, and all candidates had opinions on the degree of sadness and pessimism which was conveyed. Candidates were able to give plenty of examples of depressing events in the story. Credit was given to those who succeeded in structuring the material thematically, as opposed to simply enumerating examples of experiences which eroded Candide's confidence in Pangloss's Optimism. Effective essays linked these experiences to Voltaire's aim of discrediting the view that disasters and instances of man's inhumanity to man were part of an ultimately harmonious universal plan. The nature of the ending attracted a variety of responses, and the best answers analysed the ambiguity of the tale's conclusion, rather than viewing it simply as an end to the characters' suffering.

Question 8C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 10A

A good knowledge of the *conte* was revealed by the contextualisation of the extract, and a pertinent answer developed close textual analysis to identify the elements of hypocrisy and selfishness of Boule de suif's fellow travellers. Candidates could point to the ironies of the characterisation and give good account of Maupassant's stylistic techniques in the passage. Candidates were generally successful in tying appropriate stylistic analysis to the development of the commentary's main thrust. A small number of answers were less disciplined in their analysis of detail, but rather used the extract as a springboard for more general comments on characters and themes in the stories.

Question 10B

Candidate who answered this question demonstrated a good knowledge of the text, and were able to point to good examples of mockery and point to the reasons why Maupassant adopted this technique. Good answers were able to show structure and cogent analysis and went on to explore the balance of mockery with instances of positive treatment or characteristics and the effect that this produced. Most answers examined separate stories in turn, and there were some impressive comments on *Un coup d'état* and *Un duel*. Quite a few candidates, though, did not extend the analysis to weigh up the overall balance of changing authorial tone in the comments on different social strata.

Question 10C

Candidates generally showed good understanding of the question, and many defined the terms of their discussion adequately. Some answers would have benefited by examining how patriotism is variously portrayed in the stories rather than itemising incidents and behaviour displaying patriotism. Boule de Suif was identified as patriotic by most candidates. Most candidates indicated that when Boule de Suif gave in to the Prussian officer, it was an act of patriotism, and went on to give further explanation or exemplification of her patriotism. Most of the other examples that could be presented needed some consideration of what patriotic means. Whether 'being motivated by love of one's country', including protecting compatriots or the country's dignity, or 'acting against your country's enemy', even motivated primarily by personal revenge, would need to be defined when considering the characters in the other stories. In more discerning responses, candidates noted the unwavering heroism of the Deux Amis and La Mère Sauvage, even though it cost all of them their lives. Some astute answers mentioned the sociological aspects of patriotism in the stories, particularly that it is concentrated in the lower classes. More perceptive responses mentioned that Maupassant criticised war itself, not simply the Prussian soldiers.

Question 11A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 11B

In general, performance on this question was strong. Answers showed a very good understanding of Louis' religious development and were able to illustrate their points tellingly with precise reference to the text. There was generally a thorough consideration of his upbringing and his regard for Catholicism as a social ritual. Candidates were able to trace his use of religion as a weapon against Isa after his discovery about Rodolphe. Many answers were able to give thought to the way in which Louis's spiritual awakening is made credible, and quite a few answers, showing an awareness of the structure of the novel, pointed to the significance of Theresa of Avila's prefatory quotation and its echo in the conclusion. Good answers also examined the contrast between the hypocrisy, especially religious hypocrisy, of the family and bourgeois society and drew a distinction between the family's perception of Louis and what the reader learns about Louis's state of mind from his diary.

Question 11C

Here, too, answers were of a good or very good standard, cogently argued and well-illustrated. Candidates demonstrated a sensitive appreciation of the roles played by Louis's mother in his development and by his wife in adult life, and were well-placed to argue that Louis's character and personality also had a part to play in his feelings of isolation and loneliness. His mother stifles his development, and good essays pointed out his judgment of his youth as a long suicide. Isa makes him feel inadequate; many pointed to her infatuation with Rodolphe, and good answers included her lack of encouragement, particularly with regard to his career. The role of money was rightly seen as being an integral part of the problem, and good answers did not just allude to the stifling effect of concern for money, but made it clear that it became a means of dealing with the family and a form of self-defence for Louis to compensate for emotional warmth.

Question 12A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 12B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 12C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 13A

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 13B

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 13C

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.