



A-LEVEL FRENCH

7652/3T/3V Speaking
Report on the Examination

7652
June 2022

Version: 1.0

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Administration

Centres entering students for the teacher-examiner option (7652/3T) dealt efficiently with the new requirement this year to upload recordings to the AQA Portal and many centres sent the appropriate paperwork to the examiner. In some cases, however, there were delays in the posting out of this paperwork which meant that examiners could not begin marking tests. The Candidate Record Form must be signed by student and teacher. Some centres for the V option sent the form to the examiner electronically with names printed in the signature spaces: for future reference, please note that a hard-copy of the form is required. Some V option examiners had forms that contained only sources for the IRP. In such cases, it was difficult to know exactly what aspects of the topic the research had covered, and it is recommended that students provide headings as well as sources so that the examiner can better structure and steer the IRP discussion. Centres are reminded that the IRP title and any headings provided on the Candidate Record Form must be in **English**: only French sources should be written in French.

In the documentation from T option centres, it would be helpful to provide the name(s) of the teacher-examiner(s) so that if a Teacher Tester Performance Report needed to be completed, the examiner could be identified. Teacher-examiners are reminded that specific instructions for the conduct of the test are provided by AQA and it is expected that these will be adhered to, especially in relation to how the test should be introduced, how the stimulus cards should be identified just by reference to the letter and not to themes or sub-themes, and also the timings for each part of the test. Most of the tests were conducted in general terms according to the guidelines but there were still cases where errors and oversights in the conduct of the test impacted on the assessment of the student's performance. These are dealt with below.

Assessment Objective 2

The mark here was awarded for the understanding of the material on the card that the student demonstrated in response to the first printed question as well as for the requirement of two questions asked of the examiner. The understanding of the material can be judged to be very limited, limited, some understanding, good or very good.

There was an issue here with some of the V option students in that, when they were asked supplementary questions about the material on the card (with examiners using prompts such as *selon le texte*, *selon la carte*), they responded with information drawn from their studies and did not realise that, had such questions been answered with reference to the card, this would have enabled them to increase their mark for AO2.

Likewise, with the T option, many teacher-examiners accepted the student's response to the first question and then moved immediately on to the second printed question. This meant that if the student gave only a brief response about one piece of information on the card, the understanding was assessed – at best – as limited and was awarded 2 marks maximum. Teacher-examiners who asked supplementary questions about the material on the card allowed their students to give more information, thus demonstrate a better understanding and so achieve a higher mark. Examiners are reminded that the heading on the card above the photograph should not be overlooked when inviting students to demonstrate their understanding of the material.

How the discussion was conducted between the first and second printed questions could and indeed did have a significant impact on the score a student achieved for AO2.

Perhaps because of the two-year gap since speaking tests were last conducted, there was some confusion about what was required of the student when phrasing the questions for the examiner. The questions had to have a conjugated verb. Statements in the first person in French followed by *Et vous?* (*Moi je pense que c'est une bonne chose. Et vous ?*) did not meet the requirement and in such cases the mark for AO2 was capped. If only one valid question was asked, the maximum mark that a student could be awarded was 4 and if no valid question was asked, the maximum mark was capped at 3. Many students formulated and wrote down their questions in the preparation time and this proved to be a very effective strategy.

Assessment Objective 4

The nature of the questions used in the discussion, in some cases, had a significant impact on the mark awarded for this Assessment Objective. What was rewarded in this AO was the knowledge and understanding of the aspects of the sub-theme under discussion in the context of France and/or the French-speaking world. Where the whole of the discussion was focused on aspects of France and/or francophone regions, countries or communities, students achieved high scores for AO4. Discussions on some of the themes – especially those linked to the first year of the course – were related too much to the student's own experiences and tastes (their preferred genre of music or film; their involvement in voluntary work) with only passing reference to a French or francophone context, and, as a consequence, these performances did not score high marks for AO4. The Year 2 themes and sub-themes were often better handled in relation to AO4, with clear evidence of a good or very good critical and analytical response.

Observations about individual cards

In general terms, there was evidence this year that students had skimmed the texts and, in so doing, had missed or not understood significant details. Examples are given in the notes on individual cards.

Carte A: Many students stated that there had been 7000 marriages, rather than 7000 more marriages, this year in France. Surprisingly, the handling of numbers gave rise to many rather basic errors (7 million for some, 700 for others). Even 36 and 38 proved too challenging for some. Where students were asked about the statement *le mariage revient à la mode*, many were unsure of its meaning. Responses to questions explaining possible reasons for the trends given were generally well handled with frequent references to the post-pandemic and post-lockdown lifting of restrictions and thus to more couples being able to get married. There was some awareness of how marriage is evolving in France and/or the French-speaking world with some excellent examples from beyond mainland France.

Carte B: the rather paradoxical heading statement of isolation within families was not understood or appreciated by the vast majority of students and *écrans* was often taken to refer only to television screens. Responses to question 1 here concentrated on time spent with technology by adults and children and that was often the extent of the understanding demonstrated. Supplementary questions here should have explored the statement of the sociologist and his attitude to this state of affairs, and the behaviour of parents when playing with their children. The discussion after the printed questions generally took one of two directions: either students were questioned about how they used technology, how much time they spent using it – none of which scored marks for AO4 – or they were asked about particular trends in France or the French-speaking world – which, of course, did score marks for AO4.

Carte C: Luxembourg was reported by many to be the richest country in Europe (rather than one of the richest). It was likewise reported that across Luxembourg there were 90 voluntary workers in total. There was much confusion arising from the last sentence in the text with students stating that the voluntary workers approach football clubs, supermarket chains and international banks for donations. In discussing this sub-theme, there is still, for some, quite a heavy reliance on coursebook information: the *Croix Rouge* is not a particularly French phenomenon. The *Restos du Coeur* feature regularly but there is often confusion arising from the mispronunciation of this organisation (*restos du corps*). Students would be well-advised to take their knowledge of those helped by volunteers beyond the homeless, and of those helping, beyond the retired.

Carte D: students who opted for this card usually dealt with the content very well and successfully identified the three parties figuring in the first four lines of text. References to the *flèche* and the debate about how it should be rebuilt were not well understood on the whole. It was encouraging to see that the Notre Dame fire was an event students were aware of, and that they were also well-versed in heritage-related questions and issues. There was sound evidence of knowledge beyond the rather well-worn Lascaux 2 and Mont St Michel.

Carte E: the significance of *en dehors de* was not always understood and the information was relayed as referring to France and the French-speaking world. Likewise, the statement *La musique française vit un âge d'or à l'international* was often overlooked. In both these cases, there was a clue to the message in the heading's reference to *star à l'export*, and, as stated previously, this was very often the one element of the material on the card that students simply did not read. Contemporary francophone music seems to be a popular topic with students and many recounted how they have come to discover and appreciate francophone artists and performers.

Carte F: students opting for this card tended to "lift" the first two lines of text in response to the first question and it was doubtful if they understood the term *court-métrage*. The remainder of the text was generally ignored or overlooked and so marks for AO2, on this particular card, were not in the upper bands. *Que va-t-on faire au cours du Festival ?* and *Que pense le directeur du Festival ?* are a couple of very straightforward questions that could and would have boosted the AO2 mark. There seems to be a reluctance on the part of teacher-examiners to invite and encourage students to talk about French films they have watched. This would be perfectly acceptable provided the film in question is not one that has been studied for Paper 2.

Carte G: the least popular of all of the cards in this series, but where it was chosen, students produced some good points in relation to multiculturalism in France and Canada, and, where no prompting or additional questions were needed, made a decent job of summarising the content of the card.

Carte H: most students giving a detailed answer to the first question handled this well. Many, however, paid too little attention to the text and reported it as an initiative that was happening in France. Likewise, there was no reference to what the head of the project stated. In the general discussion, there was some good and very good knowledge and understanding shown of initiatives to encourage inclusivity including quotas in employment laws. This was another Year 2 topic that showed a better level of AO4 knowledge and understanding.

Carte I: those who opted for this card dealt with the text fairly well and showed that the content can be summarised and conveyed effectively without the need to understand every word. (*Parmi les crimes les plus fréquents, il y a les vols de téléphones portables et les vols dans les grandes surfaces*). Where students gave a full answer to the first question without the need for further

prompts they showed an understanding of most of the points. In some cases, there was little awareness shown of alternatives to prison sentences such as the TIG or electronic tagging.

Carte J: this card was well-handled when it was chosen. Most students understood and reported on the three bullet points in the text very successfully though some thought that *enseignants* was another word for parents. There was some understanding of attitudes in France towards this question and some brought in reference to the young voters' abstention rates in the recent Presidential elections to suggest that generally, among young people, there is not the appetite for political engagement.

Carte K: performances with this card were somewhat extreme. Those who were very conversant with the topic of demonstrations and strikes and who had a good understanding of trade unions in France dealt with it very well indeed. Where this was not the case, however, the understanding of the content of the card was limited, with no real appreciation of the significance of the low level of membership of unions or of the reasons for this. The effectiveness of the *gilets jaunes* movement which did not rely on the *structures traditionnelles* of the unions was not appreciated. The more general discussion likewise reflected two very different levels of knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme.

Carte L: of the Year 2 themes, this was undoubtedly handled the most effectively, no doubt due to the very recent interest in the political landscape in France through the Presidential elections. Many students saw and seized the opportunity to build on the reference points in the text and bring the issue up to date with the 2022 results and, in so doing, demonstrated comprehensive knowledge of the fortunes not just of the *Rassemblement National* but of the other major (and in some cases some of the minor) players. There was evidence, too, of a very real engagement with the issues of immigration and insecurity.

Looking, then, at what conclusions can be drawn to achieve improvements going forward, there are really two key points of advice:

- (1) Students should aim to use their preparation time in a structured way, working methodically from the heading, through the text to the questions. They should take their time reading all of the text and noting points to use in response to the first printed question. They should try and give as full a response as possible to this first question. Next, they should focus on question 2 which asks for a personal reaction to the content of the card. The response here could bring in some knowledge that reinforces the points made on the card or indeed contradicts them in some way. This does not need to be a lengthy or detailed response. Finally they should concentrate on question 3, thinking of a couple of points to make in response to this. The answer here does not have to be full and detailed: this third printed question is a starter for the more general discussion and should not be seen as an invitation to hold forth at length about the sub-theme under discussion.
- (2) Examiners should pay attention to what students say in response to the first question and judge if the response shows very limited, limited, some, good or very good understanding of the material on the card. They should then have some questions ready that relate to points in the text which will allow students to improve their mark for AO2. They should ensure that students realise that any supplementary question(s) between printed questions 1 and 2 will be linked directly to the material on the card. They should also ensure that in the general discussion after the 3rd printed question, the focus is always on the context of France and/or the French-speaking world, and that questions provide opportunities for students to achieve the highest possible score for AO4.

Individual Research Project Presentations

Many presentations were well timed and well delivered and showed either good or thorough knowledge and understanding of the area of study. These covered a very wide and varied range of topics which had, for the most part, been well-researched, and where students showed a genuine interest in and engagement with the topic. Presentations which did not score well tended to be characterised by too much of a focus on reasons for choosing the topic and/or what the ensuing discussion would cover. The presentation is about outlining key findings from the research and there is a very useful section in the specification where the mark scheme descriptors are amplified. Students should be realistic about what they can deliver in a two minute presentation; some rushed through the delivery in such a way as to render much of it incomprehensible. Here it is very definitely a case of quality and not quantity.

Individual Research Project Discussions

There was a reluctance on the part of many teacher-examiners to use follow-up questions to explore further a response that a student had made, and so to be working from a set of pre-defined questions. This had a negative impact on the mark for AO1 in terms of the quality of the engagement in the discussion. Likewise, many questions were used to elicit factual information in the belief that this is what was rewarded in AO4. It was not the knowledge *per se* that was rewarded in the mark for AO4 but how that knowledge was selected and used to support opinions and arguments, and justify conclusions. Without the evidence that students were able to do this, the score achieved could not be considered above a band 1 or 2 performance.

Assessment Objective 3

The quality of language in terms of range of vocabulary, awareness and application of grammar, and pronunciation and intonation generally reflected the limited opportunities students have had over their course for regular and sustained face to face exchanges with their teachers. Given the circumstances, students are to be congratulated on what they achieved. Language was generally never so inaccurate as to impede communication or comprehension but the nature of some of the mistakes and errors showed that fewer opportunities to practise over time – inevitably – had had an impact. That said, there were some excellent performances with students demonstrating a good grasp of accuracy and an impressive range of vocabulary and structures. In general, the mark for AO3 in the more familiar territory of the Individual Research Project was better than in the Part One discussion.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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