
A-LEVEL FRENCH

7652/3 Speaking
Report on the Examination

7652/3
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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 13 and 14). The Part 1 discussion of a sub-theme must last between 5 and 6 minutes, the IRP presentation should last 2 minutes, and the IRP discussion 9 to 10 minutes (page 16). It should be noted that marking will stop minutes 18 after the first printed question for the Part 1 discussion has been asked. In the marking of tests, timings were very closely monitored and issues to do with timings were reported back to centres on the *Teacher-Tester Performance Report (TTPR)*.

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. Nor should teacher-examiners read the heading at the top of the card as this is part of the material, the understanding of which is tested in Assessment Objective 2. In other words, teacher-examiners should keep to the script set out in the Summary of Procedures (page 20).

A CRF (*Candidate Record Form*) signed by both teacher and student must be submitted for each student. Titles and headings on the CRF must be in English: the only French text on this form would be for sources that have been used in the research. Where the centre has submitted and has had back a *Title Approval Form*, this should also be uploaded with the CRFs (page 14).

Conduct of the speaking tests

For the most part, the tests were conducted in a way that was sympathetic to the students and, where teacher-examiners asked the right sorts of questions, students were able to achieve high scores. Some quite serious 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. It should be emphasised that the points below, for both AO2 and AO4, are included in this report because of the negative impact that not following this guidance can have on the marks awarded to students.

Part 1: 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, however brief, 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; and some students did indeed give 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. Good practice was demonstrated by those teacher-examiners who asked supplementary questions after the first printed question, steering

students to deal with information on the card that they had overlooked in their first response. Prudent use of such questions enabled students to increase their mark for AO2.

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, which is why it is important that the teacher-examiner does not refer to this text in any introductory remarks. It is also worth reminding teacher-examiners that the requirement of the student to ask two questions in this discussion is linked to Assessment Objective 2. In the A-level speaking test, if the student asked only one question and was not prompted to ask a second question by the teacher-examiner, the mark for AO2 was capped at a maximum of 4 marks. If the student asked no questions, the mark for AO2 was capped at a maximum of 3 marks. If questions were asked beyond the 6 minutes cut-off point, this did not fulfil the requirement and so the capping rule was applied. For this reason, teacher-examiners are advised to prompt the student to ask their questions earlier rather than later in the discussion. Teacher-examiners are also reminded that their response to questions asked by the student should be kept short: there were frequent examples of teacher-examiners 'holding forth' in their response to these questions, thereby limiting the time and the opportunities for their students to speak.

Part 1: 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?' 'Do you do voluntary work?'). 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 sustained feature of the 5-to-6-minute discussion: some teacher-examiners were clearly not aware of this and relied solely on the student's response to the third printed question for 'ticking the AO4 box'. In such a case, however, the box was ticked in a very limited way.

In many 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 laws affecting families and partnerships, to a French or francophone singer, musician or film actor or director, or to political parties in favour of or against the vote at 16, 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 'naame-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 discussion of sub-themes 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 5 to 6 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

The cards selected from the Year 12 sub-themes (Cards A to F) and those chosen from the Year 13 sub-themes (Cards G to L) were fairly evenly matched. However, 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. It is important to note that there are as many marks available for AO2 as there are for AO4 in the A-level stimulus card discussion.

Card A : la famille en voie de changement

This card was generally well-done. The familiar topic, with straightforward information, allowed students to show their knowledge of French culture and score marks for AO4. While it was the case that the main ideas were usually well conveyed, finer details were frequently missing, eg statistics and *une population vieillissante*.

Card B : la « cyber-société »

Some students found it difficult to extract extra information or make comparisons between the figures on the graph. Few mentioned how the information had been collected and, in many cases, were not asked this question. Often, in the discussion, teacher-examiners did not direct students to elicit information within the context of France and/or the French-speaking world, resulting in a lot of generalised talk about buying online.

Card C : le rôle du bénévolat

The students who scored better here showed that they were good at manipulating the language from nouns to verbs. Most were able to talk about charity work, mostly in a French context, although often limited to the *Restos du Cœur* and the *Croix Rouge*. There were some students, however, who showed that they had researched other voluntary organisations in the French-speaking world. Some teachers did not take advantage of the AO4 potential of this topic and limited themselves to asking about their students' experience of charity work.

Card D : une culture fière de son patrimoine

Much of the information on this card was not handled well and students who chose it often struggled to say much in response to the second printed question. That said, the broader discussion of the theme of *patrimoine* was a rich source for many students, enabling them to match the top band or second band descriptors for AO4.

Card E : la musique francophone contemporaine

This card was quite a popular choice, although not as much info from the card was extracted as for some other cards. Most students, when invited to do so, could talk knowledgeably about French musicians and quotas, but some knowledge here was restricted to 'name-dropping'.

Card F : cinéma – le septième art

Again, this card was a popular choice but information about Pixar and Universal was sometimes confused. Some students found it difficult to extract all the main material on the card. However, many had a lot to say about the history of French cinema, films and directors.

Card G : les aspects positifs d'une société diverse

The language in the text was very accessible and students were for the most part successful in conveying much of the information on the card. The case-study of Hafiz was well understood and most students were able to talk knowledgeably about immigrants. The discussion often touched on *laïcité*, which was an aspect that was well understood by many.

Card H : quelle vie pour les marginalisés ?

This was not a popular choice of card and the information was only partially summarised by those who did choose it, the broader discussion here did not need to focus just on physical handicap as a reason for exclusion: as stated previously, it is the sub-theme (in this case *Quelle vie pour les marginalisés ?*) that defines the scope of the discussion.

Card I : comment on traite les criminels

The handling of this card illustrated how preparing for Question 1 must involve more than simply skimming the text but also how important it is to have a good understanding of topic-specific vocabulary. Those students who did know the vocabulary and who gave time to reading the text carefully made a very good job of conveying the information, but they were in a minority.

Card J : les ados, le droit de vote et l'engagement politique

Few students referred to Elsa's position and many found it difficult to identify the detailed information in the text. There was some awareness and understanding of the *partis extrêmes* alluded to but no real understanding of opinions in France and/or the French-speaking world about having the vote at 16, though many referred to rates of abstentionism in the last presidential elections.

Card K : manifestations, grèves – à qui le pouvoir ?

Both the card and the broader discussion here were well-handled on the whole: general awareness and understanding of current demonstrations in France, as well as, in a few cases, the *gilets jaunes* movement, allowed for some high scores for AO4. It was quite refreshing to hear content other than about *mai 68*.

Card L : la politique et l'immigration

This card was usually well handled, although there was some confusion over the interpretation of the statement *il n'est pas possible de mesurer les bénéfices de l'immigration*, which was taken to mean there were no benefits. There were frequent references to Marine Le Pen in the broader discussion.

Individual Research Projects

The topics chosen by students covered a very wide and diverse range and there was ample evidence that research had been very effectively carried out and students had gained a lot of knowledge and understanding. Most projects were very well focused and clearly linked to a French and/or francophone context. Examiners, whether for the V or the T option, commented favourably on the enjoyment they derived in very many cases from conducting or listening to IRP presentations and discussions.

Part 2: The IRP Presentation

Timings were adhered to by the vast majority of students and the content of many presentations demonstrated good or very good preparation. There were two main areas where the quality of the presentation was adversely affected. The first was the pace of delivery: some students rushed through the presentation and attempted to say too much in the time available. While delivery *per se* was not marked, if what was being communicated was unclear because of the speed of delivery, this affected the mark awarded. The second area was to do with the content of the presentation: too many students chose to devote time in their presentation either to outlining what they intended to discuss later (*je voudrais expliquer, je vais discuter, j'ai l'intention de parler de...*) or to giving a very detailed account of the sources they had consulted in their research and how they assessed their usefulness or otherwise, or indeed to both of these. Such content was not relevant and did not attract marks. The mark scheme for the presentation rewarded the quality of knowledge about the chosen IRP topic demonstrated in the time available, which could be judged to be thorough, good, reasonable, limited or very limited. There is amplification for each of these judgements set out on page 33 of the A-level French specification.

Part 2: The IRP discussion

Questions asked of students were, for the most part, clearly targeted at allowing AO4 knowledge and understanding to be demonstrated. Where there was an issue with the IRP discussion, it was in the case of teacher-examiners working from a pre-determined set of questions, each of which was seen as an opportunity to allow the student to hold forth and give what amounted to a mini-presentation in response. Such exchanges did not in any way constitute a discussion and, while the performance for AO4 might have warranted a mark in either of the top two bands of the mark scheme, the same could not be said for AO1. The level and quality of engagement in the discussion were adversely affected by stage-managed question and answer exchanges that had little or no spontaneity about them, and this approach prevented many students from achieving high scores for AO1.

Assessment Objective 3

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:

The handling of numbers was often inaccurate with confusion between *cent*, *mille* and *million*.

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

Verb + infinitive – *ils voulaient de voir il peut devient j'aime peut je préfère de parle*

Subjunctive (or not) – *bien qu'ils sont il faut que je dis il pense que la musique soit*

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 bénévolé/bénévolat penser à/de connaître/savoir jeunes/gens temps/fois/heure chose/choix assez/aussi très/trop/plus/beaucoup*

Faux amis – *effectif éventuellement sensible assister*

Anglicisms – *ils ont un bon temps le texte est autour si ils ne pensent pas sur comment sérieux c’est*

Invented words – *protector provider promoter admitter restricter recogniser experiercer especialement*

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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