
GCSE FRENCH

8658/RF: Reading Foundation
Report on the Examination

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General comments

It is important to state that the students who sat this paper appeared to have prepared effectively for the demands of the papers and this was evident in the manner in which the various questions were tackled. It was pleasing that there were very few questions for which students did not attempt answers and the majority responded to the questions fully, with a good level of detail. Their teachers also deserve praise for the thorough manner in which they had prepared their students. This was achieved despite all the difficulties experienced in the months before the examination took place.

The paper proved accessible to the students and there were many pleasing scripts, with questions 1, 2, 8 and 12 being particularly well answered by many. The questions which discriminated most effectively were the crossover questions (4, 6, 10 and 11) and also the translation task (question 13).

Section A

Question 1

This question was very well answered and provided students with a positive start to the paper. The vocabulary associated with jobs and careers was very well known by the vast majority of students.

Question 2

Generally, students also coped very well on this question, with more than 90% of all students scoring at least two of the four marks available. The main challenge was question 2.4 where all three possible multiple-choice answers were mentioned in the text but the correct answer was to be found in the sentence containing the phrase *en bonne santé*.

Question 3

More than 60% of students scored at least one of the available marks for each of the three sections. Students very often missed the meaning of the expression *il y a souvent trop de bruit* in 3.1. There were many guesses here including there is too much fruit, fights break out and the staff are unpleasant. In 3.2, it was the idea of not being able to go out during the week that was omitted, very often rendered as too much to do at the weekend. In 3.3, much confusion was caused by the word *notes*, with many taking this to mean note-taking.

Question 4

This was not as well answered as the previous questions. It was aimed at the higher grades and, as such, it was anticipated that many of the less able students would not pick out certain key details, such as *sans autorisation* in 4.1. The use of the imperfect tense caused some to give the wrong answer to 4.2. In 4.3, the phrase *une heure du matin* caused some confusion and led to some saying 'true' rather than 'not in the text'. In question 4.4, a number of students failed to score because they misunderstood the expression *une promesse qu'il va observer*. Overall, this question differentiated well.

Question 5

5.1 was generally well done, though unfortunately some took *magasin* to mean magazine and assumed that Nathan was a journalist.

Many answered 5.2 about his timidity successfully. There were three elements to 5.3 and few students managed to score all three marks, mainly due to the use of the verb *rire* which was not well-known.

Question 6

This was also a crossover question, so the questions were of high demand for this tier. 6.1 was often correct due to the various clues to war but 6.2 and 6.3 were less well answered. Clues such as *cheveux blancs* in 6.2 were not picked out; those students who were able to do this often scored well throughout the paper.

Question 7

The main problem here was caused by 7.2, which proved a challenging question. The reference to *litres d'eau* in Amir's text was spotted easily but it proved to be far harder for students to appreciate Bella's reference to *fermer le robinet*.

Question 8

This was well answered by most students, the main challenge being caused by *chanter* in 8.3. Many translated this as chatting or chanting rather than singing.

Section B

Question 9

Most of the parts of this question, based on a literary text, were successfully answered by many students. This was very encouraging as the literary text is often perceived to be difficult by students and teachers. The main stumbling blocks appeared to be in 9.1 where *triste* and *laide* were not recognised. Similarly, in 9.4, many spotted *mignons* and assumed he liked the children but then did not notice *bruyants* later in the same sentence.

Question 10

This was a crossover question. Parts 10.3 caused unexpected issues, with the mention of *médecin* causing many to choose *vrai* rather than *pas mentionnée*. Many did not see the link between *ils ont souvent faim* with *ils n'ont pas assez à manger* in 10.4.

Question 11

This was another crossover question, requiring answers in French. Unfortunately, a small number did answer in English and failed to score. Apart from 11.1, students struggled here to pick out the correct part of the text. 11.2 was often answered by *l'importance de l'éducation* which did not address the question set. The detail about playing in front of the mayor was omitted from 11.3 and many answered 11.4 with *ses fans seront contents*, rather than the fact that Meryl was going to release a new album. It was the need to recognise past and future tenses which was the challenge here.

Question 12

This question was very well answered, except for 12.5 where *passé* was not linked to *histoire*.

Question 13

The translation task contains phrases targeting all grades from 1-5 and always discriminates well. There is some evidence to suggest that a number of students were running out of time at this stage of the paper.

The main points to note were as follows:

- Paula's age was often wrongly translated, with numbers ranging from 6 to 70.
- *Elle est amusante* was nearly always correct.
- In *son professeur de danse*, the meaning of *son* was often missing and many thought the teacher was talented rather than Paula.
- Often in *il l'encourage* the direct object pronoun was omitted in the translation into English.
- *Participer à une compétition à Paris* was nearly always correctly translated.
- The word *inquiets* was not well-known or *un peu* was omitted.
- The past tense in *Paula a déjà décidé* was ignored and frequently translated by 'Paula will decide'.
- Many scored at the end for *d'y aller* since 'to go' was an acceptable answer.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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