

# FRENCH LITERATURE

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Paper 8670/41  
Texts

## Key messages

Teachers should:

- Think carefully about which texts to prepare and aim for ones that their candidates can handle conceptually.
- Train their candidates to:
  - check carefully that they manage their time in the examination room well and answer three questions;
  - check carefully that they do not answer two questions on the same text;
  - think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write.

Candidates should:

- choose carefully either **(a)** or **(b)** and invest in providing as complete and relevant an answer to that one question as possible;
- answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read. Sometimes candidates wanted to write about Molière's 'Tartuffe', but 'Le Malade Imaginaire' was set this session;
- note key words in the questions;
- answer the question precisely, stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions;
- explore all elements of questions;
- finish with a concluding paragraph.

## General comments

Candidates need to find a 'happy balance' between 'assuming that the Examiner knows nothing' and 'remembering that the Examiner has also read the text'. Although narration irrelevant to the question is not required, candidates should begin to answer the question at the beginning, but should not hold back from showing knowledge of the texts, not just retelling the story, but also making a point.

Candidates should not write an opening paragraph which addresses in rather general terms the author, his or her works or the audience that he or she was addressing. Candidates should just answer the question.

It was evident that Centres had used past questions when training their candidates, and detailed knowledge was shown in those areas. Candidates should select the question they choose to answer carefully, though, and ensure that their material is relevant. Sometimes the material was tailored efficiently and relevantly to this session's questions, but at other times, there were resounding echoes of previous years' questions.

The best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes often show on the answer paper, although it is helpful if these are crossed through to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Candidates are advised to leave time to re-read, check and edit their work. Particular confusions were noted this session, of:

- Cléante, who morphed from 'maître de musique' to 'professeur de piano' in the work of candidates answering both **Questions 1** and **4**
- Grivet (**Question 2**) and Gilbert (**Question 7**)
- Madame Raquin (**Question 2**) and Madame Rosa (**Question 8**)
- Amédée and Anthime (**Question 5**)

### Comments on specific questions

#### Section 1

#### Question 1

Molière: *Le Malade Imaginaire*

Both questions were equally popular.

- (a) This question was quite well done overall, and the context was well explained.
- (i) Angélique was already preoccupied by her love for Cléante and her desire to marry him and had talked to Toinette about this in Act I, scene iv. More candidates referred to this than to the fact that M. Diafoirus and his son were in discussion with Argan about a proposed marriage between Angélique and Thomas. Some candidates gave more detailed answers about Angélique's thoughts on marriage, such as her desire to marry for love.
- (ii) Examiners were looking for evidence of candidates' attention to Toinette's words: Toinette was being superficially polite but really she was mocking Thomas' way with words and his ability to 'beau raisonner'. This irony was widely recognised. She pointed out that he was just out of college and told Angélique, 'He will be more than a match for you.' Toinette questioned why Angélique would resist and refuse the glory of being associated, through Thomas, with the Faculty. Candidates sometimes thought that this comment had been directed towards Thomas, however a close reading of the extract would note the feminine adjective, 'attachée'. For the most part, candidates said what they thought of what Toinette said about Thomas, such as that she was just currying favour with Argan.
- (iii) This was generally the best answer of the three. Béline, Angélique's widowed father's wife, and therefore her stepmother, thought that Argan's daughter should enter a convent. This would allow Béline herself to inherit from Argan. All but a very small number of candidates had good understanding of the positions and attitudes of both women and of the undercurrents whenever they were together.
- (b) This question invited candidates to explain, from the play, why Molière considered the medical profession to be a *social* danger. Valid points made included:

What doctors in the play did:

- diagnosed illnesses and prescribed medication unnecessarily, causing fear and abusing the trust people had in them
- had impressive educational backgrounds but were socially inept, like Thomas Diafoirus in Act II, scene v, full of fancy words and grand appearances, but unable, ignorant and forgetful like he was in Act II, scene vi
- motivated by financial gain
- Toinette disguised herself in III, x as a selfish, ambitious 'médecin passager ... pour trouver des malades dignes de m'occuper ... des maladies d'importance'
- Diafoirus and Purgon gave different diagnoses raising doubts concerning competence

How people reacted:

- Argan was in awe of doctors, unthinkingly accepting their judgements;
- Béralde, Argan's brother's held a contrasting view

The question was quite well handled overall. Many referred to Toinette's disguise, although only the most able efforts mentioned Béralde's opinions about incompetence. Candidates were keen to discuss comic

elements, but it may have been more effective to point out Molière's desire to warn his audience and to encourage them to think more critically.

## Question 2

Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin*

- (a) (i) Most candidates knew that the significant event immediately prior to the passage was that Thérèse and Laurent had married. In some responses, the idea that Grivet and Michaud were 'heureux' was often mentioned without explanation of, for example, the apparent triumph that the marriage had been 'their idea'. Candidates seized upon the idea of their 'hypocrisy', as though the men were guilty, but they did not always bring out the idea that the two men had, since Camille's death, felt awkward having fun each Thursday night in a house of mourning, but these feelings had now been put to one side (line 11).
- (ii) Answers to this question were generally satisfactory – the differences between Thérèse and Laurent's attitudes were accentuated and the reasons for them were quite well explained: Thérèse had previously felt exasperated by the two men (lines 14–16), and she talked of not continuing to host them (line 15). By contrast, Laurent got on well with them and was against the idea of turning them away (line 17), realising the value in keeping up appearances (lines 17–18), motivated as he was by self-interest and a desire to keep on the right side of the police, free from suspicion (lines 18–19). Thérèse obliged and gave in to Laurent in the matter (line 19).
- (iii) The most successful responses emphasised the original unity of Thérèse and Laurent and contrasted it with their eventual disunity. Previously Thérèse and Laurent had been united first in their affair and then in their plan to remove Camille. Upon their marriage, their passion died, and what seemed to promise to be a fulfilling union, quickly became a permanent estrangement. Some candidates wrote about two-faced individuals, but really as Thérèse and Laurent lived with the haunting guilt of their murder, a wedge was driven between them. Ironically they were not united again until their final suicide.
- (b) Candidates were assessed for their relevant consideration 'de jeux de rôles et de comédie, comme si certains personnages étaient des acteurs', but it was difficult for them to sustain the discussion without having considered the role/drama/comedy aspect of the text during the course of study and without a really detailed knowledge and specific examples from the text, such as:

roles

- 'Thérèse et Laurent avaient pris chacun le rôle qui leur convenait'
- for Thérèse, 'son rôle de veuve'. She was literally a widow, but having been unfaithful in her marriage, and having conspired with her lover to drown her late husband, Zola was reinforcing the false nature of appearances.
- for Laurent, 'le rôle d'homme sensible et serviable', 'son rôle d'ami affectueux et effrayé'

comédie

- 'La comédie fut longue et délicate à jouer', 'la comédie de l'ennui et de l'accablement', 'leur comédie avait réussi'
- after their marriage, it was said of Thérèse and Laurent, 'ils avaient ... joué une atroce comédie'
- for Thérèse, 'Au bout de quelque temps, elle crut à la réalité de cette comédie, elle s'imagina qu'elle avait obtenu le pardon de Mme Raquin'
- Mme Raquin 'était devenue la poupée'
- Laurent criticised Thérèse, 'Pas de comédie', 'Il aurait voulu se repentir, lui aussi, jouer tout au moins la comédie du remords'
- Reaching desperation, 'Thérèse ... sentit que le vice ne lui réussissait pas plus que la comédie du remords'

Candidates needed to have sensitivity about comedy, even if it was not the sort of comedy to have people 'falling about laughing'.

### Question 3

Jean Anouilh: *L'Alouette*

- (a) (i) Not all candidates began with the context, immediately before the extract, when Cauchon had told Jeanne that the people had come to watch her be burnt at the stake: 'la mort des grands de ce monde est leur spectacle. Il faut leur pardonner'. As the extract opened, Jeanne had the audacity to forgive not only them but also Cauchon – this point was more successfully made, especially with a careful reading of 'lui' in line 4. At this moment in the play, Le Promoteur had not spoken for a while, however he was incensed that Jeanne should respond to Cauchon's offer of reconciliation with the mother church with a pledge of forgiveness. Throughout, Jeanne had claimed to have a 'direct line' with God through 'les Voix'. Her obstinate opposition was unacceptable to the establishment and, here, to Le Promoteur.
- (ii) The question began, 'Jeanne ne sait pas pourquoi...', but candidates who emphasised total uncertainty produced less impressive answers than those who referred to 'sauver' and 'vaincre' in line 6. The most successful responses considered how Cauchon may have been speaking softly to save Jeanne from being burnt at the stake, as though to show kindness and drop the case against her, leaving her to her convictions, or alternatively, that he may have been trying to defeat her, persuading her to drop her case against them. Those who discussed both possibilities could then state their preferred interpretation to round off a good answer.
- (iii) Candidates who did not have a good grasp of the play tended to overemphasise 'la sainte communion' from lines 19–20 as that of which Jeanne was being deprived until such time as she said 'oui' (line 22) to 'confession et ... pénitence' (line 21). For the highest marks, candidates needed to show awareness of the political context against which Jeanne was determined to resist, even if this meant death.
- (b) Fewer candidates approached this question than **Question (a)**, but those who chose it made valiant attempts to comment on Charles' description of himself as 'un homme léger'. He was more often seen as 'immature and foolish' than as 'weary, tired or uncertain'. He said, 'j'ai peur de tout', but there was little reference to fear in answers seen. Some candidates described the way in which he was advised by an overbearing mother-in-law, but enjoyed the company of other women, playing cards and games and avoiding responsibility. In conversation with Jeanne, alone, he became more decisive, and when they visited her in prison, Jeanne told Agnès and La Reine Yolande, 'Occupez-vous bien de Charles. Qu'il ait du courage toujours.'

### Question 4

Marguerite Duras: *Moderato Cantabile*

The passage-based questions are often more popular than the **Section 1** essay questions, but **4(b)** was more frequently chosen than **4(a)** this time.

- (a) (i) The first half, 'What had happened?' was the best answered part of the question: a woman had been killed in the cafe. As for 'why?', we do not discover with certainty, although Anne spent much of the novel trying to find out why, hearing only Chauvin's speculation.
- (ii) Candidates could describe the contrast between the atmospheres inside the apartment and outside in the street more adequately than they could explain its meaning, which was the focus of the question: inside, the boy (finally!) played the piano melody in a 'moderate and singing' fashion as requested, having stubbornly refused to comply up to that point; outside, relative calm had been destroyed by a vicious crime as a woman was murdered by a man who seemed to love her.
- (iii) Although Mlle Giraud had rebuked Anne Desbaresdes for her son's wilfulness, Anne had silently approved of it, admiring his tenacity, and was now a little sorry that he was conforming, '...ça me dégoûte', as she herself did not dare not to conform to expectations. This was the part of the question that candidates appeared to find most challenging.
- (b) Responses to this question were satisfactory, although candidates often seemed more able to recall the story from the beginning, and how events unfolded, than to focus on final events and the way in which everything was brought to a conclusion.

Shortly before the final page, 'La main de Chauvin battit l'air et retomba sur la table. Mais elle (Anne) ne le vit pas, ayant déjà quitté le champ où il se trouvait', Anne and Chauvin parted company, which seemed to signify the end of their mysterious relationship. This was the most common aspect of the plot to be mentioned by candidates, and their opinions ranged from 'ambiguous' and 'well/badly written', to 'shocking'. They could also typically remember that, immediately before that, Chauvin had puzzlingly declared, 'Je voudrais que vous soyez morte', and Anne had replied, 'C'est fait'. Some also made reference to the factory workers in the bar who had avoided looking at 'cette femme adultère', or to Anne who repeated the words, 'J'ai peur'.

## Section 2

### Question 5

André Gide: *Les Caves du Vatican*

- (a) The question may have looked disarmingly simple: was the character one thing or the other? For a fuller answer, candidates could have provided examples from the text, with relevant detail, in favour of both possibilities, before evaluating the strength of one option. Unfortunately some halved the potential of their responses by opting for 'imbécile ridicule' or 'pauvre martyr' and appearing to give no thought to the other description.

The third book of *Les Caves du Vatican* was entitled Amédée Fleurissoire, although he did not enter the action immediately at that point. Julie had referred to 'la tante Fleurissoire' in the first book, but only in the third book did we hear how the couple met and married. The initial description of Amédée portrayed him and his father in a negative light, particularly in comparison to Gaston Blafaphas and his father, although both boys had been constantly bullied at School and found solace in each other. Both fell in love with Arnica, and this brought them closer rather than driving them apart. They agreed both to declare their love and to leave Arnica to choose. Six weeks of indecision later, Arnica suddenly settled on Amédée, because he pronounced her name with something of an Italian accent! This might have made him look lucky, but his visit to Italy sealed his fate.

The success of their business put them in a position to support 'de maints membres influents du clergé', making them a natural choice for la Comtesse Valentine de Saint-Prix to turn to 'à la secrète cause de la délivrance du pape'. The fourth book recounted Amédée's journey. In Italy, Amédée 'songeait à sa mission auguste...'. He was on a mission motivated by his faith. '...Désormais compromise' after his encounter with Carola and Protos' involvement again, he finally met his unlucky end when Lafcadio pushed him out of a train, to his death. It transpired that this was randomly, not religiously, motivated, so candidates were likely to conclude that Amédée was not a poor martyr.

- (b) Similarly to **Question (a)**, the best answers did not conclude too quickly that they had, or had not, been made to laugh by the book. For a balanced response, evidence for both options needed to be examined before a conclusion was drawn. Opinions such as that the text was not at all funny might have been avoided by thinking more sensitively about humour, even if it was not the sort of humour to have people 'falling about laughing'. Above all, opinions needed to be justified. Relevant points for consideration included, but were not limited to:

- the irony of Julie's, 'je vous prie ..., mon Dieu, pour les péchés de l'oncle Anthime ... l'athée'
- 'La comtesse adorait confidences et simagrées...'
- 'Arnica Blafaphas? ... Arnica Fleurissoire? incapable de décider entre l'atrocité de ces deux noms'
- 'l'appeler *Arnica*, en accentuant la pénultième de son nom d'une manière qui lui parut italienne'
- Julius to Amédée, 'c'est vous qui ne suivez pas ma pensée' ... 'Amédée commençait à rire...'
- 'Monsieur Lafcadio Lonnesaitpluski'

## Question 6

Albert Camus: *Les Justes*

Again, this proved to be a popular text. Not only was **Question (a)** more popular than **(b)**, but it was also the most popular question on the paper this session, even surpassing the ever popular **Section 1** passage-based questions.

- (a)** Answers to this question were fairly successful overall, showing generally satisfactory understanding of the text. There were a small number of intelligent and detailed answers, but all who chose this alternative had at least some relevant assertions to make. Nevertheless, candidates were more keen to comment on the characters as 'les justes' than as 'pas de ce monde', when commenting on Dora's reflection from Act 3. It was pointed out that they sought justice, sacrificing their lives, pleasures and freedom for the benefit of others and for a better future for the liberty of the people, not considering it contradictory that, 'nous tuons pour bâtir un monde' ('où plus jamais personne ne tuera') (Kaliyev, Act 1). Kaliyev insisted about the Grand Duke, 'Ce n'est pas lui que je tue. Je tue le despotisme.' (Act 1) Many gave the example of Dora and Kaliyev who forsook their own interests, saying, 'ceux qui aiment vraiment la justice n'ont pas droit à l'amour'.
- (b)** The question invited candidates to analyse the play as a 'drame qui vous tient en haleine' or a 'pur débat philosophique'. Occasionally it became clear that some had encountered difficulty with the format of the question and wrote about the work as a 'drame qui vous tient pur débat philosophique'. This betrayed some confusion, but responses were still marked positively for their content and for the points that they made. Most answers considered both judgements, as hoped, but many simply concluded on the side of 'pur débat philosophique'. Points made included, among others:

'drame qui vous tient en haleine'

- Kaliyev did not throw the bomb the first time – would he ever?!
- Would Stepan's hard line attitude overwhelm Kaliyev's creativity?
- Would Kaliyev and Dora pursue their love instead of the uncompromising terrorist life?

'pur débat philosophique'

- Kaliyev: 'Mourir pour l'idée', Act 1
- Dora: 'Nous sommes obligés de tuer', Act 1
- Skouratov: 'si l'idée n'arrive pas à tuer les enfants, mérite-t-elle qu'on tue un grand-duc?'

## Question 7

Simone de Beauvoir: *Les Belles Images*

- (a)** The most admirable male character in the novel was usually judged to be Papa, with few admirable qualities attributed to the other male characters. The best answers, however, sought to find attributes that could be admired in different characters, as well as factors which limited our admiration for them, e.g.

Laurence's father

- + Laurence had a good relationship with him and enjoyed the travels in Greece in his company.
- Laurence did not always see eye to eye with him in Greece, and Dominique had not treated him well, yet he still became reconciled to her, which mystified Laurence a little.

Jean-Charles/Laurence's husband

- + He was a generous husband and well-meaning father.
- He preferred a cyclist to be injured than his car to be damaged.

Lucien

- + Laurence enjoyed his company for a while.
- 'Il suppliait: quitte ton mari', but she stopped seeing him instead.

Gilbert

- + Gilbert was successful and admired.
- He reacted angrily and violently to Dominique.



The middle-class husbands, such as Hubert, Laurence's brother-in-law  
– Other male characters were generally tainted with consumerism.

- (b) This question tended to provide more comprehensive and balanced answers than **Question (a)**. Some candidates were predominantly negative and pessimistic in their prognosis. Candidates did not always recognise the implication of the future tense 'réussira' in the question, but were often able to end the essay on the hopeful note that Laurence, having taken the first step toward self-definition, would find the courage to continue to assert herself more positively.

The most varied answers considered different men who could be said to dominate Laurence's life, such as:

- Jean-Charles, against whom she took a stand, at the end, against his desire to take Catherine to a psychologist
- Her father, who had a profound influence on her, but from whom she took some distance at the end of the novel after some differences of opinion when, to her surprise, he was reconciled to Dominique
- Lucien, who 'suppliait: quitte ton mari', but whom she stopped seeing, instead

### Question 8

Romain Gary: *La Vie devant soi*

This continues to be a very popular text. **Question (a)** was significantly more popular than **(b)** this session at Centres selecting this text.

- (a) Responses were probably equally divided between candidates who had immediate recognition of the demands of the question and those who had not. A fair number of candidates made little reference to differences of culture, ethnicity, religion or sexual choices, and understood the question to refer to the tolerance exercised in the relationships between Momo, Madame Rosa and the other main characters, such as tolerating the difficult circumstances of one's life, or Madame Rosa's complaints about the stairs. Some thought that respecting Madame Rosa's desire not to go into hospital was showing tolerance. However, there were often good and appropriate efforts to be found and rewarded. Some candidates even identified and gave illustrations of lack of tolerance in the novel:
- Momo suffered racism at School.
  - Momo's father, in a fit of intolerance, dropped dead when he heard the claim that his son had been raised a Jew.
  - Nadine's children spontaneously looked aghast when they saw Momo.
- (b) This was a demanding question to answer, even with a detailed knowledge of the text, since it required candidates to have knowledge of French 'institutions' and of what assistance would have been available and to whom. Some candidates felt that Madame Rosa's survival of Auschwitz and subsequent devotion to the children in her care should have been publicly acknowledged and honoured. Others focused on the fact that her home, and Monsieur Hamil's circumstances, were not adapted to their needs in old age. Madame Rosa experienced increasing difficulty climbing the stairs, but these points were not as convincing as those listed below.

Some candidates were able to name :

- 'L'Assistance publique', which was mentioned in the novel. Momo and the other children were certainly able to live 'under the radar' at Madame Rosa's until she died, attracting little attention from such services.
- A School might have played a role, but Momo did not attend one for long, 'on m'a renvoyé de l'école en disant que j'étais trop jeune pour mon âge', or conversely, 'puisque j'étais trop vieux pour mon âge'.
- Experiences with the police were fair, although Madame Rosa was afraid of them.
- Momo could certainly not rely on his family. His father had killed his mother and dropped dead upon hearing Madame Rosa's claim that she had raised Momo as a Jew.
- The medical profession. Ramon was 'un peu médecin', and he could not really be said to be 'peu sensible...'. Dr Katz wanted to provide Madame Rosa with support in the form of hospital care, but she declined this, and the doctor respected her wishes, somewhat counteracting the allegation of 'peu sensible' in the question. Conversely, some candidates mentioned the doctor's opposition to euthanasia, which, they argued, rendered him guilty of insensitivity.

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- 'La comédie fut longue et délicate à jouer', 'la comédie de l'ennui et de l'accablement', 'leur comédie avait réussi'
- after their marriage, it was said of Thérèse and Laurent, 'ils avaient ... joué une atroce comédie'
- for Thérèse, 'Au bout de quelque temps, elle crut à la réalité de cette comédie, elle s'imagina qu'elle avait obtenu le pardon de Mme Raquin'
- Mme Raquin 'était devenue la poupée'
- Laurent criticised Thérèse, 'Pas de comédie', 'Il aurait voulu se repentir, lui aussi, jouer tout au moins la comédie du remords'
- Reaching desperation, 'Thérèse ... sentit que le vice ne lui réussissait pas plus que la comédie du remords'

Candidates needed to have sensitivity about comedy, even if it was not the sort of comedy to have people 'falling about laughing'.

### Question 3

Jean Anouilh: *L'Alouette*

- (a) (i) Not all candidates began with the context, immediately before the extract, when Cauchon had told Jeanne that the people had come to watch her be burnt at the stake: 'la mort des grands de ce monde est leur spectacle. Il faut leur pardonner'. As the extract opened, Jeanne had the audacity to forgive not only them but also Cauchon – this point was more successfully made, especially with a careful reading of 'lui' in line 4. At this moment in the play, Le Promoteur had not spoken for a while, however he was incensed that Jeanne should respond to Cauchon's offer of reconciliation with the mother church with a pledge of forgiveness. Throughout, Jeanne had claimed to have a 'direct line' with God through 'les Voix'. Her obstinate opposition was unacceptable to the establishment and, here, to Le Promoteur.
- (ii) The question began, 'Jeanne ne sait pas pourquoi...', but candidates who emphasised total uncertainty produced less impressive answers than those who referred to 'sauver' and 'vaincre' in line 6. The most successful responses considered how Cauchon may have been speaking softly to save Jeanne from being burnt at the stake, as though to show kindness and drop the case against her, leaving her to her convictions, or alternatively, that he may have been trying to defeat her, persuading her to drop her case against them. Those who discussed both possibilities could then state their preferred interpretation to round off a good answer.
- (iii) Candidates who did not have a good grasp of the play tended to overemphasise 'la sainte communion' from lines 19–20 as that of which Jeanne was being deprived until such time as she said 'oui' (line 22) to 'confession et ... pénitence' (line 21). For the highest marks, candidates needed to show awareness of the political context against which Jeanne was determined to resist, even if this meant death.
- (b) Fewer candidates approached this question than **Question (a)**, but those who chose it made valiant attempts to comment on Charles' description of himself as 'un homme léger'. He was more often seen as 'immature and foolish' than as 'weary, tired or uncertain'. He said, 'j'ai peur de tout', but there was little reference to fear in answers seen. Some candidates described the way in which he was advised by an overbearing mother-in-law, but enjoyed the company of other women, playing cards and games and avoiding responsibility. In conversation with Jeanne, alone, he became more decisive, and when they visited her in prison, Jeanne told Agnès and La Reine Yolande, 'Occupez-vous bien de Charles. Qu'il ait du courage toujours.'

### Question 4

Marguerite Duras: *Moderato Cantabile*

The passage-based questions are often more popular than the **Section 1** essay questions, but **4(b)** was more frequently chosen than **4(a)** this time.

- (a) (i) The first half, 'What had happened?' was the best answered part of the question: a woman had been killed in the cafe. As for 'why?', we do not discover with certainty, although Anne spent much of the novel trying to find out why, hearing only Chauvin's speculation.
- (ii) Candidates could describe the contrast between the atmospheres inside the apartment and outside in the street more adequately than they could explain its meaning, which was the focus of the question: inside, the boy (finally!) played the piano melody in a 'moderate and singing' fashion as requested, having stubbornly refused to comply up to that point; outside, relative calm had been destroyed by a vicious crime as a woman was murdered by a man who seemed to love her.
- (iii) Although Mlle Giraud had rebuked Anne Desbaresdes for her son's wilfulness, Anne had silently approved of it, admiring his tenacity, and was now a little sorry that he was conforming, '...ça me dégoûte', as she herself did not dare not to conform to expectations. This was the part of the question that candidates appeared to find most challenging.
- (b) Responses to this question were satisfactory, although candidates often seemed more able to recall the story from the beginning, and how events unfolded, than to focus on final events and the way in which everything was brought to a conclusion.

Shortly before the final page, 'La main de Chauvin battit l'air et retomba sur la table. Mais elle (Anne) ne le vit pas, ayant déjà quitté le champ où il se trouvait', Anne and Chauvin parted company, which seemed to signify the end of their mysterious relationship. This was the most common aspect of the plot to be mentioned by candidates, and their opinions ranged from 'ambiguous' and 'well/badly written', to 'shocking'. They could also typically remember that, immediately before that, Chauvin had puzzlingly declared, 'Je voudrais que vous soyez morte', and Anne had replied, 'C'est fait'. Some also made reference to the factory workers in the bar who had avoided looking at 'cette femme adultère', or to Anne who repeated the words, 'J'ai peur'.

## Section 2

### Question 5

André Gide: *Les Caves du Vatican*

- (a) The question may have looked disarmingly simple: was the character one thing or the other? For a fuller answer, candidates could have provided examples from the text, with relevant detail, in favour of both possibilities, before evaluating the strength of one option. Unfortunately some halved the potential of their responses by opting for 'imbécile ridicule' or 'pauvre martyr' and appearing to give no thought to the other description.

The third book of *Les Caves du Vatican* was entitled Amédée Fleurissoire, although he did not enter the action immediately at that point. Julie had referred to 'la tante Fleurissoire' in the first book, but only in the third book did we hear how the couple met and married. The initial description of Amédée portrayed him and his father in a negative light, particularly in comparison to Gaston Blafaphas and his father, although both boys had been constantly bullied at School and found solace in each other. Both fell in love with Arnica, and this brought them closer rather than driving them apart. They agreed both to declare their love and to leave Arnica to choose. Six weeks of indecision later, Arnica suddenly settled on Amédée, because he pronounced her name with something of an Italian accent! This might have made him look lucky, but his visit to Italy sealed his fate.

The success of their business put them in a position to support 'de maints membres influents du clergé', making them a natural choice for la Comtesse Valentine de Saint-Prix to turn to 'à la secrète cause de la délivrance du pape'. The fourth book recounted Amédée's journey. In Italy, Amédée 'songeait à sa mission auguste...'. He was on a mission motivated by his faith. '...Désormais compromise' after his encounter with Carola and Protos' involvement again, he finally met his unlucky end when Lafcadio pushed him out of a train, to his death. It transpired that this was randomly, not religiously, motivated, so candidates were likely to conclude that Amédée was not a poor martyr.

- (b) Similarly to **Question (a)**, the best answers did not conclude too quickly that they had, or had not, been made to laugh by the book. For a balanced response, evidence for both options needed to be examined before a conclusion was drawn. Opinions such as that the text was not at all funny might have been avoided by thinking more sensitively about humour, even if it was not the sort of humour to have people 'falling about laughing'. Above all, opinions needed to be justified. Relevant points for consideration included, but were not limited to:

- the irony of Julie's, 'je vous prie ..., mon Dieu, pour les péchés de l'oncle Anthime ... l'athée'
- 'La comtesse adorait confidences et simagrées...'
- 'Arnica Blafaphas? ... Arnica Fleurissoire? incapable de décider entre l'atrocité de ces deux noms'
- 'l'appeler *Arnica*, en accentuant la pénultième de son nom d'une manière qui lui parut italienne'
- Julius to Amédée, 'c'est vous qui ne suivez pas ma pensée' ... 'Amédée commençait à rire...'
- 'Monsieur Lafcadio Lonnesaitpluski'

## Question 6

Albert Camus: *Les Justes*

Again, this proved to be a popular text. Not only was **Question (a)** more popular than **(b)**, but it was also the most popular question on the paper this session, even surpassing the ever popular **Section 1** passage-based questions.

- (a)** Answers to this question were fairly successful overall, showing generally satisfactory understanding of the text. There were a small number of intelligent and detailed answers, but all who chose this alternative had at least some relevant assertions to make. Nevertheless, candidates were more keen to comment on the characters as 'les justes' than as 'pas de ce monde', when commenting on Dora's reflection from Act 3. It was pointed out that they sought justice, sacrificing their lives, pleasures and freedom for the benefit of others and for a better future for the liberty of the people, not considering it contradictory that, 'nous tuons pour bâtir un monde' ('où plus jamais personne ne tuera') (Kaliayev, Act 1). Kaliayev insisted about the Grand Duke, 'Ce n'est pas lui que je tue. Je tue le despotisme.' (Act 1) Many gave the example of Dora and Kaliayev who forsook their own interests, saying, 'ceux qui aiment vraiment la justice n'ont pas droit à l'amour'.
- (b)** The question invited candidates to analyse the play as a 'drame qui vous tient en haleine' or a 'pur débat philosophique'. Occasionally it became clear that some had encountered difficulty with the format of the question and wrote about the work as a 'drame qui vous tient pur débat philosophique'. This betrayed some confusion, but responses were still marked positively for their content and for the points that they made. Most answers considered both judgements, as hoped, but many simply concluded on the side of 'pur débat philosophique'. Points made included, among others:

'drame qui vous tient en haleine'

- Kaliayev did not throw the bomb the first time – would he ever?!
- Would Stepan's hard line attitude overwhelm Kaliayev's creativity?
- Would Kaliayev and Dora pursue their love instead of the uncompromising terrorist life?

'pur débat philosophique'

- Kaliayev: 'Mourir pour l'idée', Act 1
- Dora: 'Nous sommes obligés de tuer', Act 1
- Skouratov: 'si l'idée n'arrive pas à tuer les enfants, mérite-t-elle qu'on tue un grand-duc?'

## Question 7

Simone de Beauvoir: *Les Belles Images*

- (a)** The most admirable male character in the novel was usually judged to be Papa, with few admirable qualities attributed to the other male characters. The best answers, however, sought to find attributes that could be admired in different characters, as well as factors which limited our admiration for them, e.g.

Laurence's father

- + Laurence had a good relationship with him and enjoyed the travels in Greece in his company.
- Laurence did not always see eye to eye with him in Greece, and Dominique had not treated him well, yet he still became reconciled to her, which mystified Laurence a little.

Jean-Charles/Laurence's husband

- + He was a generous husband and well-meaning father.
- He preferred a cyclist to be injured than his car to be damaged.

Lucien

- + Laurence enjoyed his company for a while.
- 'Il suppliait: quitte ton mari', but she stopped seeing him instead.

Gilbert

- + Gilbert was successful and admired.
- He reacted angrily and violently to Dominique.

The middle-class husbands, such as Hubert, Laurence's brother-in-law  
– Other male characters were generally tainted with consumerism.

- (b) This question tended to provide more comprehensive and balanced answers than **Question (a)**. Some candidates were predominantly negative and pessimistic in their prognosis. Candidates did not always recognise the implication of the future tense 'réussira' in the question, but were often able to end the essay on the hopeful note that Laurence, having taken the first step toward self-definition, would find the courage to continue to assert herself more positively.

The most varied answers considered different men who could be said to dominate Laurence's life, such as:

- Jean-Charles, against whom she took a stand, at the end, against his desire to take Catherine to a psychologist
- Her father, who had a profound influence on her, but from whom she took some distance at the end of the novel after some differences of opinion when, to her surprise, he was reconciled to Dominique
- Lucien, who 'suppliait: quitte ton mari', but whom she stopped seeing, instead

### Question 8

Romain Gary: *La Vie devant soi*

This continues to be a very popular text. **Question (a)** was significantly more popular than **(b)** this session at Centres selecting this text.

- (a) Responses were probably equally divided between candidates who had immediate recognition of the demands of the question and those who had not. A fair number of candidates made little reference to differences of culture, ethnicity, religion or sexual choices, and understood the question to refer to the tolerance exercised in the relationships between Momo, Madame Rosa and the other main characters, such as tolerating the difficult circumstances of one's life, or Madame Rosa's complaints about the stairs. Some thought that respecting Madame Rosa's desire not to go into hospital was showing tolerance. However, there were often good and appropriate efforts to be found and rewarded. Some candidates even identified and gave illustrations of lack of tolerance in the novel:
- Momo suffered racism at School.
  - Momo's father, in a fit of intolerance, dropped dead when he heard the claim that his son had been raised a Jew.
  - Nadine's children spontaneously looked aghast when they saw Momo.
- (b) This was a demanding question to answer, even with a detailed knowledge of the text, since it required candidates to have knowledge of French 'institutions' and of what assistance would have been available and to whom. Some candidates felt that Madame Rosa's survival of Auschwitz and subsequent devotion to the children in her care should have been publicly acknowledged and honoured. Others focused on the fact that her home, and Monsieur Hamil's circumstances, were not adapted to their needs in old age. Madame Rosa experienced increasing difficulty climbing the stairs, but these points were not as convincing as those listed below.

Some candidates were able to name :

- 'L'Assistance publique', which was mentioned in the novel. Momo and the other children were certainly able to live 'under the radar' at Madame Rosa's until she died, attracting little attention from such services.
- A School might have played a role, but Momo did not attend one for long, 'on m'a renvoyé de l'école en disant que j'étais trop jeune pour mon âge', or conversely, 'puisque j'étais trop vieux pour mon âge'.
- Experiences with the police were fair, although Madame Rosa was afraid of them.
- Momo could certainly not rely on his family. His father had killed his mother and dropped dead upon hearing Madame Rosa's claim that she had raised Momo as a Jew.
- The medical profession. Ramon was 'un peu médecin', and he could not really be said to be 'peu sensible...'. Dr Katz wanted to provide Madame Rosa with support in the form of hospital care, but she declined this, and the doctor respected her wishes, somewhat counteracting the allegation of 'peu sensible' in the question. Conversely, some candidates mentioned the doctor's opposition to euthanasia, which, they argued, rendered him guilty of insensitivity.