FRENCH

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Paper 9779/01
Speaking

</div>

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- In **Part I:** *Discussion of an article and related themes*, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reactions to it.
- In **Part II:** *Prepared topic discussion*, choose a subject which genuinely interests them, and which clearly relates to a country where French is spoken.
- In **Part II**, choose a subject with factual content and which offers opportunities to express opinions and make judgements.
- In **Parts I** and **II**, be prepared to take the lead in the conversation and to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion.

General comments

Part I: Discussion of an article and related themes

In choosing which card to prepare, candidates should pay attention to the title of the article, printed at the top of the article in French, and the topic area printed in English under the card number. The best candidates were able to demonstrate understanding and evaluation of the issues raised in the article and were then able to go on to discuss the wider topic area, demonstrating analysis and opinion.

The summary of the article is intended to be an overview of the main ideas and should not last more than one minute. Candidates should not read directly from their notes or lift sentences from the card. The best candidates used their summary to highlight what they considered to be the main points for discussion and did not include their own opinions. These should be left for the discussion.

When discussing the article, candidates should listen carefully to the type of question the Examiner is asking. Sometimes they need to show an awareness of a problem rather than give an answer. Sometimes candidates are being asked to give their own opinion. Sometimes they are required to see a problem from a different point of view. Better candidates were able to provide a specific example from the article or from their own experience to illustrate their point and support their argument.

When discussing the wider topic area, candidates should avoid undue repetition of what has been discussed in relation to the article. Stronger candidates showed the ability to discuss wider issues beyond the card. Some candidates were not always fully prepared for the discussion on the wider topic area.

In both the discussion of the article and the wider topic area, candidates must listen carefully to the Examiner's prompts to ensure they have understood the precise nature of the question. Some candidates missed the point of some questions by answering too hastily. Candidates can allow themselves a natural amount of processing time and still respond 'without undue hesitation'. Some candidates gave very lengthy responses which did not always communicate their ideas clearly. Candidates should aim to show the initiative in developing the discussion in a natural way, which means giving the Examiner time to participate in the discussion.

Part II: Prepared topic discussion

Candidates had generally researched their topic well. Most candidates were well prepared for the discussion and were able to talk in some depth about most aspects of their topic. The most successful candidates listened carefully to the questions put to them and entered into a genuine discussion rather than delivering

chunks of pre-learnt material that did not always address the precise focus of the question, or proceeding to address the next heading on their topic submission form rather than the question asked.

Most candidates gave a clear introduction to their topic within the one-minute time limit. Some candidates exceeded one minute as they tried to include too much information in their presentation. If this is the case, the candidate must expect to be interrupted. Candidates should remember that the purpose of the one-minute presentation is for them to highlight interesting and/or contentious points in their topic and their reasons for choosing it. They should not spend time describing how they conducted their research or simply announcing the five to eight headings that they have submitted.

Candidates should select and develop topics which have analytical potential and about which they can put forward points of view in discussion. They should avoid choosing topics which are too descriptive. When preparing the five to eight topic headings to submit to Cambridge International, candidates should consider how these headings will provide a useful guide for the discussion. Candidates are advised to plan their headings in a careful and logical way to provide interesting discussion points, rather than a series of facts and dates.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Discussion of an article and related themes

Card 1 – Pollution

This was the most popular card and most candidates who chose it were familiar with the topic of pollution and its global implications. Many candidates were able to discuss how to encourage the use of public transport and were able to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of individual measures to tackle pollution and suggested initiatives. Topic specific vocabulary regarding air pollution and climate change was used well by most candidates although *environnement* was not always pronounced correctly. Some candidates were unsure about the meaning of *le chauffage à bois/au charbon*. Only the better candidates were able to express their own reactions about contrasting differences in life expectancy between cities and rural areas. When it came to discussing the wider topic area better candidates were able to discuss different types of pollution. Some candidates continued to focus on the dangers of air pollution, and this led to repetition at times.

Card 2 – Equality of opportunity

Few candidates chose this card. The concept of *mobilité sociale* was generally well understood and most candidates were able to discuss the solutions proposed and offer their own views. These candidates were also well prepared for more general questions on the theme of equal opportunities.

Card 3 – The media

This was the second most popular card and candidates were all familiar with the concept of *la télé-réalité*. Candidates who chose this card were mostly critical of reality shows and better candidates were able to discuss the negative effects these programmes can have on participants and viewers alike. Weaker candidates had difficulty in explaining why *la télé-réalité* might be dangerous for younger viewers. During the wider discussion on media, most candidates were confident discussing *les réseaux sociaux*. Some candidates were less able to discuss the future of traditional media, such as television, radio, and newspapers and very few were familiar with the concept of *la presse écrite.* Common vocabulary errors included misuse of the word *audience* and confusion between *participants* and *téléspectateurs*.

Card 4 – Generation gap

Candidates who chose this card generally dealt with it well. They were able to discuss the differences in approach between parents and grandparents and the merits of these approaches. Many were then able to discuss other aspects of the generation gap including the role played by technology.

Card 5 – Work and leisure

This was the third most popular card with many candidates able to discuss personal experience of working from home alongside other family members. The article was well summarised and better candidates were able to discuss the issues raised from different viewpoints: *employé, cadre, chef d'entreprise*. Most

candidates were able to discuss the notion of work/life balance in the wider discussion. Only the best candidates discussed concepts such as professional fulfilment and retirement age convincingly.

Card 6 – Cultural life/heritage

Too few candidates chose this card to make comment appropriate.

Part II: Prepared topic discussion

Topics

There was a wide selection of topics, most of which had been well prepared and researched. Several candidates discussing art and artists brought visual material with them. These worked most successfully when they were used to illustrate a specific point rather than for simple description. The best candidates focused on a few key elements of their chosen topic whilst those who chose very broad and/or abstract topics, for example *la laïcité, l'existentialisme, l'impressionisme*, *la musique en France* were not always able to discuss them convincingly. Candidates must also ensure that their topic clearly relates to a French-speaking country. Some discussions, for example on sport or fashion, were rather general and it was not always clear how they related specifically to the history, current affairs or culture of an area of the world where French is spoken.

Examples of topics chosen in this exam series include:

- Social and political: la laïcité en France; l'Islamisme en France; l'islamophobie en France; la loi sur la dissimulation du visage en public; les Gilets Jaunes; Emmanuel Macron et l'élection présidentielle; les scandales politiques français; la gestion de la pandémie en France; l'immigration en France; le Code Civil; le Rassemblement National; le travail dominical; la France devrait-elle restituer les objets coloniaux ?; l'extrême droite en France; l'énergie nucléaire en France; les couples homosexuels et la PMA/GPA; la gastronomie française.
- Literature: Colette; Simone de Beauvoir; Victor Hugo; l'essor du vernaculaire au 16e siècle; Madame Bovary; Leïla Slimani; Baudelaire; Candide; Les Aventures de Tintin; Les Mouches; La Nausée.
- Film/TV: le Festival de Cannes; La Haine; Lupin; la Rafle (2010); À Bout de Souffle et la Nouvelle Vague; Divines*;* Trois Couleurs; La Vie Scolaire; L'Année Dernière à Marienbad; Portrait de la Jeune Fille en Feu.
- Art/Design/Architecture: les arts engagés en France depuis les années 90; l'Impressionnisme; Yves St Laurent; Rodin; Coco Chanel; Christian Dior; Matisse et le Fauvisme; Louis Vuitton; comment la haute-couture française a-t-elle globalement influencé l'industrie de la mode ?; la Cathédrale de Notre Dame; la Tour Eiffel; Les Grands Travaux de François Mitterrand.
- Music: Lili Boulanger; la Marseillaise; Debussy: 'La Mer'; Bertrand Cantat; Stromae; Olivier Messiaen.
- History/Geography: Marie Antoinette; Napoléon; les Guerres Péninsulaires; l'Affaire Dreyfus; la Révolution Française; la Prise de la Bastille; la Semaine Sanglante; la France Occupée; Pétain et Vichy; Jean François Champollion; la Bretagne; le surtourisme; l'Indépendance en Algérie; les Pieds-Noirs; la Guerre d'Algérie; la démocratie en Tunisie; la Déforestation à Madagascar; l'Indochine; le colonialisme au Vietnam; le Québec et le souverainisme; la République Centrafricaine; les objectifs du développement durable dans les pays francophones; la guerre civile au Mali; l'implication française dans la Guerre d'Indépendance Américaine; le naufrage de la Méduse.
- Philosophy: Descartes; les Chemins de la Liberté; la philosophie de Camus; Voltaire et les Lumières.
- Science: Marie-Curie; Louis Pasteur; l'impact du colonialisme sur la structure de la santé et de la médecine des pays de l'Afrique colonisée française.
- Sport: pourquoi le PSG ruine-t-il le football ?; le hooliganisme dans le football français; le racisme dans le football français; les Bleus 1998; le Tour de France; les Jeux Olympiques en 2024; le tournoi de Roland Garros; le surf à Tahiti.

Language

Range and accuracy

Many candidates demonstrated a very good knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary and syntax and a commendable level of accuracy.

Areas where accuracy could be improved:

- genders of common words e.g. *le problème, le texte, le parti, la partie, le nombre, le pouvoir, le futur, la chose*
- comparative and superlative and adjectival endings
- use of and omission of definite and indefinite articles
- misuse of expressions of quantity such as *beaucoup de*
- *à* with *le*, *de* with *le* and *les* e.g. *au lieu de les voitures; la qualité du l'air*
- prepositions with towns, countries and geographical areas e.g. *à Paris, en France, au Sénégal, en Afrique*
- prepositions with verbal phrases e.g. *dépendre de, profiter de, s'intéresser à*
- conjugation of common irregular verbs such as *pouvoir, savoir, produire, résoudre*
- past participles of common irregular verbs such as *conduire, produire, résoudre*
- conditional forms after *si* phrases e.g. *je créerais, j'améliorerais*
- reflexive and non-reflexive use of verbs e.g. *développer/se développer, améliorer/s'améliorer*
- correct subject/verb agreement after plural/singular nouns e.g. *gens, jeunes*, *population, gouvernement* e.g. *beaucoup de gens ne comprennent pas que les centrales produisent de la pollution*
- misuse of impersonal expressions such as *il s'agit de*
- overuse of opinion phrases e.g. *à mon avis, je pense que, selon moi, autant que je sache*
- incorrect use of *fois/temps*, *faire/rendre*, *procès/processus*
- false friends and anglicisms e.g. issue (*question/problème*); appliquer (*faire la demande*); genuine (*authentique/véritable*); incentif (*encouragement*); efficient (*efficace*); les manifesteurs (*les manifestants*); en regard de/à (*en ce qui concerne*); secure (*sécurisé/en sécurité/sûr*).

Pronunciation and intonation

Pronunciation was generally good, often improving in the topic discussion as candidates relaxed after discussing the article.

Common errors of pronunciation included:

- *transports en commun, investir, pays, aspects, Québec, plus, personne vs pourcent, des héros vs des zéros, vie vs ville, gens vs jeunes, européen, gouvernement, environnement, toute la population*
- plural endings
- silent final consonants especially –t.

FRENCH

**Paper 9779/02
Reading and Listening**

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

* focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
* pay particular attention to conveying the required information to the examiner in unambiguous language.

General comments

Performances spanned the whole of the ability range. In the strongest scripts, candidates made a good attempt to express themselves in their own words, and their answers were concise, legible and to the point. The best answers really targeted the precise terms of the questions. In weaker scripts, candidates' answers were missing a key element. Other candidates need to focus on exactly what the question is asking. In very few cases, candidates incorporated surplus, contradictory information that invalidated correct information given elsewhere. Overall there were very few instances where candidates copied substantial chunks of text from the question paper. Very few candidates did not answer all the questions. In one or two cases, a question was answered in the wrong language thus scoring no mark for the question.

There was only a relatively small group at the lower end. A pleasing number of candidates scored marks in the thirties and forties.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Reading

Texte à lire 1

This text was well understood by the vast majority of candidates. On the whole, candidates had clearly been well-prepared by teaching staff to use their own words and transform the language from the text to provide a grammatically correct answer to the question. Sometimes candidates missed out on marks because certain information was missing, or grammar was manipulated unsuccessfully. The questions require candidates to explain parts of the text using their own words. It is good practice for them to use the end of the question as a starting point for answering it, and to explain without lifting key or difficult vocabulary from the text.

Question 1

This question was generally well answered. Candidates were required to state that the campaign was launched to reduce the number of accidents linked to a drunk driver. Candidates needed the full idea to score the point.

Question 2

Fewer than half the candidates answered this question accurately. Candidates needed to understand the last two lines of the first paragraph and explain what Sam does. The best answers explained this succinctly. All the candidates understood that Sam was a sober driver, but to get the mark, they also needed to mention that Sam was driving back his friends from the club/party who had drunk.

Question 3

This question was answered correctly, but candidates needed to explain the word *essaimé* and not just reuse it to be awarded the point.

Question 4

This question was generally well answered. Most candidates understood that anyone could be Sam. Only a minority of candidates misunderstood that Sam was only a woman. Very few candidates described Sam physically by quoting the text and thus not showing a full understanding.

Question 5

More than half the candidates answered this question accurately. To get full marks, candidates had to begin the comparison with *les hommes*, thus transforming the text which starts the comparison with *les femmes*, or start with *les femmes* but then go on to avoid copying the text to finish the sentence.

Question 6

Ideally, candidates should have answered with the imperfect tense here. It is always good practice to answer in the tense that appears in the question where appropriate. The present tense was also accepted. Using the perfect tense was not accepted as it meant she did not drink on this one occasion. A few candidates added an adverb, for example saying she did not drink much, invalidating their answer.

Question 7

This question was well answered. A small number of candidates could have got the mark if they had focused on the grammar to make their answer comprehensible.

Question 8

This question was well answered. The vast majority of candidates understood that she became cool once she decided to take on the role of Sam at parties.

Question 9

More than half the candidates were able to explain in their own words what *tourné vers les autres* meant, in other words, that Sam is not selfish and takes care of others.

Question 10

Only the most able candidates understood that entry was free for Sam and were able to express it correctly without copying the text. Candidates should know that *offrir* cannot be put in the passive voice in French.

Texte à lire 2

This text was well understood by the majority of candidates. Weaker candidates found it challenging to understand the key ideas and reverted to translating the French word for word. Candidates must be reminded to re-read their answers in order to ensure that the intended meaning is clear in English and not just a word-for-word translation of the French.

Question 11

Virtually all answered this correctly.

Question 12

Virtually all the candidates understood they had to pay a sum of money, but only the most able indicated that it was a large sum and gained the point.

Question 13

Only the very best candidates understood that *la majorité* meant 'over 18'.

Question 14

To answer correctly, candidates needed to explain the expression *monetarisation du volontariat*. Many candidates were able to do that successfully using the English word monetisation or explaining in other words.

Question 15

Most candidates were able to score at least the first point awarded for this question, understanding that unqualified volunteers may treat locals medically. Some misunderstood *sans parler de,* translating it word for word thus rendering either their full answer or the second half unintelligible. Only the best candidates were able to separate the two ideas and clearly explain the second point, that orphans may miss the volunteers when they have gone causing psychological problems.

Question 16

This question was generally well answered by candidates, who found the explanation at the end of the fourth paragraph: Westerners think they can help native populations even if they are unqualified.

Question 17

Only a few candidates got all three ideas required for the point. Candidates needed to include charitable work/non-profit making activities in their answer. Many candidates struggled to understand the expression *l'engagement associatif*.

Question 18

Nearly all candidates answered this question well, saying that volunteering is a way to adapt to the world of work.

Question 19

Most candidates answered this question well, stating that the elite uses charitable work to justify its wealth.

Texte à lire 3

About 60 per cent of candidates achieved at least 5 out of 10 for the translation and the vocabulary available in the reading passage was well used. Many candidates seemed to find the first half of the translation challenging while the second half was generally dealt with better. Candidates were on the whole well prepared for the grammatical structures encountered but had gaps in their knowledge of vocabulary. The tenses in general and the use of the subjunctive were pleasingly accurate overall. The main points that emerged were as follows:

1   Items of vocabulary which proved problematic for many were: *so many, although such a, showcase, ability, demanding, living expenses, there are many, no concrete assignment, unsurprising, will bring.*
2   *L'enthousiasme* was rarely spelt accurately but was accepted with one small spelling mistake. More often than not the *o* was missing.
3   Accents proved difficult in many cases.
4   The words and phrases given in the second reading text were generally accurately used: *du travail bénévole, de l'humanitaire, mission, volontaire, bénévole, atout.*
5   Agreements of verbs were often accurate.
6   The use of correct prepositions after verbs was sometimes an issue in *capacité à*, *s'adapter à des conditions*.
7   The possessive 'students' enthusiasm' was well translated as well as 'their'*.
8   Only the very best candidates were able to translate boxes 19 to 21. Word order was the main issue after the negative, as well as the translation of the vocabulary in box 19.

Part II: Listening

Candidates were better trained at writing the key information succinctly than in the past and the summary task was generally well done with the word limit adhered to very well. There were a few instances of candidates attempting to write phonetic versions of what they had heard rather than communicating meaning and demonstrating real understanding.

Texte à écouter 1

This proved to be the most successful section for candidates with the 2-mark questions being generally well answered.

Question 21

This question was well answered by 40 per cent of candidates, who were able to grasp the meaning of the text – *nos vies sont vides de sens* – rather than transcribe what they heard with approximate spellings and without it making much sense.

Question 22

This was well answered by the majority of candidates who understood *la technologie* was the answer.

Question 23

Two thirds of candidates understood *sa generation ne peut vivre sans/se passer de leur portable* and transcribed it successfully. As in **Question 21**, spelling here was important for the answer to make sense.

Question 24

Just over half the candidates were able to score both marks here, but most scored at least one, *la conscience de soi* being understood by most and *l'ennui* proving more difficult.

Question 25

Three quarters of candidates were able to score both marks here and nearly all at least one mark. They understood that, without their phones, the children would talk or have long family meals. *À bâtons rompus* was an issue. *Ils ont des conversations/ils se parlent* would have sufficed on its own.

Question 26

Most candidates answered this question correctly, scoring at least one mark.

Question 27

This proved to be the most difficult question of the text and only half of the more able candidates answered correctly that spirituality is *un espace hors du temps (comme la méditation).* Some candidates struggled to give a successful rendering of *on ne pense plus à comment gagner sa vie*.

Texte à écouter 2

This text proved a bit more challenging for the candidates. To be well answered these questions required the candidates to extract the key idea and write the answer in English.

Question 28

This question proved to be one of the most difficult and only some candidates understood that his view was that farmers had destroyed the heritage of their ancestors. Some candidates said that the idea of regret came from the journalist, which was not accurate.

Question 29

This question was generally well answered, and more than half the candidates understood his dilemma – whether to produce more or to protect the planet. Only a small number of candidates said that he was depriving future generations of resources.

Question 30

This question was well answered by nearly all the candidates.

Question 31

Most candidates understood that his cows were raised indoors (most answered they never saw the light of day) and fed cereal.

Question 32

Very few candidates understood *petits-enfants* as meaning grandchildren.

Question 33

Most candidates understood that he changed his farming methods to organic farming. A few candidates answered that he planted a thousand trees. Some candidates could improve by having a more secure knowledge of numbers as 'a thousand' was sometimes interpreted as 'millions'.

Question 34

This question was well answered by 90 per cent of candidates.

Question 35

Most candidates achieved at least one mark here, understanding that trees promote the biodiversity of insects and birds. They understood that they reduce damage caused by flooding, but some translated damage as waste and did not get the mark.

Texte à écouter 3

Question 36

It is pleasing to report that the summary exercise was well executed by many candidates and a high number scored 6 or 7 marks. Most candidates adhered to the word limit for this task. Some candidates had written a draft and need to be reminded to cross out or clearly mark their draft work. There were some infringements on the word limit, which, in the interest of fairness to all candidates, was consistently applied, and all material beyond the 100-word limit was disregarded and did not score. Candidates do not need to write a structured paragraph and no introduction or preamble is necessary as these do not gain marks. They should be encouraged to read through their summary to ensure it makes sense and that they have covered all four bullet points. Bullet point 4 (details of the young people fostered) was the bullet point the majority of candidates struggled to score points for. Candidates do need to be careful that they do not distort the key details of what they hear. Some candidates need to give more precise answers and lacked accuracy with the following:

1   *Shortage of families in rural areas <u>with low population density</u>*: the last part was sometimes omitted or changed to 'unpopulated' which did not get the mark
2   *Accueil* was sometimes translated as 'welcoming' instead of 'fostering'.
3   It would help candidates to have better geographical knowledge of France. Some candidates seemed to think that Marseilles was in the north of France, which invalidated their answer.
4   'More families are needed to maintain the supply of carers' was generally omitted.
5   In 'their job is to give youngsters an educational <u>framework</u>', the idea of 'framework' was not always conveyed successfully by candidates.
6   Nearly all the candidates understood that the teenagers were aged 16-18, but a few wrote 15 or 6 instead of 16. *L'accueil collectif en foyer* and *en fin de placement dans un centre éducatif fermé* proved more challenging for some candidates to understand.

FRENCH

> **Paper 9779/03**
> **Writing and Usage**

Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully in **Part 1** and take sufficient time to plan their essays before starting to write. They then need to create logical, well-illustrated answers on the precise question set. Candidates should use the introduction to show their understanding of the essay title with all its elements and the conclusion to show their considered final judgement of the issues they have discussed. Structure and use of paragraphs are also important in order to demonstrate both clarity of thought and logical progression through an argument. In order to attain high marks for language, candidates should use accurate and idiomatic French which shows complexity both in grammatical structure and vocabulary. In **Part 2**, they need to possess a good in-depth knowledge of grammatical forms and structures in order to perform well on the exercises.

General comments

The Writing and Usage paper (Paper 3) is designed to test candidates' ability across a number of exercises. They have to write a discursive essay on a contemporary topic, know the correct verb form to use in a particular construction in **Exercise 1**, manipulate language in **Exercise 2** and demonstrate comprehension of the content and structure of a newspaper article by filling in gaps with the appropriate word or phrase in **Exercise 3**. The paper gives candidates across the ability range the chance to show the extent of their knowledge of the French language. The paper has some testing grammar points and five essay questions which give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate familiarity with contemporary global and societal issues as well as the critical thinking skills that enable them to form a persuasive and structured argument.

The selection of essay topics in this summer's paper covered the effect of flying on the environment, the distrust of experts, the benefits or otherwise of space travel, the link between happiness and sadness and the balance to strike between being oneself and conforming to a group. The usage section of the paper tested knowledge of verb forms in **Exercise 1** including formation of the past tense, use of the subjunctive, preceding direct object, sequence of tenses with *si*, and the imperative. **Exercise 2** tested the ability of candidates to manipulate language across a range of different structures. **Exercise 3** provided candidates with a newspaper article about alternative schooling in France. Candidates were given a grid of possible words and phrases to fill in the gaps in the text. For the Discursive Essay question, 24 marks were awarded for Accuracy and Linguistic Range and 16 for Development and Organisation of Ideas. **Exercises 1** and **2** were worth 5 marks each and **Exercise 3** was worth 10 marks.

Candidates appeared generally well prepared for the examination and understood the requirements of the paper. In the first section of the paper, there were some excellent essays at the upper end where there was evidence both of real maturity of thought and consideration of the topic backed up by concrete examples. In these essays, language was accurately used with a range of complex structures and a strong sense of idiom.

There is clear merit in taking time, before launching into the essay, to reflect on the title and its ramifications. Writing a plan in French enables candidates to anchor themselves in the language before starting to write. Succinctness and clarity of thought are very important in the construction of a coherent argument. The candidates who followed these principles were those who gained the highest marks.

Weaker candidates should work on presenting a more cogent argument on the topic and developing their knowledge and control of grammatical structures and idiom in order to convey their thoughts more effectively. Candidates should avoid unclear arguments and should aim to write in greater depth. They should also avoid long-winded sentences to explain fairly minor points and stay clear of translating very literally from English.

It must be said, however, that in the large majority of cases, candidates were able to offer some interesting arguments on a range of contemporary issues.

Among a number of common errors, the following were seen:

- incorrect spelling of common words: *concluir, example, un individue, la plus part, un emploie, à fin, l'impacte, environment, gouverment, hors* (instead of *or), le stresse, l'aspet, deuxièment*

- incorrect vocabulary*: les scientistes*, *balancer* for *équilibrer, balance* for *équilibre, stage (de la vie) for stade, emporter/apporter, amener/emmener*

- use of translated English verbs such as *correcter, expériencer, valuer, afforder, denier, recogniser*

- incorrect genders of common words such as *âge, aspect, monde, avantage, public, thème, manque, problème, effet, rôle, type*

- overuse of *le taux,* often incorrectly used for *le nombre*

- incorrect past participle agreement such as *ils ont développés*

- use of *mieux* for *meilleur, mal* for *mauvais, bien* for *bon, vite* for *rapide*

- failure to discriminate between the forms of *leur* and *leurs* such as *leur enfants, leurs donner* and use of *leur* for *eux*

- inability to form reflexive verbs correctly particularly in *nous* form such as *nous devons s'occuper de l'environnement*

- confusion between: *ces/ses/c'est; ce/ceux.*

- overuse of *plusieurs, personnes, choses, beaucoup*

- incorrect preposition use with *permettre*

- use of *sans* with present participle instead of infinitive

- use of *cela* with a plural verb

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Discursive Essay

The essay question gives candidates the opportunity to discuss their chosen title in any way that they wish and there is no correct answer or viewpoint. Their argument should be convincing and with a degree of balance. If a candidate argues for one side of the argument very strongly, there should be at least some recognition that another opinion is possible. Planning is clearly an important part of the art of essay writing. Most candidates wrote plans, but these should have some level of detail and be written in French to avoid stilted and awkward translations from English e.g. *il faut qu'il y ait quelque chose fait*, *c'est deuxième à rien*. As in previous years, many candidates listed in their planning numerous phrases that they would try to incorporate into their essays. These phrases which provide a framework to a serious piece of discursive writing should not be used to pad out shorter responses.

Essays do not have to contain multiple subjunctive structures in order to be successful. Often the use of a simpler indicative structure would be more appropriate, more concise and more French; an example of this would be a candidate using *pour que* and a subjunctive when *pour* and an infinitive would be neater.

Candidates should avoid including unsupported and improbable statistics from a range of journals, surveys and universities. Accurate references to environmental statistics for carbon emissions were, of course, very helpful in support of a point being made in **Question 1a**.

Most candidates appeared to have understood the major implications of the questions set and were able to offer some genuine personal insights into the topics. Introductory paragraphs could be better and more attention should be devoted to defining the parameters of the question before launching into the essay. It is also important that candidates do not make extravagant claims about their essay in their introduction which they cannot then fulfil. Successful essays then proceeded in a series of clearly set out paragraphs, finally arriving at a considered conclusion based on, but not merely repeating, what had gone before.

A significant number of candidates wrote essays in excess of 1500 words, in some cases up to 2000 words. The rubric clearly states that the length should be 350-450 words. Writing essays that are too long proved unhelpful for many candidates since focus was lost and the quality of the writing deteriorated. Answers then became rambling and repetitive. Paragraphing was often forgotten and language errors accumulated. Concise and persuasive answers that were well-structured and used a range of complex sentence patterns and idioms were those that scored highest.

Question 1

(a)   **« *Pour sauver la planète, on doit renoncer à l'avion.* » *Discutez de cette affirmation*.**

This was by far the most popular question. There were many very interesting responses that showed excellent knowledge of the issues. Candidates discussed the environmental problems caused by flying, often quoting many facts and figures, not all of which were accurate. It was generally understood that flying has a negative impact on the planet and some candidates felt strongly that the use of planes should be severely restricted. Few agreed totally with the idea that we should stop flying altogether. They recognised that we need planes for long haul transport as other options would take too long and be too expensive. People need to travel to see family, for business, for tourism and planes are also needed for the shipment of food and consumer goods. Candidates were keen to point out how the economy would suffer in developing countries that rely on tourism if people could no longer travel by plane. They also considered the loss of jobs within the aviation industry itself which would lead to unemployment across the globe. It was felt that it is not only planes which cause damage to the environment. Industry, agriculture, cars and other forms of transport and domestic appliances also have an environmental impact. There was a strong feeling, though, that we need to think seriously about creating new types of greener fuels for planes, travelling by train for short distances (useful reference was made to the French policy of using the train for journeys of less than 2.5 hours), using electric cars, and making fewer business trips now that virtual meetings are possible. There were a number of essays which merely described environmental problems and suggested ways to improve the situation such as not eating meat or not using plastic bags. They made little reference to the impact of plane travel and, therefore, gained lower marks for Content.

(b)   **« *Il faut se méfier des experts.* » *Qu'en pensez-vous ?***

No candidates answered this question.

(c)   **« *La conquête spatiale n'apporte presque rien à l'humanité.* » *Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?***

There were some very interesting and varied answers to this question which triggered some strong personal responses. It was clear to most candidates that space travel had brought us many useful practical things such as GPS, satellites and weather information allowing us to prepare for serious incidents, and to see the progress of climate change. They spoke of the curiosity of the human race, the desire to know more about our place in the universe and also the potential to find other habitable planets in case ours is destroyed. They also mentioned the collaborative research work in the ISS and within the space industry communities across the world. They described the discovery of other planets and galaxies as awe-inspiring, making us wonder about our place in the universe. On the opposite side of the coin, candidates also recognised that space travel is very expensive (although some mentioned Elon Musk's Space X being much cheaper) and that there are many issues on Earth, such as poverty, medical research and the environment that could benefit from the money that is poured into space exploration. Overall, candidates were able to explore both sides of

the argument and to reach the conclusion that space exploration is, on balance, of benefit to humanity.

(d) **« *Il faut connaitre la tristesse pour connaitre le bonheur.* » *Discutez*.**

There were not many answers on this topic. The candidates who did attempt it wrote thoughtful and serious essays about the links between sadness and happiness. They pointed out that in everyone's life there will be sadness caused by deaths of loved ones, relationship break-ups, job loss and disappointments, and that sometimes the experience of this sadness can result in depression and despair. However, they also recognised that, for some people, experiencing sadness can result in a greater feeling of happiness when it comes. Having been in the depths, the heights become higher. They also felt that being able to surmount sadness can lead to a better understanding of oneself. It was clear to candidates, though, that some people struggle to experience happiness as their mental health issues mean that that they are condemned to be depressed no matter what happens. In particular, they mentioned the mental health of young people and the difficulties with finding help. Some candidates felt that going through sadness could make people more compassionate about the experiences of others and that this was a side benefit. Some candidates referred to people who were always happy, had no worries and seemed not to need to experience sadness in their lives; they reflected that the happiness experienced by this group may be at a different level to that experienced by others who were less stable emotionally and more prone to feel the highs and lows. Overall, there was a reasonable understanding of the question and a recognition that the issue was not straightforward.

(e) **« *Se conformer aux autres ou être soi-même.* » *Faut-il choisir ?***

Candidates who answered on this topic had strong views about the role of the individual and the group. They made the point that for young people, there is a very strong desire to belong and that social media has created an environment where everyone has to find a group in which they can feel included. This goes against the idea of being oneself and having one's own ideas, opinions and persona. Candidates had anecdotal evidence of being excluded, being bullied and feeling it was hard to express one's own personality, but they strongly believed that it is really important to stand up for oneself, be strong and fight the pressure to conform. Other forms of pressure to conform came from family and religion, and candidates felt it was important sometimes to compromise in order to avoid too much conflict. Certain rules and social constraints were necessary, in their view, in order for people to live together in harmony. There was obviously a balance to be struck between conforming and being an individual standing up for one's rights. Reference was made to young people having the strength to come out as gay or transgender and to the overwhelming importance of feeling happy in one's skin.

Part II: Usage

Exercise 1

Most candidates achieved 3 or 4 out of 5 marks on this verb exercise. Some candidates, however, lacked knowledge of verb forms. Incorrect answers included:

Question 2 – *est naît, a née, naisions*

Question 3 – *part pas, partis, partisse*

Question 4 – *recoivions, avons recevues*

Question 5 – *viendrent*

Question 6 – *voulez-moi*

Exercise 2

This exercise tested a range of grammatical points. Few candidates achieved full marks, but many achieved 3 or 4 out of 5. The following incorrect answers were seen:

Question 7 – *ne faut pas*, *ne fasse pas*

Question 8 – *duquel, sans que*

Question 9 – *ne résoutait rien, ne résoudions rien*

Question 10 – *à envoyés, ce que on a envoyé*

Question 11 – *elle arrivera, elles avaient venu, d'avaient été arrivé*

Exercise 3

Many candidates achieved good marks on this exercise, showing that they had understood both the content and grammatical structure of the passage. **Questions 17**, **23**, **25**, and **29** were some of the clearer discriminators although incorrect answers were distributed across the whole exercise.

FRENCH

Paper 9779/04
Topics and Texts

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- read the question with care and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close attention to the question
- take care to include analysis and argument and avoid simply retelling the story.

General comments

There were some strong essays in both sections of the examination and the standard of French used in **Part 1** was generally very high.

The better essays, both in English and in French, were those where some level of planning had taken place, which allowed for clearer structuring of the response and ensured that essays remained focused on the question.

Poor handwriting was a common feature and led to some responses being almost illegible.

Candidates should plan their essays before setting pen to paper. A well-structured essay will be sensibly paragraphed, and the discussion will lead from an introduction to a conclusion. In responding to the question on a literary text, candidates should reflect on the whole question, not just focus on one specific word.

For both parts of this paper, a good level of understanding and knowledge of the texts and films is required, expressed in well-argued responses with relevant illustration. The Topics section invites the acquisition of a broad cultural knowledge of the topic studied through the material chosen. It is recommended, and required, to write on two sources rather than three. For answers in French, candidates should strive to achieve a high level of accuracy and determine to use a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence patterns; a sense of idiom would be a bonus.

In both parts of the paper, candidates should:

- read the question carefully
- plan their answer keeping the question in mind throughout
- define the terms of the question in the introduction
- support any assertions with close references to the text and/or film
- make sure that quotations, if used, support the argument
- make sure that all quotations are accurate
- use paraphrasing and allusion as an alternative to overlong quotations
- make sure to include analysis and argument and avoid narrative
- demonstrate knowledge by using it as supporting evidence for the argument
- exclude information that is irrelevant to the question.

Part I: Topics

Candidates should:

- make sure that they learn the necessary vocabulary to write about their topic when preparing for this part

- remember that the rubric requires reference to only two of the works and writing about all three may lead to a lack of depth
- try to demonstrate their knowledge of underlying themes, and mention comparisons and links between the two works
- ensure that all parts of the question are answered
- proofread carefully after writing, paying special attention to verb forms and adjectival agreements.

Part II: Texts

In context questions candidates should:

- make sure they analyse the extract, showing how its content is related to the rest of the work
- site the extract within the novel/play as a whole
- avoid using the passage as a springboard for a general essay
- be careful to analyse, rather than re-tell the story of the extract.

General comments

This paper combines an exploration of a cultural topic in French with the analysis of a French literary text in English. The Examiners continue to be impressed by the candidates' preparation for, and engagement with, this paper. The quality of answers indicates that teachers and candidates have established a good grasp of the requirements of the syllabus and of the demands of this paper. The candidates' scripts confirm that the aim of the syllabus to raise cultural awareness and to develop critical faculties is being fulfilled, often impressively so. The majority of answers engaged well with the terms of the questions, with the best answers revealing detailed knowledge of the texts and films used as supporting evidence in a cogent and coherent line of argument. The level of language was, in the main, of a satisfactory to good standard, and often quite sophisticated in the use of both vocabulary and syntax. The overwhelming majority of candidates managed to strike a good balance when approaching two texts and/or films and showed the ability to draw considered comparisons between the two works according to the terms of the question, either in the body of the essay or in the conclusion. The answers on cultural topics indicated a good knowledge of the source material and that the narrative approach was less in evidence.

All the topics were studied this year by centres, although there were very few on topic 3, *La condition féminine*. The quality of language was at least satisfactory, and often very good, indicating that candidates had built up the requisite vocabulary for this register and were comfortable in writing extensively in the target language. The best answers to the second part of the Paper, Texts, showed an excellent ability to organise material in direct reference to the terms of the question and also showed command of detail of the text studied; they proved to be cogent and considered arguments. Almost all of the texts were studied by centres this year. There were either no answers or minimal answers on **Questions 6**, **8** and **12**. Most candidates were well practised in structuring their answers, notably in defining the terms of the question with a clear introduction and conclusion. The Examiners noted the generally satisfactory quality of English and the use of appropriate register in the majority of scripts. Some extract answers relied heavily on the language used in the extract. Some candidates dealt with the analysis as if it were purely an exercise in literary appraisal, focussing solely on the linguistic structure of the extract. Whilst such analysis is relevant, a complete response must also address the other aspect(s) detailed in the question. Across both parts of the exam many candidates described an incident, and then tried to draw a point out of it. This is the wrong way round. They need to think in terms of points first and illustrate them from the text. To do this requires analysis as well as a good knowledge of the text or film.

Some essays had the 'ghost' of another essay behind them. This rather implies that candidates have written one practice essay. They could do with writing more, so that one approach does not bias their thinking. They must resist the temptation to rewrite the question to fit their knowledge. For example, for **Question 5**, some candidates had prepared the theme of identity and diversity and were determined to use it.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Topics

Question 1

Problèmatiques du couple

(a)   Most candidates dealt with the film *Amour* and the text *Élise ou la vraie vie*. The Sartre text was less popular. There were some strong answers to **1a**, though some candidates failed to see any egoism in the actions of Georges. Many candidates also commented on the selfishness of the women in the film/texts. Many candidates did comment on Georges's desire to keep the care of Anne to himself and his frustration at Anne's growing incapacity. Candidates also commented on Eva's actions being more about her own worries and selfishness rather than concern for her mother and father. Candidates who chose to write about the Sartre text found plenty of examples of egoism, especially in relation to Pierre. In *Élise ou la vraie vie*, Lucien's obvious selfishness was frequently pointed out and contrasted with Arezki's actions by better candidates but overlooked by others.

(b)   This question was the more popular of the two and marks were generally towards the good to very good range. Candidates found plenty of examples of women depending on men from the film and both texts. Anne's increasing dependency on Georges, after her previous life as a more independent woman, was obvious but good evidence was also presented about the women in the texts too. In *Élise ou la vraie vie*, her dependency on the men in her life was highlighted successfully. In *Les jeux sont faits* it was more problematic to extract examples of dependency as Eve is not dependent on men for money. Better candidates commented on her dependency on both André and Pierre for her life.

Question 2

Histoire et vérité

(a)   **2a** was marginally more popular than **2b.** Some candidates struggled with the title and were not fully sure as to how to answer the question successfully. Better candidates recognised the difference between the truth and versions of the truth given to others throughout the film and texts. *Z* and *Meurtres pour mémoire* were dealt with more successfully than *Magnus*. Overall, candidates seemed to find this question more challenging.

(b)   Some candidates were unsure of the meaning of '*détourner*' in the title and wrote essays that did not always hit the mark. Those that did had plenty of examples from the film and both texts and were able to comment on the extent to which they should be condemned. There were various different ways of understanding the title. Can one condemn those who lie, according to one's own standards? Or, closer to what was intended, can you understand why the characters should wish to, or have to, be economical with the truth?

Question 3

La condition féminine

(a)   There were no answers to this question.

(b)   There were very few answers to this question. Paula's journey to happiness in *Jeune femme* was highlighted by better candidates and the marks for this question were generally very good. Anna's fight for a new life in *Et te voici premise à tout homme* has many moments of unhappiness, but candidates recognised her personal triumph in the end as she finds self-fulfilment despite the lack of recognition by the church. Nadia's freedom and happiness in *Au commencement était la mer* is in sharp contrast to increasing restrictions imposed on her by the rise of Islamism.

Question 4

Contes moraux

(a)   **4a** was one of the most popular questions on the paper and it was often very well done. Most centres had chosen the two films. There were two parts to the question and the second part was omitted by some candidates. Generally speaking, candidates were able to illustrate the many things that prevented couples from being together and better candidates could express why they were destined to separate. Surprisingly, the children, as a source of friction, was often not mentioned in *Le Passé*. The complexity of the relationships in *Le Passé* was challenging for some candidates to analyse. Candidates should avoid story telling and focus on analysis. Candidates should also give more weight to the Catholic faith as an obstacle in *Ma nuit chez Maud*. There were very few centres that had studied *Le Message*.

(b)   This was not a popular choice and those that did choose it often got lost in arguments about freedom of action with insufficient focus on the text/film. As a result, marks were often in the satisfactory range.

Question 5

Identité et diversité

(a)   **5a** was the most popular question on the paper, with almost a quarter of all candidates choosing it. There were some very impressive answers and many candidates dealt well with the extent to which France welcomed immigrants (there were very few answers on *Tropique de la violence).* The contrast between authority and community was usually covered well. Quite a few candidates seem to have misunderstood '*pays d'accueil*' and wrote at length about the country they had come from, rather than where they had travelled to.

(b)   Fewer candidates chose this essay, and those that did sometimes found themselves struggling to build a case, despite multiple examples in both the film and the texts. Better answers to **5b** were able to quote examples where migration had not led to the loss of identity.

Part II: Texts

Question 6

(a)   There were too few answers to comment.

(b)   No answers submitted.

(c)   No answers submitted.

Question 7

(a)   There were too few answers to comment.

(b)   **7b** was efficiently handled, though many responses went a little too far in describing the friendly relations between Figaro and the Count, failing to acknowledge the formality and social distance that still existed between the two. Generally, though, this question was answered well.

(c)   There were too few answers to comment.

Question 8

(a)   No answers submitted.

(b)   No answers submitted.

(c)   There were too few answers to comment.

Question 9

(a)   There were too few answers to comment.

(b)   This was quite a popular choice and generally well handled. The better answers to **9b** carefully analysed Arsinoé's character and the key role that she plays in moving the action forward.

(c)   This was the most popular of the three questions. Whilst many answered well, some candidates needed to acknowledge those aspects of Molière's play that belonged only to 17th century court life. For example, they omitted the dated aspects of language, the reference to lawsuits and the practice of reading poetry in salons. Others needed to make more of the still relevant traits, such as hypocrisy, status and superficially courting popularity.

Question 10

(a)   There were too few answers to comment.

(b)   Candidates struggled to find a sufficient amount to say for **10b**. Candidates could also have improved by distinguishing between sympathy and pity.

(c)   There were too few answers to comment.

Question 11

(a)   There were some mixed responses to **11a**. Most discussed Pierre's attitude to women as revealed in his thoughts about the barmaid, but few went on to describe his need to idealise women. Accordingly, relatively few responses discussed the impact that the barmaid's response would have on his relationship with his mother. A number of responses analysed the language in depth but needed to tackle the question more.

(b)   There were some very good descriptions of the character and role of père Roland in **11b**, which was the more popular of the three questions set. Many candidates covered a good number of points, although some concentrated entirely on the negative and found no redeeming features. Overall, though, this question was executed well.

(c)   There were too few answers to comment.

Question 12

There were no answers for any of the three questions set.

Question 13

(a)   There were too few answers to comment.

(b)   Some candidates could improve by contrasting the plays in more detail and distinguishing between the master-slave relationship and the symbiotic one. The best candidates showed a detailed knowledge of both works.

(c)   This was the more popular question. Some responses to **13c** tended to concentrate on just one or two elements of the 'absurd' revealed in the plays, although there were a couple of comprehensive and very impressive essays. Some brought in reference to secondary works rather than references to the texts. Some candidates would do well to avoid comments on what absurdity means that were too general and instead show how it is implied in the dramatic techniques of the plays.