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# AS LEVEL FRENCH

7651/3 Speaking  
Report on the Examination

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## Administration

Teacher-examiners should be familiar with what is required for the correct administration of the tests, which is set out in detail in the booklet *Notes and Guidance: Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams Summer 2023*. Some key reminders are provided below with page references to the above booklet so that the detailed instructions can be consulted.

Recordings should be saved in .mp3 format. Filenames for individual student recordings should comply with the required format. Centres successfully uploaded tests to the Media Submissions Portal but the accompanying documentation was not always submitted (pages 14 and 15). The discussion of each sub-theme must last between 6 and 7 minutes (page 17) and it should be noted that marking will stop 14 minutes after the first printed question for the first discussion has been asked.

The tests should be introduced according to the information provided in the Summary of procedures. Once the examiner has stated which stimulus card the student has chosen there is no point asking the student to identify this. The stimulus card should be identified by the letter of the card only and not by its theme and/or sub-theme. Teacher-examiners, in other words, should keep to the script set out in the Summary of Procedures (page 22).

## Conduct of the speaking tests

On the whole the tests were conducted well and, where teacher-examiners asked the right sorts of questions, students were able to achieve high scores. Some issues still remain, however, around the approach needed to allow students to access the higher marks for Assessment Objective 2 and for Assessment Objective 4.

## Assessment Objective 2

AO2 relates to the student's understanding of the material on the card. A significant number of teacher-examiners allowed students to under-achieve on this assessment objective by simply accepting the student's response to the first printed question and then moving on to the second printed question. Many students were very selective in the information from the card that they referred to; students also misinterpreted the information on the card; some students gave a very brief response to this first question. If, in any of these scenarios, the response went unchallenged, if there was no further exploration of the material on the card, the understanding of that material could not be judged to be any better than limited or very limited, and the mark for either of those bands had to be awarded.

It should also be noted that the mark for Assessment Objective 2 is not linked to and will not be influenced by any explanation of or information about the visual material on the card. It is inappropriate for students to describe what they see in photographs. The material on the card refers to anything that is printed, and this includes the heading above the visual, although both students and teacher-examiners often overlooked this.

It is also worth reminding teacher-examiners that the requirement of the student to ask a question in each discussion is linked to Assessment Objective 2. In the AS speaking test, if the student failed to ask a question and was not prompted to do so by the teacher-examiner, the mark for AO2 was brought down by one band. If a question was asked beyond the cut-off point in either discussion, it did not fulfil the requirement and so a penalty was incurred. For this reason, teacher-examiners are advised to prompt the student to ask a question earlier rather than later in each discussion.

## **Assessment Objective 4**

As set out in the specification, AO4 is about showing knowledge and understanding of, and responding critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.

Most teacher-examiners have understood the importance of tailoring their questions to provide opportunities for their students to achieve the higher marks for AO4. They have realised likewise the need to avoid asking questions inviting students to give a personal opinion about general issues linked to themes and sub-themes (for example, 'Do you think the Internet is something positive or negative?' 'What are the disadvantages, in your opinion, of single-parent families?'). Asking the right sorts of questions needs detailed and thoughtful preparation: teacher-examiners are required to conduct a discussion around the sub-theme on the stimulus-card in the context of France and/or the French-speaking world. This should be a recurrent feature of the 6-to-7-minute discussion: some teacher-examiners were clearly not aware of this and relied solely on the student's response to the 3<sup>rd</sup> printed question for 'ticking the AO4 box'. In such a case, however, the box was ticked in a very limited way.

In a significant number of tests, teacher-examiners did not make full use of opportunities provided by a student's response to a question to explore further the reference that had been given. For example, references to a French or francophone voluntary organisation, a law affecting families and partnerships, a singer, musician or film actor or director, remained unchallenged and would have been a very effective way of encouraging greater spontaneity as well as demonstrating more detailed AO4 knowledge and understanding. This practice limited the mark that could be awarded. Simply 'name-dropping' with little or no development did not enable students to achieve high marks for this Assessment Objective.

In those performances where the critical response was either good or very good, it was encouraging to see that more students were now drawing on their knowledge and understanding of themes and sub-themes from beyond the material in course-books, although this tended to be on sub-themes such as voluntary work, cultural heritage, cinema, and francophone music. Examining technique can help students with the sub-themes of the changing nature of the family and the cyber-society in that there is no requirement to keep to the focus of the stimulus card throughout the entire discussion. It would be unrealistic to expect a discussion about grandparents, for example, or cyber-bullying – in the context of France and/or the French-speaking world – to be sustained for 6 to 7 minutes. Teacher-examiners should therefore note that the sub-theme on the card sets the scope for the discussion.

## **Stimulus cards in the 2023 series**

Some students clearly had not understood that the purpose of the first printed question was to assess their understanding of the information on the card, and instead began 'setting out their AO4 stall'. There was therefore an issue here with how students are advised to use their preparation time and it is important to get the message across that the information on the card should be read and processed carefully so that, in response to the first question, students can give as detailed a summary of the content as possible, and the test can then move on.

**Cards A and B : la famille en voie de changement**

Despite some confusion between *mille* and *million*, the information on the card was generally well-handled by those students who gave a full and detailed summary of the information. Students, on the whole, showed a reasonable to very good knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme in the context of France and/or the French-speaking world with sound knowledge of trends regarding marriage, divorce, the PACs and of trends and changes in the structure of families.

**Cards C and D: la « cyber-société »**

Card C produced a better response than Card D on this sub-theme, probably because of the familiarity of TikTok compared with the phenomenon of 5G in Madagascar. Where the discussion was broadened out more generally to questions about how technology is used in France and/or the French-speaking world, there was evidence of some detailed knowledge and understanding. Those students who had visited French or francophone websites and were quizzed about this gave a generally very good account of the experience.

**Cards E and F : le rôle du bénévolat**

The nature of the voluntary work undertaken by Caritas Luxembourg was not always well understood, nor was the fact that the stimulus detailed what voluntary workers the organisation was looking to recruit. Card F produced a more confident response generally although, where students' brief responses went unchallenged, much of the detail on the card was overlooked. Some students had knowledge and understanding of some quite specific local and/or regional voluntary organisations in France and/or the French-speaking world, but there was equally much reliance on the *Croix Rouge* and *Restos du Cœur*.

**Cards G and H : une culture fière de son patrimoine**

The detail on Card G that the Notre-Dame in question was in Chartres, not Paris, was missed by many and, in some cases, this led to irrelevant discussions about the destruction caused by the fire. On this sub-theme generally, there was evidence of a good understanding – with a wide range of examples – of the difference between the *patrimoine matériel* and *immatériel*. Likewise, there was evidence of a prudent use of material from cards from previous series to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

**Cards I and J : la musique francophone contemporaine**

It would seem that this specification has had some success in converting students to French and/or francophone music. Both of these cards were well understood and prompted some very engaging and interesting discussions. Where students were invited or encouraged to do so, there was evidence of not just knowledge and understanding, but a genuine appreciation, of some musicians and artists.

**Cards K and L : cinéma – le septième art**

The purpose of the Cannes film festival to showcase quality films was understood but few students referred to the glamour of the occasion or to the celebrities that frequent it. Card L was well handled in terms of the detail on the card. Both cards prompted some interesting discussions and, where students were encouraged to talk in detail about familiar French and/or francophone films, again, a genuine appreciation was conveyed.

### Assessment Objective 3

Given that a significant part of the first part of the discussion centres on summarising material on the card, students would benefit greatly from being encouraged to read aloud and from having any unclear or inaccurate pronunciation corrected. There were many instances where accented words were mispronounced (*plus âgées*; *recomposées* – often pronounced as *récompensées*; *l'opportunité* – not the English word; *réfugiés* – not *réfugies*; *vulnérables* – not the English word; *traditions héritées*).

As in previous series, most students showed a reasonable grasp of grammar and in some cases demonstrated an impressively wide range of vocabulary and complex language. However, the application of grammar was sometimes quite inaccurate, with familiar common and sometimes serious errors being much in evidence:

Conjugation of verbs – *ils promouvoir ils sont écouter ils a devenu ils vont reçoit*

Passive – *elle est transmettre ils ont développés je n'ai surpris pas*

Negatives – *je ne vois pas rien c'est ne intéressant pas*

Pronouns – *vous s'amusez ils...ses chez leur les films qui ils regardent quelque chose qu'on doit être fier de*

Adjectives and adverbs – *les mals acteurs la seulement option c'est vite*

Comparisons – *si important comme plus bien les plus bons films*

Confusion with – *parce que/à cause de choquant/choqué surprenant/surpris bénévole/bénévolat penser à/de connaître/savoir jeunes/gens temps/fois/heure chose/choix assez/aussi très/trop/plus/beaucoup*

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

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