

GCSE 2003

June Series



Report on the Examination

FRENCH

Specification A

-
- FULL COURSE
 - SHORT COURSE

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from:

Publications Department, Aldon House, 39, Heald Grove, Rusholme, Manchester, M14 4NA
Tel: 0161 953 1170

or

download from the AQA website: www.aqa.org.uk

© Assessment and Qualifications Alliance 2003

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales 3644723 and a registered Charity 1073334.
Registered address Addleshaw Goddard, Sovereign House, PO Box 8, Sovereign Street, Leeds LS1 1HQ.
Kathleen Tattersall, Director General

CONTENTS

3651 French Full Course / 3657 Short Course

	<i>Page No.</i>
Full Course	
Foundation Tier Listening.....	4
Higher Tier Listening.....	5
Foundation Tier Reading.....	7
Higher Tier Reading.....	8
Foundation Tier Speaking.....	12
Higher Tier Speaking.....	12
Foundation Tier Writing.....	14
Higher Tier Writing.....	14
Writing Coursework.....	18
Mark Ranges and Award of Grades.....	24
Short Course	
Foundation Tier Listening.....	29
Higher Tier Listening.....	30
Foundation Tier Reading.....	31
Higher Tier Reading.....	32
Foundation Tier Speaking.....	34
Higher Tier Speaking.....	34
Foundation Tier Writing.....	36
Higher Tier Writing.....	38
Coursework.....	38
Mark Ranges and Award of Grades.....	43

Full Course

Listening Tests

Foundation Tier

Most candidates did well in Section A, with a majority scoring 6 or 7 marks. In Question 2 the word *mer* sometimes led to answers referring to “mother”, while in Question 3, some candidates mentioned sea-side activities such as swimming, rather than mentioning the beach.

In Section B, Questions 7, 8 and 9 were usually correct. Questions 11 – 13 were also often well done, though as often seems to be the case, directions is a demanding topic for some candidates. On the other hand, the jobs vocabulary in questions 14-17 was usually well known, though *fermier* (Q14) was the least known. Question 28 was almost always well done (*poulet* was clearly better known than was the case last year). Question 29, though quite well done, was rather more demanding, possibly because candidates misheard *frites* as *fruits*. The aim of having a pattern of peaks and troughs, rather than an incline of difficulty, continues to work well in motivating even the least able candidates to persevere to the end of the test.

Question 10 and Questions 18 to 27 were the overlap questions, which also appeared on the Higher Tier paper. It is interesting that Question 10, and Questions 18 and 19, the content of which is contained in Theme 4, proved to be among the least well done questions in the paper. This Theme, which is probably the last to be covered in many schemes of work, and which contains the most abstract vocabulary, will nonetheless continue to be tested at Foundation Tier, in order to give the appropriate breadth of specification coverage. Answer C (*la pollution*) was often given in response to Question 10, while in Question 19 answer D (*paresseux*) was common, perhaps resulting from a similarity between the sounds of *ennuyeuse* and *paresseuse*. It is worth remarking here that *casse-pieds* is a perfectly common, though familiar, item of vocabulary in spoken French. AQA has always aimed to make its listening material as natural as is consistent with the restrictions of the specification, and this word does appear in the Foundation Tier vocabulary published in the specification.

The implication above that Theme 4 may be less well done by some candidates at Foundation Tier is supported by the fact that Questions 22 to 24 (also overlap, and aimed at Grades C/D) were much better done. These questions were based on Theme 1 (Interests and Hobbies) which is likely to have appeared in Key Stage 3, and therefore to be more familiar to the majority of candidates.

As in the previous specification, the questions to be answered in French (though not requiring any manipulation of the language, and capable of being answered using simple vocabulary heard on the cassette, proved the most challenging, and a number of candidates continue to leave this section blank. In Question 25 very few candidates produced a recognisable form of *appareil photo*, and many simply answered *photo* or *Paris photo*, indicating that their difficulty lay not in spelling the word, but in understanding it. In the second column *bon marché* was rarely correct (usually because the accent was missing) but many candidates gained the mark for *réduction*, though this was sometimes negated by a mention of *20 personnes*. Question 26 was less demanding, many candidates managing a recognisable spelling of *chemise*, and most gaining the mark in the second column either for *bleu* or *bien*. The difficulty in Question 27 was without doubt less in the understanding of *parfum* than in

its spelling. Although no fewer than 10 spellings (in addition to the correct one) were allowed in the mark scheme, most candidates still did not score this mark, though in column 2 many were able to mention *mère*, or less frequently *cadeau* to gain the mark.

In conclusion, the non-availability of dictionaries in this test seems to have made no difference to candidate performance. Rubrics appear to have been understood as well as in the previous specification, and there was no evidence that candidates from 1998 to 2002 used the dictionary to improve their spelling of answers in French.

Higher Tier

The overlap questions (Questions 2 to 5, and most noticeably Questions 9 to 12 and Questions 14 to 16) were better done by candidates at Higher Tier. However, some of the specific comments made in the report on the Foundation test are still true of a smaller number of candidates, especially with regard to the spelling of *appareil photo* and *parfum*.

The first part of Question 1 was consistently badly done, since hardly any candidates were able to spell *portefeuille* in any recognisable manner. Most candidates, however, were able to cope with the first appearance of euros, and gained the mark for the second column.

Question 6 was not very well done, many candidates choosing C or occasionally D rather than A, despite the clues of *agents* and *assassin*. This may be because candidates do not make much distinction between adventure, horror and detective films. Questions 7 and 8 were much better done.

Question 13 proved very hard. Many candidates gained 1 mark – usually for *Lucie*, but very few scored all three marks. This type of question, in which candidates have to identify points of view from a longer conversation, is always difficult, in part because it inevitably requires a degree of memory – though this conversation was not as long as some past examples have been. The use of names in the recording is intended to help candidates to identify who is saying what, as is the fact that each answer is self-contained, and each speaker only speaks once. Two of the answers required understanding of phrases which are not explicitly in the published vocabulary lists (*mettre de côté* and *lèche-vitrines*) though in both cases it was possible to arrive at the meaning by drawing conclusions from the context. Interestingly, it was *Lucie* who referred to window-shopping, and as mentioned above, she was correctly identified by most candidates.

Most candidates gained at least some marks in Questions 17 to 19. In Question 17, many candidates understood *pratique*, though their attempts at spelling it were often less successful – endings in ‘c’ and ‘k’ were not accepted. Unfortunately, a number of candidates failed to pick out the negative in *Je n’ai pas besoin de prendre le bus ...* and negated *pratique* by adding *pour le bus*. For the disadvantage, a recognisable spelling of *bruyant* was beyond most candidates, versions with *ouill...* predominating.

Question 18 also proved very difficult. Clear attempts at *loyer* were rare, as was the conclusion that the building was old. Some candidates did gain marks for *HLM* (though many attempted to transcribe what they heard – *ashelem*, for example), and, in the disadvantage column, for *...ascenseur [ne] marche pas*, while there were a few communicative attempts at *construit il y a quarante ans*. Fortunately, Question 19 was more

accessible, many candidates gaining marks for *beaucoup de place* or *énorme/grande*, and for *pas d'autres jeunes*. Some candidates clearly misunderstood what they had heard, and put *à la campagne* as an advantage. As in previous examinations, Questions 20 and 21, in which candidates had to complete sentences in French, were generally badly done. It is important in this type of question that the language of the sentence to be completed is understood, though since this is a listening test the vocabulary and structures will always be basic, as was the case here. In Question 20 many candidates gained a mark for *enfants* in the first part (though *infants* spellings were not accepted), and those few who understood *boulot* also gained the second mark. A large number of candidates did not know *déménager*, and answers referring to *natation* were common. Few candidates scored in Question 21. Attempts to spell *heureux* were rarely successful (*horreur*, *heure* and *euros* being the most frequent), as were attempts to produce part of the verb *mariage* (*mari(e)* and *mariage* were often seen). Despite the example, many candidates attempted lengthy answers to these questions, which rarely gave any worthwhile information.

The questions in Section B are aimed at the higher grades, and as usual, there was a wide range of marks, with few candidates failing to score at all, and very few gaining all eight marks. In Question 22(i) many candidates seemed unfamiliar with *permis de conduire* and there was a number of answers containing the word 'permit', not always in the right context, despite the rubric which mentioned transport. Part (ii) was marked independently of part (i), so many candidates gained marks simply for 'expensive', and 'accidents', fewer for speed, and a small number for 'afraid'. Question 23 was a real test. While the most able candidates understood what they had heard, and provided accurate translations of it, reliance on picking out key words/phrases clearly was not enough to gain weaker candidates any marks. Particularly in part (iii) it was necessary to understand the gist of what was heard in order to produce a scoring answer. Some candidates did manage to convey that one experiment with drugs is enough to kill, but not many understood that drinking a lot at weekends was worse than drinking a little regularly.

As at Foundation Tier, there is no evidence that candidates would have performed better in this test had dictionaries been available – though many more marks would have been scored had candidates been able to spell a number of common words recognisably (*appareil photo*; *chemise*; *bleu*; *parfum*; *cadeau*; *mère*; *portefeuille*; *bruyant*; *jeune*; *heureux*). In addition, candidates should be encouraged to use the five minutes reading time to study particularly those questions where there is a need to understand longer phrases/sentences – in this paper Question 13 and particularly Questions 20 and 21.

In conclusion, it is worth drawing the attention of centres to the additional vocabulary list aimed at grades A*, A and B which appears in the *Teachers' Guide* (section 9). Though this is neither exclusive nor exhaustive, it provides vocabulary which will help students to handle the four Themes at this level, and Higher Tier candidates should be familiar with it.

Reading Tests

General Comments

Examiners reported a decline in standards of performance in this year's papers. Although few candidates were entered at an inappropriate tier, and most candidates found questions

they could answer, the number of candidates gaining high marks was appreciably lower at both tiers. This undoubtedly reflects the decision to discontinue the use of dictionaries, which has more impact in Reading than in other components. However, it remains the case that failure to act upon advice contained in previous reports constitutes an important secondary reason for the decline in marks. In particular, examiners consistently refer in their reports to poor use of examples, answers in the wrong language, poor levels of expression in English, including spelling, and providing potentially correct answers which cannot be credited because they contain contradictory information or ‘two bites at the cherry’.

Foundation Tier

Question 1

Most candidates scored this mark. Those who gave both dates without acceptable linkage could not score. *Mars* became ‘May’ in a surprising number of cases.

Question 2

Most candidates gained all 3 marks, providing the intended confidence-boosting introduction to the paper. Occasional errors appeared to be simply careless e.g. 30 miles instead of kilometers; ‘south’ for *nord*.

Question 3

Though generally correct, some candidates referred to information instead of reservations, though information about reservations was accepted.

Question 4

In (a) most answers were correct, with various wordings accepted as long as they amounted to ‘every day’, but not all day. Some candidates made incorrect reference to weekends. In (b) some candidates found the lay-out difficult to follow, but the commonest error was to use a pound sign where a clear euro sign was required. Since prices feature routinely in this paper, centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the euro sign, and can write it.

Overall, questions 1 to 4 provided candidates with good opportunities to gain marks, with very few writing answers in French.

Question 5

As usual, and despite the lack of dictionaries, this question posed few problems. *Champignon* and *chou-fleur* caused occasional problems. For ‘grapes’, a fair number of candidates were seduced by the s of *ananas* as opposed to the apparently singular *raisin*. AQA apologises for the fact that an Erratum notice was needed for this question. Some examiners reported that this notice was clearly not delivered by a small number of centres, causing confusion for a number of candidates.

Question 6

Generally well done, with 5 or 6 marks the norm. This was the first question requiring candidates to write French words, and a substantial minority answered in English. Those

who answered very briefly were lucky, since answers written as ‘15’, ‘bus’, and ‘sport’ had to be credited, even where other answers were clearly in English. A small number of candidates confused the information about subjects and hobbies, whilst the impact of the negative *pas* was missed by those who identified *informatique* as the favourite subject.

Question 7

The combination of lack of dictionary and lack of application meant that this standard question provided far fewer high marks than usual. Candidates are required to identify words or phrases with similar meanings within different texts, in this case letters and questions. Answers to (b) and (f) were frequently correct as candidates matched *instrument/piano* and *informatique/ordinateurs*. However, other similar links were missed, and there was little evidence of candidates doing any working out on the paper, for example by highlighting key words. Questions (d) and (e) required some grammatical awareness, of gender and comparison, and were the least well answered. Candidates should be reminded that the example cannot also be used as an answer, nor can any choice of answer be credited twice in this sort of question.

Question 8

This question also relies on knowledge of structure as well as vocabulary. Despite a more generous lay-out and sub-division into 3 parts, candidates found this question very demanding, and often relied on guesswork, with marks of 0 to 2 common. Answers B and G were most often correct, but very few candidates managed 6 or 7 correct answers. *Soif* and *mis* proved very demanding words.

Question 9

(a) was nearly always correct, with the picture providing substantial support. However, (b) was clearly the subject of guesswork, with any of the 4 alternatives likely to be chosen.

Higher Tier

Questions 1 and 4 (overlap)

It was gratifying to see how much better these questions were answered at this level, a clear indication of the accuracy of entry patterns. Candidates had a wider vocabulary and better-developed grammatical awareness, enabling them to accumulate marks. In particular, they used the example better in Question 1 than candidates at Foundation Tier.

Question 2

Some examiners felt that the lay-out of this new type of question may have caused difficulties for some candidates. Answers provided no evidence of this, although it may be the case that some candidates lost time as they worked out the mechanics of the question. Most candidates scored at least 3 of the 6 marks, with a fair number obtaining 5 or 6. The answer which regularly caused greatest difficulty was letter I for number 5. Many candidates clearly misunderstood the interrogative in *Qu’avez-vous étudié après le bac?* They chose *Au collège* commonly.

Question 3

Most candidates scored 2 or 3 marks on this question, though few gained all 4. Although some texts were challenging, and the question prompts also needed to be clearly understood, 3 of the answers were readily accessible through application of the same skills used in Question 1. Candidates recognised the link between *temps* and *météo* for answer A, similarly *fax* in both elements for H, and *train* (+SNCF) for I. Answer C caused most problems, presumably through failure to understand *embouteillages*, though this is listed in the Foundation Tier vocabulary list. It is accepted that candidates who chose letter F may well not have known *Ile-de-France*, since parts of France are not listed.

Question 5

Once again, this question type worked well, with many candidates gaining full marks, and demonstrating the ability to think sequentially and identify relationships within texts. The first and last answers were almost universally identified. Candidates at all levels understandably found the middle pair of HG the most difficult to order, with a fair number of GH answers. Some centres complained about the inclusion of this question type because it did not appear in the specimen papers. Centres must not expect rigid adherence to what was an attempt at helpful exemplification, and must accept that there will be future experimentation with question types.

Question 6

Encouragingly, most candidates attempted all the questions and took note of the example to produce short answers. Inevitably there was some uninspired dipping into the text to produce hopeful combinations of words which did not make sense, especially in (f). Very few candidates answered in English.

- (a) *Histoire* and *EPS/sport* were accepted. *Géo(graphie)* and *histoire-géo* were not. Answers which were not subjects could not be credited, e.g. *l'escalade*, *l'environnement*. Most candidates gained this mark.
- (b) Most candidates identified the correct information in the text but forfeited the mark by expressing themselves inaccurately. Answers such as *13-15 (ans)*, *entre 13 et 15 (ans)* or *13 à 15* were correct. However *13 et 15 (ans)* leaves out 14 year olds. This was a very common error, ignoring *entre* in the text.
- (c) Most candidates gained the mark for identifying 'Dordogne', clearly a place they are aware of, despite regions of France not being included in the vocabulary list. Additional information was ignored if it did not contradict the correct answer, e.g. *la vallée de l'Homme*.
- (d) This proved to be one of the most demanding questions on the paper. Many candidates quoted sections of the text but failed to work out that there must be either one or two girls in a mixed team of three. The question tested logical thought, but also deduction based on an understanding of the French in the first place. One popular answer, *25,000*, based on one of the few numbers in sight, was clearly illogical thinking.

- (e) The interrogative *d'où viendront* caused problems so that too many answers constituted fairly random guesswork. *Une ville de France* was all that was required.
- (f) The mark could be scored only if the three elements *visiter* + *grottes* + *Lascaux* were given. Clearly Lascaux itself was not the prize. This was a good illustration of candidates' propensity for writing nonsensical answers as they select from the text, since the most common wrong answer was the truncated *visiter les célèbres*.

Question 7

This question, aimed at A and A* candidates, was generally poorly answered, even by the target group. Most candidates seem to find difficulties with expressions of attitude and relationships, although these are identified for testing at this level. Other candidates tended to guess wildly at these questions and base answers on the few words they recognised; the scenarios they built around this limited understanding. Although there were two letters in the stimulus, some candidates failed to separate the information appropriately, leading to very odd answers. Although it is true that some of the vocabulary was demanding, colloquial or not prescribed, there was usually more than one route to the mark.

- (a) A middle-of-the road expression of attitude was required. Too many answers did not constitute an attitude but stated facts from the letter.
- (b) There were three routes to the two marks. A surprisingly large number of candidates grasped the idea of smoking 'roll-ups', for which a variety of expressions were accepted. However very few identified either that the cost of tobacco had gone up, or that he was thinking about giving up smoking. *Augmentations* and *se demander* are challenging but accessible words.
- (c) Nearly all candidates recognised *de temps en temps*, and gained this mark. They could also have gained it by reference to good marks at school, or to when his parents feel like giving him pocket money.
- (d) (i) Most candidates seized on the difficult *on s'engueule*, and some correctly answered that he argues with his father, not his parents. However, most candidates expressed this answer inaccurately, and few noticed the more accessible alternative, that his parents don't understand him.
- (ii) Quite a lot of candidates gained a mark for the idea that he cannot go out with his friends or makes excuses not to go out with them. Some then lost the mark by adding inaccurate information, such as 'as much' or 'hardly ever', which are not in the text. The second mark depended upon combining his feelings, and being excluded, and proved quite difficult for candidates to express acceptably.

Question 8

Extremely few candidates scored both marks for this final question. There were two main problems. Candidates did not recognise that this was one continuous message, and broke it up where they wished. They also brought their own experience of airports to bear, rather than reading what the notice said, leading to many plausible but irrelevant answers. A third problem was poor knowledge of key words, in this case *attendre*, *avant de* and *douanes*, all

of which are prescribed at Foundation Tier. For two marks, candidates needed to convey the idea of waiting for luggage before going to customs, with the notion of sequence essential. Far too many candidates referred to picking up/collecting luggage, and going to all sorts of ‘controls’ – police, passports, X-ray machines. Misunderstanding of *ici* led to vague links with local industries. As mentioned in last year’s report, candidates do not seem to get enough practice in understanding notices and official messages, especially without the help of a dictionary.

In Questions 7 and 8, a small number of candidates answered in French and gained no marks.

Speaking Tests

General Comments

Overall teacher-examiners coped well with the new test and were generally well prepared, although new problems arose over the question of timing the different parts of the test, in particular the Presentation/Discussion.

Centres generally entered candidates at the appropriate tier.

Although there seemed to be fewer instances of problem recordings, centres are again reminded to check that equipment is working properly and that the microphone is facing the candidate and not the teacher. It is advisable also to listen to the last few seconds of each candidate’s test, as this will reduce the risk of producing inaudible recordings. It is advisable, too, to pause for a few moments - without pausing the tape - if the school bell rings. Candidates can only gain marks if they can be heard, and often candidates’ responses are lost as their voices are drowned out by such loud interference.

Where centres use tape recordings with internal microphones it is advisable, too, to check for ‘motor hum’ as this can often interfere with the clarity of recordings.

As the Presentation/Discussion and Conversation elements are now marked separately, it is vital that teacher-examiners make the break between the elements clear e.g. by announcing : *Et maintenant la conversation.*

It was worrying to note that examiners have again commented on poor teacher/examiner performances. The performance of the teacher-examiner is vital in bringing out the best in candidates.

Centres are reminded that Teacher Support Meetings for the Conduct of GCSE Speaking Tests are held annually in March and centres are advised to send representatives where possible. The support packs are available free of charge, to those centres unable to attend. Please contact the Modern Foreign Languages Department at AQA’s Harrogate Office.

Role-Playing Situations

Foundation Tier

Candidates generally coped well with the Foundation Tier role plays. The new format whereby candidates have more of a choice about what they say seemed to work well, as did the removal of dictionary use.

Specific items of vocabulary highlighted were ‘South, town plan, work, too dear’. It was surprising to note the number of candidates who did not know ‘*c’est combien?*’. It needs to be stressed to candidates that J’ with verbs beginning with a vowel is not part of the verb. *Il j’aime, elle j’achète* was quite frequently used throughout all elements of the test.

There is still a general inability on the part of candidates to formulate questions at any level, but particularly at Foundation Tier.

Although pronunciation is not specifically targeted in the role plays, candidates cannot gain maximum marks for pronunciations which are too ‘mangled’. Nor can marks be gained for pronouncing cognates/near cognates as English. The *er/é* pronunciation of ...*er* verbs in the present tense is still evident and is one of the most common causes of candidates failing to score marks in the Speaking Test at both Foundation and Higher Tiers.

It again needs to be emphasised that role plays are imaginary situations – that candidates are ‘playing a role’ and not necessarily producing responses based on their own experience. The purpose of these role plays is not to test a candidate’s individual experience, but to test different elements of the specification.

Higher Tier

The teacher-examiner’s role in this part of the test is paramount and in spite of the given script, preparation is needed to think of ways of eliciting the required information when the script ‘fails’. However if teacher-examiners suggest answers – e.g. a candidate fails to understand ‘*Quand*’ or ‘*quel jour*’? so the teacher suggests *lundi? mardi?* and the candidate then produces *mercredi* the candidate cannot be awarded full marks for such an utterance.

Candidates fared better when teacher-examiners were skilled at offering alternative questions and, where split responses were required, asked for only one element at a time.

Teachers-examiners should remember that once a candidate has given a complete and incorrect response, they should not repeat/rephrase the question to obtain a different response. Candidates are marked on their first completed response.

Neither teacher-examiners nor candidates should extend role-play utterances into mini conversations. There are no additional marks for such utterances and the risk of error is greater. Candidates should not be encouraged to ‘develop’ their responses to role-play utterances.

Role Play 7. In Task 2 candidates tended to suggest means of transport rather than asking about transport. It needs to be made clear to candidates that utterances with a ? require them to ask a question.

Role Play 8. The '*depuis combien de temps*' construction caused problems for many candidates.

Role Play 10. Many candidates ignored the reference to '*hôtel*' in the introductory rubric and subsequently failed to score marks in Task 2. Candidates should be reminded that in all role plays the introductory rubric is important and can help them decide what is required in the following tasks.

Role Play 12. Candidates had difficulty in this role play with formulating the questions in the fourth task.

Overall, however, examiners found that candidates coped well with the role plays at this tier.

Presentation/Discussion

As this element of the test is now marked separately from the Conversation timings are vital.

Examiners are instructed to stop marking this element when the allotted 3 minutes has been completed. If the Presentation is allowed to take up the whole or most of the 3 minutes candidates' marks suffer. The mark for Spontaneity and Fluency is for the Discussion only and a candidate will gain no marks if the 3 minutes are taken up by the Presentation alone.

Short discussions will also disadvantage candidates who need to develop responses to gain the highest marks for Communication.

Many examiners, however, commented that this element was well done. Only a very small minority of candidates had no Presentation at all. Approaches from centres again varied greatly from whole classes doing the same Presentation to a great variety of topics.

Teacher-examiners need to be aware of what candidates are going to say or listen carefully during the Presentation so that they do not ask questions requiring information which the candidate has already given. Nor does it help candidates to be asked the same questions with no reference to their responses.

Presentations continue to create problems of delivery and pronunciation. As candidates have generally pre-learnt the material, they need to do it with the help of their teachers so that pronunciation as well as content can be monitored. Teachers need to stress to their candidates that they should not deliver their Presentations at top speed. Many Presentations gave the impression that candidates did not understand what they were delivering and the information became garbled and incomprehensible.

The Discussion questions should be linked to the topic and not become almost irrelevant to the chosen topic because the candidate is responding poorly to the questions.

It is vital to know the ability level of candidates to ask questions at the appropriate level.

For candidates who can cope with a variety of tenses and who may well obtain Grade C, there must be the opportunity to refer to past and future time frames in this element and then to use them again in the Conversation.

Conversation

Teacher-examiners need to use questions aimed at the ability level of their candidates. Speaking tests should never be used as ‘lessons’ with teacher-examiners correcting candidates’ French, nor should an English translation of questions be given.

It does not help candidates if they are faced with endless questions requiring ‘*oui/non*’ or the names of towns/pop groups/television programmes etc. Teacher-examiners are well aware now of the need for reference to past, present and future events, but it does not help if teacher-examiners insist on ‘chasing tenses’ with candidates who will clearly not gain higher grades.

The questions given in the Teacher’s Booklet are suggestions only. They need not be adhered to, nor should they be used one after the other without listening to the candidate’s responses, nor should they be the only questions asked. This element of the Test is very dependent on the skill of the teacher-examiner who needs to be well prepared with a range of questions suited to the ability level of the candidates. Higher Tier candidates need to be allowed to “show considerable independence of the stimulus”, whereas Foundation Tier candidates may not be able to cope with this type of question but need something more structured. It is appropriate to have high expectations of candidates but not ask questions way beyond their ability level.

Many candidates, even very able candidates, can tire as the test progresses and find it difficult to fill the allotted time. Teacher-examiners need to be sensitive to the performance of their candidates and to realise that they do not need the full time limit to show their capabilities. However, teacher-examiners should not cut short conversations to such an extent that candidates do not have the time to show the range of their language ability.

The best performances at both levels are produced when teacher-examiners recognise the abilities of their candidates and adapt questions accordingly, and when they respond to candidates answers with questions which allow for development and independence, rather than adhering rigidly to a pre-prepared list of set questions. This engenders an unnatural conversation with the teacher-examiner seeming to disregard candidates’ actual responses.

Writing Tests

General Comments

The quality of work was largely as expected as the majority of candidates were entered at the appropriate tier.

Although the less able Foundation Tier candidates still find Question 3 of the Foundation paper difficult, there was a reasonable, and in many cases a better attempt made at the question this year.

It needs to be emphasised that candidates can find help in answering the tasks in Question 2 if there is a French stimulus and in Foundation Question 3/Higher Question 1 in the rubric where the tasks required are summarised in English.

The absence of dictionaries does not seem to have had a deleterious affect on performance, although there was a lot of poor spelling.

Question 1

This question was well done in spite of the spellings of some of the relatives chosen.

Question 2

All candidates made a reasonable attempt at this question with the main problems being verb formation, the use of *je* throughout, the confusion of *être/avoir* and the omission of the verb. As in previous years, the use of *é* on *er* verb forms was prevalent.

Task 1 Candidates confused *être* with *avoir* and omitted *ans*. *Il y a 2 ans* was often used.

Task 2 Generally well done, but again there was confusion of the verbs *avoir* and *être* or omission of the verb.

Task 3 presented the same problems as Task 2. However, no further penalty was applied if the error was identical.

Task 4 Generally well done.

Task 5 Quite well done, although *é* was prevalent on *il mange*.

Task 6 Many candidates failed to score 2 marks on this task, although 1 mark was common. Errors included inappropriate tense/verb formation, omission of the verb and omission of the preposition.

The mark for Quality of Language in this question is closely limited to the mark for completion of the tasks.

Question 3 Foundation/Question 1 Higher

Fewer candidates this year seem to have made no attempt at this question. Many wrote copiously and confidently on the topic. Unfortunately many candidates wrote generally about the topic with little regard for the tasks set and, by oversight, omitted required information.

Many candidates clearly did not use the English rubric, which could have helped in the understanding of the tasks.

Communication

It should be noted that, to score the highest marks for Communication, candidates need to develop their tasks, although in this question a development can be an additional word or

short phrase. They also need to be credited for an opinion to gain at least 5 marks and a justification of an opinion to gain at least 6 marks.

Task 1 Most candidates were awarded the task for Communication. Although very little is required for development in this question, few candidates managed to develop this task.

Task 2 Again most candidates responded to this task but found it difficult to develop.

Task 3 Candidates succeeded in saying quite a lot about lunchtime activities but did not necessarily respond to the need for the past tense in this task. Formation of the past was not always well done and *je* with a past participle was prevalent. The task was, however, easily developed.

Task 4 Again candidates scored for Communication in the task and it was also well developed. Common problems were spellings, position of adjectives and the use of *portez-vous* from the stimulus.

Task 5 *Pensez-vous* was frequently misunderstood and many candidates talked at length about what homework they did rather than giving an opinion about it. Where it was understood, it was also developed well.

Task 6 Generally well done and developed.

Task 7 When this task was poorly done it was because of the inability to formulate a future time reference. Past tenses were frequently used and candidates no doubt at times misunderstood *à l'avenir*.

Task 8 This was perhaps the least well done of all the tasks. As in previous years the requirement to ask a question cannot be fulfilled by a good number of candidates. Where candidates did manage to complete the task, it was rarely developed.

Range/Complexity

Candidates found 3 marks quite accessible but the move to 4 marks for some Foundation candidates was more problematical because of the need for references to all 3 time frames to be credited.

Candidates were, however, quite successful in the use of longer sentences and the use of subordinate clauses, particularly with the use of *parce que*.

Higher Tier candidates scored well with an impressive range of vocabulary and structures.

Accuracy

Major errors of tense usage and formation were the main problem for the production of accurate French. Spellings were often poor but did not necessarily create a barrier to the intended meaning of what was produced. However, even words taken from the stimuli were often misspelt.

Question 2 Higher Tier

This question was generally well done by appropriately entered Higher Tier candidates, who wrote at length about the individual tasks.

Communication

To gain the highest marks for Communication, candidates need to develop tasks and in this question they are allowed two developments per task as opposed to one in Foundation Question 3 /Higher Question 1. A development should also be an additional clause or sentence.

Candidates need to be credited with the expression of an opinion to gain at least 5 marks and the justification of an opinion to gain at least 7 marks. Marks for Communication were found to be more accessible than in previous years.

Task 1 and 2 were generally well done, although here was a tendency to believe that towns are populated by young people and the country by old. These two tasks were developed well.

Task 3 Many candidates failed to recognise the past tense reference in the stimulus and produced responses in the present or future and some thought the task still referred to advantages and disadvantages.

Where candidates understood what was required responses were detailed and developed.

Task 4 Again this task was not as well done as Tasks 1 and 2.

There was some misunderstanding of the rubric with accounts of preferences for town or country. Tenses caused problems too. On the other hand, where candidates understood the requirements of the task, there were fluent, detailed accounts and reasons produced.

Range/Complexity

Most candidates entered appropriately at this tier had no problems with producing a variety of structures including subordinate clauses with a variety of conjunctions. The most able candidates produced an impressive range of vocabulary and structures with fluent responses to all tasks.

Accuracy

It was surprising to find many careless spellings including many candidates who could not spell *avantage* and *inconvenient*, both of which appeared in the wording of the tasks. Many errors occurred no doubt from the speed at which candidates tried to write down their thoughts.

This is a perennial problem where candidates do not divide their time well between the two questions. Candidates wrote inordinately long answers to Question 1 and did not leave themselves sufficient time to demonstrate their range and obvious ability in Question 2. Many candidates produced rather succinct responses to Question 2.

Overall the standard of work was encouraging with some examples of scripts of outstanding quality.

Coursework

Centres had clearly prepared candidates well for the new specification. The vast majority of centres submitted assignments taken from the prescribed list and from three different themes. Similarly most centres applied the new assessment criteria successfully, with marks falling within the agreed limits of tolerance of +/- 4 out of 60.

Administrative procedures were not handled so well however, with poor administration quite often impeding the moderation process. As this was the first year of the new specification, a number of errors e.g. incorrect choice of titles, failure to produce a controlled piece, incorrect administration were not penalised in 2003. This will not, however, be the case next year. Centres are urged to read carefully the feedback forms, to be issued to all centres with their results and to consult their Coursework Adviser if they have any queries. Details of Coursework Advisers can be obtained from AQA's Harrogate Office.

Assessment

Although the general trend was towards generosity, centres are to be congratulated in marking according to the agreed standards. Moreover most centres had carried out effective internal standardisation this year. The most common problems encountered were as follows:

1. Communication

- a) For the award of 7-8 marks, there should be evidence of all the mark descriptors i.e. a lot of relevant information, narration of events, full descriptions and ideas/opinions which are justified. Centres sometimes awarded marks in this band based on the length of the assignment, when specific descriptors had not been met. A number of centres also incorrectly awarded marks when there was no justification of ideas/opinions. A simple '*J'aime _____, parce que c'est amusant*' satisfies this descriptor, although the more able candidates clearly did not use this formulaic approach in order to justify their ideas. It should be noted that provided there is strong evidence of all other descriptors but if there is only one example of a particular element, then a mark of 7 may be awarded, but not 8.
- b) Assignments were regularly over-rewarded when candidates did not focus sufficiently on the title. This was especially the case in assignments 1.2 'My favourite leisure activity', 1.3 'Advertising my local area', 1.5 'Advertising my school/college', 1.6 'My ideal school uniform', 3.3 'Am I fit and healthy?' and 4.4 'My ideal future job'.

2. Range and Complexity

- a) Centres are reminded that descriptors for a particular mark must be satisfied, before considering a higher mark. A number of centres awarded a mark of 4 simply because 2 time-frames had been used, although there was no attempt to link structures together (a requirement for 3 marks).
- b) Some centres failed to understand the requirements for linking words and subordinate clauses at various marks. Simple linking words include '*et, mais, puis, ensuite and ou*'.

Longer temporal expressions such as ‘ *le weekend dernier, à huit heures, après cela* ’ may be used to add variety and to link ideas. The main problem, however, arose in the award of 5 marks, where it is essential that there is evidence of at least one subordinate clause i.e a clause which cannot stand alone, but which contains a finite verb, introduced by, for example, *où, quand, car, qui*.

3. Accuracy

Although assessment here was more accurate than in the other categories, centres are reminded that a major error is seen as one which affects communication of the intended message. Occasionally centres gave marks of 5 or 6, when major errors occurred in basic tense formation and not as a result of attempts at complex structures. Inappropriate tense usage is seen as a major error.

Overall, centres’ marks for Quality of Language were more in line with agreed standards than those awarded for Communication.

4. General

- a) Centres are reminded that given the assessment descriptors, a mark of 1+0+0 is not permissible, although this was seen quite regularly. A mark of 1 for Communication automatically results in marks being awarded for Range/Complexity and Accuracy.
- b) Centres using ‘templates’ and ‘writing frames’ to support less able candidates often over-rewarded the resulting work. The specification states clearly that the maximum marks available when a template approach has been used is in the 1-2 band. In practice, using the assessment criteria, this results in marks of 2+1+1 as a maximum. Where writing frames are used, the above restriction should be used as a guideline.

Assignment titles

Although centres tended to stick closely to those titles which were previously available under the legacy syllabus, some of the new ones proved popular this year.

The titles seen most frequently were:

1.1 Profile of a Famous Person or Group of People

Candidates seemed to appreciate the removal of the requirement to write about a French-speaking person. The Internet was clearly used regularly, but, as in the past, web-site addresses were rarely provided, either by candidates or teachers. It should be noted that it is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that these addresses are written on the Candidate Record Form.

1.2 My favourite leisure activity

The major problem here was that many candidates simply wrote about how they spend their free time, listing lots of activities, but failing to indicate which was their favourite activity or even stating all the activities were of equal merit. Clearly these candidates were not adequately addressing the title and communication marks were adjusted by moderators.

1.3 Advertising my local area

This was amongst the most popular of titles from this theme. Although there were some thoughtful pieces, a number of candidates included negative comments and some failed to promote the area, simply writing descriptions of it. Similarly when candidates wrote from a personal viewpoint, some included irrelevant information on their home or family.

Information Technology was used in many instances, resulting in spelling errors and missing accents.

1.5 Advertising my school/college

Similar problems arose here, with candidates including negative comments and failing to advertise the school/college.

1.6 My ideal school uniform

Despite comments every year in this Report on the Examination, once again candidates wrote at length about their present and past uniforms and very little about the **ideal** school uniform. This was rarely reflected in centre's assessments and marks for Communication were, therefore, regularly adjusted. It is, of course, possible to write about the existing uniform, provided that candidates show why it represents their ideal uniform.

1.7 The school/college of the future

Although candidates incorporated material about their current school, in this assignment the main focus was, quite correctly, the future school. This assignment was most popular with less able candidates.

2.2 Account of a Holiday

In this theme, this was by far the most popular of the titles, candidates again seeming to appreciate the possibility of writing this year about non-Francophonic countries. The title attracted the full range of ability, and was generally very well completed. Some candidates, however, chose to write about holidays in general and failed to provide an account of a specific holiday.

2.4 My dream holiday

Amongst the candidates who included this title in their portfolio, the quality was variable with the handling of the conditional tense being important.

2.5 Planning a holiday in a target-language country/community

Centres are reminded that for this title, the holiday should be in a French-speaking country.

3.2 A special occasion

Candidates tended to write here about Christmas and birthdays. Candidates often relied heavily on source material, producing similar work within centres.

3.3 Am I fit and healthy?

This was the most popular of the titles within this theme. Many less able candidates concentrated on their eating habits, resulting in an imbalance in the content. There were also a number of candidates, who failed to address the title adequately, simply describing eating or sporting activities. The more able candidates produced very good pieces, regularly relating their habits and activities to the title and showing how improvements could be made. On the whole, where smoking and drugs were discussed, candidates relied heavily on material taken from textbooks.

3.4 My work experience

This was a popular title with lots of pupils across the ability range, but there was extensive use of writing frames and source material. In general, however, the piece was done well.

3.6 Review of an article/book etc

This was attempted by a number of candidates with the majority choosing to review a film. On the whole, it was quite successful, the candidates being able to narrate plots and express opinions well. In some centres, candidates were clearly reliant on source material.

3.8 A day that went wrong

This was seen quite often, but usually involved candidates arriving late, losing their purse/wallet, falling down and breaking their leg, going to hospital or having to go home under the most severe of rainstorms.

3.9 Publicising a shop or a leisure facility

Of the candidates who chose this title, some approached it from the point of view of a poster. There was, however, a much greater effort to include some French sentences, rather than lists and phrases. In the past, this has not always been the case. Leisure facilities rather than shops were advertised.

4.4 My ideal, future job

From this theme, this was the most widely chosen title. Problems arose where candidates failed to focus on the job, instead including too much material on their future education and future life-style and sometimes their work experience placement.

Moreover, some candidates did not choose to write about a single, ideal job but gave a list. This is a possible approach to the title but one would have expected a compare and contrast approach if the attempt was to have validity.

4.5 A factual or imaginary interview with someone to find out about his/her job

This was attempted by a number of candidates. In some instances, it was obvious that the questions had been given to the candidate, such was the discrepancy between the quality of French in the question and in the answer. Some candidates did not expand on the answers given, writing simple sentences e.g. 'Que faites-vous dans la vie?' 'Je suis pompier.' Candidates should be encouraged to develop that answer and say a lot more about the job.

4.6 I've won..

Usually candidates wrote about winning the lottery, but they were able to write at length, some quite successfully.

4.7 A letter to a problem page

Candidates offering this title relied heavily on source material, with similar assignments being produced by candidates within a particular centre.

Administration

- a) This year teachers provided considerably less information regarding source materials. This was perhaps because they were uncertain where to include this information on the Candidate Record Form. Last year more centres than ever provided copies of worksheets used in class, and photocopies of published materials used extensively by candidates. In 2002 moderators commented regularly on the increase in helpful information supplied by centres and it had been hoped that the trend would continue. Unfortunately the reverse has occurred.
- b) Many centres were clearly unsure as to the type of information to be provided on the Candidate Record Form, under Teacher's supporting statement. Although this may be left blank, comments showing how and why the marks were awarded were very helpful to moderators. This was especially the case when a candidate had been awarded a lower mark than s/he deserved. Few centres did in fact do this, with many centres writing comments more suited to a school report of the type 'X is a hardworking pupil, who deserves to do well' or simply 'Work matches criteria'.
- c) In some cases no assignment code had been written on the reverse of the Candidate Record Form. This made it very difficult for the moderator to know which marks had been awarded to the various assignments. Teachers should encourage candidates to write the full assignment title on the piece of work, as this helps the candidates focus on the title. When candidates failed to address titles, the pieces would often have a vague title such as '*Mes vacances*', which could clearly be assignment 2.2, 2.4 or 2.5.
- d) A number of teachers wrote marks and even corrections on the scripts. **There should be no annotations of any sort on the assignments themselves.**
- e) Arithmetical errors were again noted this year and marks on the Candidate Record Forms did not always match those on the Coursework Mark Lists.
- f) Although stationery was despatched to centres automatically this year, many centres did not meet deadlines and failed to send two copies of the Mark Sheet to the moderator.
- g) Centres are urged to fasten individual portfolios together securely, either with treasury tags or possibly the whole centre's assignments in a ring binder. Plastic wallets are not recommended, as these are very time-consuming for moderators to deal with.

Whilst it is accepted that many of the above are relatively minor issues, it is hoped that centres do not overlook them in the future. It is, however appreciated that many administrative procedures were new to centres this year.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

In this specification, scaled marks are the same as raw marks.

Full Course

Foundation Tier Listening (111 550 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	35	35	23.7	5.2

	Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	35	25	21	18	15	12
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Higher Tier Listening (56 788 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	40	40	20.4	6.1

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	Allowed E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	24	20	17	15	11	9
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30

Foundation Tier Reading (92 965 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	35	35	21.6	4.5

	Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	35	25	21	17	14	11
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Higher Tier Reading (75 452 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	45	45	24.1	6.8

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	Allowed E
Scaled Boundary Mark	45	28	24	20	16	12	10
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30

Foundation Tier Speaking (87 043 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	36	36	12.7	6.2

	Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	36	19	15	12	9	6
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Higher Tier Speaking (62 669 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	40	40	26.8	7.3

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	Allowed E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	34	27	22	18	14	12
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30

Foundation Tier Writing (21 435 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	42	42	22.6	9.9

	Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	42	29	24	19	14	9
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Higher Tier Writing (17 558 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	40	40	31.0	6.9

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	Allowed E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	35	28	23	18	13	10
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30

Writing Coursework (129 424 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	60	60	37.0	11.8

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	54	48	42	36	28	20	12	4
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

Overall award

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Uniform Boundary Mark	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40

Provisional statistics for the award

166 948 candidates

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	6.5	17.4	29.7	48.4	69.4	84.5	93.8	98.5

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade. Although component grade boundaries are provided, these are advisory. Candidates' final grades depend only on their total marks for the subject.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Uniform Mark: a score on a standard scale (applying to all GCSE Modern Foreign Languages specifications) which indicates a candidate's performance. Each component (skill) has a maximum uniform mark of 90 and the lowest uniform mark for grade A* is 80, grade A 70, grade B 60, etc. A candidate's uniform marks for the components are added in order to determine the candidate's overall grade.

Short Course

Listening Tests

Foundation Tier

Despite the revised specification most candidates performed well and seemed appropriately entered for this tier.

Section A proved a straightforward start for all candidates and all but a few scored very well here. Pierre's age in Question 1 rarely caused problems but some strange answers were given for the penfriend's age. Question 2 on pastimes was very well done. Most candidates arrived at the correct answer *mother* to Question 3 with very few hedged bets such as *mother and father*. The spellings of *secretary* in Question 4 were quite varied and were accepted but the French *secrétaire* was rejected as were references to *bureau*. In Question 5 *fil unique* was not widely known and produced a range of incorrect answers.

In Section B Questions 6 – 8, a good number of candidates seemed not to have made use of the list of possible answers given nor to have understood the instructions in French. These questions were very similar to those sent out to centres as sample material. In Question 6 *Italie* and *Italienne* were confused as were *France*, *Françoise* and *Française*. Question 7 produced various versions of *chômage* when *sans travail* was available from the list. In Question 8 some candidates chose the correct answers but wrote them on the wrong lines. In future only words selected from the list will be accepted as answers to this type of question.

The overlap Questions 9 – 13 were more challenging than expected. Questions 10 and 12 were the most accessible. Most candidates did not recognise *ce n'est pas une école* in Question 11 and gave the incorrect answer B. In Question 13 some candidates did not understand *cadeau*.

Question 14 the final overlap question proved difficult for the majority of candidates. Many candidates left blanks after one correct answer in (i) although even here the spellings of *piano* gave examiners many problems. Some missed *son instrument préféré* and gave several musical instruments. Incorrect spellings of *huit ans* in (ii) lost marks. The correct answer *tante* in (iii) was very rare. In (iv) very few candidates understood *il doit*. In (v) the English spelling *modern* was rejected. Candidates need to be made aware of this marking principle.

Questions 15 – 18 as intended were a relatively easy conclusion to the paper. Most candidates scored well but *montre* in Question 16 was the least well done.

The lack of dictionaries on this paper does not seem to have created too many difficulties but candidates do need to take more care with the spelling of their answers. There were fewer problems with alterations to answers this year and also fewer scripts written in pencil. It is however surprising to note how many candidates still leave a large number of boxes blank. Answers in the wrong language were very rare.

Higher Tier

Although fewer candidates were entered for the Higher Tier than for the Foundation Tier, most were correctly entered although a small number of centres had clearly entered candidates at this level inappropriately. Higher Tier candidates fared a little better on the overlap Question 1 and significantly better on overlap Questions 2 – 6.

Question 1 proved to be a challenging start to the paper. Candidates left fewer gaps than on the Foundation paper and their answers were on the whole spelt more accurately. Parts (i) and (ii) were the most accessible. Although the mark scheme did not require the infinitive *travailler* after *il doit* in (iv) few candidates arrived at an acceptable answer. As on the Foundation paper candidates who gave the English spelling of *moderne* were not awarded the mark. Perhaps candidates in general need more practice with this type of question.

Questions 2 – 6 were generally well done and a typical score for this page was four or five marks out of six. In Question 4 candidates were misled by distractors *professeurs, élèves* and *école* and reached the incorrect answer B.

Question 7 tested candidates knowledge of food vocabulary and the notion of liking/disliking. Many candidates scored well here although there were still some answer boxes left blank. A very few candidates expressed their answers as full words from the list rather than as letters as shown in the example.

Question 8 proved difficult because all eight printed statements had to be understood as well as the recorded conversation to give access to the two correct answers. The more successful candidates had clearly made good use of their five minutes reading time. The mention of *vêtements* in 8(b) led many candidates to the incorrect answer D.

A respectable number of candidates scored the mark in Question 9 (a) for *l'argent* but a small number negated this correct answer by offering *beaucoup d'argent*. Some candidates appeared to misunderstand the questions and some wrote the correct answers on the wrong line. Not understanding the word *clients* seemed to account for wrong answers in Question 9(b). Question 10(a) was well done but in Question 10(b) some candidates were unable to pick out the correct meeting time from the two times heard.

In Section B there were still a number of answers in the wrong language. Some candidates adopted various written strategies to ensure answers in English. In Question 11 (i) and (ii) candidates did not always pick up on the need to give the **sort** of school subjects. In part (iii) candidates scored well. Parts (iv) and (v) saw plenty of sensible guesswork but relatively few correct answers. Most candidates attempted part (vi) but missed out the necessary detail that *his parents had been to see the Maths teacher*.

Reading Tests

General comments

Whilst examiners felt that candidates were again entered at the correct tier, very few candidates gained high marks in either paper compared to previous years. This may well reflect a decline in standards but more likely reflects the impact of two key changes in the

new Specification, the removal of dictionary use and the reduction in marks and time available. Though examiners reported very few instances of incomplete papers, possibly because less time was spent on using dictionaries, they also felt that too many candidates rushed through the paper because of the short time available, and did not spend sufficient time considering texts, examples and questions. This led to many answers which were inappropriate or simply guessed, so that language clues and grammatical indicators were overlooked.

Foundation Tier

With a reduced maximum mark of 25, far more candidates scored single figure marks this year and very few exceeded 20. This was despite an adherence, for this first year, to question types with which candidates should be familiar. Questions 1 to 3, requiring answers in English, produced fewer high marks than usual, underlining the extent to which candidates had previously relied on dictionaries and, therefore, the weakness of their basic vocabulary. In Questions 3 and 4, too many answers were in the wrong language, and could not be rewarded. Questions 7 and 8 were beyond most candidates, despite following well-tried patterns, suggesting insufficient practice.

Questions 1 and 2.

Generally well done, and providing a gentle introduction to the test, but a significant minority of pupils failed to recognise the concept of future plans, despite practising this for their oral test.

Question 3

This turned out to be surprisingly difficult for too many candidates, but only because of weak vocabulary knowledge. There were four ways of accessing the 2 marks for part (a), yet most candidates could recognise only fish. *Fruits de mer* was construed in a range of predictable and unexpected ways, but rarely by shellfish. Surprisingly few knew *viande*. In part (b), candidates seemed to assume that since this was France, the answer must be wine, perhaps distracted by the similarity of *viande* and *vin*. Examiners accepted a range of spellings of beer, given the context.

Question 4

As usual, candidates found this question easiest to cope with and many scored full marks. Some repeated mistakes suggested lack of familiarity with the published icons.

Question 5

Candidates who have been taught to write numbers rather than words did best in the first two questions. A list of the brothers' names was not accepted, as this suggested confusion of *nombre* with *noms*. Comparatively few candidates scored the third mark, for *cyclisme*, not so much because they did not know *surtout*, but largely because they failed to spot that *préféré* pointed to a singular answer. Consequently no mark could be awarded for lists of hobbies.

Question 6

Quite well done, but this was a good example of candidates who lost marks because they did not look at the example, and answered with a list of jobs. Some took *Berry* to be a person, in spite of clear context.

Question 7

Poorly done. Contrary to previous years, examiners reported little evidence of candidates doing any working out on the paper, for example by highlighting key words. This may well reflect their feeling of needing to press on. Some of the answers required grammatical knowledge in addition to the usual skill of equating words or concepts within different texts. Answer (b), *Marine*, was most frequently correct, as candidates connected *instrument* with *piano*, but similar connections were not made, for example between *lire* and *lecture*, and *voile*, *surf* and *sports de mer*. Surprisingly few candidates managed a correct answer to (e) where the connection between *17 ans* and *15 ans* should have been easy to pick up, as long as candidates knew *plus jeune* in the question. Overall, it seems that too many candidates are not prepared to read texts of any length and this, above all else, accounts for poor marks for this question. The few who spent time searching for key words did well.

Question 8

Although answers C and F were often correctly produced, few candidates scored full marks on this question, reversing the improvement noted last year. A lack of grammatical awareness led to much uninformed guesswork.

Higher Tier

Very few candidates managed 30 out of the 35 marks available. The overlap questions 1 and 3 were answered much better than in the Foundation Tier paper. In Questions 2, 4 and 6, a common failing was the inability of candidates to understand interrogatives, which need to be rehearsed much more effectively. Question 7, aimed at A* candidates, was clearly too difficult for most candidates, not simply because of the language, but because they find it hard to cope with attitudes and to draw conclusions. However the policy of entering such candidates is defensible, in that most score sufficiently well on other questions to give them access to grades higher than they could achieve if entered at Foundation Tier.

Question 2

Most candidates scored 2 and 4. *Mois de naissance* caused problems, but the commonest error was in failing to understand the interrogative in *Qu'avez-vous étudié après le bac?* Many candidates thought this asked the question 'where', leading to answers of *Paris* and even *Mars*.

Question 4

Many candidates coped well with this first extended text. They seemed at home with the subject matter, though a small minority did not use the example appropriately. It should be emphasised to candidates that examples cannot also be answers, and that no answer can be

used twice (or more) in this sort of question. Questions (a) and (b) were particularly well answered.

Question 5

Although the texts required quite a lot of reading, the question prompts were short and easily understood, so that candidates with good scanning skills did well, and there were many all-correct answers, as candidates seized upon the obvious clues. No particular question stood out as being easy or difficult, as each text provided a good range of clues.

Question 6

- (a) *Histoire* and *sport/EPS* were accepted. References to activities which are not subjects (e.g. *escalade*, *l'environnement*) were not, and *géo(graphie)* was simply wrong.
- (b) Most candidates identified the correct information but did not express it accurately. The required answer was 13 to 15, (i.e. 13-15, 13 à 15 etc), so that the common 13 **et** 15 was wrong.
- (c) Many candidates correctly identified *Dordogne*, which was all that was needed. Too many candidates failed to understand *où* in the question and gave inappropriate answers.
- (d) Few candidates scored here. The required answer was *une ville de France*, but inability to understand the question *d'où viendront* led to guesswork.

Overall there was less evidence of candidates simply dipping into the text in the hope of hitting on the right bit. There was also less evidence of the question simply being left out because of its perceived difficulty.

Question 7

- (a) This was the most accessible question. References to his beautiful flat/apartment (but not house) and beautiful/nice car attracted marks. For the concept of the classmates' relative poverty, candidates were rewarded by turning this around to refer his (or his family's) comparative wealth.
- (b) Some candidates worked out that his schoolwork was suffering, though mistranslation of *notes* was penalised. The second mark, for Eric not wanting to go to school, proved much more demanding, with many candidates not attempting this.
- (c) Most answers were guesswork based on recognition of individual words in the text, such as *qualités*, *courageux* etc. Extremely few candidates gained marks for the correct advice – to stop boasting about possessions and to make himself respected for his qualities.

As usual, in this final question, many candidates were not prepared to read the whole passage or to work hard to unravel the intricacies of demanding language, leading to a series of answers which bore only tangential relevance to the text. Though many candidates gave up on the task, there were very few answers in the wrong language.

Speaking Tests

General Comments

Overall, the transition between the previous syllabus and the new one was smooth and teacher-examiners must be commended for the way in which they prepared themselves and the candidates for the new speaking tests. As a direct result, teacher-examiners' own performances showed a clear improvement on previous years.

Centres mostly entered their candidates for the appropriate tier, although there were some exceptions, particularly at the bottom end of the Higher Tier. In previous years, for fear of not scoring at Higher Tier, some of these candidates would have been entered for the Foundation Test. This year, however, centres took advantage of the removal of the drop off at the Higher Tier and occasionally entered candidates who found the requirements of the Higher Tier too demanding. This year, candidates no longer had access to a bi-lingual dictionary but this was counter-balanced by the open-endedness of the role play instructions, thus not requiring specific vocabulary. Candidates were well prepared for this and performed at least as well as in previous years in the Foundation role play in particular.

Centres are again reminded to check that equipment is working properly and that the microphone is facing the candidate and not the teacher. It is advisable also to listen to the last few sentences of each candidates' test, as this will reduce the risk of producing inaudible recordings. Teacher-examiners who are unsure about how to obtain a good quality recording should seek advice on the matter before the start of the examination.

Teacher-examiners who did not attend the Teacher Support Meetings for Speaking Tests in March are strongly advised to take advantage of that opportunity next year.

Role Play Situations

Candidates generally coped well with the Foundation Tier role playing situations. They had more time to prepare the tasks than in previous years but did not have access to a dictionary. This, generally, did not present candidates with problems as most were able to provide answers of their own choice.

All Foundation role plays require candidates to ask at least one question. Although many found that particular utterance difficult, there was a clear improvement on how candidates handled the task.

Where candidates chose to ask a question by using a statement form eg. *Tu aimes le sport?*, they often failed to use the correct intonation.

In the Higher Tier role plays, the teacher-examiner's role should be prepared thoroughly and alternative questions worked out in advance as a way to elicit information when the script given 'fails'. Overall, there was little re-phrasing by teacher-examiners.

Where split responses were required, teacher-examiners sometimes asked both questions at the same time. A possible solution to this problem might be to read both questions then read

the first one again and elicit an answer before proceeding with the second question. That method allows the candidate to realise that there are two questions to answer whilst dealing with each element separately therefore making the task more accessible. This occurs with the unpredictable element of the role play. Given that it is unpredictable, the questions tend to be easier than in the rest of the role play and often require short answers. Candidates seemed to be familiar with the demands of the unpredictable element and handled it better than in previous years. Candidates need to be reminded that, if a stimulus ends with a question mark, they are required to ask a question. This caused problems for some candidates in Role Play 11 utterance (c). Although teacher-examiners are entitled to ask further questions in order to elicit part of an answer that the candidates has not yet given, they should also be aware that once a candidate has given a complete and incorrect response, there is no need to repeat or rephrase the question to obtain a different response as the candidate will be marked on his/her first completed response.

Presentation and Discussion

The majority of candidates made a good attempt at this part of the test. The Presentation and Discussion were, for the first time, marked separately from the Conversation. Teachers seemed to have prepared their candidates for Discussion better than in previous years and it was fairly rare to see a major discrepancy between the quality of the Presentation and that of the Discussion. However, teacher-examiners' own performances varied. There were occasionally problems with teacher-examiners interrupting their candidates and not listening carefully to what was said and therefore asking questions in the Discussion which required the candidate to repeat what had already been said.

The timing was not always respected (one and a half minutes for the Presentation and the same again for the Discussion). Teacher-examiners are reminded that examiners will stop marking after the prescribed time limit.

Given the new mark scheme, if candidates are to score high marks, they must be given the opportunity to develop their answers and show evidence of their ability to handle complex language, including the use of the three time frames. Providing such opportunities in a very limited amount of time requires thorough preparation by teacher-examiners as well as by candidates. Candidates need to be shown how to develop the points they make and how to incorporate complex language in their delivery of the Presentation/Discussion.

Conversation

Perhaps surprisingly, many candidates performed better in the Conversation than they did in the Presentation/Discussion.

Tenses were used more successfully and most candidates seemed to at least attempt to develop their answers. Open-ended questions seemed to be more frequently asked than in previous years, thus providing better opportunities for candidates to develop their answers. Teacher-examiners themselves, on the whole, performed better than last year.

However, there were still too many questions requiring a yes/no answer or a name as a response. Occasionally, teacher-examiners had not prepared questions and were attempting

to react to candidates' responses, with varying degrees of success. On rare occasions, teacher-examiners used the suggested questions rigidly, without making links between what candidates said and their next question.

Overall, teacher-examiners handled this part of the test very well and this was reflected in improved candidates' performances.

Generally, teacher-examiners adhered to the topic headings and duration times. They tailored the nature of their questions and the length of the Conversation to the ability of their candidates and thus, tended to give them a positive experience.

Writing Tests

Foundation Tier

The response to the paper this year was disappointing in that many candidates found the tasks, particularly on Question 3, too difficult. However, there were still some candidates who responded well to the paper and given that more marks were available on Question 2 and Question 3 than in the previous specification; there was an increase in marks awarded.

Candidates seemed unprepared for the paper and as in the previous syllabus, the majority of candidates seem to be of low ability.

Question 1

This question was answered well and despite not being able to use dictionaries, there were only very few candidates who did not score marks.

Question 2

Candidates need to be reminded that the rubric asks them to write a sentence and that full marks can only be awarded to responses that are sentences. Candidates who respond using single words can only expect to score low marks. Given that marks are now also awarded for Quality of Language, candidates scored higher marks for this question than in the previous syllabus.

In Task 2 *Angleterre* was often given for *anglais*. Task 6 was not well-answered in that candidates found it difficult to write where they ate their lunch and the usual confusion between *avoir* and *être* caused problems.

Foundation Question 3/Higher Question 1

There was a slight improvement in the response to the tasks than in the previous specification although there is still a worrying number of candidates who find the demands of this question too high. Candidates need to be reminded that the rubric gives the tasks for this question in English and that this is designed to help them access the tasks.

Communication

The mark scheme requires only one piece of information for each task but for the award of 3 to 8 marks candidates are required to provide a response which goes beyond the minimum across a number of tasks. Candidates need only provide a minimal development, which is in many cases one word. One development only can be credited for each task. To score the 5 or 6 marks, candidates are required to give an opinion and for 7 or 8 marks, they are required to justify an opinion. Infinitives and inappropriate tenses with context were accepted for Communication, but considered under Quality of Language.

Quality of Language**Range/Complexity**

In order to achieve a mark of 4 or above, all three time frames must be there. For marks of 5 and 6, candidates need to be trained to produce longer sentences and subordinate clauses.

It should also be noted that marks for Range/Complexity and Accuracy cannot be more than one mark higher than the Communication mark and that a mark of 1 for Communication will always lead to a mark of 1 for Range/Complexity and 1 for Accuracy.

Task 1

This task was well handled and less able candidates made good use of the stimulus.

Task 2

This task was well handled.

Task 3

Many candidates did not follow the rubric and referred to activities outside the home or copied the stimulus, which was inappropriate.

Task 4

Many candidates did not score as they found it difficult to produce a Future time reference.

Task 5

Many candidates found this demanding.

Task 6

This task directed candidates to express an opinion. Those candidates who failed this task often failed to score a high Communication mark because an opinion is needed for them to do so.

Task 7

Many candidates found this demanding.

Task 8

Many candidates found this demanding although some used the stimulus effectively.

Higher Tier

Performance at this tier was very pleasing. Although there are only few candidates who are entered for the paper, they are entered appropriately and are able to handle the tasks well. They are well-prepared and produce responses of a high standard.

The comments made in relation to Question 1 should be noted but it is important also to note that development to tasks in Question 2 are expected to be in the form of a phrase or clause as they were in the previous syllabus.

Question 2

Candidates who achieve a mark above 1 for Communication need to develop tasks and this mark scheme accepts two developments for each task. As for Question 1, to score 5 or 6 marks, candidates are required to give an opinion and for 7 or 8 marks, they are required to justify an opinion. Only correct tense formations are acceptable in this question.

Candidates attempted the tasks well. Tasks 1 and 4 were particularly well-answered possibly due to preparation work the candidates may have completed for the Speaking tests. Some candidates did not produce a response to Task 3 and some, as before, found it difficult to produce a correct future time reference.

Coursework

Centres had clearly prepared candidates well for the new specification. The vast majority of centres submitted assignments taken from the prescribed list and from two different themes. Similarly most centres applied the new assessment criteria successfully, with marks falling within the agreed limits of tolerance of +/- 3 out of 40.

Administrative procedures were not handled so well however, with poor administration quite often impeding the moderation process. As this was the first year of the new specification, a number of errors e.g. incorrect choice of titles, failure to produce a controlled piece, incorrect administration were not penalised in 2003. This will not however be the case next year. Centres are urged to read carefully the feedback forms, to be issued to all centres with their results and to consult their Coursework Adviser if they have any queries. Details of Coursework Advisers can be obtained from AQA's Harrogate Office.

Assessment

Although the general trend was towards generosity, centres are to be congratulated in marking according to the agreed standards. Moreover most centres had carried out effective internal standardisation this year. The most common problems encountered were as follows:

1. Communication

- a) For the award of 7-8 marks, there should be evidence of all the mark descriptors i.e. a lot of relevant information, narration of events, full descriptions and ideas/opinions which are justified. Centres sometimes awarded marks in this band based on the length of the assignment, when specific descriptors had not been met. A number of centres also incorrectly awarded marks when there was no justification of ideas/opinions. A simple *'J'aime _____, parce que c'est amusant'* satisfies this descriptor, although the more able candidates clearly did not use this formulaic approach in order to justify their ideas. It should be noted that provided there is strong evidence of all other descriptors, if there is only one example of a particular element, then a mark of 7 may be awarded, but not 8.
- b) Assignments were regularly over-rewarded when candidates did not focus sufficiently on the title. This was especially the case in assignments 1.2 'My favourite leisure activity', 1.3 'Advertising my local area', 1.5 'Advertising my school/college', 1.6 'My ideal school uniform', 3.3 'Am I fit and healthy?'

2. Range and Complexity

- a) Centres are reminded that descriptors for a particular mark must be satisfied, before considering a higher mark. A number of centres awarded a mark of 4 simply because 2 time-frames had been used, although there was no attempt to link structures together (a requirement for 3 marks).
- b) Some centres failed to understand the requirements for linking words and subordinate clauses at various marks. Simple linking words include *'et, mais, puis, ensuite and ou'*. Longer temporal expressions such as *'le week-end dernier, à huit heures, après cela'* may be used to add variety and to link ideas. The main problem, however, arose in the award of 5 marks, where it is essential that there is evidence of at least one subordinate clause i.e. a clause which cannot stand alone, but which contains a finite verb, introduced by, for example, *où, quand, car, qui*.

3. Accuracy

Although assessment here was more accurate than in the other categories, centres are reminded that a major error is seen as one which affects communication of the intended message. Occasionally centres gave marks of 5 or 6, when major errors occurred in basic tense formation and not as a result of attempts at complex structures. Inappropriate tense usage is seen as a major error.

Overall, centres' marks for Quality of Language were more in line with agreed standards than those awarded for Communication.

4. General

- a) Centres are reminded that given the assessment descriptors, a mark of 1+0+0 is not permissible, although this was seen quite regularly. A mark of 1 for Communication automatically results in marks being awarded for Range/Complexity and Accuracy.
- b) Centres using ‘templates’ and ‘writing frames’ to support less able candidates often over-rewarded the resulting work. The specification states clearly that the maximum marks available when a template approach has been used is in the 1-2 band. In practice, using the assessment criteria, this results in marks of 2+1+1 as a maximum. Where writing frames are used, the above restriction should be used as a guideline.

Assignment titles

Although centres tended to stick closely to those titles, which were previously available under the legacy syllabus, some of the new ones proved popular this year.

The titles seen most frequently were:

1.1 Profile of a Famous Person or Group of People

Candidates seemed to appreciate the removal of the requirement to write about a French-speaking person. The Internet was clearly used regularly, but, as in the past, web-site addresses were rarely provided, either by candidates or teachers. It should be noted that it is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that these addresses are written on the Candidate Record Form.

1.2 My favourite leisure activity

The major problem here was that many candidates simply wrote about how they spend their free time, listing lots of activities, but failing to indicate which was their favourite activity or even stating all the activities were of equal merit. Clearly these candidates were not adequately addressing the title and Communication marks were adjusted by moderators.

1.3a Advertising my local area

This was amongst the most popular of titles from this theme. Although there were some thoughtful pieces, a number of candidates included negative comments and some failed to promote the area, simply writing descriptions of it. Similarly when candidates wrote from a personal viewpoint, some included irrelevant information on their home or family.

Information Technology was used in many instances, resulting in spelling errors and missing accents.

1.4a Advertising my school/college

Similar problems arose here, with candidates including negative comments and failing to advertise the school/college.

1.4b The school/college of the future

Although candidates incorporated material about their current school, in this assignment the main focus was, quite correctly, the future school. This assignment was most popular with less able candidates.

1.5 My ideal school uniform

Despite comments every year in this Report on the Examination, once again candidates wrote at length about their present and past uniforms and very little about the **ideal** school uniform. This was rarely reflected in centre's assessments and marks for Communication were, therefore, regularly adjusted. It is, of course, possible to write about the existing uniform, provided that candidates show why it represents their ideal uniform.

3.2 A special occasion

Candidates tended to write here about Christmas and birthdays. Candidates often relied heavily on source material, producing similar work within centres.

3.3 Am I fit and healthy?

This was the most popular of the titles within this theme. Many less able candidates concentrated on their eating habits, resulting in an imbalance in the content. There were also a number of candidates, who failed to address the title adequately, simply describing eating or sporting activities. The more able candidates produced very good pieces, regularly relating their habits and activities to the title and showing how improvements could be made. On the whole, where smoking and drugs were discussed, candidates relied heavily on material taken from textbooks.

3.4a My work experience

This was a popular title with lots of pupils across the ability range, but there was extensive use of writing frames and source material. In general, however, the piece was done well.

3.5a Review of an article/book etc

This was attempted by a number of candidates with the majority choosing to review a film. On the whole, it was quite successful, the candidates being able to narrate plots and express opinions well. In some centres, candidates were clearly reliant on source material.

3.6 A day that went wrong

This was seen quite often, but usually involved candidates arriving late, losing their purse/wallet, falling down and breaking their leg, going to hospital or having to go home under the most severe of rainstorms.

3.7 Publicising a shop or a leisure facility

Of the candidates who chose this title, some approached it from the point of view of a poster. There was, however, a much greater effort to include some French sentences, rather than lists and phrases. In the past, this has not always been the case. Leisure facilities rather than shops were advertised.

Administration

- a) This year teachers provided considerably less information regarding source materials. This was perhaps because they were uncertain where to include this information on the Candidate Record Form. Last year more centres than ever provided copies of worksheets used in class, and photocopies of published materials used extensively by candidates. In 2002 moderators commented regularly on the increase in helpful information supplied by centres and it had been hoped that the trend would continue. Unfortunately the reverse has occurred.
- b) Many centres were clearly unsure as to the type of information to be provided on the Candidate Record Form, under Teacher's supporting statement. Although this may be left blank, comments showing how and why the marks were awarded were very helpful to moderators. This was especially the case when a candidate had been awarded a lower mark than s/he deserved. Few centres did in fact do this, with many centres writing comments more suited to a school report of the type 'X is a hardworking pupil, who deserves to do well' or simply 'Work matches criteria'.
- c) In some cases no assignment code had been written on the reverse of the Candidate Record Form. This made it very difficult for the moderator to know which marks had been awarded to the various assignments. Teachers should encourage candidates to write the full assignment title on the piece of work, as this helps the candidates focus on the title.
- d) A number of teachers wrote marks and even corrections on the scripts. **There should be no annotations of any sort on the assignments themselves.**
- e) Arithmetical errors were again noted this year and marks on the Candidate Record Forms did not always match those on the Coursework Mark Lists.
- f) Although stationery was despatched to centres automatically this year, many centres did not meet deadlines and failed to send two copies of the Mark Sheet to the moderator.
- g) Centres are urged to fasten individual portfolios together securely, either with treasury tags or possibly the whole centre's assignments in a ring binder. Plastic wallets are not recommended, as these are very time-consuming for moderators to deal with.

Whilst it is accepted that many of the above are relatively minor issues, it is hoped that centres do not overlook them in the future. It is, however appreciated that many administrative procedures were new to centres this year.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

In this specification, scaled marks are the same as raw marks.

Short Course

Foundation Tier Listening (6118 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	25	25	12.8	3.8

	Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	25	16	13	11	9	7
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Higher Tier Listening (339 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	30	30	16.1	5.3

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	Allowed E
Scaled Boundary Mark	30	24	19	16	13	10	8
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30

Foundation Tier Reading (5945 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	25	25	12.1	3.7

	Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	25	15	12	10	8	6
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Higher Tier Reading (512 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	35	35	16.5	6.1

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	Allowed E
Scaled Boundary Mark	35	26	20	16	13	9	7
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30

Foundation Tier Speaking (5007 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	36	36	11.4	5.4

	Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	36	17	14	12	10	8
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Higher Tier Speaking (349 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	40	40	23.2	7.9

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	Allowed E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	33	28	23	19	15	13
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30

Foundation Tier Writing (1840 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	42	42	16.4	9.2

	Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	42	27	22	18	14	10
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Higher Tier Writing (83 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	40	40	29.3	8.4

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	Allowed E
Scaled Boundary Mark	40	37	28	21	14	13	12
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30

Writing Coursework (4534 candidates)

	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
	60	60	18.2	8.4

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	36	32	28	24	18	13	8	3
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

Overall award

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Uniform Boundary Mark	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40

Provisional statistics for the award

6253 candidates

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	0.4	1.4	3.0	11.8	32.7	56.6	78.8	93.8

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade. Although component grade boundaries are provided, these are advisory. Candidates' final grades depend only on their total marks for the subject.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Uniform Mark: a score on a standard scale (applying to all GCSE Modern Foreign Languages specifications) which indicates a candidate's performance. Each component (skill) has a maximum uniform mark of 90 and the lowest uniform mark for grade A* is 80, grade A 70, grade B 60, etc. A candidate's uniform marks for the components are added in order to determine the candidate's overall grade.