

FRENCH

<p>Paper 3015/01 Listening</p>

Key messages

Candidates were usually well aware of the requirements of the examination.

As intended, there was a gradient of difficulty on the paper and the final section was the most difficult but even weaker candidates usually scored some marks on this section.

There were cases of candidates whose answers were not clear due to them appearing to overwrite their first attempts to answer, which was often very difficult to read. Centres need to remind candidates to write very clearly in blue or black pen. Candidates should cross out very clearly any material which they do not wish the Examiner to consider.

There were many cases of poor handwriting which made scripts very difficult to read.

Most candidates wrote as briefly as possible. Full sentences are not required in responses and candidates should be aware that if answers are long, there is the danger that extra distorting details may be included which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Answers were marked on the basis of communication and comprehension.

Some candidates need to be more aware concerning ticking the correct number of boxes in objective exercises.

General comments

The candidature overall performed well on the first two sections of the paper and nearly all candidates went on to attempt the final section with less able candidates successful on a few questions in each of the final two exercises. There was a full range of performance on the paper with a good number of candidates scoring well. The exercises discriminated appropriately across the gradient of difficulty in the paper. It was also evident that the examined topics and contexts were very accessible to all candidates.

The majority of candidates were familiar with the rubrics and well aware of the requirements of the test types. Some candidates remain unsure as to the correct number of boxes to be ticked on multiple-choice exercises and, in particular, on **Question 16**. There were cases of candidates ticking four or eight boxes rather than six boxes. On other multiple-choice questions, one box only should be ticked. A few candidates tried to use a system of both ticks and crosses; either is acceptable but not both used together. If candidates need to take notes during their listening time, they should be advised not to write these notes on the line intended for the answer.

The French extracts heard by candidates gradually increased in terms of length and density and featured both monologues and conversations. The emphasis of the questions moved from targeting the candidates' ability to pick out information contained in short factual pieces, to testing their ability to understand specific factual information, as well as opinions and explanations, in longer narrated accounts and conversations. Longer extracts featured a variety of register and references to both past and future events. The vocabulary tested in the first two sections of the test was drawn from the vocabulary as set out in the Defined Content.

Candidates usually appreciated the need to write as briefly and clearly as possible and understood that full sentences were not required in response. Brief answers are preferable on this paper as candidates do not run the risk of extra distorting material being added which may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. Candidates should not try to include extra material which is not on the recording and should not try to paraphrase answers. They should aim to write precisely what they hear and keep the question in mind when writing their answer.

Centres must stress to candidates the need to write clearly and not to use pencil to make a first attempt and then overwrite this in pen. Please remind all candidates that, if they wish to make a second attempt at an answer, they should cross out their first attempt very clearly. This is particularly important on multiple-choice



questions. If Examiners can see more than one attempt at an answer the mark is not awarded. Likewise, letters should be clearly written as poorly shaped letters may be seen as unacceptable spellings of answers. Candidates should always be encouraged to attempt every question.

The Listening paper tests comprehension. Accuracy in written responses in French is not an issue provided that the message is clear. If the answer sounds and reads like French it will be accepted provided that the message is unambiguous. If however a word offered means something else in French then it will not be accepted as it may introduce a distorting concept. In addition, candidates should not offer a choice of answers to the Examiner.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–8

This first exercise tested the understanding of eight short conversations/monologues through multiple-choice questions with visual options. Candidates were very successful in this exercise and many scored full marks.

In **Question 2**, some candidates were unfamiliar with *guichet*. In **Question 6**, some candidates incorrectly chose option **B** instead of **A**.

Exercise 2 Questions 9–15

Candidates heard a longer extract which featured tourist information about a *Centre de vacances*. There were seven marks available for this exercise and many candidates scored between 5 and 7 marks.

For **Question 9**, a large number of candidates were not able to write *juillet*. **Questions 10, 12 and 13** were answered well but some candidates did not understand *chalets en bois* in **Question 11**. In the second half of this exercise, **Questions 13 and 15** were answered correctly by a large number of candidates. In **Question 14**, however, candidates chose option **A** instead of **C**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

Performance on this exercise was extremely good across the ability range and candidates seem to be very much aware of the requirements of this exercise. There were only a few examples of candidates ticking more than six boxes or four boxes only. Candidates are reminded, however, not to attempt to put a tick and a cross in all boxes. Six of the twelve boxes need to be left blank.

In this exercise, the candidates heard four young people talking about their life, either in the countryside or in the town. Many candidates gained high marks on this exercise, with the majority scoring 5 or 6 marks. There was no discernible pattern for the incorrect answers.

Exercise 2 Questions 17–25

In this exercise candidates heard an interview with Léa who lives in Dubaï.

In the first part of the interview, candidates were required to correct an incorrect detail in each of five statements, which is a question type with which they were clearly familiar. The missing words were all items which appear in the vocabulary lists of the Defined Content. The exercise represented a step up in the incline of difficulty of the test and the extract heard was longer than the one heard in the previous exercise.

Some candidates were not able to score the mark in **Question 17** as they omitted the word *année* from their answer. **Question 18** was generally correct but some candidates answered *appartement*. In **Question 19**, candidates usually scored the mark but spellings of *construit* varied a lot. In **Questions 20 and 21**, some candidates misspelt *mignonne* and *sec*.

In the second interview, candidates had to respond in French with no more than two words to four questions. Only a few candidates were unable to provide an answer. In **Question 22**, many candidates invalidated their answer by writing *fraise*, instead of *frais*. A significant majority answered **Question 23** correctly and many

were able to score the mark in **Question 24**. Some did not score here, as they omitted the *pas* from their answer. In **Question 25**, many candidates scored the mark but some wrote *online* instead of *en ligne* or *chanter* instead of *chatter*.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26–31

Candidates heard an interview with Isabelle, speaking about her holidays and the question type used was multiple choice. Questions tested not just specific factual information but also gist understanding over the longer extract. Candidates also needed to identify attitudes and emotions in some questions and be able to understand a narrative which, in places, depended upon them understanding a sequence of events. Candidates rarely omitted answers to these questions.

There was no discernible pattern of incorrect answers in this exercise, except in **Question 26** where candidates chose option **B** instead of the correct option **C**. **Questions 29** and **30** were answered correctly by a large number of candidates, but only a few candidates scored a mark in **Question 31**.

Exercise 2 Questions 32–40

This was an appropriately challenging exercise at this stage of the paper. Very few candidates left all the questions blank and were usually able to score some marks. Candidates heard an interview with Alain, a champion ice-skater. There was a good mixture of challenging and more accessible questions on this last exercise and most candidates scored marks, with some questions only being successfully answered by the most able.

The questions were designed to make short responses possible and candidates generally seemed aware of this. Candidates should be reminded not to write long answers as sometimes they add extra detail not on the recording which can distort and invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

In **Question 32**, many candidates responded with a correct part and tense of the verb *tomber*, but there were also many references to Alain's 10th birthday and/or finding the activity easy which invalidated a correct answer. **Question 33** was answered correctly by a large number of candidates but in **Question 34** candidates did not score as they omitted the word *section* from their answer or wrote *session* instead.

In **Question 35**, *trop* was often missing and this was required for the candidates to be awarded the mark. **Question 36** was answered well by the more able candidates. In **Question 37**, there was a variety of answers and, on occasion, the omission of *plus* meant that no mark could be scored here. Some candidates offered *plus avancés* which referred to Alain and not the other competitors, and a reference to the other competitors was required by the question.

There were many correct answers in **Question 38** but in **Question 39**, the inclusion of *glasse* with the correct answer *spectacle* or the inclusion of *spectaculaire* with the correct spelling of *glace* invalidated the answer. In **Question 40**, many candidates had understood *éviter* in the question and gained the mark by simply answering *regret(s)*. Candidates who did not score the mark here often included references to *sportif*, *émissions* and *télé* or omitted this question.

FRENCH

Paper 3015/02
Reading

Key messages

To maximise their chances of success on this paper, candidates should:
keep their answers brief and focused, particularly in **Section 3**
make sure that they read the questions carefully
check the accuracy of their spelling, especially with words used in the text/question.

General comments

The paper was accessible to all the candidates. The vast majority attempted all sections and exercises.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1–5

Most candidates scored full marks on this exercise. A few chose option **A** for **Question 1**, instead of **B**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6–10

This exercise was also very successful and the vast majority of candidates scored full marks. Those who did not often chose option **B** for **Question 6**, instead of **C**.

Exercise 3 Questions 11–15

This multiple-choice exercise based on a short text was very successful and the vast majority of candidates scored full marks. Some only scored 4 marks as they chose **C** instead of **A** for **Question 15**.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16–20

For this exercise, candidates completed statements in French, choosing words from a list. Most candidates scored 5 marks. The most common errors were *sauf* for **Question 16** and *grande* for **Question 17**.

Exercise 2 Questions 21–30

For this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended text in the form of an email from Sophia. The text was mostly straightforward and the vocabulary covered familiar topics. Most candidates were able to cope with the demands of the task. Long answers are not required, and often only a few words would answer the question, but some candidates chose to copy a couple of sentences from the text for each question. For this exercise, extraneous material and incorrect tenses are often ignored as long as they do not in some way invalidate the candidate's correct response. Some candidates lost marks as they chose to paraphrase some of their answers and selected vocabulary that was not close enough to the original idea.

The majority of candidates scored at least 8 marks out of 10. For **Question 25**, candidates who answered *toute la nuit* instead of *toute la soirée* could not score the mark. For **Question 26**, *matière préférée* was the expected answer. *Elle aime l'histoire* could not be rewarded as it did not convey the correct idea. The rest of the questions were usually correctly answered as candidates were able to successfully locate the relevant information in the text.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 31–35

In **Section 3**, Examiners are expecting a higher level of attention to detail, and for candidates to be more selective of the information they take from the texts. In this exercise, candidates should not merely write the opposite of the statement but need to look for the alternative information. Candidates cannot be credited with a justification if they have ticked *vrai* for the statement, so there is no benefit in writing a justification for every response.

Questions 31 and **35** were the most often incorrectly identified as true or false. For **Question 31**, the expected answer was *les agriculteurs de la région ont organisé la compétition*. Candidates who answered *le directeur du centre a annoncé la compétition* also scored the mark. For **Question 32**, many candidates lost the mark because they used the incorrect tense *sa grand-mère est irlandaise* or because they retained the *qui* from the text. For **Question 34**, both *il l'avait fait tant de fois chez lui* and *il avait souvent fait son plat chez lui* were rewarded.

Exercise 2 Questions 36–41

This final exercise was, as intended, the most demanding part of the question paper. Even though many candidates found this exercise rather challenging, they managed to score a few marks. Many were able to locate the correct part of the text but were not selective enough when choosing what was a relevant response to the question or they were unable to manipulate the language to give an acceptable answer. Lengthy responses did not score the marks as they did not show genuine comprehension. Candidates need to read the questions carefully and ensure that they use the correct tense to answer the questions. It is also essential that they copy accurately words which have been given in the text or the question.

For **Question 36**, the use of *voir* was essential to convey the correct message. **Question 37** was a challenge for many candidates. A verb in the present tense was expected and candidates who copied *de s'occuper des tâches de tous les jours* lost the mark as they had not answered the question effectively. **Questions 38** and **39** were very successful but, in **Question 40**, many candidates could not score the marks available as they misspelt *vieilles* or missed out *pour chiens*. **Question 41** was a challenge for most candidates. Whilst many successfully mentioned *besoin d'amour et d'amitié*, very few provided a correct verb. Many just copied *les chiens ayant besoin* or missed out *ont* in *ils ont besoin*.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 3015/03 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- A very full range of performance was heard.
- Candidates usually attempted the role plays well.
- Centres must adhere to the cues in the role play tasks and must not change them or add extra tasks.
- Centres need to observe the stipulated timings of 5 minutes for **each** of the two conversations.
- It is essential to include questions to elicit past and future tenses in **both** the Topic conversation and the General conversation sections. Correct examples of past and future tenses are required for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded for Language in both conversation sections.
- Occasionally, Examiners needed to give candidates more opportunities to respond to spontaneous questions which encouraged candidates to explain and develop their answers in a natural way.
- Centres should aim to cover just two or three topics in the General conversation with each candidate as in some centres too many topics were covered too superficially.

General comments

Centres were usually well aware that there were three sections to the test.

In the role plays, Examiners usually followed the cues well, prompting where necessary and encouraging candidates to work for the marks. Examiners who did not follow the scripted cues and who changed the tasks sometimes made this section of the test harder for the candidates. If there are two parts to a task then Examiners are free to split the task, but if only one part of a task is completed by the candidate, the maximum mark which can be awarded is 1. If a candidate uses a verb to complete a task and makes an error of tense or conjugation, a mark of 2 and not 3 is appropriate. Poor pronunciation should always be queried as there were cases where pronunciation prevented clear communication of the set task. If the pronunciation of a key element is not clear, the communication of the message becomes distorted and a mark of 3 is **not** appropriate. Overlong answers are not to be encouraged as marks are only awarded for the set tasks. Indeed, if candidates add material extra to the set task it may distort meaning and detract from an otherwise correct answer.

If the Topic conversation and the General conversation sections are too short, candidates are not given the opportunity to develop their ideas and opinions nor the opportunity to use a range of structures and tenses. It is in the interest of fairness to all candidates to make sure that each candidate is given the full examination time of 5 minutes for **each** of their two conversation sections. Conversations which are too long can also disadvantage candidates. Examples of past and future tenses can only be credited within the stipulated timings of the test.

In the conversation sections, Examiners who included unexpected questions in a spontaneous, natural way went beyond the straightforward “closed” questions and gave their candidates the possibility of scoring in the Good band or above on Table B, Communication. It is essential to include questions which will elicit past and future tenses in both conversation sections as candidates need to show they can use both of these tenses accurately for a mark of more than 6 to be awarded on Table C, Language.

There should be a clear transition between the Topic conversation and the General conversation and the links between the different parts of the test should always be in French.

Impression marks were usually awarded fairly in centres but were sometimes a little generous when pronunciation was not good and impeded successful communication.

Comments on specific questions

A Role Plays

Many candidates performed well on the A Role Plays. The role plays were set using vocabulary from Topic areas A, B and C of the Defined Content.

On all the Role Play A situations, there is always one task which requires candidates to listen and choose from the two options offered by the Examiner. It is important that candidates listen carefully and choose one of the two scripted options.

Phoning a theatre

This role play was done well by candidates. Nearly all gave an appropriate greeting but, on **Task 1**, some mispronounced *spectacle* or *places*. On **Task 2**, most were able to choose an option but some Examiners did not give the correct cue here. **Task 3** was done well but some candidates did not give a precise date and just gave a day such as *mardi*, which was not specific enough for 3 marks. Provided that a specific day was stated, such as *mardi prochain*, candidates gained the full marks available. **Task 4** was done well with nearly all candidates able to state a clear number of *places* they required. Candidates were generally well prepared to phrase an appropriate question on **Task 5** with most asking about parking or the price.

Phoning a youth hostel

On **Task 1**, most candidates were able to state clearly that they wanted to make a reservation although some mispronounced *réservation*. **Task 2** was also approached confidently with nearly all candidates able to state a clear number of people. On **Task 3**, candidates were expected to give their age. Any age was accepted but many made errors of verbs such as *je suis 16 ans* or did not say *ans*. **Task 4** required candidates to listen to the two options and choose one. Those who opted for *au restaurant en ville* sometimes mispronounced *ville* as *vie*. Most candidates approached **Task 5** well. Some chose to ask about internet access but were not always able to pronounce *accès* well.

In a sports shop

Candidates approached this role play confidently. On **Task 1**, some found the pronunciation of *à dos* difficult. Nearly all were able to choose a correct option well on **Task 2**. **Task 3** required candidates to state they liked the bag rather than give an opinion about it. Some candidates made errors when conjugating the verb *aimer* here. Most candidates asked for *une carte* well in **Task 4** but full marks were often mistakenly awarded by Examiners for mispronunciations such as *une car*. **Task 5**, which required candidates to ask the price, was usually well done but some candidates just asked *Combien de prix ?* which was not the most appropriate language.

B Role Plays

The Role Play B situations were deliberately more demanding and required the ability to use different tenses, to explain, and to give and justify opinions. They differentiated well, but even the weakest candidates could usually score a mark on some tasks when the Examiner kept closely to the script and prompted if necessary.

There is always one task in which candidates have to listen to the Examiner and reply to an unprepared question and one task which requires candidates to react in some way. Candidates should be prepared to give a positive or negative opinion about something. Role Play B situations also require the candidate to ask one appropriate question (*Posez une question... or Demandez...*).

Talking about a holiday job

On **Task 1**, candidates were not always able to reformulate the rubric. Some just stated they had a job but did not give the full reason for calling their friend. In **Task 2**, candidates needed to respond to the unexpected question which featured the cue *Depuis combien de temps travailles-tu au restaurant ?* Some responded *pour une semaine* but the use of *pour* distorted the time frame as it implied future time. **Task 3** was better attempted with most candidates being able to give a positive opinion about the work and explain why they liked it. To score full marks on **Task 4**, candidates needed to give two details about how they were going to spend their earnings. Many candidates were able to use a future time frame here. In **Task 5**, in order to fulfil the task and gain 3 marks, an appropriate question needed to be asked and a correct interrogative adverb used. Some candidates used incorrect or incomplete interrogative forms.

Talking about a birthday

Many candidates made a good start in **Task 1** but some did not reformulate the rubric well and confused the possessive adjective, using *votre anniversaire* instead of *mon anniversaire*. **Task 2** required candidates to give two details about what they had done on their birthday. Many were able to communicate that they had eaten out, been to the cinema or celebrated at home. Some candidates made errors when conjugating verbs in the perfect tense. The unexpected question on **Task 3** was well attempted by more able candidates but weaker candidates often needed the cue to be repeated and were not always sure what had been asked. Sympathetic examining and prompting usually enabled such candidates to score 1 or 2 marks here. **Task 4** was approached well with many candidates able to say with whom they preferred spending their birthday and giving an appropriate reason why. On **Task 5**, candidates made some good attempts at asking Alex if they could visit him/her next year. Weaker candidates however were challenged by trying to use a correct pronoun and word order. Some candidates also used the verb *visiter* rather than *rendre visite*. In such cases, the message was communicated but the language used was not the most appropriate.

Arriving at the airport without a suitcase

Candidates generally attempted **Task 1** well and were able to say that their suitcase had not arrived. On **Task 2**, candidates had to say which town they had travelled from and at what time they had arrived in Paris. Some candidates left out their town/city of departure or the time they had arrived. Others sometimes found it hard to conjugate *partir* and *arriver* correctly in the perfect tense. Better attempts were made at describing the suitcase on **Task 3** with most candidates gaining 2 or 3 marks here. On **Task 4**, candidates needed to express their displeasure to complete the task successfully. Some said they were disappointed, sad or annoyed, which is a different notion. Most were able to say why they needed the suitcase saying, for example, that their laptop or money was in it. Some candidates said the suitcase was a present or expensive. These were all taken as valid reasons. **Task 5** required a correct question to be formulated about the possibility of having the suitcase the next day. Some candidates just said *je voudrais ma valise demain*, which only counted as partial completion of the task as this was not a question.

Topic presentation and conversation

Nearly all centres conducted a Topic conversation after the Topic presentation but the timings were sometimes incorrect. The Topic presentation should last between 1 to 2 minutes and the remaining time of 3 to 4 minutes should be spent discussing the topic. Sometimes, the questions in the Topic conversation repeated material already heard in the presentation or did not always stretch candidates to develop their ideas in a spontaneous way. The best candidates showed that they could talk about their material in a natural way and were able to give explanations and support their opinions.

When candidates did not include past and future tenses in their presentation or could only respond to questions in the present tense, the Language mark was limited to 6.

Generally, Topic presentation times were well adhered to by candidates and many had clearly prepared their topic very thoroughly and learnt appropriate vocabulary and expressions. Candidates usually presented their material in a lively way and at an appropriate speed. The most successful topics were ones in which candidates had a clear personal interest which enabled them to give opinions and not just factual detail. Centres usually had a good range of individual topics.

Most candidates spoke clearly but some occasionally rushed their presentation and often mispronounced their material which prevented them from communicating clearly. The best candidates were able to sustain the communication and level of language after the initial presentation and managed to converse at the same level heard in the presentation but, for many, this often proved more difficult. A marked increase was seen this year in the number of candidates talking about the environment. Other popular topics were festivals, healthy lifestyle, holidays, home life and routine, school, pastimes, future plans and life in another country.

Questions which require precise geographical or statistical knowledge when discussing life in another country should be avoided. It is better instead to ask candidates what they find most interesting or what they like/dislike about their country/another country and why. The best performances were those which developed into a natural conversation and in which candidates could express not just factual information in response to straightforward questions but also develop and explain their opinions about the topic.

It always helps candidates when the end of this section of the test is indicated with a phrase such as *Maintenant, on passe à la conversation générale*.

General conversation

Timings were usually correct for this part of the test but there were instances of General conversation which were too long or too short. Correct timings mean that candidates are given the opportunity to develop ideas and show they can use a range of linguistic features. Correct use of past and future tenses can only be awarded within the stipulated timing. Generally, this section of the test was conducted well and Examiners encouraged candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Centres usually covered an appropriate range of topics but some centres covered too many topics too superficially with a string of unconnected questions. This did not give candidates the chance to go into depth on a topic. It was also confusing for candidates to have to switch from topic to topic. Only **two or three topics** should be covered in this section of the test. It is also essential to include questions in different tenses as candidates must produce accurately conjugated examples of past and future tenses to be able to gain a mark of more than 6 for Language.

It is important to cover different topics with different candidates and, if using the same topic with different candidates, to try to use different questions. Questions which are very straightforward, and which require simple short responses or completions, will not give candidates access to the upper mark bands for both Communication and Language. Candidates who could give and explain opinions and respond to **unexpected** questions gained high marks.

Generally, the level of performance was good across the candidature with some outstanding performances. Candidates of all abilities were encouraged to do their best. Many candidates showed they could communicate well on familiar topics such as shopping, technology, holidays, life at home, school, future plans, healthy lifestyle, leisure activities, their town, pollution and the environment. Some candidates were asked questions on their daily routine or a friend but these topics were not always fully exploited in terms of a range of tense coverage.

Work heard illustrating standards at the lower end of the marking bands for Language showed some manipulation of structures and some awareness of verbs and a limited vocabulary. Work illustrating the performance in the middle bands showed the ability to produce some accurate examples in past and future tenses and usage of key Defined Content vocabulary together with some key adverbs of time and common adjectives. The more able candidates could go beyond speaking in the first person and conjugate verbs with different subjects with greater control. At the top end of performance, candidates communicated ideas with ease and made consistent accurate use of appropriate tenses, adverbs, conjunctions and a range of appropriate vocabulary. Structures such as *avant de* plus infinitive, perfect infinitives and *si* plus imperfect followed by conditional tenses were heard more frequently this year, as were correct and appropriate examples of *depuis* plus an imperfect or present tense together, and also *quand* plus a future tense.

Many candidates reflected that they had enjoyed their experience of studying and communicating in a foreign language.

FRENCH

Paper 3015/04
Writing

Key messages

Candidates should read the whole task carefully before starting to write their answers.
Candidates are advised to highlight or underline key words in questions and sub-tasks.
Candidates should ensure that they respond in the same time frame as used in the question.

General comments

Work from the full ability range was seen on this paper. The gradient of difficulty in the questions allowed the vast majority of candidates to show what they knew and could do.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1: À la page

The vast majority of candidates scored 5 marks on this exercise.

The eight pictures only serve as a guide and candidates are free to use different items provided that they fit the context of the question. Most candidates successfully provided a mixture of places and objects. *Restaurant, magasin, serviette* and *bateau* were usually well known. Some candidates misspelt *arbre* or *lunettes (de soleil)*.

Question 2: Mon anniversaire

Communication

To ensure that they score the 10 marks available for Communication, candidates should check that they have addressed every task and sub-task, produce clear and concise answers which remain focused on the task and aim at writing at least two sentences per task.

In **Task 1**, most candidates could clearly give the date of their birthday, however some added *th* after the number (e.g. *15th juin*) or could not spell the month of their birthday accurately. Many candidates also gave the year (e.g. *20 juin 2003*) but this was also rewarded. Candidates did not need to write numbers in letters, a figure was perfectly acceptable.

Task 2 was very successful as candidates offered a variety of activities they usually do on their birthday. Going out with friends, eating in a restaurant or going to the cinema were popular activities. Those who described what they do and with whom at different times during the day scored many marks.

For **Task 3**, candidates had to say what type of present they like to receive. The vast majority opted for money so that they could buy what they really wanted. Even though the word *cadeaux* was provided in the question, many misspelt the word in their answer. Candidates who stated *je n'aime pas recevoir de cadeaux* could not score a mark as they had not fulfilled the task.

Task 4 was very successful as candidates could clearly explain with whom they preferred to spend their birthday. Many scored many communication marks as their answers were very detailed.

Task 5 required candidates to convey some notion of future time to express what they would like to do to celebrate their next birthday. Once again, candidates who listed all the different activities they'd like to do for their next birthday scored many marks.

Candidates need to provide as many details as they can for each task. Candidates who only provide one short sentence for each task are very unlikely to score 10 marks for Communication.

Language

The vast majority of candidates scored 4 or 5 for Language. They produced pieces of work which were coherent and showed that they could use relevant verbs and vocabulary with a fair degree of accuracy. To maximise their chances of scoring in the top bands for Language, candidates are advised to ensure that they use the time frames used in the tasks.

Section 2

The three options were equally popular. Candidates should read each option carefully before making their choice and take into consideration the vocabulary, verb tenses and structures which will be needed to respond effectively to the question. The vast majority of candidates kept to the recommended word count.

Communication

Question 3 (a): J'ai gagné une croisière en Méditerranée.

Many candidates scored 2 marks for **Task 1**. The question clearly stated *avant de partir*, however some candidates described what they did to prepare for the competition or described the competition itself.

Task 2 was very successful as candidates provided several activities they had done during the cruise. Playing different sports and eating in the restaurants were very common. Some candidates had not looked carefully enough at the tense used in the question and used the future tense to complete the task. These candidates could not score the 2 marks available as they had only partially fulfilled the task.

For **Task 3**, candidates had to make general comments about the advantages of boat trips. Some candidates could only score 1 mark as they gave the advantages of the cruise they had just done. Those who had used the correct time frame to answer the question often mentioned that boat trips are relaxing or that the scenery is beautiful.

Task 4 was not very successful as candidates described what they had done to win the competition. Very few were able to say that they like to win or that they like a challenge.

Task 5 required a verb in the conditional. Many candidates were able to adapt the verb in the question to successfully complete the task. Some candidates could not score any communication marks for this task as their inaccurate spelling of *gagner* distorted the message they were trying to convey.

Many candidates wrote good essays and the vast majority scored 7 marks or more for Communication.

Question 3 (b): Un achat sur Internet

Candidates were expected to provide two details about their purchase for **Task 1**. To score the 2 marks available, they had to say what they had bought and for whom. Most candidates provided the two details. Some candidates listed what they usually buy on the internet rather than what they had bought recently. The most popular items were a new mobile phone or clothes.

In **Task 2**, the problem they experienced had to be linked with the item they had ordered. Those who had chosen an item of clothing often mentioned that it was the wrong size or colour. Many candidates stated that the item did not arrive when it was expected. Many explained what they had to do to put things right.

Task 3 was very successful as candidates were able to say how internet helped them daily. Many explained that they need internet for their school work or to keep in touch with friends and family.

Candidates easily scored the 2 marks available for **Task 4** by simply saying *mes parents aiment/détestent internet*. Many also provided a reason why.

Task 5 was sometimes misunderstood as candidates listed what they would not be able to do rather than activities that they would do if they did not have internet. A verb in the conditional was required to score 2 marks. Many candidates said that, without internet, they would be much more active and much more sociable.

Question 3 (c): En retard pour l'école

Some of the candidates who chose this option did not always have the linguistic skills to manage the storyline.

For **Task 1**, candidates were expected to explain why they woke up late. A verb in the pluperfect was required for their explanation but if they used the perfect tense they could still be fully rewarded for communication. The main reasons given were watching television very late in the night or having to complete all their homework. Most candidates scored 2 marks.

Task 2 was also successful as many candidates were able to explain *j'ai vite pris une douche* or *j'ai mangé mon petit déjeuner très vite*. Some candidates did not use the correct auxiliary with reflexive verbs.

For **Task 3**, many candidates showed a lack of urgency as they just said *je suis allé(e) à ma classe*. For others, their arrival was much more dramatic as they met the head teacher and had to explain their lateness.

For **Task 4**, an action (e.g. *mon professeur a téléphoné à mes parents*) as well as an emotion (e.g. *mon professeur était furieux*) were rewarded.

Candidates often used the same adjective *furieux* to explain what their parents thought of the situation in **Task 5**. Despite this lack of variety in choice of vocabulary, the task was fully rewarded.

Verbs

To enhance their overall marks for Communication and Verbs, candidates must pay careful attention to the tense required by the task. Using a present tense when a past tense is required (or vice versa) incurs a double penalty as the sentence can only achieve partial communication and the verb cannot be rewarded.

The repetition of *avait*, *était* or *étaient* should be avoided as verbs can only be awarded the first time they are used. However, some candidates offered a wide variety of verbs in different forms throughout their essays.

Candidates should also pay attention to the verbs provided in the rubrics and questions to avoid unnecessary spelling errors.

In **Question 3(c)**, the opening sentence was in the perfect tense. Verbs in the past historic could not be credited.

Other linguistic features

To maximise their chances of achieving marks in the top three bands for Other linguistic features candidates need to check carefully what they have written. Particular care should be taken with the agreements of adjectives and past participles and the spelling and gender of common nouns. Essays must give evidence of complex structures, variety of relevant vocabulary and a fair degree of accuracy. The repetition of *parce que*, *car* or *je pense que* does not demonstrate the level of control and variety expected for the top bands.

There were frequent errors of spelling in common adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. Words such as *beaucoup*, *malheureusement*, *ennuyeux*, *intéressant* are widely used but regularly misspelt.