



AQA qualification support

AS and A-level French

Preparing to teach the new specifications

Commentaries

BOOKLET 5

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Commentaries on A-level French Paper 2

A-level Student 1

Q4.1: L'étranger

Analysez comment le comportement et les attitudes de Meursault mènent à sa mort à la fin du récit.

AO4

This is a borderline reasonable/good essay in terms of the overall critical and analytical response to the question set. The student identifies three aspects of Meursault's behaviour/attitudes on which to focus in the answer: (a) his behaviour at his mother's funeral; (b) his refusal to lie; (c) his lack of religious beliefs or convictions. Each of these is exemplified with some knowledge of the text demonstrated:

- (a) the fact that he does not cry at the funeral and that he smokes a cigarette
- (b) his response to the judge's question about regretting his action and his response to Marie when she asks him if he loves her
- (c) his refusal to believe in God and his response when the chaplain says he will pray for Meursault's forgiveness.

All of this is valid material but the student draws the same conclusion each time which is that Meursault's bizarre behaviour, his refusal to play the game, is seen as threatening and therefore he is condemned to death. For the material the student has selected, knowledge is accurate and detailed but the weakness is the range of material selected. There is no acknowledgement of the significance of the structure of the *récit* and the fact that behaviour and attitudes displayed in Part 1 are viewed in a different light in the context of the trial following the murder of the Arab. There is no reference to the detail of the witness statements in Part 2.

= 12/20

AO3

The language is generally accurate with some minor errors. Some of the errors have a significant impact on the validity of judgements and opinions made eg *Meursault ne pleut pas ...* the student overall shows a good grasp of grammar and is often able to manipulate complex language accurately. The range of vocabulary is good with attempts to introduce variety in dealing with death, execution and condemnation.

= 14/20

Total = 26/40

A-level Student 2

Q15.1: La Haine

« Pour beaucoup de critiques, *La Haine* est un chef d'œuvre du cinéma. » Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous d'accord avec ce jugement ?

The indicative content states that “candidates will probably agree with this: the challenge for them is to give evidence to prove their case.”

AO4

This student does precisely that. The range of evidence, because of the range of aspects of the film that the student covers in the essay, is wide-ranging and convincing. Not only that, but it also deals in almost equal measure with both thematic and technical aspects of “work of art” status. The key feature of the descriptors in the top band is “consistently” and this essay demonstrates very clearly how consistent the accurate and detailed knowledge is throughout and how consistently and effectively that knowledge is used to support opinions, judgements and conclusions drawn. Note too that despite there not being an exact match between the points listed in indicative content and the points made in this essay, it is nonetheless worthy of the highest mark available, showing that indicative content is not rigidly prescriptive nor exhaustive. There is a passion and enthusiasm in writing about this film critically and analytically that comes out of the essay, which clearly illustrates the extent to which the student agrees that *La Haine* is a masterpiece of cinematography.

= 20/20

AO3

The grasp of grammar is secure and is better than “generally good” therefore worthy of a top-band mark. There are some errors in attempts to use more complex structures but generally the student manipulates complex language accurately. The range of vocabulary is impressively wide and highly appropriate to the topic.

= 18/20

Total = 38/40

A-level Student 3

Q9.1: Un secret

Analysez comment les rapports entre le narrateur et ses parents changent au cours du roman.

AO4

The critical and analytical response to this question is excellent. The “au cours du roman” element of the question determines the structure of the essay which tracks chronologically the nature of the relationship between the narrator and his parents. There is an excellent understanding of the “how” and the “why” of the changing relationship through from the narrator’s childhood to early adulthood. The contrasts between parents and narrator are well documented and explained. Knowledge of the text is detailed and accurate, although one or two references could be explained more clearly and more fully. Opinions, views and conclusions are consistently supported by relevant and appropriate evidence, which is expressed in a succinct and well-controlled way.

= 18/20

AO3

Mainly accurate language with occasional minor errors which in no way affect comprehension of what the student is expressing. The grasp of grammar is consistently secure and the manipulation of complex language is accurate. There is a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the text and to literary analysis and evaluation.

= 19/20

Total = 37/40

Commentaries on AS French Paper 2

AS Student 1

Q14.1: La Haine

Examinez les similarités et les différences entre Saïd, Vinz et Hubert dans *La Haine*.

A04

Knowledge is sometimes accurate and detailed and the student sometimes uses evidence to justify points of view and draw conclusions. Physical appearance is dealt with in terms of approximate ages and age-difference, colour of skin, and the latter links in with ethnicity. Similarities in social status include poverty and exclusion. Points of differences in behaviour, temperament and attitudes are clearly made and well-argued and the student shows a good understanding of these aspects of the three characters.

= 15/20

A03

The language is reasonably accurate with a few serious errors often occurring because of the intrusive influence of English creating anglicised French (*plus comme 16 ; arrêter les luttes au lieu de s'installer en eux*); grasp of grammar is reasonable and the student at times manipulates complex structures accurately.

= 11/15

Total = 26/35

AS Student 2

Q14.2: La Haine

« Le titre du film *La Haine* est bien choisi car il reflète exactement le thème principal du film. » Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous d'accord avec ce jugement ?

A04

This essay is thin on content and does not address the question through any detailed critical response. It makes the point that *la haine* is a key theme but does not explore this further. Instead there is brief mention of other themes but without any significant development of these either. The student agrees with the quotation but does not present any detailed case to support this judgement. The scene chosen as exemplifying the main theme is a good one but again the treatment of this section is superficial.

= 7/20

A03

The range of vocabulary is limited and there are many errors, some of a basic nature. There is little evidence of an ability to manipulate complex structures accurately.

= 6/15

Total = 13/35

AS Student 3

Q5.2: L'étranger

Examinez l'indifférence de Meursault aux normes de la société dans laquelle il vit.

A04

The critical response overall in this answer is very good. The student addresses the question well, arguing that in most respects Meursault can be seen to be indifferent to society's norms and expectations but pointing out that in his relationships with male characters, we can detect some differences in attitude. Good use is made of the bullet points in structuring and developing the answer and in organising the content of the essay. There is a good balance across the sections dealing with Meursault's relationship with his mother, his relationship with Marie, his atheism, his attitude during his trial and his relationship with other males. Knowledge is accurate and detailed and there is good use of appropriate evidence to support points of view.

= 18/20

A03

The language is generally accurate with some minor errors. The writing shows a generally good grasp of grammar and good control of accuracy.

= 14/15

Total = 32/35

Commentaries on A-level French Paper 3 - Speaking

A-level Student 1

Discussion of sub-theme – Card L

AO1

Throughout the discussion the student develops most ideas without needing too much prompting from the examiner. The delivery is mainly fluent: where there is hesitation it is usually to formulate an idea or opinion. Most, if not all, of the discussion comes across as very spontaneous and thus the student responds appropriately to most unpredictable elements.

= 4/5

AO2

Understanding of material on the card is good but the student does not ask any question in the course of the discussion. In a live test, of course, the examiner would remind the student of the need to do this by an appropriate prompt eg *y a-t-il quelque chose que vous voudriez me demander ?* As no question is asked, the mark for AO2 cannot be higher than 3.

= 3/5

AO3

Pronunciation and intonation are fairly good. [pie] for *pays* makes comprehension a little difficult initially but other than that it is fairly good. Errors are more than minor (verb forms somewhat insecure; confusion of passive and active forms; word order in eg *qui on travaille avec*). Some variety of vocabulary and some complex language demonstrated but accurate application of grammar is uneven.

= 6/10

AO4

Much of the discussion is more general, rather than focused on France/French-speaking world but there is some evidence of French culture and society demonstrated within a reasonable critical and analytical response eg some understanding of the attitude of main political parties towards the immigration question (but no mention of anti-immigration policies or parties); an awareness that Maghreb countries might want a more tolerant attitude towards immigration from the French government; some awareness of the issue of quotas for and control of immigration. Such knowledge and understanding are reasonable and the student sometimes selects relevant information to support arguments.

= 3/5

Total for sub-theme discussion = 16/25

A-level Student 2

Discussion of sub-theme – Card F

AO1

Delivery is fluent throughout. Ideas and opinions are nearly always developed. In fact there is only one occasion where the student responds with a minimal *oui, peut-être*. Otherwise there is a very full and detailed development of opinions and ideas and an appropriate response to nearly all unpredictable elements, of which there were many. The overall impression here is that this is a completely spontaneous discussion.

= 5/5

AO2

The material on the card has been well understood. In the course of the discussion the student asks two questions which are appropriate to the context of the discussion and which are well-phrased. (The examiner's response to the second question is rather too long.)

= 5/5

AO3

Pronunciation and intonation are very good. There is a wide range of vocabulary and complex language in evidence. Errors are minor and occasional. The student's handling of the language is impressive, both in terms of accuracy and range, enabling a meaningful discussion to take place between student and examiner.

= 10/10

AO4

Within the opportunities available to do so, the student shows a good critical and analytical response, with good knowledge and understanding of those aspects of the sub-theme covered in the discussion. There is evidence of evaluation in the discussion of the benefits of the Cannes Film Festival, the influence of French cinema and movements such as the *Nouvelle Vague*, and inequality in how actors and actresses are treated and rewarded, which could apply to a French-speaking context. Had the student studied this topic with a specifically French-speaking community focus to discuss in a "live" test, it is clear that she would have scored the full marks available.

= 4/5

Total for sub-theme discussion = 24/25

A-level Student 3

Individual Research Project Presentation

A04

The presentation was very short and very thin on content with mention only in very vague terms of the subject of the play and its philosophical content (*existentialisme*) and reference to one character but with very little detail about him. Very limited knowledge and understanding of the area of study are evident in the presentation.

= 1/5

Individual Research Project Discussion

A01

The general impression is that the student is not too confident about discussing this topic. Delivery is sometimes fluent and with some questions the student successfully manages to develop ideas and opinions but this is only sometimes. There are a number of questions where responses are limited and where the examiner needs to prompt for further material to be given.

= 5/10

A03

A very similar performance to the discussion of the sub-theme with similar errors made. Overall the judgement has to be the same. There is some variety of vocabulary. Accurate application of grammar is uneven. Pronunciation fairly good.

= 5/10

A04

The critical and analytical response in evidence here was reasonable. "sometimes" characterises this performance. The grasp of material relevant to a knowledgeable and informed discussion throughout of *Les Mains Sales* was not secure – in fact it came over as very patchy. The student was confident enough to talk about characters and differences between them (for example Hugo and Hoederer) and there was evidence of some understanding of the link between Hoederer and existentialism as a theme.

= 6/10

Total for Individual Research Project = 17/35

A-level Student 4

Individual Research Project Presentation

AO4

A lot of facts are presented in the course of the presentation about Baudelaire's life, family, where he lived in Paris, what the Quartier Latin was like, drug-taking and factual information about Baudelaire's poetry. There is some evidence of an understanding of this area of study through mention of public reaction to some immoral aspects of the poetry. The knowledge and understanding are reasonable.

= 3/5

Individual Research Project Discussion

AO1

Development of ideas in the early stages of the discussion is rather repetitive but thereafter ideas and opinions expressed are mostly developed independently of prompts. One area where there is not the same level of development is on aspects of style but otherwise the student gives an appropriate response to most unpredictable elements. Delivery is mainly fluent.

= 8/10

AO3

There is a stark contrast between the handling of language to do with range and accuracy and the quality of pronunciation and intonation. In terms of the latter there is evidence on a number of occasions where mispronunciation significantly gets in the way of understanding (*la mort* and *l'amour*) and this has to be taken into account in awarding a mark for AO3. The performance does not accurately match the descriptors in one band.

= 6/10

AO4

In the early part of the discussion the response is reasonable. As the discussion progresses, the student demonstrates a better knowledge and understanding of her material including knowledge, understanding and an evaluation of themes and thematic content and a sound understanding of the impact and influence of Baudelaire on French poetry. Overall the critical and analytical response is good.

= 7/10

Total for Individual Research Project = 24/35

Commentary on AS French Paper 3 - Speaking

AS Student 1

Discussion of sub-theme – Card D

A01

A good pace of delivery that makes nearly all responses easy to follow with development of most opinions and ideas and an appropriate response to most unpredictable elements. Questions about the student's own habits re use of cyber-technology tend to be less well-developed than responses to other questions.

= 5/5

A02

The material on the card is very well understood and there is an appropriate question put by the student to the examiner.

= 5/5

A03

Pronunciation and intonation are good. There is some variety of vocabulary and complex language is demonstrated. Application of grammar is often accurate.

= 8/10

A04

There is a clear attempt in response to the first and third printed questions to refer to knowledge of how French-speakers use cyber-technology even though the starting-point for the first answer was that there is probably not that much difference between France and England. Question 3 prompts some thoughtful comparisons. The nature of the questioning, influenced by how this topic has been studied currently, means that opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and understanding are more limited than they would be in a live test for this new specification.

= 7/10

Total for sub-theme discussion = 25/30

Commentary on A-level French Paper 1 – Listening summary

Q3: Interview avec un sans-abri

Marking and commentary

One content point is successfully conveyed in Bullet point 1, namely less noise. The misspelling of *aire* invalidates the point about pollution. The two content points are credited in Bullet point 2 and likewise in Bullet point 3.

AO1 = 5/7

The language produced contains many errors of a basic nature. The student shows little grasp of grammar and is rarely able to manipulate complex structures accurately where required by the task.

AO3 = 1/5

Commentary on A-level French Paper 1 – Reading summary

Q8 Une enfance pas comme les autres

Marking and commentary

The student scores all seven content points for AO2 as all elements identified in the mark scheme are included in the response.

AO2 = 7/7

Those parts of the summary where points are expressed in the student's own words are highlighted. Many lexical items are taken directly from the original but there is a clear attempt by the student, in composing this summary paragraph, to sequence and contextualise points in a way that is different from the original and in so doing the student succeeds in creating some appropriately complex sentences. There is not a lot of language not figuring in the original. However, as a piece of summary writing, the student has successfully "added value" in the arrangement and presentation of the material. The language is mainly accurate with only occasional minor errors (*étages* not quite the *mot juste*; *comprennions* is a minor mis-spelling error); the student shows a consistently secure grasp of grammar and is able to manipulate complex language accurately where required by the task

AO3 = 5/5

Commentary on AS French Paper 1 – Listening Summary

Q3 Le Festival Ebène à la Martinique

Marking and commentary

Bullet point 1 is successfully addressed in terms of content and Bullet point 2 has 2 out of 3 relevant content points. There is no mention of the rise of AIDS awareness. There is no content relevant to Bullet point 3.

AO1 = 4/7

The language produced contains many errors. The student shows some grasp of grammar and is occasionally able to manipulate complex structures accurately where required by the task.

AO3 = 3/5

Commentary on AS French Paper 1 – Reading Summary

Q8 Aide aux personnes âgées en Belgique

Marking and commentary

No reference to causes of loneliness; no mention that TAS is a charity; no reference to home-visits. 3 out of 7 content points can therefore be credited.

AO2 = 3/7

Much of the summary is expressed in the student's own words. The language produced contains many errors. The student shows some grasp of grammar and is occasionally able to manipulate complex structures accurately where required by the task.

AO3 = 3/5