
GCSE

FRENCH

8658/RH Paper 2 Reading Higher Tier
Report on the Examination

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Higher Tier

General comments

Changes were made to the 2023 papers to reflect the removal of the regulatory requirement to test vocabulary outside of the published vocabulary list.

The paper proved accessible and discriminated well. There were many successfully answered scripts, with questions 1, 6, 7 and 11 demonstrating particularly pleasing results. The questions which discriminated most effectively were the gap-filling text (question 9) and question 12, the translation task.

On the whole, students were well prepared for the demands of the paper. The vast majority attempted all the questions and most responded to the questions requiring answers in English with some detail. Teachers are to be congratulated for the thorough and conscientious manner in which they had prepared their students.

Section A

Question 1

This crossover question based on a literary text, aimed at the lower grades on this tier, was very well answered by the majority of students, with 1.1 and 1.7 yielding a very high level of accuracy. The most challenging part was 1.3, with many students giving the incorrect answer due to the mention of *deux champs*, which was often taken to mean the number of floors. Despite this, more than half of all students scored the mark.

Question 2

Despite the increasing level of demand, generally, students also did well on this question, especially parts 1 and 2. The question called for the recognition of various opinions. In 2.4, many lost the mark. The correct answer was positive and negative though many stopped reading after the word *vulgaire* and assumed the opinion was negative despite the mention of not being able to avoid watching the programme.

Question 3

This question discriminated well as would be expected in a question that was aimed at the highest grades. The most difficult elements appeared to be in part 3.1 where many failed to make clear there had been an increase in the number of young people becoming homeless. When this was answered correctly, the second mark about no longer being shocked by this was more elusive. 3.2 was generally well answered but 3.3 led to many vague answers to do with a campaign against homelessness (the use of *un jour* led many to think that we should have a poverty awareness day each year). The majority of students unfortunately failed to score on this question.

Question 4

The first part of this question on the environment was very well answered by the vast majority, with over 80% scoring a mark for 4.1. 4.2 caused some difficulties since a certain amount of inference was required to reach the correct answer of 'mental health'. In 4.3 the future tense (*fera des efforts*) was not spotted by all students and led to the loss of the mark.

Question 5

This question, like question 3, was aimed at the higher grades and overall students responded better than had been anticipated. Many managed to convey the positive reaction to the robot. Occasionally, there were some wrong answers, suggesting that the patients would have preferred a human being to a robot. Part 5.2 was generally well answered, apart from a few who did not understand the word *tâches*. Reassuring the family was much more successfully conveyed. In the final part, some became confused by *numérique* and gave answers about numbers or counting. People living longer was better answered, though here some thought it was the robots who could outlive humans.

Question 6

This question yielded very pleasing results for a medium demand question with many scoring the maximum of four marks. 6.2 and 6.3 proved slightly more demanding but even here more than 80% of students gained the mark.

Question 7

The main problem here was caused by 7.3, where the phrase *ainsi que* led some astray. Otherwise the majority of students scored well here.

Section B

Question 8

This crossover question, aimed at the lower grades, required answers in French. Parts 2 and 3 were very well answered, though a minority did not pay attention to the tenses (*j'avais l'intention* and *j'ai enfin décidé*) and chose *apprentissage* as the answer rather than *une année sabbatique*. The same error was evident in 8.4 where fewer than half of students answered correctly with the majority opting for *médecin*.

Question 9

This gap filling task was beyond many but it was targeting the very highest attaining students. About a quarter of students failed to score any marks. It was encouraging that most managed to pick up one or two marks and there was a small number who did achieve the maximum of five marks.

Question 10

There was some inconsistent scoring on this question. This is to be expected as it was considered to be of medium demand. Parts 10.1 and 10.5 were often correct and 10.3 was very successfully answered by the majority. However, fewer than half of all students managed to score marks on 10.2 and 10.4. In 10.2, both Alice and Baptiste state their intention of seeking another job. In 10.4, many did not realise that Alice knew her boss because they did not see the word *voisin* in the first sentence.

Question 11

This was another crossover question, based on a literary text, requiring true/false answers. Parts 2 and 3 of this question were well done, with about three quarters of students answering successfully. The main stumbling block was in 11.1 where many did not see that going to the office implied he was not unemployed.

Question 12

The translation task always discriminates well, and the main problems caused here were the need to translate the various past and future tenses correctly and to convey the correct pronouns. The main points were as follows:

- In the first sentence *Je voudrais faire du bénévolat à l'étranger* was very well answered. A mark was occasionally lost for not translating *avant* correctly. Some wrote 'after' or 'while continuing my studies'.
- The past tense was often absent from the second sentence with many writing 'they do not' or 'will not allow me'.
- Many translated the sentence *Ils disent que je suis trop jeune pour voyager* correctly, though *ils disent* was not always recognised as coming from the verb *dire*.
- There were many correct answers for *j'ai toujours pensé* but *il ne faut pas être égoïste* caused a lot of difficulties for many. Many wrote 'my parents are always selfish'.
- *Pouvez-vous répondre* was often correctly translated in the last sentence though many missed the *en me donnant des conseils*. This was either because the pronoun *me* was omitted or the failure to convey the use of the present participle in English. The last section about persuading them (the parents) to change their mind was very well answered by many.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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