



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	French
Level	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the Examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

There was, again, a slight decrease in the number of candidates presented but the spread of candidature was similar to that of recent years. Performance overall in the examination was very satisfactory. However, whilst the percentage of those achieving Grade 1 was virtually the same as the previous three years, there was a 4% decrease in awards at Grades 2-3 compared to 2008.

Overall, it was felt that the papers were well received by candidates. Feedback from centres and markers suggests that the papers were set at appropriate levels.

In **Reading**, the percentage achieving Grade 1 was higher than the previous three years. There were fewer Grades 2-3 and performance at Grades 4-6 was good. In **Listening**, performance at Grade 1 was not as good as 2008, Grade 2 was on a par with recent years, Grade 3 slightly down and Grades 4-6 up in terms of percentage distribution. Performance in **Writing** was on a par with recent years at Credit level. There were fewer awards at Grade 3 and other levels remained largely unchanged. In **Speaking**, candidates performed exceptionally well at Grades 1-3 and the percentage of awards at these levels was up on previous years.

In **Writing**, there were many exceptional performances where candidates expressed themselves with clarity and accuracy and where they truly engaged with the piece of Writing, giving interesting personal opinions and using colloquial expressions. There were fewer inappropriate tasks this year and most candidates at all levels were well prepared, even when completing straightforward tasks. There was, in some centres, evidence of over-preparation which led to candidates clearly not engaging with the Writing process and producing pieces very similar in content which showed little sign of personal input or personal opinion. This practice is to be discouraged.

Listening was, once again, the most difficult element for candidates, although the performance at Foundation level was exceptionally good.

Although the **Reading** papers were well received, and performance was exceptionally good at Grade 1, the slippage at Grades 2-3 resulted in a higher number of awards at Grades 4-6. A significant number of markers commented upon the use of poor English and pupils not reading over answers to ensure that they make sense.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Speaking performance was good at all levels, with an enhanced performance at Grades 1-3 in particular. Many centres are now much more at ease with the Extended Role Play – others still need to focus more on the demands of this task.

In **Writing**, candidates performed well where the language was personalised, interesting and portrayed their own ideas. At other levels, most candidates did not try to write too much and were well prepared within their own ability level.

In **Reading** at Foundation level, candidates coped very well with most questions and this resulted in high scoring, with few candidates scoring below 20 points. Questions 1-4, 7-9 and Q11 were particularly well done. In the General paper, there was, as expected, a significant disparity in performance between the G/F and G/C cohorts. The former group found the paper challenging. Questions 1(b), 3, 4, 9 met with most success. At Credit level, Question 1 got most candidates off to a good start. Otherwise, different groups of candidates performed well in different parts of this paper.

Listening at Foundation level was mostly good throughout. At General level, performance was mixed but Questions 1, 4(b), 5, 9, 10 were well answered on the whole. In the Credit paper, Questions 1, 4, 9, 10, 12 and 14 were well answered by most candidates.

Areas which candidates found demanding

For **Writing**, comment is similar to that of last year. Able candidates are disadvantaged when they are set mundane topics such as *Moi...Ma Famille...Ma Routine...* In such instances, the level of language often dips to a very basic level.

In **Reading**, at Foundation level, the content was largely accessible. At General level, a lot of candidates focussed on individual words rather than entire phrases or sentences, thus losing marks. Poor expression in English was another factor which affected performance, as was providing insufficiently detailed answers – where answers were not wrong but not sufficiently detailed to gain the point. Under-developed dictionary skills also let a number of candidates down. Questions 5-8 in particular were less well done, with a large number of candidates trying to use prior knowledge rather than examining the texts closely. Some words and expressions which caused difficulty – *informations...rencontre sportive...rapports* (Q2), *faire ses devoirs...navigateur...temps* (Q4), *pendant les vacances* (Q7). Many also ignored negatives. At Credit level, Question 4 was not well done and there was some confusion in Q6(c). Expressions found to be difficult – *le bon déroulement...se débrouiller...rend services...j'ai du mal à faire...il n'est pas facile de s'isoler*.

In **Listening**, at Foundation level, words which were less known were *droite...pêche...jolie...mer* caused difficulty. At General level, the first four questions frequently caused candidates to get off to a slow start with *boîte de chocolats...près de la gare...trois voitures sont entrées en collision* posing problems – also *salle de jeux* in Q7 and *le prof est jeune* in Q11. At Credit level, Questions 2, 3 and 11 proved to be most challenging. Individual words and phrases were also found to be challenging – *écrans plasma* (Q5), *sainement* (Q11), *maquillage* (Q13) and *comprehensive* (Q14) – but largely it was lack of attention to detail and incomplete answers which cost marks, and also poor English expression.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Candidates should re-read their answers to make sure that they make sense and make their English expression as clear as possible.

Answers need to be as detailed as possible.

Candidates should focus on entire phrases/sentences rather than individual words.

Pay attention to negatives like *ne...pas, ne...rien, ne...plus* and watch out for “wee words” like *sans...avec...peu...meme...plus...moins*.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	30774
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	27986
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Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	16.4%
Grade 2	21.2%
Grade 3	23.0%
Grade 4	24.8%
Grade 5	11.2%
Grade 6	1.5%
Grade 7	0.0%
No award	1.8%

Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
R	26	18	13	32	20	14	33	20	13
L	25	15	10	26	16	11	27	16	12