

Version 1.1

# GCSE 2004

## *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](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2004 AQA and its licensors

#### 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 number 1073334. Registered address AQA, Devas Street, Manchester. M15 6EX.

*Dr Michael Cresswell Director General*

# CONTENTS

## *3651 French Full Course / 3657 French 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.....	10
Higher Tier Speaking.....	11
Foundation Tier Writing.....	14
Higher Tier Writing.....	14
Writing Coursework.....	18
Mark Ranges and Award of Grades .....	25
	<i>Page No.</i>
Short Course	
Foundation Tier Listening.....	30
Higher Tier Listening.....	31
Foundation Tier Reading.....	32
Higher Tier Reading.....	33
Foundation Tier Speaking.....	35
Higher Tier Speaking.....	35
Foundation Tier Writing.....	37
Higher Tier Writing.....	38
Writing Coursework.....	40
Mark Ranges and Award of Grades .....	46

# Specification A

## Listening

### Foundation Tier

As usual, Section A was generally well done, although some candidates did not know *pomme* in Question 2. In Question 6, *église* was often not known, or was heard as *glace*, resulting in many answers of “ice-cream” or “ice skating”. A large number of candidates answered simply “she goes out with her parents”. Surprisingly, in Question 5, while *petite* was almost universally understood, *jaune* was often not known, and guesses such as “tidy” – or more often “untidy” – were common.

In Section B, the school subjects in Questions 7 – 11 were well known, and despite the more complex sentence structure which made these items appropriate for Grades C/D – and therefore overlap questions – most candidates were able to work out the favourite subject from those mentioned. In questions 12 – 15 most candidates coped well with the shops and shopping items, though Question 12 was not well done. It may be that candidates are not familiar with the symbol for a chemist’s shop, or that many do not know *dentifrice*.

Questions 16 – 18 were badly done. With a new question-type, as this was, there is always the possibility that the rubric itself may have caused difficulties, though there can be little evidence one way or the other, and it proved no more demanding than some previous overlap questions. The success of Higher Tier candidates in the same question suggests that there is no intrinsic problem with this kind of question. It seems likely that the material being tested (understanding of question words) was found demanding by many candidates at this level – as is the production of question words in Speaking and Writing.

Questions 19 (where the key vocabulary item was the cognate *hôtels*) and 22 were usually quite well done, but in Question 21 *commissariat* was often not known, while in Question 20 many candidates heard only *ville* (not *plan de la ville*) and answered C.

Questions 23 and 24 gave rise to fewer blank answers than the equivalent question has produced in the past, no doubt because candidates were not expected to come up with their own French. Almost all candidates correctly followed the rubric, and answered by selecting phrases from the box. However, as is inevitably the case with overlap questions, not all were successful. Correct answers were much more frequent in Question 23, possibly because of the near-cognates *vétérinaire* and *animaux*, while in Question 24 many candidates had the phrases the wrong way round, though it was not unreasonable to expect Grade C candidates to be able cope with the grammar required here.

Questions 25 – 28 were well done. Questions 29 and 30, although the last two overlap questions, proved accessible to many candidates, with the link between *gâteaux / chocolat / dessert* and *le sucré* in Question 29 being rather easier to make than that between *haricots verts / petits pois / chou-fleur* and *les légumes* in Question 30. Finally, Questions 31 – 32 were very well done by most candidates.

In conclusion, examiners drew attention to the need for candidates to make any alterations to the letters in the multiple-choice answers **clear**. It is strongly recommended that candidates

**cross out** an incorrect letter and write in the correct letter alongside, rather than attempting to write one letter over another. If a letter is unclear, it will not be marked correct. There seemed to be a larger number of scripts written partly or entirely in pencil this year, and the attention of centres is drawn to the regulations concerning this.

### Higher Tier

The overlap questions (Questions 1 – 5, 10 – 13 and 18 – 20) were generally very well done, and particularly in the case of Questions 18 – 20 Higher candidates coped much better than Foundation candidates. However in Question 13 a number of candidates were unable to cope with the grammatical distinction, and gave their answers the wrong way round – though it was encouraging to note the number of candidates who wrote “*continuer ses études*” followed by “*dans un garage*”, then spotted the grammatical problem, and amended their answer by using arrows.

Questions 6 – 9 and 14 – 17 were also generally well done, with a large number of candidates gaining three of the four marks available in each group. Indeed, many candidates scored 18 or more of the first 22 marks (up to Question 20).

In Question 21, the first requiring an answer in French, many candidates gained the first mark for “*cinéma*” or “*film [d’horreur]*”. The second mark was more demanding. Poor spelling of “*grippe*” or “*malade*” was sometimes responsible (“*mallard*” and “*grip*” were not allowed in the marking scheme, though those candidates who attempted “*enrhumée*” were usually close enough to gain the mark).

Questions 22 and 23 were very hard. In Question 22 most candidates were unable to work out from the detailed description (mentioning cards, presents, a tree and a traditional meal) that the festival was “*Noël*”. Even fewer, despite the leeway allowed in the marking scheme, which accepted answers which grammatically should have followed *parce que* rather than *à cause du*, were able to produce an acceptable answer, which could have been any appropriate reference to climate or weather, or to the fact that it was spent on the beach or in a swimming costume, or even that it was “*bizarre*”.

There were even fewer correct answers to Question 22. Most candidates chose to simply attempt to transcribe what they had heard on the cassette, resulting in answers such as “*la fête nationale de Cristian*”, “*la fête nationale de l’année*” (clearly indicating that such candidates did not understand the concept of *la fête nationale* (which, along with *quatorze juillet* was a correct answer) in the first part, and “*... grand-mère à la ferme*” in the second. References to *chien* were rare, and when they did appear, were often spelled incorrectly.

It is worth pointing out that at this level, candidates are expected to have a general understanding of what they hear, rather than, as is sometimes the case at Foundation Tier, picking out isolated key words or phrases.

In Question 24 the marking scheme required a number of relevant details before awarding the mark, which were given by only the best candidates. The first problem was the **smell** from the dustbins, so reference had to be made either to the smell or to the infrequency of emptying the dustbins. Unfortunately, *vider* and *sentir* (often misheard as *santé*) were rarely known, so many answers relied on just the key word *poubelles* (not enough to score) or *près des poubelles* (not true according to the cassette). Similarly, for the second problem mention

had to be made of the lack of **hot** water for showers **after** 7am, so answers such as “*il faut se lever/prendre sa douche avant sept heures*”, or “*il n’y a pas d’eau chaude*” were not enough.

Question 25 proved equally demanding. Again, there was a lack of precision in the candidates’ answers (*une chambre de famille* was sometimes given rather than *chez une famille*). The answer “*moins cher*” was sometimes negated by the addition of *à l’hôtel*, while *cuisine régionale* was often heard as *originale* or *traditionnelle*. Part (ii) was often left blank, or completed with almost unrecognisable attempts to transcribe *sales gosses* or *insupportable*. Centres are reminded, as in last year’s *Report on the Examination*, of the existence of the 500 words of additional vocabulary which appears in Section 9 of the *Teachers’ Guide* aimed at Grades A\*, A and B, which features both *gosse* and *supporter*, and of the *Communication Strategies* which appear in Section 16 of the Specification, which are intended to help candidates “cope successfully with unknown words” – here, specifically, to make the link between *supporter* and *insupportable*. Centres should be aware that the “assessment tasks at **Foundation Tier** will be based on the minimum core Vocabulary List” which appears in Section 17 of the Specification. At Higher Tier, tasks may in addition require candidates to understand vocabulary contained in the list in the *Teachers’ Guide*, and to make use of the above mentioned *Communication Strategies*.

Although Section B is aimed at Grades A\* to B, there are, as always, some opportunities for almost all candidates to gain one or two of the marks. This year, *explorer* in Question 28 (i) provided such an opportunity, as, for a smaller number of candidates, did “... *a vraiment de la chance*” in Question 26 – though some candidates were not aware that *chance* means “luck”, and offered answers such as “She has a lot of chances”. Some candidates attempted to conceal their lack of understanding of Question 26 by reproducing their own knowledge of the differences between the French and English education systems – with varying degrees of accuracy. Hence there were many references to the length of the school day, and differences in school-leaving ages. Many candidates did, however, understand the reference to being able to “drop” certain subjects, but failed to gain the second mark by adding “if you don’t like them” rather than “if you are not good at them”. Very few candidates understood the word (or the concept of) *moyenne* to score in part (iii).

The gist of at least parts of Question 27 was quite often understood, in particular the notion of “a long journey for a short visit” – though too many candidates at this level took the French word *car* and the English word “car” to be interchangeable. Many candidates saw no distinction between the notions of “bad food” and “not liking the food” (cf Q26(ii)).

In Question 28, part (i) was often correctly answered, as mentioned earlier, but in part (ii) many candidates again imposed their own opinions on the speaker, and mentioned the cost (not mentioned at all on the cassette) or the organised activities – which Céline views as a disadvantage.

As always, a small number of candidates answered some or all of the questions in Section B in French, and could therefore gain no marks.

## Reading

### General comments

Examiners reported that the Foundation paper was more demanding this year, whereas the Higher paper made similar demands of candidates as in previous years. The range of marks suggests that centres are entering candidates appropriately by tier. Advice given regularly in the published report seems to have been heeded, so that there was better use made of the rubric and examples, fewer blanks, and less overwriting of letter answers. However, a small minority of candidates continue to fail to score marks by answering in the wrong language.

### Foundation Tier

Section A (answers in English) proved more demanding this year, because of shortcomings in vocabulary knowledge. The usually easy matching of words to pictures proved more demanding than one of the overlap questions, whilst the final, gap-fill, question was much more challenging this year.

#### Question 1

This was well done, but some candidates construed *vacances* as ‘vacancies’, which may have affected how they answered subsequent questions.

#### Question 2

This proved to be one of the most elusive marks on the paper. Even candidates gaining high overall marks failed to score a mark here. Although the weather is always taught as a topic, it may well be that the word *temps* is confined to the question *Quel temps fait-il?*, and not much used by students. Some candidates knew it was about the weather, but provided a wrong description, e.g. hot.

#### Question 3

Most candidates scored the mark for swimming, but surprisingly few knew *pêche* in the context of activities.

#### Question 4

Most knew *réservez votre billet*, but few also knew *achetez*. *Horaires* and *commandez* were too demanding for many candidates, so that full marks were rare.

#### Question 5

Usually the easiest question on the paper, this proved challenging this year. Most candidates scored 3 marks for recognising *frigo*, *lampe* and *lit*, but the other words eluded them. The fact that *armoire* and armchair begin with the same three letters seduced many candidates.

**Question 6**

This was the most accessible question, with many candidates gaining full marks. A few answered in English, despite the instruction in bold.

**Question 7**

Most candidates recognised that statements D and F were correct. Answer B was rarely given, as candidates did not equate *parc* with *jardin*. They frequently substituted C, suggesting lack of awareness of the often-tested *gratuit*.

**Question 8**

Most candidates scored 4 or 5 marks; some gained full marks. Parts (c) and (e) caused most wrong answers, for no obvious reason.

**Question 9**

By far the most demanding question on the paper, this question type requires knowledge of grammar as well as vocabulary. Too many candidates do little working out, relying on guesswork in the hope of a few lucky marks. Consequently they failed to understand the context for the missing words, and did not know who the characters were. It was accepted that the penultimate answer could be either F or A. Only E and B were given correctly with any sort of regularity. Since this question type is used regularly to test comprehension at grade C, centres should ensure that candidates use more texts than just those from past papers by way of preparation. A basic knowledge of such simple concepts as gender and number is essential.

**Higher Tier**

Candidates seem to have had enough time to complete the paper. It is encouraging that the incidence of blanks in the later, more testing questions is now very low, indicating well-informed entry patterns and a good level of preparation.

**Questions 1 and 3**

Many candidates scored full marks on the first overlap question. However, the gap-fill exercise caused problems even for candidates with very high final totals, suggesting critical shortcomings in grammatical awareness.

**Question 2**

This produced a full range of marks. Most candidates gained the first mark, recognising that *avril à juin* was more likely to be spring than any other season. In (d), *moins de* caused the usual problems. Examiners felt that candidates were loath to use the third alternative, the question mark, to indicate that the information is not given in the text. In future, this device will be replaced by PM (*pas mentionné*).

#### Question 4

Most candidates earned 3 marks for this challenging question. They scored well on the first two, and the last parts, making good use of the visual clues, but many mixed up the sequence in the telephone conversation. Complaints that this is too demanding as a question type are not substantiated by candidates' performance.

#### Question 5

Like Question 2, this was a good discriminator, with candidates again reluctant to use the third option, in this case P/N to indicate that there was a mixture of opinions.

#### Question 6

Candidates scored well on items (a), (d) and (e). In (b), *réussir* was not well known. Many candidates used *passer deux épreuves*, which is wrong. In both (c) and (d), many candidates selected the correct information from the text, but added material which distorted their answers into nonsense e.g. *cinquième doivent*, where *cinquième* by itself would have scored. A few answers suggested lack of knowledge of interrogative words.

#### Question 7

(a) Most candidates understood that Martin was stressed because of impending examinations. Examiners allowed any reasonable interpretation of *bac*, e.g. GCSE, A-levels. The few candidates who wrote about him having a bad back were literally wide of the mark, especially where this misunderstanding influenced subsequent answers.

(b) Most correctly identified Stéphanie as Martin's sister. However, those who chose to add additional information based on poor understanding of *il y a trois ans*, (e.g. his younger sister) failed to score the mark.

(c) Very few candidates gained all four marks. Centres should encourage candidates to list briefly the information they find instead of writing lengthy tracts, overspilling the space provided for answers. Such answers rarely have the precision needed to gain marks. Many candidates recognised that Martin asks his parents not to put him under pressure or to make comments/ask questions about his revision. Fewer understood his dislike of being compared to his sister. Very few understood that he did not want his parents to invite their friends when he is revising (all needed), or to give him a big breakfast (too many translated large chunks of text, missing the basic point).

#### Question 8

Few candidates scored full marks. The majority recognised that Sophie had too much to drink. Many gave only one or two details where all three were required for the second mark, i.e. she danced with a boy for two hours. The key misunderstanding was of *je l'ai embrassé devant mes parents*. Very few wrote that she kissed the boy. The vast majority thought that she was embarrassed in front of, or even by her parents. Those who inferred from the complete text that she embarrassed or upset her parents were rewarded.

In both Questions 7 and 8, candidates showed a tendency to seize on certain words then weave a story around them based on their own experience of revision and parties, instead of paying sufficient attention to language used in the texts.

## Speaking

### General Comments

Overall teacher-examiners coped well with the test and were generally well prepared, although problems were again evident over the question of timing the different parts of the test, in particular the Presentation/Discussion, in many cases to the detriment of the candidates. Centres generally entered candidates at the appropriate tier.

Although there seemed to be fewer instances of problem recordings this year, 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 essential that teacher-examiners make the break between the elements clear e.g. by announcing: *Et maintenant la conversation*. Again this can affect the mark given to the candidates when an examiner cannot tell when the Discussion finishes and the Conversation begins.

It was worrying to note that examiners have again commented on poor teacher-examiner performances. The performance of the teacher-examiner is essential in bringing out the best in candidates, both in terms of the administration of the examination and equally in question technique. Teacher-examiners should not turn the test into a 'lesson' and correct their 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 for further details.

### Role-Playing Situations

#### Foundation Tier

Candidates generally coped well with the Foundation Tier role plays. 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. *Tu j'aime* was quite frequently used.

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’. The majority of teacher-examiners tackled the role plays confidently, drawing candidates into giving the required information without giving away key vocabulary.

Candidates fared better when teacher-examiners were skilled at offering alternative questions and, where split responses were required, asked for only one element a time. Teacher-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. This is not the place for developing answers. Candidates should be encouraged to keep their responses as simple and as short as possible here while covering the required content.

### **Role Play 8**

Expressing dates was a problem for many candidates. In Task 2 many candidates stated where they worked rather than stating what they did.

### **Role Play 9**

Although the role play worked well overall, many did not understand ‘*équipe*’ in Task 2. Teacher-examiners also caused difficulties for candidates in this task as often the team had been stated in Task 1 and confusion was caused where teacher-examiners then asked for the team again.

### **Role Play 10**

In Task 4 problems were caused because the third person singular/plural was required and many candidates used ‘*je*’.

## Role Play 12

Marks were not scored in Tasks 1 and 2 because candidates had not read the rubric and gave various different reasons for being tired.

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 essential**. Many examiners commented on the poor timings in this element of the test.

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 candidates were disadvantaged by the timings allowed in the Presentation/Discussion.**

On a more positive note 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 if all are asked the same questions with no regard to candidate 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 pronunciations 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 and at times sounded as if it was being read.

It is essential to know the ability level of candidates and 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 use the past and future tenses 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 candidate’ 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. Candidates at both tiers, however, can be encouraged to link their sentences, even with such simple conjunctions as *et, mais, parce que*. This can help increase marks awarded for Range/Complexity.

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. Candidates cannot be awarded the highest marks for Communication if the Conversation falls well short of the minimum requirement.

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**

### **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 demanding, there were many reasonable attempts made at the question this year, with fewer blank scripts.

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

**Question 1 Foundation Tier**

This question was well done in spite of some poor spellings.

**Question 2 Foundation Tier**

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

**Task 1**

Generally well done.

**Tasks 2 & 3**

These tasks were well done, but with past tense attempts – *je bu/je mangé* quite frequently used and some poor spelling.

**Task 4**

Most candidates scored at least 1 mark but again past tense attempts and poor spelling were prevalent.

**Task 5**

Perhaps the least well done. Candidates attempted long sentences with beginning and ending times. *Combien* was often included in the response.

**Task 6**

Generally well done.

The mark for Quality of Language in this question is closely linked 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. A lot of information on school subjects and lessons was included.

Closer use of the English rubric could eliminate a lot of superfluous information.

**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.

### **Tasks 1, 2 and 3**

Many candidates attempted these tasks using the past tense or attempts at the past tense. These could not be credited without context e.g. *-Hier je me suis levé...* In Task 3 there was frequent use of English: cereal, juice.

### **Task 4**

*Pied* was frequently used as a verb, as was *travailler* for “travel”. Overall, however, this task was well done.

### **Task 5**

Many candidates did not complete the task, failing to say why they ate where they did. The English ‘canteen’ was prevalent.

### **Task 6**

Although accurate formation of the past tense was rare among Foundation Tier candidates, this task was generally well done when candidates had read the stimulus question carefully – *à la maison*. Many candidates could not be credited for this task because they wrote about going to the cinema etc.

### **Task 7**

This task was generally done acceptably for Communication. Although the tense/tense formation was a problem for many candidates.

### **Task 8**

Asking questions still remains a problem. There was frequent confusion between *Qu'est-ce que* and *Est-ce que...* and verbs were omitted.

### **Range/Complexity**

Candidates are becoming more adept at accessing 4 marks because of the recognition of the need for references to all three time frames. However, tenses are frequently poorly formed. 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.

## 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

Many candidates were not awarded this task because, after saying where they went on holiday, they failed to add something about their journey there. It is surprising too, how many Higher Tier candidates confuse the country and the nationality. These are not credited.

### Task 2

Generally well done. Most candidates were credited with this task and were able to develop it fully. Amongst less able Higher Tier candidate's *je* with a past participle – *je allé* was prevalent.

### Task 3

This was generally well done by the more able candidates. However, some candidates misunderstood the task, thinking it referred to returning home and these could not be credited as fulfilling the tasks. Where the weather was given as a reason *c'est* was frequently used for *il fait*.

### Task 4

Perhaps the least well done of the four tasks. Many candidates could not express their ideas clearly and there were many instances of the inability to use a negative correctly – *Les vacances sont ne stressant pas*.

### 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* which appeared in the wording of the task. 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

The Coursework option has again continued to grow in popularity as an alternative to the terminal written paper. Overall, most centres are to be congratulated on preparing their candidates well for the component and it was especially gratifying to note the maintenance of high levels of accuracy, in terms of assessment. The vast majority of centres this year awarded marks which fell within the agreed limits of tolerance (+/- 4 out of 60), although most centres erred towards generosity.

Unfortunately there has not been an improvement in centres' handling of administrative procedures, which was highlighted in last year's report as the main problem affecting coursework. It is nevertheless appreciated that centres, which read this report annually, are unlikely to be amongst those which do not adhere to requirements.

## Assessment

Centres are now, on the whole, marking to agreed AQA standards. There has been a definite improvement, this year, in the assessment of work, where candidates have used a 'template' or 'writing-frame' approach. Where templates have been used, centres have awarded the correct 1-2 band of marks across all assessment categories, and where candidates have needed to rely heavily on sources, marks awarded have reflected this. Centres are nevertheless reminded that where such approaches are used, copies of 'templates', 'banks' of structures/key phrases should be sent to moderators. The supplying of these will not affect adversely the ultimate outcome, but will simply enable the moderator to ensure that all candidates gain the marks deserved. Sometimes, this year, moderators have been surprised by the severe marks awarded to certain candidates, but in the absence of worksheets or comments written under 'Teacher's Supporting Statement' on the Candidate Record Form, they have accepted the centre's judgements.

Overall, where problems have arisen this year in terms of assessment this has occurred in the following areas:

## General

- a) One can only award a mark within a specific band, if the descriptors of the lower band(s) have been displayed. One cannot therefore, e.g. award a mark of 4 under Range/Complexity simply because a variety of time frames have been displayed. Before one can consider a mark of 4, one must be certain that there is an appropriate use of vocabulary and structures, with a little attempt at variety, together with some successful attempt to link structures together, as these are the descriptors for the award of 3 marks.
- b) Centres are reminded that, given the assessment descriptors, a mark of 1+0+0 or 1+1+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 e.g. 1+1+1. It should be noted that the descriptors for 1 mark for Communication require the communication of a little basic information, which in practice means some complete messages are conveyed to a native speaker.

## Communication

- a) As was stated last year, 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. This was especially the case in terms of ‘narration of events’. Some assignment titles e.g. 1.3: Advertising my local area do not easily lend themselves to ‘narration of events’. The specification, under the bullet points, suggests ways of incorporating this requirement.

Equally many 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 might be awarded, but not 8.

- b) Centres are reminded that for the award of 5-6 marks, the communication of information should be ‘clear’.
- c) Certain titles were frequently over-rewarded when lacking the necessary focus e.g. 1.6: My ideal school uniform. Longer assignments containing much irrelevant material or sections where communication broke down were awarded high marks simply because of the length, although the pieces did not satisfy the assessment criteria.

## Range/Complexity

The main problem here lay in the award of 4/5 marks. For the award of 5 marks, not only should there be evidence of the successful use of subordinate clauses, but the choice of language should enable the candidate to communicate with some precision. Centres often overlooked these points.

## The Assignments

- a) The range of assignments chosen was quite varied this year. Centres were clearly advising candidates well in their choice of assignments and on the whole, showed a good understanding of approaches needed to enable candidates to produce work to the best of their linguistic ability. A number of Team Leaders commented on the high quality of work produced by the best candidates, where knowledge of vocabulary was impressive, there was a good appreciation of idiomatic expressions and there was a confident use of a range of tenses. More able candidates were also able to integrate pre-learnt phrases and expressions successfully into their work. The very best candidates were clearly working to a post GCSE standard and were able to incorporate complex structures e.g. the Subjunctive into their work with some confidence.
- b) Unfortunately, there seems to be a growing tendency to prepare assignments as a whole class activity, such that candidates within a particular teaching group all produce very similar pieces. Where assignments were most successful, there was ample evidence of original work from candidates.

- c) Candidates also often seemed vague about assignment titles, writing e.g. *'Ma ville'* , *'Mon collègue'* or *'Mes vacances'* as titles. These candidates often then included irrelevant or inappropriate material, which affected marks for Communication. It is good practice to insist that candidates write the correct title at the start of their assignments, so that they can focus on this, as they produce the work.
- d) A small number of candidates produced two assignments from the same theme, and although moderators always checked with the centre to see if other work was available, the marks awarded to the weaker piece were discounted.

The following titles were seen most often:

### **1.1 Profile of a famous person or group of people**

A wide range of responses was seen, including some excellent pieces at the top range of ability. Although source material was sometimes used inappropriately and not always acknowledged, there seemed to be far fewer instances of candidates using the Internet this year.

### **1.2 My favourite leisure activity**

This proved a popular choice this year. Unfortunately, as was the case last year, 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 to state that all the activities were of equal merit. Clearly these candidates were not adequately addressing the title and so moderators adjusted marks for Communication. To score good marks, candidates need to focus on the title, which relates to one activity.

### **1.3 Advertising my local area**

Again this year this was very popular with the vast majority of candidates being able to produce something of value. Problems again occurred, however, when negative comments were made about the area and quite a lot of able candidates were denied access to the top band of marks under 'Communication' as they had failed to include any narration of events. Centres need to stress this requirement at the preparation stage.

### **1.4 An excursion for a group of foreign visitors in my local area**

This was rarely seen, but candidates offering this piece wrote full responses and scored high marks.

### **1.5 Advertising my school/college**

Again a popular choice, but candidates need to think carefully before embarking on this title as to how they will actually promote/ advertise their school/college. Negative comments about subjects, teachers and the uniform are clearly inappropriate and will affect the mark for Communication. Although candidates may choose to write about the school day, they should not overlook the requirements of the title. More able candidates often wrote about a successful school trip, in order to include narration of events.

## **1.6 My ideal school uniform**

This was seen less frequently than in the past. Nevertheless, and despite all the guidance offered in previous reports, candidates presenting this assignment still failed to concentrate on the **ideal** uniform. To score good marks, it is essential to focus on the ideal uniform – a successful outcome is unlikely, where candidates have given equal emphasis to a past, present and ideal uniform, as they do not have the linguistic ability to compare the uniforms, make value judgements and then show why the preferred uniform is ideal.

## **1.7 The school/college of the future**

A good number of candidates offered this title, often following the bullet points suggested in the specification. As with the previous title, in many instances candidates concentrated too much on their present school and said little about the school of the future.

## **2.2 Account of a holiday**

This was by far the most popular of all titles. Candidates were given and took the opportunity to express themselves effectively, at their own level. Some excellent pieces were seen. The candidates benefited from this title no longer requiring the holiday to be in a target-language country.

Occasionally, as with 1.2, candidates wrote about holidays in general and did not focus on the account of one particular holiday. Equally, some candidates were clearly over-reliant on source material, but this was not acknowledged by centres in their assessments.

## **2.4 My dream holiday**

This was done well by most but generally only the more able candidates attempted the title, as it required the ability to handle the Conditional Tense. There were nevertheless a few instances where candidates wrote about a holiday, which turned out to be a dream. This was accepted.

## **2.5 Planning a holiday in the target-language country/community**

This was less popular than has been the case in the past, possibly because of the reference to the target-language country. A variety of approaches were used, but assignments were often disappointing.

## **3.1 Planning a meal for family/friends**

The few centres which offered this piece exploited its potential, as topic-specific vocabulary is generally known and the piece lends itself to full description, narration of events and opinions with justifications. Less able candidates tended to concentrate rather too much on the purchase of long lists of foods however.

### **3.2 A special occasion**

Weddings and birthdays were generally chosen here. Although seen infrequently, like the previous title, this assignment has much to commend it.

### **3.3 Am I fit and healthy?**

This was the most popular piece from this theme, attempted by candidates of all abilities. Although Team Leaders commented favourably on fuller responses this year, where problems arose it was in those areas highlighted in previous years. 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, or those who wrote at length on general guidelines for good health but failed to give enough detail on their own personal circumstances.

### **3.4 My work experience**

This was generally done quite well. Nevertheless there was a great similarity in the work offered from centre to centre, with identical sentences appearing in different centres' work. Candidates seemed to be relying heavily on sources taken from published materials, with less able candidates interspersing quite complex structures with poor, inaccurate sentences. More able candidates were able to show originality in their accounts of the work undertaken and their relationships with colleagues.

### **3.8 A day that went wrong**

In a couple of instances, there was some outstanding work produced here. Some candidates tended to supply a list of unrelated events, however, with a lack of variety in the choice of vocabulary and little or no attempt to justify ideas. Occasionally candidates simply wrote an account of a day, where only one thing went wrong or they relied heavily on phrases provided.

## **Theme 4**

Centres seem to be less comfortable with the titles in this theme with few titles proving really popular.

### **4.2 Publicising an environmental or social issue**

This was seen rarely but was only handled successfully by the more able candidates. These showed an impressive knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary. Elsewhere candidates relied on templates or simply did not have the language necessary to put forward convincing arguments.

### **4.3 Letter to a newspaper on a social or environmental issue**

On the few occasions when this was seen, candidates tended to skim over a wide range of issues rather than concentrating in depth on one particular issue.

#### **4.4 My ideal future job**

A number of these were seen, but few candidates actually explained what the ideal job would be. Many candidates wrote too much about a job that they have at the moment or which they had in the past or about their work experience. As was the case last year, some candidates interpreted the title as a description of future plans, including too much material on their future education and future life-style. Moreover, some candidates again did not choose to write about a single ideal job but gave a list, without actually detailing advantages and disadvantages and reaching a conclusion. An additional problem arose when candidates failed to include narration of events.

#### **4.5 An imaginary or factual interview with someone to find out about his/her job**

On the few occasions where candidates attempted this, there was again a discrepancy in the quality of language between the questions, which were presumably taken from sources and the answers themselves.

#### **4.6 Letter to a problem page**

This title was offered by a number of centres. Able candidates produced some excellent responses, which showed originality and were often amusing. Less able candidates were reliant on support from source materials and so similar work was seen within teaching groups.

### **Administration**

The comments which follow were all raised in last year's report, and it is accepted that teachers currently reading this report are likely to be amongst those whose administration was exemplary. AQA is very grateful to the teachers and centres, which adhere to deadlines and spend considerable time completing documentation in order to facilitate the moderation process.

### **The Candidate Record Form**

Many centres failed to give detailed information about source materials; a number failed to provide **any** information. Centres generally were again reluctant to send copies of worksheets used extensively by candidates.

Some centres wrote helpful comments on the reverse of the Record Form, under 'Teacher's Supporting Statement', showing why they had awarded particular marks. Many centres, however, left this section blank. The provision of this information can only work to the candidates' advantage, especially when candidates seem to have been awarded a lower mark than that deserved. The information is especially valuable, when teachers are hesitating between marks, or when teachers wish to highlight particular features, which have determined the award of certain marks.

Moreover, although last year's report advised centres to avoid comments more suited to a school report of the type 'X is a hardworking pupil, who deserves to do well', this type of comment was again in evidence this year. The information provided should assist the moderator in understanding the teacher's rationale when awarding marks.

A number of Team Leaders commented this year on centres' failure to indicate, on the reverse of the form, the Controlled assignment(s). In addition, where a draft is submitted for the controlled piece, the two versions should be clearly labelled 'draft' or 'final'. If no draft has been submitted, this should be stated under 'Teacher's Supporting Statement'.

### **Assignments**

There should be neither marks nor annotations on the assignments themselves. Centres are also reminded that feedback on drafts can **only** be made by ticking the boxes on the Coursework Comments Sheet. Any extra guidance offered by teachers constitutes malpractice and will be dealt with accordingly. Unfortunately a few teachers this year did not adhere to this requirement.

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.

### **General**

Many centres did not meet deadlines this year. When mark sheets were actually sent in time, centres failed to send two copies to the moderator. Centres were generally slow in providing the sample of work requested by the moderator.

New centres, those which require guidance and those which have received adverse comments on the feedback forms, issued late Summer 2004, are reminded that AQA provides considerable assistance:

- a) marked exemplar coursework pieces can be obtained via Modern Foreign Languages at AQA's Harrogate office – Tel: 01423 840015.
- b) regional coursework standardisation meetings are held each November.
- c) each registered centre has been allocated a Coursework Adviser, whose telephone number or e-mail address is available within the centre. These Advisers are experienced Coursework Moderators, who can usually answer queries immediately, but, if necessary, will follow up 'unusual' problems and deal with them promptly. Please contact AQA's Modern Foreign Languages Department for details.

# Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

## Full Course

### *Foundation tier*

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Listening	35	35	22.2	5.4
Reading	35	35	20.1	4.3
Speaking	36	36	12.9	6.0
Writing	42	42	22.1	9.4
Writing Coursework (untiered)	60	60	38.4	11.3

		Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Listening boundary mark (91,512 candidates)	raw	35	25	22	19	16	13
	scaled	35	25	22	19	16	13
	uniform	59	50	40	30	20	10
Reading boundary mark (76,226 candidates)	raw	35	24	20	17	14	11
	scaled	35	24	20	17	14	11
	uniform	59	50	40	30	20	10
Speaking boundary mark (79,035 candidates)	raw	36	19	15	12	9	6
	scaled	36	19	15	12	9	6
	uniform	59	50	40	30	20	10
Writing boundary mark (13,467 candidates)	raw	42	29	24	19	15	11
	scaled	42	29	24	19	15	11
	uniform	59	50	40	30	20	10

*Higher tier*

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Listening	40	40	21.0	6.1
Reading	45	45	25.8	6.2
Speaking	36	36	26.1	7.4
Writing	40	40	28.8	8.1
Writing Coursework (untiered)	60	60	38.4	11.3

		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Listening boundary mark (57,467 candidates)	raw	40	28	22	19	17	12	9
	scaled	40	28	22	19	17	12	9
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	35
Reading boundary mark (72,753 candidates)	raw	45	29	26	23	20	15	12
	scaled	45	29	26	23	20	15	12
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	35
Speaking boundary mark (69,944 candidates)	raw	40	34	27	23	19	15	13
	scaled	40	34	27	23	19	15	13
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	35
Writing boundary mark (16,256 candidates)	raw	40	35	28	22	17	13	11
	scaled	40	35	28	22	17	13	11
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	35

		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Writing coursework (untiered) boundary mark (119,256 candidates)	raw	60	54	48	42	36	28	20	12	4
	scaled	60	54	48	42	36	28	20	12	4
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

## Provisional statistics for the award

### *Overall award*

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

### *Overall (162,381 candidates)*

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	6.9	16.9	30.2	49.8	69.0	83.5	93.2	98.4

## Short Course Listening

### Foundation Tier

Most candidates seemed appropriately entered and this would in part account for the small number achieving scores over 20. The paper offered the usual gradient of difficulty but examiners reported a significant number of single figure scores.

Section A proved accessible for the majority of candidates. Most managed the correct age, 14, in Question 1 but *quatorze* and *41* were given as answers. A very small number of candidates offered no answers to any part of the paper and apart from completing the front page submitted a totally blank script. In Question 2 the spelling of *Bordeaux* was a potential difficulty but most candidates coped well with what should be a familiar town in France. It was pleasing to note how many candidates spelt it correctly.

*Correspondant* in Question 3 was rarely identified as *penfriend* and *she corresponds in English* was a frequent incorrect answer. Question 4 was straightforward for most but a few missed the negative or wrote *she doesn't go to school*. Question 5 attracted a wide range of sensible but incorrect guesses.

In Section B most candidates understood the requirements of Questions 6 to 8. The mark scheme allows for minor copying mistakes of words and phrases in the box but rejects answers not in the box for example *au bord de la mer* is not an acceptable answer for *la côte*. Some candidates wrote the correct answer but on the wrong line while others wrote answers which made little sense for example *son père n'est pas...sa soeur* or *il habite avec...Paris*. Other errors were giving two answers on the same line for example *son père, sa soeur*. This is a hedged bet answer and will be rejected by all mark schemes. A small number of candidates left all answers blank.

With Questions 9 to 13 most candidates were in familiar vocabulary territory and scored well. Occasional difficulties arose in Question 9 where the meaning of *j'ai laissé tomber la musique* was not appreciated and in Question 12 where *EPS* was either not known or not linked to *je suis très sportive*.

Questions 14 and 15 caused some problems for some candidates. Some ignored or did not use the list while others left the page completely blank. Occasionally candidates wrote more than one answer. Candidates need to rely less on guesswork and more on a basic grammatical understanding and on an appreciation of what the stimuli and possible answer means.

The final section, Questions 16 to 19, was not well done. Examiners reported that a significant number of candidates seemed not to know basic specification vocabulary such as *dentrifrice*, *timbres*, *chaussures* even *pain*. Of the four questions, number 16 proved most difficult where candidates needed to understand *dentrifrice* and then link it to the pharmacy sign.

## Higher Tier

The entry for this tier was relatively small in comparison with the Foundation tier entry. Most candidates were appropriately entered but whole centres seemed incorrectly entered, their candidates achieving very low scores.

Questions 1 to 5, overlap questions, were very well done by the vast majority. Question 6 proved a little more challenging with the second mark not scored by those candidates who did not equate *votre supermarché...sera fermé* with *le magasin...n'ouvre pas*. Again in these questions requiring letter answers there were too many unclear alterations.

Question 7 required short answers in French. A good number of candidates scored well here but a few left blanks and a very few answered in the wrong language. Some answers clearly showed interference from Spanish or German.

Questions 8 and 9 were overlap questions. Higher Tier candidates did well here but a few still did not use the list of suggested answers or did not understand the grammatical clues. *La cuisine* was a common incorrect answer to Question 8 (i).

Question 10 proved demanding for many candidates. Too many did not understand which adjectives were positive or negative attributes. A few candidates copied out the words in full rather than giving letter answers as in the examples. Clearly the correct word corresponding to the correct letter in the correct box is given a mark. A typical score here was five or more out of eight but again there were many blanks or alterations. This question was clearly more demanding for those candidates whose grasp of specification vocabulary was more limited.

In Question 11 (i), a lot of candidates did not hear or understand the significance of *demain* and were led to the incorrect answer B. The time was well understood by most in Question 11 (ii).

In Section B, Questions 12 and 13 were well attempted by the vast majority of candidates with very rare answers in the wrong language or in a mixture of languages. Although the main points were clearly understood, some candidates gave insufficient detail to score for example in Question 12 (iii) writing *they eat in restaurants* rather than *they eat too often in restaurants* and in Question 13 (ii) *having no money* rather than *having no money to eat well*.

Some examiners commented that some candidates had not familiarised themselves with basic items of vocabulary.

In conclusion, examiners drew attention to the need for candidates to make any alterations to the letters in the multiple-choice answers **clear**. It is strongly recommended that candidates **cross out** an incorrect letter and write in the correct letter alongside, rather than attempting to write one letter over another. If a letter is unclear, it will not be marked correct. There seemed to be a larger number of scripts written partly or entirely in pencil this year, and the attention of centres is drawn to the regulations concerning this.

## Short Course Reading

### General comments

The fact that the overlap questions required less reading time and grammatical awareness than in previous years meant that the tests were slightly more accessible at both tiers. Candidates appear to have had sufficient time to complete the papers, so that there was a lot less evidence of hasty guesswork. With very few exceptions, candidates were entered at the appropriate tier.

### Foundation Tier

#### Questions 1 and 2

These were generally well done and provided the intended easy introduction. As a general point, some candidates tried to overwrite D with B, producing something unreadable and scoring no mark. Candidates should be instructed to cross out answers they wish to change, and write clearly their replacement answer alongside.

#### Question 3

Many candidates did not know what a *crêperie* is, which made part (a) one of the most difficult marks to access. Answers such as ‘crabs’ and ‘grapes’ smacked of guesswork. On the other hand, most candidates gained both marks for (b), although the standard of expression in English was sometimes poor. This also applied to spelling. Occasional answers in French could not be credited.

#### Question 4

Most candidates did this word connection exercise well. Answers (c) and (d) were usually correct. A significant number reversed answers to (a) and (e), suggesting lack of knowledge of *commissariat*.

#### Question 5

Candidates scored well, as they usually do on this question type. They made good use of the cognates, *collectionner* and *instrument* to earn marks. Where marks were not scored, there was no particular pattern.

#### Question 6

This proved to be the most demanding question on the paper, for several reasons. Some candidates clearly did not understand the format of the timetable, so could not access the required information. Others simply did not know the key words *premier*, *dernier* and *troisième*, or the interrogative first words *combien* and *quel*. Too many answers failed to take into account the fact that *quel* is singular, producing lists which contained the correct answer, but earning no mark as a result. Some candidates appeared to think that *déjeuner* and *récréation* are lessons. Question (e) was answered well regularly, although the spelling of *mercredi* was frequently wrong, despite candidates having only to copy it. This new question type proved to be a good discriminator and will be used again.

## Question 7

Most candidates gained 2 to 4 marks from this question. Answers to parts (b) and (d) were nearly always correct. In (c), candidates surprisingly failed to equate *musique* with *concerts*, and in (e), the hardest question, they failed to spot the importance of *ouvert toute l'année*.

## Higher Tier

### Questions 1 and 3

As expected, these were done better by candidates entered at this tier, although some of the comments made about the timetable question still apply.

### Question 2

This was not well done. Few candidates scored 6 marks. Indeed, it was clear that many candidates did not recognise that 6 marks were available. The biggest problem was that they did not take time to read the rubric and take note of the two examples provided, thinking that it was a simple true/false question. A small number of candidates wrote French words for each question and omitted to write the V or F which was needed for a mark.

### Question 4

This proved to be a good discriminator, with a broad range of marks. The first and fourth answers were most frequently correct, but other parts caused problems due to inadequate knowledge of vocabulary, such as *étrangère*, *tôt* and *à temps partiel*. The fact that these all occur in the questions, as opposed to the text, suggests insufficient attention.

### Question 5

As usual, candidates suffered because they are not familiar with interrogative words, such as *comment* and *qui*. Consequently many answers had no relevance to the question. Question (c) was generally well done, with many candidates picking up both marks, despite failing to amend *ont été échangées* into a more acceptable verb form. In (a), the mark was often not scored because of confusion between *voyage* and *journée*. It should be impressed on candidates that lengthy answers are unlikely to be correct (hence the inclusion of a short example answer), and equally that words they do not know should be avoided, since it is a principle that words outside the published list cannot be targeted for marks. Therefore the answer *Toutefois* to the question *Qui est Charlène?*, commonly produced, was ill-chosen. Where candidates added bits of the text to a correct answer, producing something making no sense, the mark was lost, e.g. *une animatrice reprendront* for (e), where *une animatrice* is correct. A small number of candidates answered all questions in English, gaining no marks.

### Question 6

Aimed at candidates likely to achieve A or A\* grades, this was by far the most demanding question. In part (a), too many candidates conveyed the sensible but wrong idea that Aurélia looks after dogs when the owners are on holiday, whereas the text makes it clear that she does this in her holidays. In (b), both ideas were needed for the mark, i.e. at the owner's or at her

house. In (c), many candidates tried to untangle the notion of preventing dogs from being abandoned, not always successfully, while missing the simple explanation that she loves animals. In (d), the idea of killing two birds with stone was accepted, although some candidates showed imperfect knowledge of the English proverb. The alternative route to the mark, by explaining the phrase in terms of the text, was rarely attempted.

### Question 7

Candidates answering that the leaflet is about promoting local beef earned both marks. Long answers were almost always wrong. Correct references to beef could attract one mark, e.g. it is about tasting beef. Despite the picture of a barbecue and happy faces, too many candidates converted the text into a tract against eating meat or cruelty to animals. A substantial number seized on the word *dégustation* to say that eating meat is disgusting, or to suggest that it is an invitation to a discussion (or meeting) to protest about eating beef.

Difficulties with questions 6 and 7 meant that few candidates scored 30 or more marks out of the 35 available.

## Short Course Speaking

### General Comments

Overall, candidates performed to expectations and were generally well prepared for the test, although a number of problems arose because teacher-examiners' own preparation for the conduct of the test was not always satisfactory.

Centres generally entered their candidates for the appropriate Tier. However, there were some exceptions, particularly at the bottom end of the Higher tier. If candidates are to have a positive experience, they must be given the opportunity to do well. When the demands of the test are too great for them, they are more likely to under perform. When candidates feel that what is expected of them is achievable, given the right guidance from the teacher-examiner through the different parts of the test, they tend to perform well.

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 candidate's 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.

A number of problem recordings arose of which teacher-examiners should be aware. For example, there were instances of recording over a previous candidate. Teacher-examiners are asked to check that there is enough tape left for the recording of the next candidate to be completed, thus avoiding having to interrupt the test and turn the tape over to finish that test, or even having to complete that test on a different tape. It is distracting for both the candidate and the teacher-examiner and does not facilitate the task of the examiner. Reading the 'Instructions for the conduct of the Examination' each year is of paramount importance and will help teacher-examiners in their own preparation for the test.

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 role-plays. They were given ample time to prepare the task and tended to use it well. They were generally able to produce answers where the instructions were non vocabulary specific. However, there were exceptions to that. For instance, asking for a hot drink was often a problem for less able candidates. Specific items of vocabulary were generally known : an ice cream, work, Saturday, own name, big, house.

All Foundation role-plays require candidates to ask at least one question. Predictably, less able candidates found that particular utterance more difficult than the others. However, the improvement on how most candidates handled that task that was noted last year was also in evidence this year.

Where candidates choose to ask a question by using a statement form e.g. Tu aimes le college ? , they are expected to use the correct intonation for full marks.

### **Higher Tier**

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'.

Where split responses were required, teacher-examiners sometimes asked both questions at the same time or one question after the other, which occasionally confused candidates. 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. Most candidates seemed to be familiar with the demands of the unpredictable element and handled it well this year again.

Although teacher-examiners are entitled to ask further questions in order to elicit part of an answer that the candidate 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.

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 in role playing situations.

**Role-play 7**

Where candidates chose to use *jouer* (utterance 1) and *manger* (utterance 2), they often failed to use a correct time frame.

**Role-play 10**

The open-ended nature of the first two utterances seemed to confuse many candidates. The unpredictable element (utterance 4) was generally not handled well.

**Role-play 11**

In utterance 1, many candidates failed to give an answer that included a verb. Giving one detail about their work caused problems for most candidates (utterance 2).

**Role-play 12**

Some candidates ignored the fact that role plays are imaginary situations and insisted on saying that in their village, there is nothing to do or see! The purpose of role-plays is to test different elements of the specification, not to test candidates' individual experiences.

**Presentation/Discussion**

Although there was a small minority of candidates who did not offer a Presentation at all, most candidates made a good attempt at this part of the test.

Where no Presentation was prepared, some teacher-examiners chose to move on straight away to Conversation, therefore denying their candidates the opportunity to score any mark on this part of the test. Teacher-examiners who knew what such candidates would have talked about in their Presentation were therefore justified in conducting a Discussion and thus, gave their candidates every chance to score some marks.

Teacher-examiners' own performances were variable in this part of the test. 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. Sometimes, teacher-examiners used the same questions in Discussion for all their candidates, irrespective of the answers given.

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 stop marking after the prescribed time limit. As the mark given for Spontaneity and Fluency applies to the Discussion only, it is important that candidates are given the time, to which they are entitled, to answer questions on the topic that they have used in Presentation.

For candidates 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. It should be noted that complex language does not necessarily mean complex grammatical structures. Sentences that include more than one clause are themselves complex sentences and therefore the use of *et, mais, parce que, car* should be encouraged. Complex grammatical structures in conjunction with an extended range of vocabulary are only expected for the highest marks. It is essential for the teacher-examiner to know the ability level of individual candidates and to ask open-ended questions that generate language at the appropriate level, thus affording every candidate the opportunity to show what they can do.

## **Conversation**

Generally, teacher-examiners this year showed a greater awareness of the content of the mark scheme and better questioning techniques than in previous years. It does not help candidates if they are faced with many questions requiring *oui/non* or the names of pop groups, television programmes, etc. Teacher-examiners showed awareness of the need for reference to the three time frames, the need for developing answers and the need to afford the opportunity to display range and complexity of language.

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 linguistic ability. As with the Presentation / Discussion, teacher-examiners are reminded that examiners will stop marking after the prescribed time limit.

A few teacher-examiners did not introduce the Conversation...'*Et maintenant, la conversation*', thus making it difficult for the examiner to know when the Discussion ended and when the Conversation started. As these two parts of the test are marked separately, it is essential that teacher-examiners give a definite 'marker' to the examiner.

Teacher-examiners are reminded that it is not a 'general conversation' but a conversation based on specific topics, which must not include the topic area covered in the Presentation/Discussion. On rare occasions, teacher-examiners used the suggested questions rigidly (or their own set of questions rigidly) without making links between what candidates said and their next question. Teacher-examiners are also asked not to interrupt their candidates too readily and allow them time to complete their answers.

Generally, the Conversation was handled as well as the Presentation/Discussion by most candidates and teacher-examiners must be commended for the way in which they prepared themselves and their candidates for the whole of the Speaking test.

## **Short Course Writing**

### **Foundation Tier**

The response to the paper was slightly better this year than last year. Many candidates seemed well prepared for the paper and responses to Question 3 were more successful than last year's. This could mainly relate to the tasks being in English as well as in French.

Question 2 still causes problems for many candidates who seem unable to produce a full sentence in response to the tasks.

### **Question 1**

This question was generally well managed and many candidates scored full marks. Cognates such as *t-shirt*, *short* and *pullover* were frequently used and enabled the candidates to score marks.

### **Question 2**

The rubric asks candidates to write a sentence and it is important to note that full marks can only be awarded to responses that are sentences. Candidates who responded using single words can only expect to score low marks. Verbs were often omitted throughout and the inappropriate use of *j'ai* for *je suis* or vice versa penalised candidates. The stimulus was used to better effect than last year and many candidates scored most of their marks on this question.

### **Question 3 Foundation/Question 1 Higher**

There was an improvement in the response to this question this year.

### **Communication**

The mark scheme required only one piece of information for each task but for the award of 3 marks or more; candidates are expected to provide a response, which goes beyond the minimum across a number of tasks. Candidates only needed to provide a minimal development, which in many cases was one word. To score the full 8 marks, candidates were required to complete at least 7 tasks and include 6 developments. One development could only be credited for each task. Infinitives and inappropriate tenses were accepted for Communication with context but considered under Range/Complexity. Candidates were well prepared this year and in some cases were able to contextualise their responses. They therefore gained marks for Communication more easily.

It was also pleasing to note that Candidates had no difficulty in understanding the tasks although some candidates seemed not to have read the rubric.

### **Range/Complexity**

To score 4 marks or above, candidates must display the ability to refer to all 3 time frames. Candidates seem able to produce Past tenses but have more difficulty in producing Future tenses.

As last year, the marks for Range/Complexity and Accuracy cannot be more than one band higher than the mark awarded for Communication.

### **Task 1**

This task was well handled although the name of the school only was not accepted as a description.

**Task 2**

Many candidates ignored the second half of the task and did not score a mark for the task as a reason for disliking the subject was needed.

**Task 3**

This task was relatively easy to score as the name of the teacher was acceptable e.g. *J'aime Mr Smith*.

**Task 4**

This task was reasonably well handled as any reference to homework was accepted.

**Task 5**

Candidates found this task demanding and there were many instances of the word *travail* being used for travel and the word *piéd* used as a verb, neither of which was acceptable.

**Task 6**

Some candidates used the context and were awarded the task although formation of the perfect tense was not accurately formed. Other candidates produced a past tense in isolation.

**Task 7**

Candidates did not readily produce a future tense in this task. Also lack of context did not enable candidates to score.

**Task 8**

Candidates found this task difficult as many are still unable to form questions and many of those who did produce a question did not refer to school routine and therefore did not score.

**Higher Tier**

Performance at this tier was very good. Although there are few candidates entered for the paper, they are entered appropriately and are able to handle the tasks well.

The comments made in relation to Foundation Question 3 should be noted although the entry at this level coped very well with the question.

It is important to note that developments to tasks in Question 2 are expected to be in the form of a phrase or clause as they have been in previous years. Also, only appropriate verb formations are acceptable for this question.

## Question 2

Candidates can only score 2 or more marks for Communication if they develop their answers and two developments can be awarded per task. It is important that candidates are trained to develop all tasks if they are to have access to full marks for Communication. Similarly, it is important to note that candidates are expected to give and justify opinions for high marks.

Candidates attempted the tasks well. They were able to manipulate verbs effectively and tasks were developed fully. There were some excellent responses to this question, which is very encouraging. Although many candidates ignored the references to **recent** leisure activities and **future** fitness activities, the use of time frames was not an issue in this question.

## Short Course Coursework

The Coursework option has again continued to grow in popularity as an alternative to the terminal written paper. Overall, most centres are to be congratulated on preparing their candidates well for the component. The majority of centres this year awarded marks, which fell within the agreed limits of tolerance (+/- 3 out of 40), although most centres erred towards generosity.

Unfortunately there has not been an improvement in centres' handling of administrative procedures, which was highlighted in last year's report as the main problem affecting coursework. It is nevertheless appreciated that centres, which read this report annually, are unlikely to be amongst those which do not adhere to requirements.

## Assessment

Centres are now, on the whole, marking to agreed AQA standards. There has been an improvement, this year, in the assessment of work, where candidates have used a 'template' or 'writing-frame' approach. Where templates have been used, centres have awarded the correct 1-2 band of marks across all assessment categories, and where candidates have needed to rely heavily on sources, marks awarded have reflected this. Centres are nevertheless reminded that where such approaches are used, copies of 'templates', 'banks' of structures/key phrases should be sent to moderators. The supplying of these will not affect adversely the ultimate outcome, but will simply enable the moderator to ensure that all candidates gain the marks deserved. Sometimes, this year, moderators have been surprised by the severe marks awarded to certain candidates, but in the absence of worksheets or comments written under 'Teacher's Supporting Statement' on the Candidate Record Form, they have accepted the centre's judgements.

Overall, where problems have arisen this year in terms of assessment this has occurred in the following areas:

## General

- a) One can only award a mark within a specific band, if the descriptors of the lower band(s) have been displayed. One cannot therefore, e.g. award a mark of 4 under Range/Complexity simply because a variety of time frames have been displayed. Before

one can consider a mark of 4, one must be certain that there is an appropriate use of vocabulary and structures, with a little attempt at variety, together with some successful attempt to link structures together, as these are the descriptors for the award of 3 marks.

- b) Centres are reminded that, given the assessment descriptors, a mark of 1+0+0 or 1+1+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 e.g. 1+1+1. It should be noted that the descriptors for 1 mark for Communication require the communication of a little basic information, which in practice means some complete messages are conveyed to a native speaker.

### Communication

- a) As was stated last year, 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. This was especially the case in terms of 'narration of events'. Some assignment titles e.g. 1.3a: Advertising my local area do not easily lend themselves to 'narration of events'. The specification, under the bullet points, suggests ways of incorporating this requirement.

Equally many 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 might be awarded, but not 8.

- b) Centres are reminded that for the award of 5-6 marks, the communication of information should be 'clear'.
- c) Certain titles were frequently over-rewarded when lacking the necessary focus e.g. 1.5: My ideal school uniform. Longer assignments containing much irrelevant material or sections where communication broke down were awarded high marks simply because of the length, although the pieces did not satisfy the assessment criteria.

### Range/Complexity

The main problem here lay in the award of 4/5 marks. For the award of 5 marks, not only should there be evidence of the successful use of subordinate clauses, but the choice of language should enable the candidate to communicate with some precision. Centres often overlooked these points.

## The Assignments

- a) The range of assignments chosen was more varied this year. Centres were clearly advising candidates well in their choice of assignments and on the whole, showed a good understanding of approaches needed to enable candidates to produce work to the best of their linguistic ability.
- b) Unfortunately, there seems to be a growing tendency to prepare assignments as a whole class activity, such that candidates within a particular teaching group all produce very similar pieces. Where assignments were most successful, there was ample evidence of original work from candidates.
- c) Candidates also often seemed vague about assignment titles, writing e.g. *'Ma ville'* or *'Mon collègue'* as titles. These candidates often then included irrelevant or inappropriate material, which affected marks for Communication. It is good practice to insist that candidates write the correct title at the start of their assignments, so that they can focus on this, as they produce the work.
- d) A small number of candidates produced two assignments from the same theme, and although moderators always checked with the centre to see if other work was available, the marks awarded to the weaker piece were discounted.

The following titles were seen most often:

### 1.1 Profile of a famous person or group of people

A wide range of responses was seen. Although source material was sometimes used inappropriately and not always acknowledged, there seemed to be far fewer instances of candidates using the Internet this year.

### 1.2 My favourite leisure activity

This proved a popular choice this year. Unfortunately, as was the case last year, 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 to state that all the activities were of equal merit. Clearly these candidates were not adequately addressing the title and so moderators adjusted marks for Communication. To score good marks, candidates need to focus on the title, which relates to one activity.

### 1.3a Advertising my local area

Again this year this was very popular with the vast majority of candidates being able to produce something of value. Problems again occurred, however, when negative comments were made about the area and quite a lot of able candidates were denied access to the top band of marks under 'Communication' as they had failed to include any narration of events. Centres need to stress this requirement at the preparation stage.

### **1.4a Advertising my school/college**

Again a popular choice, but candidates need to think carefully before embarking on this title as to how they will actually promote/ advertise their school/college. Negative comments about subjects, teachers and the uniform are clearly inappropriate and will affect the mark for Communication. Although candidates may choose to write about the school day, they should not overlook the requirements of the title. More able candidates often wrote about a successful school trip, in order to include narration of events.

### **1.4b The school/college of the future**

This was rarely seen, but sometimes candidates concentrated too much on their present school and said little about the school of the future.

### **1.5 My ideal school uniform**

This was seen less frequently than in the past. Nevertheless, and despite all the guidance offered in previous reports, candidates presenting this assignment still failed to concentrate on the **ideal** uniform. To score good marks, it is essential to focus on the ideal uniform – a successful outcome is unlikely, where candidates have given equal emphasis to a past, present and ideal uniform, as they do not have the linguistic ability to compare the uniforms, make value judgements and then show why the preferred uniform is ideal.

### **3.1 Planning a meal for family/friends**

The few centres which offered this piece exploited its potential, as topic-specific vocabulary is generally known and the piece lends itself to full description, narration of events and opinions with justifications. Less able candidates tended to concentrate rather too much on the purchase of long lists of foods however.

### **3.2 A special occasion**

Weddings and birthdays were generally chosen here. Although seen infrequently, like the previous title, this assignment has much to commend it.

### **3.3 Am I fit and healthy?**

This was the most popular piece from this theme, attempted by candidates of all abilities. Although moderators commented favourably on fuller responses this year, where problems arose it was in those areas highlighted in previous years. 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, or those who wrote at length on general guidelines for good health but failed to give enough detail on their own personal circumstances.

### **3.4a My work experience**

This was generally done quite well. Nevertheless there was a great similarity in the work offered from centre to centre, with identical sentences appearing in different centres' work.

Candidates seemed to be relying heavily on sources taken from published materials, with less able candidates interspersing quite complex structures with poor, inaccurate sentences. More able candidates were able to show originality in their accounts of the work undertaken and their relationships with colleagues.

### **3.6 A day that went wrong**

Although seen infrequently, occasionally candidates simply wrote an account of a day, where only one thing went wrong or they relied heavily on phrases provided.

### **Administration**

The comments which follow were all raised in last year's report, and it is accepted that teachers currently reading this report are likely to be amongst those whose administration was exemplary. AQA is very grateful to the teachers and centres, which adhere to deadlines and spend considerable time completing documentation in order to facilitate the moderation process.

### **The Candidate Record Form**

Many centres failed to give detailed information about source materials; a number failed to provide **any** information. Centres generally were again reluctant to send copies of worksheets used extensively by candidates.

Some centres wrote helpful comments on the reverse of the Record Form, under 'Teacher's Supporting Statement', showing why they had awarded particular marks. Many centres, however, left this section blank. The provision of this information can only work to the candidates' advantage, especially when candidates seem to have been awarded a lower mark than that deserved. The information is especially valuable, when teachers are hesitating between marks, or when teachers wish to highlight particular features, which have determined the award of certain marks.

Moreover, although last year's report advised centres to avoid comments more suited to a school report of the type 'X is a hardworking pupil, who deserves to do well', this type of comment was again in evidence this year. The information provided should assist the moderator in understanding the teacher's rationale when awarding marks.

A number of moderators commented this year on centres' failure to indicate, on the reverse of the form, the Controlled assignment(s). In addition, where a draft is submitted for the controlled piece, the two versions should be clearly labelled 'draft' or 'final'. If no draft has been submitted, this should be stated under 'Teacher's Supporting Statement'.

### **Assignments**

There should be neither marks nor annotations on the assignments themselves. Centres are also reminded that feedback on drafts can **only** be made by ticking the boxes on the Coursework Comments Sheet. Any extra guidance offered by teachers constitutes malpractice and will be dealt with accordingly. Unfortunately a few teachers this year did not adhere to this requirement.

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.

### **General**

Many centres did not meet deadlines this year. When mark sheets were actually sent in time, centres failed to send two copies to the moderator. Centres were generally slow in providing the sample of work requested by the moderator.

New centres, those which require guidance and those which have received adverse comments on the feedback forms, issued late Summer 2004, are reminded that AQA provides considerable assistance:

- a) marked exemplar coursework pieces can be obtained via Modern Foreign Languages at AQA's Harrogate office – Tel: 01423 840015
- b) regional coursework standardisation meetings are held each November.
- c) each registered centre has been allocated a Coursework Adviser, whose telephone number or e-mail address is available within the centre. These Advisers are experienced Coursework Moderators, who can usually answer queries immediately, but, if necessary, will follow up 'unusual' problems and deal with them promptly. Please contact AQA's Modern Foreign Languages Department for details.

# Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

## Short Course

### *Foundation tier*

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Listening	25	35	12.3	4.1
Reading	25	35	16.3	4.5
Speaking	36	36	11.1	5.4
Writing	42	42	16.8	9.3
Writing Coursework (untiered)	60	60	20.2	8.4

		Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Listening boundary mark (3579 candidates)	raw	25	17	14	11	9	7
	scaled	25	17	14	11	9	7
	uniform	59	50	40	30	20	10
Reading boundary mark (3412 candidates)	raw	25	21	18	15	12	9
	scaled	25	21	18	15	12	9
	uniform	59	50	40	30	20	10
Speaking boundary mark (3539 candidates)	raw	36	19	16	13	10	7
	scaled	36	19	16	13	10	7
	uniform	59	50	40	30	20	10
Writing boundary mark (818 candidates)	raw	42	29	24	19	15	11
	scaled	42	29	24	19	15	11
	uniform	59	50	40	30	20	10

*Higher tier*

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Listening	30	40	15.0	5.2
Reading	35	45	19.2	5.6
Speaking	36	36	23.8	7.2
Writing	40	40	27.3	9.6
Writing Coursework (untiered)	60	60	20.2	8.4

		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Listening boundary mark (354 candidates)	raw	30	24	20	17	14	11	9
	scaled	30	24	20	17	14	11	9
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	35
Reading boundary mark (521 candidates)	raw	35	27	23	20	18	13	10
	scaled	35	27	23	20	18	13	10
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	35
Speaking boundary mark (394 candidates)	raw	36	33	28	24	20	16	14
	scaled	36	33	28	24	20	16	14
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	35
Writing boundary mark (128 candidates)	raw	40	38	28	21	15	12	10
	scaled	40	38	28	21	15	12	10
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	35

		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Writing coursework (untiered) boundary mark (2987 candidates)	raw	60	36	32	28	24	18	13	8	3
	scaled	60	36	32	28	24	18	13	8	3
	uniform	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

## Provisional statistics for the award

### *Overall award*

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

### *Overall (4721 candidates)*

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	0.4	2.1	4.7	13.7	31.7	54.9	77.1	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.