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# A-LEVEL FRENCH

7652/2 Writing  
Report on the Examination

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## General

Across the entry this year, all works were covered, with the three most popular literary works being *No et moi*, *L'étranger* and *Un sac de billes*, and the three most popular films being *La Haine*, *Au revoir les enfants* and *Entre les murs*.

The most popular combination of film and text was *No et moi* paired with *La Haine*, though *La Haine* studied together with *L'étranger* was also common, and a significant number of centres studied the two Occupation-based works of *Un sac de billes* and *Au revoir les enfants*. Most centres opted for the film and text combination of works but some studied two literary texts.

A short commentary on each of the works and the related questions is given in the remainder of this report. In general terms, all students had gained some knowledge and understanding of the works they had studied and – again generally – what differentiated performances was the accuracy and level of detail of the knowledge demonstrated, its relevance to the chosen question, and the effectiveness with which the knowledge and understanding were used in support of points made in the responses.

## Section A : Literary works

Molière: *Le Tartuffe*

Question 1 was less popular than question 2 and was generally not well handled. Students were far more confident writing about the power struggle in Orgon's household, and the way this changes in the course of the play was well documented with good evidence drawn from the involvement of different characters.

Voltaire: *Candide*

Question 1 was by far the more popular of the questions but both were well-handled. With the first question, students successfully identified those aspects of the work that might not be taken as seriously today, but also pointed out what remains highly relevant for today's reader. The philosophical versus the psychological interest of characters produced some good answers in question 2.

Maupassant: *Boule de Suif* et autres contes de la guerre

The numbers opting for question 1 and question 2 were roughly the same, but question 1 was handled with greater confidence, with some detailed and accurate analysis of the portrayal of women through the *Boule de Suif* female characters and some very well argued contrasts. Question 2 was often taken as a prompt for recounting the narrative of the stories selected and the element of realism in the everyday lives of characters was often overlooked.

Camus : *L'étranger*

Question 2 was far and away the more popular option here with 89 students opting for question 1 and 1026 for question 2. There was evidence of a sound understanding of the significance of events and of Meursault's behaviour prior to the murder of the Arab, and of how this was used in his trial, but with this text, students were often distracted from addressing the question set by what they saw as a need to explain, in great detail, the philosophy of the Absurd, and this invariably produced a largely irrelevant response.

**Sagan : Bonjour Tristesse**

Both options here attracted similar numbers of responses and, in general terms, the first question was more successful. Students made good use of analysing how characters reflect and represent traditional and/or liberal values, and the tensions between these. Equally, there was a good understanding shown in the second question of how Raymond and Cécile are more interested in the pursuit of pleasure than of love.

**Etcherelli : Elise ou la vraie vie**

There were only two responses on this text, both to question 1.

**Joffo: Un sac de billes**

Question 1 was the more popular choice. Many answers here were restricted to the episodes in the early chapters which show Joseph's childhood and relationship with Maurice and his family, and did not plot aspects of his behaviour as a 10 year old beyond this material. There was also evidence, however, of how aspects of Joseph's experiences force him to grow up and mature sooner than he normally would have done. Question 2 was generally well-answered with plenty of evidence, in the case of the best answers, of a wide range of interventions by strangers, but also of the boys' own *debrouillardise* and its contribution to their survival.

**Guène: Kiffe kiffe demain**

Question 1 attracted the most responses. There was evidence in responses of detailed knowledge and understanding of the text, but the material was not always successfully organised and presented in a relevant and coherent way. This applied to both questions. What students knew about characters and episodes in the novel was not always effectively linked to the thrust of the questions.

**Grimbert: Un secret**

About double the number of students opted for question 2 than did question 1, and while the answers to both questions showed evidence of good, confident handling of knowledge to support points made, this was especially the case with question 2. The best answers here made very discerning judgements about aspects of both female and male characters that might or might not have warranted our admiration. Question 1 sometimes led to a rather confused treatment of the different versions of the past that the narrator presents.

**De Vigan: No et moi**

The two questions were equally popular and produced very similar types of response. What distinguished excellent and good performances here was the detail of the knowledge demonstrated and the attention given to explaining how this was evidence, in the case of question 1, of the injustices in the characters' lives, and, in the case of question 2, of the reasons for Lou's lack of self-confidence. This detailed explanation was often left unstated in the limited to reasonable responses.

**Section B : Films****Truffaut : Les 400 coups**

Question 2 was by far the more popular choice and students opting for this produced some good responses in their essays, with a clear analysis of factors in Antoine's life that justify the view that it is not all his fault, but also with a case made where what befalls him is clearly of his own doing. Responses to question 1 tended to narrate the closing scenes of the film rather than look beyond to the significance of the freeze-frame in the context of what has gone before.

**Malle : Au revoir les enfants**

Each question here was equally popular, though the second was handled more successfully on the whole, with a good knowledge demonstrated of those aspects of the film that evoke the period in which it is set. The question about contrasts was often taken as an opportunity to rework a previous question and so the contrasts were those between the different characters of Julien and Jean, which led to a response about the development of their friendship.

**Kassovitz : La Haine**

Question 2 attracted far more interest (2445 responses) than question 1 (487). The effective selection and presentation of relevant material from the whole *corpus* of knowledge that students have gained about this film remains the one clear difference in the quality of responses. In so many cases, with either question, many students simply set off on their presentation of everything they knew about *La Haine*, with scant regard for the relevance or otherwise of the points presented. More than any other work, this one illustrates the key feature of a good examination answer, namely that it is quality not quantity that counts.

**Klapisch : L'auberge espagnole**

Question 2 was the more popular, understandably so as it allowed for some choice in which characters were selected for the response. Sometimes, the element of “worthy of admiration” was overlooked and students simply presented three character studies, but the choice was also well-justified in other cases. Responses to question 1 likewise became rather restricted, concentrating only on how Xavier and Anne-Sophie behaved away from France and how their relationship developed.

**Jeunet : Un long dimanche de fiançailles**

Though question 2 was the more popular, it was with the first question that students demonstrated a confident selection and presentation of relevant material, with almost three quarters of responses being judged good to excellent for AO4. There was a varied range of material used to illustrate the contrasts in the film, and arguments were presented with conviction. Equally, the effects of the war on characters produced some good and excellent detailed responses.

**Cantet : Entre les murs**

Question 2 was the more popular option and those who could see the subtlety in the question of the audience’s sympathy for Marin, and argue that the response to the question was not black or white, produced good answers. Question 1 was well-answered where students were confident about their knowledge and understanding, but in many cases, the responses did not address the specifics of the question and simply presented the problems and circumstances of a range of pupils in Monsieur Marin’s class.

**Assessment Objective 3**

The full range of marks was used in the assessment of AO3. In general terms, students demonstrated that in their study of the text or film, they had acquired vocabulary that enabled them to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, but key words – and words that actually featured in the questions on the paper – were misspelt. At the top of the range, there was a high level of accuracy and an ability to manipulate complex structures accurately. Language errors or misuse of language – the literal translation of English concepts and phrases into French – often caused the breakdown of effective communication of an idea or opinion which therefore could not be credited for AO4. There was evidence in the planning of some responses that students had been

encouraged to include certain structures or points of language, as if such a checklist would automatically increase the mark awarded. There was evidence too of pre-learnt (and very lengthy) introductory paragraphs explaining the context and background of a work. Neither of these strategies is effective in influencing the mark awarded for language and the time spent reproducing such set-pieces would be better spent planning and organising, in French, a response to the question encountered and selected on the day of the examination.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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