



GCSE

FRENCH

8658/RH: Reading Higher
Report on the Examination

8658
June 2022

Version: 1.1

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Higher tier

General comments

The paper proved accessible and discriminated well. There were many successfully completed scripts, with questions 1, 4, 6 and 11 yielding particularly pleasing results. The questions which discriminated most effectively were the gap-filling text (question 8) and question 12, the translation task.

It is worth stating that the students seem to have been well prepared for the demands of the paper. It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of students attempted all the questions and most responded to the questions with some detail. In the face of all of the challenges of the last couple of years, the teachers deserve a special mention for the professional manner in which they had prepared their students.

Section A

Question 1

This crossover question, aimed at the lower grades on this tier, was very well answered by the majority of students. The only area which proved to be challenging was 1.3, where many did not identify the correct answer due to the mention of the time *une heure du matin*, which was often taken to mean the amount of time it took James to climb the tower.

Question 02

Generally, students also gained some credit for this question. In 2.1, many gained marks for 'improving history knowledge' and 'tourist being in a good mood', but many found the third element, 'being easy to gain employment outside the tourist season' to be too challenging and wrote about finding a job during the season. In the second part, having to work during the summer was often present though many misunderstood *travailler sept jours sur sept* and wrote about travel or working seven days in September.

Question 3

This was well answered by most. The most challenging elements appeared to be in 3.3, where understanding the girls' world and some sections being too long did not lead to the choice of the correct response, and in 3.4 where *peu intéressant* was taken to mean the film was interesting or the negative *n'est pas subtil* was not picked up.

Question 4

This crossover question on finding the theme of some poems was very well answered by the vast majority, with over 80% scoring maximum marks. This was very pleasing as the literary text questions are often considered to be challenging.

Question 5

This question was generally well done, though the final part (5.4) was the least successfully answered. Here, the clues *à l'ombre* and *se couvrir* were not always linked to the dangers of sunlight. All the other three parts were high scoring.

Question 6

The first two questions, about families not eating regular meals and being forced to leave their homes were very well answered. In 6.3, many did not gain the marks as they did not mention plastic waste going into the sea. Unfortunately some students gave vague answers about pollution and did not link this to spoiling the landscape. In 6.4, not picking wild rare plants was often mentioned but turning off air conditioning or sticking to tourist paths were not fully understood.

Question 7

The main challenge here was 7.3. A certain amount of inference, which is required in the specification, was needed to work out that both found their apprenticeship worthwhile. Unfortunately a number of students found this level of challenge to be too demanding. The phrase *ça valait vraiment la peine* indicated that Arthur was pleased by his experience. Though Basma says she did not immediately think of being an apprentice, she goes on to state that she earned money and gained in maturity, suggesting that she also found the experience rewarding. Similarly, in 7.5, it is clear that Arthur is intending to work somewhere else, but Basma's reference to *ailleurs* was not always understood.

Section B**Question 8**

This question discriminated well and resulted in the full range of marks being awarded. It was aimed at the highest grades and so inevitably proved very challenging for many. There were, however, a pleasing number of students who scored full marks but the third, fifth and sixth gaps proved to be very challenging for a substantial number. The need for a plural verb after *où elles*, an infinitive after *à se* and the present participle after *en* were not widely recognised.

Question 9

Here, the theme of paragraphs 1 and 3 was nearly always correctly identified. Paragraphs 2 and 4 proved more elusive, with *meubles* not apparently well-known and the idea of owning up to your mistakes and taking responsibility for your actions was not fully understood.

Question 10

This was a crossover question with the first two parts causing few problems. Part 10.3 proved to be more challenging, with the mention of not being able to see a doctor being wrongly linked to a desire of Maya to be a doctor, which is not mentioned in the text. 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. All four parts of this question were well done, with more than three quarters of students scoring at least three marks out the four. The main stumbling block was in 11.2 where the answer required was ‘completing her studies’; many copied vague answers about the role of education which did not fit the past tense, as required in the question.

Question 12

The translation task contains phrases targeting all grades from 4-9 and always discriminates well. The main challenges here were caused by the need to translate the various past and future tenses correctly.

The main points were as follows:

- The first element (*Avez-vous décidé d’acheter*) was very well answered.
- A mark was occasionally lost for making *enfants* singular in English.
- *Avant la rentrée* was often translated as ‘after going back to school’.
- The first part of the sentence starting *c’est la meilleure façon* was often correct, but the second part led many to talk about the end of the journey.
- Most failed to convey the future tense in *ils pourront*.
- In *dans notre magasin* there were frequent references to magazines, or the *notre* was not translated.
- Very few gained a mark for the challenging phrase (set to test the higher grades) *qui leur plairont*. The tense was often wrongly conveyed, and many made guesses, such as which they need, which they use and so on.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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