
GCSE FRENCH

8658/LH Paper 1 Listening Higher
Report on the Examination

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General Introduction to the November Series

This has been an unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

Overview of Entry

This paper proved to be accessible to most students entered for this series. Most were able to score marks in each question of the paper. The standard of the work seen was generally very good. There were some clear indications that students were able to deal with a range of question types, some of which were done particularly well. Although the entry was relatively small in comparison to normal examination years, similar issues to previous years were apparent in this paper, particularly in questions requiring verbal answers. Too often, the marks lost in these types of questions were due to a lack of clarity or to ambiguity. At the top end, it was pleasing to see many students gaining marks in the most testing questions.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Of the three correct answers in this question, E and F were the ones most recognised by students. Option C was the one which posed the most problems for those who only scored 2 marks. Students were unable to identify the cognate *positivité* or understand the clue given by the last sentence of the transcript.

Questions 2-4

These questions were answered better than anticipated. It was pleasing to see that the majority of students scored at least one mark in each question. In Question 2, F was the correct answer which most students identified. A was the correct answer for Question 3 and was chosen by most, while D was the one for Question 4. Those who did not score the second mark available in Questions 2 and 3 had not been able to make the link between the clue given and the options on the paper. In Question 4, those who did not score a second mark were distracted by the word *voyages* and incorrectly opted for answer G as a result.

Question 5

Question 5 was a high demand question as it required students to demonstrate their ability to draw conclusions from what they had heard. 5.1 proved to be the most accessible of all three questions.

Questions 6-7

These overlap questions with Foundation tier were done much better by students at this tier. The main issue in Question 6 was the confusion with *verre* which some understood as *vert* or *vers* leading to incorrect answers referring to a problem with worms or green areas. There was also a lack of clarity for some students for the second answer in Question 6. In Question 7, many misunderstood the verb *fabrique* and put 'fabric' as one of their answers. A very small minority lost a mark in Question 7 due to adding an extra detail to their answers which negated the correct answer.

Questions 8-9

These were aimed at the highest grades due to the level of precision required in each answer and the vocabulary used in the transcript. Question 9 proved the most challenging for most students. The main issue in this question was the fact that most incorrect answers were irrelevant to the question asked. Answers such as 'if she continues like that she will get good marks', although mentioned in the transcript, were rejected as they did not answer the question: What does Agnès say about the day? Students must continue to listen to whole utterances and decide which extraneous details are not required by the question set.

Questions 10-13

These questions were of medium demand. Questions 10 and 12 proved to be the most accessible in this section. Question 11 was the least successful due to many students incorrectly selecting option E having been misled by the key words *stade*, *match* and *équipe*.

Question 14-15

Question 14 was a high demand question and was done well overall. Many students who did not score correctly for Question 15.1 did not know the vocabulary item *faire de la voile*. There were also many who were distracted by the first utterance. Centres must remind students that questions requiring verbal answers tend to require the need to listen to whole utterances carefully before putting down an answer. Question 15.2 was not an issue except for those who misunderstood *mer* for *mère*. It is a good idea to remind students that the answer should make sense and although *mer* and *mère* are indeed homonyms, the latter did not make sense in the context of this question.

Questions 16-17

Despite being of high demand, these questions performed better than anticipated with many students scoring 2 marks in each section.

Questions 18-22

Overall these questions were done very well by students at this tier. Question 20 was the highest scoring question in this paper with all students scoring the mark. Question 21 was the least successful in this section suggesting perhaps that *heureusement* was not always identified as introducing a positive statement.

Questions 23-24

In this section, Question 24 proved much more accessible than anticipated showing the students' ability to recognise the relationship between tenses.

Questions 25-26

These questions were of medium and high demands and it was pleasing to see that students are now more familiar with this type of question. In Question 25.1 many gained the mark despite the incorrect spelling of *directeur*. It is worth reminding students that, as per the General principles of marking section of the Mark Scheme paragraph 7 B, 'minor spelling errors are accepted as long as the answer is understandable with no ambiguity. In Section B, this means that even if the spelling error results in the creation of a word in another language, including English, then provided it is a recognisable attempt at a spelling in the target language, it will be credited'. A few students in Question 26.1 lost the mark because they added an extra detail negating the correct answer (eg *les règles et les profs*). In Question 26.2, although the expected answer was '*inquiétant*', the alternative *trop grand/large* was accepted as a correct answer for those who had chosen it instead.

Concluding Remarks

There were many pleasing answers in this paper and it was encouraging to see most students being able to gain marks in each question. Despite this, some questions discriminated more than others. Students tackled the range of questions well especially in Section B's verbal answers which have proved to be the most demanding questions in previous series.

As in previous series, students must be reminded of the following key techniques:

- listen carefully to whole utterances before putting down an answer.
- in verbal answers in English, write down exactly what you hear. You may lose the meaning of the key idea by trying to use your own words.
- in verbal answers in French, always try and lift the answer directly from what you hear. No language manipulation is required.
- read each question carefully and check that your answer makes sense and fits the question set.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.