GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

FRENCH
AS

SUMMER 2019

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EDUQAS AS COMPONENT 1

General Comments

The number of candidates sitting this test has decreased significantly over the last three years. Nevertheless, it is invaluable as a preparation for A level as it gives the candidates the opportunity to speak French with a stranger under examination conditions and practice in discussing an AS (and A level) topic.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The two sets of six cards covered all the themes and sub-themes of the AS specification. The candidates needed to be familiar with suitable content relating to France or a French-speaking country or community on all of these.

AO1
Almost all candidates were willing to engage with the examiner and had enough French to respond to questions asked. There was a tendency for candidates to reply to the set question (the one seen on the candidate's card) at very great length, often relying heavily on the notes they had prepared during the preparation time. This could limit interaction but was acceptable if the candidates had begun to discuss the content of the reading passage. Candidates were not as adept in asking the examiner a question. Questions were often vague, personal or did not relate to the specific topic on the card.

AO2
Although most candidates were aware that they had to refer to the content of the reading passage, many did not explain in detail what the text said, even when prompted to do so, and could not interpret the implications of the text for the topic under discussion.

AO3
Most candidates had the vocabulary and the structures required to maintain quite a long discussion. The ablest were able to manipulate abstract language and show a full understanding of the questions asked and the concepts behind the themes under discussion. Weaker candidates needed prompting in order to maintain their flow of language, either because they lacked the language skills, or did not have the information required to discuss the topic.

AO4
The specification is quite clear that discussions must relate to France or a French-speaking country or community. The stimulus questions specifically related the questions to France or a French-speaking country. Candidates undertake two tasks: one on "Being a young person in French-speaking society" (section A) and one on "Understanding the French-speaking world" (section B).

Candidates had a better grasp of Families and citizenship in France than last year (Cards A1 and A2). The more able were able to pinpoint events, politicians and to give specific details. The cards on youth trends and personal identity (A3, A4) were discussed enthusiastically but in a general way - not specifically relating to France or a French-speaking country.

Cards A5 and A6 did need a certain amount of specific information on education and employment which was often lacking.

Candidates discussing cards B1 and B2 on festivals and monuments were often able to provide sufficient information to maintain the conversation. Some had the detailed knowledge necessary to maintain and lead the conversation. Candidates were less confident when discussing galleries in France (Card 3). Cards 4-6 dealt with "Media, art, film and music in the French-speaking world". Candidates needed suitable knowledge and a good understanding of the themes to contribute well to the discussion. In many of the above discussions, suitable reference was made to the ideas in the texts themselves. Candidates needed to be aware that the texts themselves often gave details which would have helped with the discussion.

Summary of key points

- Candidates need the language and information necessary to both answer and ask questions.
- The specification requires the candidates to make obvious and detailed reference to the text.
- Candidates need to be able to think "on their feet" and not be too dependent on what they have noted previously in the preparation room as they might not be answering the questions asked but what they think they have been asked.
- Candidates need to ensure that they refer continuously to the topic under discussion as it relates to France or a French-speaking country or community.
- Candidates need not only knowledge about France or a French-speaking country or community but also need to understand and analyse the implications of that knowledge.

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COMPONENT 2: LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

General Comments

The exam was very accessible to candidates with nearly all questions being attempted with varying degrees of success. There were very few gaps. Candidates completed the paper within the allotted times. 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

Q.1 This multiple-choice question was well answered, with the vast majority of candidates scoring at least 4 of the 6 marks available. It was clear that candidates had been trained to use syntax and grammar to ensure that the matching sentences made sense. However, the answers must reflect the information in the source material and marks were mainly lost here for 1.1 when many candidates selected answer K, and 1.5 when many wrongly selected answer C.

Q.2 **(A)** This multiple-choice tick box question was very well answered by the majority of candidates. Candidates who achieved less well than 6/6 tended to make mistakes in 3,4 and 5.

(B) This was a 'Vrai/Faux' question type with corrections of 'Faux' responses. In general, most candidates correctly identified the correct true/false answer and were successful in offering a corrected version. Where mistakes were made, these were commonly in (c) where it was not sufficient to state that there was no mention of cheese. In addition, candidates misunderstood the length of the programme in (d).

Q.3 **(A)** This gap-fill exercise was very well executed by candidates who recognised that they were to tick the correct word from the choice provided. A small minority of candidates failed to recognise that there was a choice of 3 words to choose from per line and ticked more than one word per line.

(B) **(a)** This question was answered quite well, although many candidates wrote *partir la maison* which does not have the same meaning as *sortir de la maison*. Many candidates misunderstood *rencontrer du monde* and took it to mean that he would be seeing the world.

(b) Very well answered with candidates understanding how young people were benefitting.

(c) Candidates were successful at finding one reason here from the two provided in the listening extract.

(d) Very well answered by nearly all candidates.

(e)   The correct tense was essential to answer the question.

Q.4   This was a gap-fill text where candidates were expected to write in the correct word from the box beneath the text. Many incorrect words were chosen, for example *laisser* was not particularly well known when linked with *sortir*. Very few candidates correctly identified *derrière* for (10). Many used the word *égoïstes* which indicated a lack of comprehension of the text. Reading the text with their chosen words and checking the meaning would be beneficial for candidates as it might highlight where their chosen words do not fit in with the gist of the text. For example, *professeur* was often selected for (6) which would not fit with his given age of 18.

Q.5   **(A)**   This question was generally well done and most candidates chose the correct synonyms from the text. Many candidates omitted the word *renseignements* in (c) and the word *lecture* in (d). Where candidates had copied *lire certains hebdomadaires* this was also accepted.

(B)   This question was correctly undertaken with the vast majority of candidates only ticking 5 sentences. It was noted that (b) was not selected with any frequency by candidates which could indicate a lack of awareness of the meaning of *les romans*. In addition, (e) was ticked by several candidates which could indicate a lack of full comprehension of the text and a failure to pick up on the word *municipale* as opposed to *scolaire*.

Q.6   A minority of candidates clearly understood the expectations of the summary text and were able to deduce meaning from the text in their answers. Many candidates did not provide answers which fulfilled the demands of the question. This was particularly seen in the first two bullet points. Many candidates did not describe the *vie familiale de Blanche* and equally many failed to provide a summary of the *vie personnelle de Christa*. In addition, several candidates confused the two characters.
The response to the third bullet point was answered well by several candidates although many failed to include enough detail about the problem and the solution.
In the fourth bullet point, many candidates were able to correctly state that the mother agreed with the solution, but not as many correctly identified that she was surprised that her daughter had a friend.
The final bullet point was answered well by only a small minority of candidates. As detailed in the specification, candidates are expected to infer meaning from complex texts which include factual and abstract content. Although the vocabulary was accessible within the text, the demands of this question were not understood and candidates could not simply 'lift' information from the text to answer the question about the relationships between the characters. The summary question demands inference and deduction and many candidates misinterpreted the relationship between the characters.

Q.7   This question was very accessible to candidates and overall, candidates produced quite accurate responses. Many candidates had considered the text as a whole when formulating their response although candidates need reminding that what they write needs to be idiomatic and make sense in English.

Frequent errors included:

* Incorrect translation of *autrefois* (including words such as "sometimes", "furthermore", "in other ways", "on the other hand" and "most of the time") which often then meant that candidates wrongly translated the tense of *ne voulaient pas.*

- *Actuellement* caused some confusion with words such as "actually", "however" and "in reality" used.
- *Cible* was translated by a variety of different words including "survives", "attracts", "follows", "helps", "favours", "unites", "appeals to", "controls", "symbolises", and "tricks" amongst others. Some attempts do indicate that candidates were considering syntax.
- *Aussitôt* was often mistranslated, literally but incorrectly, as "also early".
- *Les vedettes* was not recognised by some candidates although they knew it represented a group of people as words such as "youngsters", "models", "hipsters" and "teenagers" were used.
- The meaning of the verb and the tense was often mistranslated for *poussera.*
- In the context of the text, the word "clients" was not accepted for *les clients.*
- Candidates need to consider each sentence in its entirety when translating as the phrase *tous les six mois de nouvelles fringues* caused confusion. Some candidates did not recognise *fringues*.
- The last sentence of the translation proved challenging for candidates as many misidentified the pronoun *elle* as referring to Coco Chanel herself. Where candidates had done this well, they had understood that it was the idea of fashion being seen on the streets, rather than Coco Chanel.

Q.8 A lack of attention to detail caused marks to be lost in this question. Candidates must read the sentences carefully before translating them. In particular, they must be clear about the tense required.

1. The imperative "imagine" was often poorly translated with many candidates using the infinitive. Another common issue was the translation of "sitting next to you".
2. Very few candidates knew the word for "a dozen", and very few were able to use the passive effectively to translate "have been introduced". Where the passive was correctly identified, very often candidates failed to use the correct past participle *introduit* with the appropriate agreement. Candidates had more success with the start of the second sentence although the word "attend" was problematic with many candidates using *attendre*. Candidates also struggled to translate "to take part "live"".
3. The infinitive "hear" was translated wrongly by many candidates as they used the word *écouter* instead. Not many candidates were able to translate "what is happening" accurately.
4. Using the wrong tense caused several candidates to lose marks at the start of this sentence. Although many candidates could translate "break" correctly, marks were lost as they failed to translate the word "canteen" and kept the English spelling. "Take part in conversation" was also problematic with many candidates failing to use the verb *participer* but instead choosing *prendre parti* or *faire parti.*

Summary of key points

- Questions requiring non-verbal responses were generally very well answered by the candidates
- Many candidates lost marks through using the wrong tense in the translations and comprehension questions.
- Candidates need to develop more awareness of common cognates and faux-amis as many key words were misused and mistranslated.
- For the summary question in particular, candidates need to develop their skills of inference and deduction and be able to answer questions which require implicit rather than explicit information.

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EDUQAS AS COMPONENT 3

General Comments

Candidates answered questions on *Intouchables* and *No et Moi.* Six per cent of candidates chose *No et Moi,* all answering Question 1(b). The vast majority chose *Intouchables.* Ninety-four per cent of candidates chose this film with a split between the two questions Question 4(a) (thirty-four per cent) and Question 4(b) (sixty per cent). None of the other nine questions for the other books and films was attempted.

The Item Level Data indicated that the mean marks for both AO3 and AO4 were slightly higher for Questions 4(a) and 4(b) *(Intouchables)* than for 1(b) *(No et moi)*.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- The candidates who chose *No et moi* wrote some good answers and had good understanding of relationships and characters of Lou and No. Most essays focused on the question set, although some candidates brought in extraneous and irrelevant details, especially on the life of *une jeune SDF*. No's influence and its effects was well explored by some candidates.

- About one third of candidates who chose *Intouchables* opted for the question (4a) about why Philippe chose Driss. The better candidates looked at the impact that this decision had on his life and ensuing changes. Some candidates lacked focus on the title spent too long on descriptions of Philippe's life, Driss and his life (e.g. difficulties faced by *un handicap*é).

- The majority of candidates opted for Question 4(b). For the essay on *une amitié incroyable* the better candidates looked at the deeper meaning in the film of two very different men who were both on the edge of society and developed the ideas that opposites attract and the positive outcomes of such an unlikely friendship. They dealt well with the themes of disability, exclusion and marginalisation.

The skills assessed on this paper are AO3 and AO4.

AO3 – candidates are required to manipulate the language accurately using a range of lexis and structure.

The following were the cause of inaccuracies and errors in the manipulation of language:

- handling of gender - common errors e.g. nouns ending in *…tion* and *…sion* are feminine
- verb forms and tense formation especially the 3rd person present tense. Where used, perfect tenses were not well formed and often the incorrect auxiliary verb was used
- reliance on anglicised structure
- subject pronouns, adjectival endings and agreement, possessive adjectives
- *ce qui, ce que*, use of *ceci/cela*

- the spelling of certain common words, some with accents omitted, added to the inaccuracy of the work of certain candidates e.g. *pourquoi, exemple, rencontrer, conclure, ennuyeux, galerie, plusieurs, handicapé, c'était, différent, malgré, banlieue développement, amitié, a/à, négative, pitié.*
- candidates confused *humour* and *humeur.*

It was pleasing to see the word *personnage* used correctly in most essays but often characters' names were spelt incorrectly e.g. *Phillipe.*

Summary of key points

- Essay-writing technique: too many candidates write essays well in excess of the stipulated word length. Many begin with a lengthy introduction which is merely a reworking of the title and a list of points which will be considered. The go on to repeat thee in the main body of the essay. This affects both AO3 and AO4.

- AO3. The longer the essay, the more errors occur. The overall standard of written French for the essay question was not good and many candidates lost many marks for incorrect spelling and grammar was often poor. Those who made a plan in French tended to be the most focused in their answers. Some candidates write a plan in English and try to translate it leading to poor French with a lot of anglicised structure. Candidates need to ensure that their basic grammar is correct in order to allow their essays to be intelligible.

- For AO4 the candidate must show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects (in context) of the literary work or film studied. The question is designed to be answered according to the word limit. Many candidates wrote well over the word count without direction or structure in their response. They tended to be incorrect or irrelevant in subject knowledge. Characters and plot details were sometimes confused and a lot of extraneous or repeated material was included which often dissipated the argument.

- There were some very good essays which were a pleasure to read and showed that candidates had a good understanding of the book or film, its themes and characters and could write with insight and empathy showing good evaluative skills.