GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**FRENCH
AS**

SUMMER 2022

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FRENCH

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EDUQAS AS COMPONENT 1

General Comments

The speaking assessment at AS Level consists of two picture card-based discussions over a period of 6-7 minutes per card, a maximum of 14 minutes in total. The assessment is marked out of 60 marks and both cards have equal weighting. The speaking assessment is worth 30% of the total qualification.

The number of entries this series at this level was down considerably on those in 2019. There has been a downwards trend in entries at this level over several years prior to 2019. The AS examination is invaluable as a preparation to gauge progress halfway through an A Level course. It also gives candidates the chance to speak and practise French with an examiner under examination conditions.

Examiners were encouraged by how positively candidates approached this assessment, especially as for most, the AS French speaking assessment was their first public examination.

For advice on the administrative requirements of this component and information on the IRP form, centre/candidate declaration and possible models of a good presentation, please refer to the Principal Examiner's report on the 2018 examination.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The two sets of picture stimulus cards (sets A and B) cover both AS themes and their sub-themes: being a young person in French-speaking society and understanding the French-speaking world. Candidates need to be well informed for both these themes about life in France or other French-speaking countries or communities across the world.

Candidates who performed well, generally had an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the situation in France or in the French-speaking world and they were able to give relevant and culturally specific examples and discuss the sub-themes in-depth. Those candidates who were less successful were generally unable to refer directly to France or the French-speaking world and discussed the sub-themes only in general terms, without mentioning specific or culturally relevant examples to back their arguments and opinions.

AO1 (understand and respond in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction) 5 marks

Almost all candidates this series were willing to engage positively with examiners and they were able to respond effectively to most of the questions they were asked. Some candidates however, relied more heavily on the notes they made during the preparation time for the question printed on the stimulus card, which of course can limit natural face-to-face interaction and on occasions, stifle spontaneity. These candidates also tended to struggle more on the unseen questions as they were less adept at responding spontaneously without notes.

Candidates who did not rely on their notes, tended to be more confident at responding more readily and sustaining the discussion. These candidates also tended to be more successful at asking the examiner the required two questions and often did not need any prompting to do so. Some candidates found formulating questions challenging and some were not always totally relevant to the topic under discussion.

AO2 (understand and respond in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources) 5 marks

All candidates were aware that they had to refer to the written passage on the stimulus card, but some candidates did not fully explore the content of the passage and their responses were more superficial and lacking in detail. The more successful candidates referred to all aspects of the written passage in detail and were able to demonstrate a full understanding of the issues in the passage and discuss their implications and interpret the ideas behind them. Some candidates were also able to give additional examples to further explore the issues in the written passage.

AO3 (manipulate the language accurately, in spoken forms, using a range of lexis and structure) 10 marks

Many of the candidates had both the vocabulary and a sound knowledge of grammatical structures needed to sustain a discussion at this level. The more able candidates were able to manipulate the language with ease and confidence, including the use of more abstract and erudite vocabulary and structures, such as the correct use of the subjunctive, si clauses, a wide range of connectives and using different timeframes successfully. Weaker candidates required more prompting and tended to use a more limited vocabulary and stuck to one or two timeframes only. However, on a few occasions, some candidates had a strong linguistic ability but struggled to maintain a conversation because they did not have the depth of knowledge required despite their accurate use of French and their knowledge of vocabulary.

AO4 (show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the French is spoken) 10 marks

This is the assessment objective, which some candidates found the most challenging as even some of the more linguistically able candidates were less successful at AO4. To gain high marks in this area, candidates much be able to demonstrate a very good understanding of all aspects of the sub-theme. They need to be able to give and argue their points of view and their opinions coherently and back them up with specific and relevant examples based in the target culture. They also need to be able to draw logical conclusions.

The candidates who performed well overall, were all able to demonstrate in-depth understanding of the sub-themes under discussion and were able to draw on their knowledge and understanding of France or a French speaking community. Those candidates who were less successful, tended to have a more superficial knowledge of France or a French-speaking community and were generally unable to refer to specific examples in the target culture. Their answers were more generic or were based on their own experiences here in the UK as opposed to the experience of people in France or in French-speaking countries and communities.

As the cohort was relatively small, it is not possible to draw specific conclusions about each of the twelve stimulus cards. However, candidates had a generally good grasp of the issues of families and citizenship, although their knowledge and understanding of 'le PACS' was generally quite superficial on occasions. The other two sub-themes were generally well discussed, although again some candidates had trouble relating their discussion specifically to France or a French-speaking community.

Taken as a whole, the discussions based on the second theme were generally more relevant and more candidates were able to give specific examples and draw more readily on their knowledge and understanding of France or a French-speaking community. Candidates seem to engage more successfully with this theme and were more confident in their answers. The discussions based on festivals and monuments were generally relevant and candidates engaged enthusiastically and provided suitable examples and maintained a good level of discussion. When it came to the sub-theme of media, some candidates struggled to relate the discussion specifically to France or a French-speaking community.

Summary of key points

- Candidates should be encouraged not to over rely on copious written note taking during the preparation period.
- Candidates should be reminded that they need to refer specifically and in detail to the whole of the written passage on each stimulus card.
- Candidates should be discouraged from rote learning pre-prepared answers, as this does not prepare them to answer a whole range of possible questions. These candidates tend to regurgitate pre-learnt answers even if it is not relevant to the question being asked.
- Candidates must be able to give specific and relevant examples that relate directly to France or a French-speaking country or community. They should avoid generic comments and examples. Candidates must demonstrate that they have a good and up to date understanding and knowledge of the target culture.
- Candidates must ensure that they can draw conclusions and give detailed analysis of the examples they give.
- Some candidates need more practice formulating and asking relevant questions as well as being able to answer them.

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COMPONENT 2: LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

General Comments

Component 2 is divided into three sections and the assessment objectives are divided as follows:

- Listening (30 marks) AO1
- Reading (30 marks) AO2
- Translation (40 marks) AO3.

The exam was very accessible to candidates with nearly all questions being attempted with varying degrees of success. There were very few gaps. It was clear that candidates had been well prepared for the different types of questions included in the exam. Detailed answers to Questions 1-8 are given in the published mark scheme as well as possible correct alternative answers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A – Listening

Q.1 Most candidates coped well with this multiple-choice task. No active use of French was required. The challenges were as follows:

- in (3), several candidates misunderstood *un soif d'individualisme*
- a number of candidates did not recognise *enrichissant* in (5)
- some candidates did not know the meaning of *fils* in (6).

Q.2 (a)

- In the true/false section, many candidates were able to select accurately but did not always give the correct response.
- Several candidates were able to manipulate the statements provided to formulate their own answer.
- However, some candidates wrote phrases verbatim from the listening extract and were not credited.
- Candidates are reminded not to write whole phrases from the recording.

(b)

- This gap-fill exercise was very well done by candidates.
- The most common error occurred in (5) where several candidates incorrectly chose *lettres* as the synonym for *postes*.

Q.3 **(a)** Summary of main points in response to listening in French. This question was well done by a number of candidates. Candidates are reminded not to "lift" whole sections directly from the text as this can result in the answer being diluted within a body of text.

(a) Many candidates identified the two correct responses although some candidates referred to *jeu de paume* in their answer which was not required. Marks were lost here by some candidates for poor grasp of grammar and syntax.

(b) Most candidates correctly identified two of the potential four responses available for this section.

(c) Correctly answered by most candidates.

Q.3 **(b)** This was a response in French to a listening extract style question.

(a) Most candidates correctly identified the two countries although care is need with spelling as some candidates struggled with *Espagne.*

(b) Very well answered by the majority of candidates. Attention to spelling is necessary. *Les payées* was written for *les pays.*

(c) Very well answered with many candidates successfully adapting language used in the extract in their answer.

(d) Several candidates failed to understand that there were other sports to be considered and answered that it was too similar to other sports.

(e) Very few candidates correctly answered that 1900 was the first time that it had been played in the Olympic games.

Section B – Reading

Q.4 **(a)** This question was very well executed with no candidates selecting more than four responses. The most common error was failing to recognise that Yves Saint Laurent was retiring; candidates did not recognise the verb *raccrocher* and focused on the word *ciseaux.*

(b) Very well executed by all candidates who took care to not copy sections of the text. However, candidates must ensure they include sufficient words to convey the correct meaning; *près* without *de* does not convey the meaning of *environ.* Some candidates failed to correctly identify the equivalent of *pratiques.* These candidates tended to write the plural noun *étagères* instead of the adjective.

Q.5 This was a gap-fill exercise.

- The most common incorrect words were (2), (3) and (10).
- *Sous* was often given for (2) perhaps indicating that *trottoirs* was not understood.
- A few candidates failed to add a verb in the 3rd person plural for (3).
- Close and careful reading is required by the candidates as several of the word choices provided did fit grammatically but did not match the sense of the text.

Q.6 **(a)** Summary of main points in response to a written text. Some candidates lost marks as they "lifted" information directly from the text without any adaptation.

(a) Many candidates understood that the influencer had a large online following but many failed to identify that age was also a defining factor.

(b) Very well answered by many candidates who used words from the text but adapted them sufficiently.

(c) Most candidates understood that he had customised clothes and wore them in a concert and expressed this well using accurate language. However, incorrect spelling of *customiser* and *vêtements* detracted from the performance of some candidates.

(b) Responses in French to a written text. Most candidates understood the responses required here, but lost marks through grammatical errors in their written answers. Verbs were poorly conjugated, or candidates had "lifted" too much from the text.

(a) Most candidates understood that an influencer should communicate with their followers.

(b) Most candidates understood that brands wanted more consumers, but several candidates lost marks due to grammatical mistakes.

(c) *les marques* correctly identified by nearly all candidates.

(d) Very few candidates scored correctly as they failed to accurately express the idea that influencers were a form of publicity for the brands.

Section C – Translation

Q.7 The translation into English was very well attempted by all candidates. Although some candidates failed to translate single words, there were no sections omitted. Errors sometimes occurred through poor grasp of sentence structure in English. Candidates must ensure that what they write makes sense in English.

Common errors included:
- incorrectly translating *appauvri*
- *de toute façon* translated as in every way/in all ways
- *ses tableaux* translated as tablets/tables
- *ne se sont pas vendus,* candidates needed to translate that the paintings were not selling rather than that they were not being sold
- *au contact de la nature*, some candidates wrote in contact to nature which is not idiomatically correct in English.

Q.8 Translation into French. There were some excellent translations from candidates whose knowledge of grammar is secure and can write idiomatic French with accuracy. By contrast, several candidates did not know common items of vocabulary and grammar therefore marks were lost.

The main challenges were as follows:
- In (a), most candidates correctly translated "for 20 years" using depuis although many candidates did not translate "to decrease" correctly.
- In (b), many candidates omitted the preposition *pour* before the infinitive. Many candidates changed the word order in this section when translating. This is acceptable provided that candidates ensure all the necessary words are included.
- In (c), translating "spectators" was a challenge for some candidates with responses such as *les regardeurs.* The phrase "by far" was not translated correctly by many candidates. Literal word for word translating was an issue when translating "the fast-moving world".
- In (d), "on-demand television" proved troublesome for several candidates. The future tense was used correctly here by many candidates. Many candidates correctly conjugated *offrir* although there were instances of the 3rd person plural and the past historic tense. The majority of candidates were able to translate "less than" correctly.

Summary of key points

- It was pleasing to see that candidates have good knowledge of the themes studied and can apply this in a range of contexts.
- Questions requiring non-verbal responses were generally very well answered by the candidates.
- Candidates are familiar with the demands of the paper and the mechanics of the tasks. Very few marks were lost for incomplete answers or for supplying too many details.
- In general, candidates are becoming more adept at manipulating language using a range of lexis and structure. These candidates avoid "lifting" material, although this is still an issue for a minority of candidates.
- Candidates must spend time reading the questions carefully and assessing their demands before forming a response.

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EDUQAS AS COMPONENT 3

General Comments

The majority of candidates answered questions on *Intouchables* (83%) and *No et moi* (13%). Only 3% of candidates answered a question on *Les choristes.* None of the other films or texts were chosen.

Overall, essays were well-constructed and showed a good knowledge of the film or text.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The candidates who chose *Intouchables* opted mainly for Question 4 (a) about social differences. Candidates who wrote better responses looked at the differences of the social aspects of the two main characters their and attitudes to society. Some candidates lacked focus on the title and spent too long on Driss and his life (e.g. difficulties of *la banlieue*). The other question for *Intouchables* was Question 4 (b). The better candidates looked at the deeper meaning in the film of two very different men who were both on the edge of society. They dealt well the different attitudes and observations and how and why they shift as the film progresses in the context of disability, exclusion, and acceptance.

The candidates who chose *No et moi* wrote some good answers and had good understanding of relationships and character and the themes of the novel. For Question 1 (a) some essays tended towards description and did not fully examine all aspects of the title, especially with regards to Lou's difficulties. The more popular essay was Question 1 (b) and was mainly well done and focused on the title, although some candidates brought in extraneous and irrelevant details.

The candidates who chose *Les choristes* produced high quality essays in terms of linguistic skill and knowledge of the film. The responses were analytical, pertinent, and well considered.

Common errors included:

- misspelling of character and place names e.g., *Philippe, Les Bertignac, Morhange*
- confusion between *personnage* and *caractère*
- poor use of possessive and demonstrative adjectives: *sa père, son maison, ses famille, ça humeur*
- adjectival agreements are often omitted
- candidates do not seem to be familiar with disjunctive pronouns and common errors such as *avec ils*, *sans la* were frequent
- poor use of indirect pronouns e.g., *quand No la parle*, *Philiippe le donne.*

Summary of key points

Essay writing technique: The questions set are designed to be answered in the suggested word limit. Many candidates wrote well over the word count without direction or structure in their response. Lengthy essays suffer when the assessment objectives in the mark scheme are applied. The best essays produced were concise and relevant, answering the question directly without a long introduction or repetitive conclusion. These candidates were able to answer the question set in accurate French using evidence from the film or text appropriately and in a pertinent and succinct manner.

AO3: Generally speaking, the longer the essay, the more errors occur. There were some examples of very good use of grammar and idiomatic language applied in a relevant and meaningful context to answer the question set. However, the overall standard of written French for the essay question was not always good and candidates lost many marks for poor grammar and incorrect spelling. Candidates would be best advised when preparing for this section of the examination to write a range of practice essays so that they have opportunity to develop their basic grammar correctly in order to allow their sentences to flow accurately.

AO4: For a successful critical response to the question set is one which clearly demonstrates that the candidate is able to present and justify points of view, develop arguments, and draw conclusions based on knowledge and understanding of the work studied. Most candidates applied their essays to the questions set but, in a few cases, wrote very long essays which encompassed everything they knew about the film or book. Some essays were merely descriptions of characters or recounting of the plot. This encouraged storytelling, digression, irrelevant and superfluous information in relation to the question set. During the time available for this component candidates should plan carefully in French and keep the plan relevant to the question set. By doing this, extraneous and irrelevant material can be discarded in favour of relevant and meaningful information and examples.