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In French (9FR0)

Paper 01: Listening, Reading and Translation

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## Introduction

Paper 1 tests candidates' comprehension of spoken and written material in French. The stimulus texts are based on the four main themes of the Specification: *Les changements dans la société française*; *La culture politique et artistique dans les pays francophones*; *L'immigration et la société multiculturelle française*; *L'Occupation et la Résistance*. Candidates are required answer open-response questions and questions in a multiple-choice format. They are also required to show the ability to summarise spoken material and to translate a passage from French into English. In total, there are 80 marks available for this paper.

There are five extracts of spoken material and five reading passages in all; candidates are required to answer all questions on the paper and there are no option questions. The level of challenge varies across each question.

In Section A, candidates listen to the audio extracts and respond to the questions in French. Q1 offers questions in a multiple-choice format while Q2, Q3 and Q4(a) require the candidate to answer open-response questions in French. Candidates should manipulate the language in order to show their comprehension and answer the question successfully; they should not attempt to simply transcribe what they hear. In this paper, there are no marks awarded for grammatical accuracy; however, responses which are too inaccurate to successfully communicate the message will not score. Candidates should aim to offer concise, accurate answers which convey the correct idea.

In Q4(b)(i) and Q4(b)(ii), candidates are required to summarise two passages of spoken French, giving the information required in the bullet points. Candidates should signpost their answers by using bullet points or three clear separate sentences. In this question, candidates should remember that the purpose is to summarise and so they should keep the answers as short as possible with each bullet point containing one idea or element. Candidates should avoid attempting to transcribe material from the recording; any direct "lift" from the recording is unlikely to score as there will have been little or no attempt to summarise. Candidates should answer in the space provided on the question paper; candidates who use supplementary sheets invariably give answers that are too long and are therefore likely to lose marks.

The second section of the paper tests the candidates' comprehension of the written word; Q5 and Q6 offer questions in a multiple-choice format while Q7, Q8 and Q9 require the candidate to answer open-response questions in French.

In the multiple-choice questions, candidates must make their choice of answer clear and, in Q6, only four sentences must be chosen or candidates will lose marks.

In the open-response questions, candidates are once again reminded of the instruction in the rubric "you must not copy out whole sections". It is pleasing to note that many candidates have now understood that they must manipulate the language in order to score the mark. However, there is still a minority of candidates who offer answers which are directly "lifted" from the text and these cannot be credited. Candidates must be aware of the need to change the language from the text in order to give the answer and also that some questions will require candidates to use inference to arrive at the correct idea. Answers that contain more ideas than marks also run the risk of not scoring; in a 1-mark question, the examiner can only consider the first idea given and so, if the correct answer is offered as an additional idea, it cannot score.

In this series, candidates coped well with the literary passage; often candidates find comprehension of a literary text more challenging and it was pleasing to see that the performance this year was generally more successful. This year's text was an extract from

a modern novel by Aurélie Valognes and, overall, candidates showed a good level of understanding, although there was again a minority who tried to answer some of the questions without attempting to manipulate the text.

Although there are no marks awarded for the quality of language in this paper, candidates should be aware that, if the language is so inaccurate that the message cannot be clearly understood, the mark cannot be scored. Some candidates continue to show a lack of awareness of verb structures across the tenses and there were again frequent instances of misspellings (even when the word was printed in the text). While minor misspellings are tolerated, candidates are reminded that credit cannot be given for words given in other languages. Where misspellings cause words to appear as English words (or words from other languages), or as alternative French words with a different meaning, that mark cannot be scored; candidates are therefore reminded of the need to check their spellings carefully, particularly in words such as *uniforme, projet, attaque, marques, peine, coupable, preuves, réfugiés, recrutement*.

Candidates must aim to write accurate French and to use their knowledge of linguistic structures to ensure that they offer a concise and targeted answer. Linguistic errors which cause the meaning to be changed or offer ambiguity in the answer will cause the mark to be withheld. It is noticeable that many candidates struggle to produce accurate language when using the *passé composé* and many do not understand the difference between the uses of the perfect and imperfect tenses. Too often, inaccurate language causes communication to break down and so the mark cannot be awarded. This year, too many candidates did not know the difference between *ils ont tué* and *ils sont tués* in Q3(c) and Q3(h) and so gave an answer which was, at best, ambiguous and so could not score. Pronouns are poorly understood and used; there is little understanding of the difference between direct and indirect pronouns and many candidates seem unaware of the correct word order. Also poorly understood is the difference between *ça* and *sa*; this too can make an answer ambiguous.

Candidates continue to find the translation question (Q10) very challenging at this level. This year's passage was based on the topic of *le droit à la grève* from the sub-theme of *le monde du travail* and was written in a journalistic style. Candidates would be expected to be familiar with vocabulary such as *les manifestations, les mouvements de protestation, des ralentissements*. Candidates who regularly read newspapers would have been best placed to cope with this passage which focused on lorry and other drivers who were protesting against the cost of fuel. Candidates should aim to produce a piece of well-written English which exactly conveys the message of the original text in an appropriate register; they should not attempt to paraphrase or stray from the original text.

### **Comments on individual questions**

In this report, we will consider each of questions which require an open response in French, together with the translation question.

#### **Question 2**

Question 2 is an open-response style question testing aural comprehension; this question offers a possible five marks. This question is based on a conversation between two speakers about Marine Le Pen and her ideas on school uniform and the legalisation of cannabis; this extract focuses on the third sub-theme of the topic *L'immigration et la société multiculturelle française*.

In Q2(a), most candidates were able to understand the idea of school uniform promoting equality but slightly less were able to explain that it would protect students from pressure to buy brands. In Q2(b), most understood that Marine Le Pen wanted a severe sentence for cannabis users, although some candidates misunderstood *une peine* and offered the

idea of the use of cannabis to treat pain. It was surprising that some candidates offered the idea that Le Pen would be in favour of legalising cannabis; as the topics of *l'extrême droite* and, in particular, *les leaders du Rassemblement National*, are included in the third sub-theme in Theme 3, candidates would be expected to know Le Pen's views on key issues.

Some candidates lost the mark in Q2(c) as their answer lacked detail (*ils deviendraient agriculteurs*) or they had misunderstood *melons* and offered answers which made no sense (*mélange, moulins*); a minority offered the idea that the dealers were moving to the countryside to continue cannabis production. In Q2(d), most candidates understood that people in favour of the legalisation of cannabis were felt by Le Pen to be naïve, although many found it difficult to clearly express the idea, *Ils sont naïfs*. Some candidates answered without a verb which caused them to lose the mark as the answer *Naïfs* alone did not answer the question. There was also some confusion with the idea of knives (*le cannabis est meilleur que les knifes et la violence [sic]*).

Many candidates struggled with putting the verb *promouvoir* into either the conditional or the present tense and, again, direct and indirect pronouns were poorly used (e.g., *on devrait les donner une peine sévère [sic]*).

However, overall, this question was reasonably well answered with a mean mark of 3.15.

### Question 3

Question 3 is an open-response style question testing aural comprehension; this question offers a possible nine marks. This question was based on a conversation between three speakers about the attack by German troops on the village of Maillé in 1944; this extract focused on the third sub-theme of the topic *L'Occupation et la Résistance*.

Candidates found this question slightly more challenging than in 2306. Many candidates were unaware of the term *maquisards* (although this should be well-known from the theme *L'Occupation et la Résistance*) and some were often not able to understand the detail of the audio passage. In Q3(a), most candidates understood that the German troops were heading north, although there was some occasional confusion between *alliés* and *Allemands*. In Q3(b), most candidates were able to offer the idea of the village being near the demarcation line but some misunderstood the idea of *stratégique* and offered instead *c'était un village anonyme*. The second idea proved more challenging; many misheard *deux voies de communication* which were offered as *voix* or *devoirs* and some candidates offered an answer that was unspecific, e.g., *bonne pour la communication*.

In Q3(d), many failed to understand the idea of the Resistance feeling guilty and some were unable to offer the word *coupable*, giving the English 'culpable' instead. In Q3(e), many candidates struggled to understand *dissimuler* in the question and others misheard *les traces écrites* in the audio. Q3(f) caused problems for many candidates who were unable to express their ideas clearly and so gave incorrect information (*ils ont blâmé les autres*) and also in Q3(h) (*ils ont tué/ils sont tués*). In Q3(g), many candidates identified *retarder* as an *-re* verb as they were unable to recognise the subjunctive form; others appeared unable to conjugate the verb, offering simply *retard les troupes allemandes [sic]*. Although it was not necessary to specify the number of villagers killed in Q3(h), an incorrect number prevented the mark from being awarded, which was often the case. Comprehension of numbers continues to cause problems for candidates, even at this level.

While there is no mark for linguistic accuracy in this paper, it is a poor level of language that often prevents the mark from being awarded because communication has not been successful. Candidates at this level should be able to produce topic-specific vocabulary correctly (e.g., *les troupes allemandes, attaquer*), recognise the difference between *était* and *été* and should be able to produce a correct perfect tense. They should also be able

to recognise the passive voice. This question required candidates to produce verbs in the *passé composé* to accurately convey their ideas and this was poorly done in many cases (e.g., *les maquis ont attaquer deux voitures allemandes [sic]*); this is an area on which Centres should concentrate as candidates at this level need to be able to convey their ideas clearly in all time frames.

The mean mark for this question was 4.89.

#### Question 4

Question 4 is in two parts: Q4(a) is an open-response style question testing aural comprehension and Q4(b) requires candidates to offer two short summaries of spoken material. Six marks are available for each part of the question with a possible twelve marks in total. This question is based on a discussion about the “Cuistots Migrateurs”, a scheme set up to provide refugees and asylum seekers with a formal training in a cookery school. This extract focuses on the second sub-theme of the topic *L’immigration et la société multiculturelle française*.

Candidates were able to express most of the ideas in Q4(a) although occasionally candidates offered the opposite idea from that given in the audio simply because the language was not manipulated correctly, e.g., in Q4(a)(i) *en raison de l’opposition de son gouvernement*. Candidates who used the phrase *à cause de* coped most successfully with avoiding the lift here. Most candidates understood and were able to communicate Rashid’s dissatisfaction with his accommodation in Q4(a)(ii) although some struggled to offer the verb *vivre* in the Perfect tense; a change to the synonym *habiter* might have offered an easier solution. In Q4(a)(iii), *chef cuisinier* was given in many forms, although a tolerant approach was taken to the marking here.

Some candidates offered too many ideas in Q4(a)(iv) or they failed to recognise *ne...que* in the audio and so did not make it clear that the business employed *only* asylum seekers and refugees. The second point was less well-answered in this question with some candidates offering simply *c’était une entreprise sociale*.

In Q4(a)(v), many candidates showed that they struggle to use a pronoun successfully in their attempt to answer the question (*La grand-mère de Rashid lui avait enseigné/donné les recettes*) and some candidates misunderstood the question *Qu’est-ce qui explique..?* (*What*) for *Qui explique...?* (*Who*) and so answered simply *Sa grand-mère*. The vocabulary item *recettes* caused problems for some.

Candidates are reminded that the use of incorrect time frames will prevent the awarding of the mark; Q4(a) focuses on Rashid’s experiences following his arrival in France so the use of the future would not be appropriate here.

In the summary question, Q4(b), many candidates are now signposting their answers but some continue to give too many elements in a paragraph form and so lose marks. Candidates should offer a short succinct answer (although not a single word) to each bullet point and signpost clearly. This question had a similar level of demand as in the previous year and, overall, candidates are coping more successfully with the summary task than at the beginning of this Specification.

In Q4(b)(i), candidates sometimes failed to clearly express the idea of *valoriser les compétences* but the second and third points were well understood and expressed.

Q4(b)(ii) was slightly less successfully attempted by candidates; the idea of the school opening in November was sometimes expressed in the past rather than the future and, in the second bullet point, some candidates failed to offer the idea of *plus de 200 personnes* while others misunderstood the idea of *former*, writing instead *deformer* or *trainer*. The

third bullet point was well answered by most candidates who recognised that the motivation behind the project was to make society more inclusive.

The mean mark for this question was 8.02.

### Question 7

Question 7 is the third reading comprehension exercise and tests the candidate's understanding of a written text by responding in French to questions in an open-response format. This year, this question was based on a literary text; the extract was adapted from Aurélie Valognes' « *Né sous une bonne étoile* ». Six marks are available for this question.

This year, candidates coped more successfully with the demands of a literary passage. Far fewer candidates attempted to "lift" sections of text in order to answer the questions. In Q7(c), some candidates failed to read the text closely and blamed Gustave's pen or his mother for his difficulties. In Q7(d), some candidates offered *supportive/supportif* to describe Gustave's mother's attitude; in this question, the mark scheme was tolerant of any idea that showed that Gustave's mother was trying to encourage him or believed that he could do well (*elle était positive/elle l'encourageait/elle pense qu'il est capable*) and candidates should be encouraged to use their knowledge of synonyms to find a way of expressing the overall idea in this situation.

In Q7(e), many candidates incorrectly made the verb *douter* reflexive, were incapable of changing *doutant de lui* to *Il doutait de lui* and interpreted *n'y arrivant pas* as meaning that Gustave did not go to school. The word *détente* was not well-known by some candidates who thought that Gustave had been given detentions.

The mean mark for this question was 4.33

### Question 8

Question 8 tests the candidate's understanding of a text written in 2012 by responding in French to questions in an open-response format. This question is based on a text about changes in family structures; the text focuses on the first sub-theme of the topic *Les changements dans la société française*. Eight marks are available for this question.

Overall, candidates coped reasonably well with the demands of this question although there were some who attempted to offer lifts in response to Q8(a), with too many offering *la modification du rôle de l'homme* without any attempt at manipulation. Here, a straightforward perfect tense sentence (e.g., *le rôle de l'homme a changé*) would have given the correct information and candidates need more practice in manipulating the language in similar circumstances. There were also references to *la taille des familles* without specifying that the families were getting smaller and *les familles recomposées* were mentioned but without the necessary information that they had increased. In addition, candidates need to be sure to offer one clear answer for each bullet point, ideally with each point set out on a separate line. Additional information is likely to result in a loss of marks if there is infringement of the Order of Elements rule.

In Q8(b), many candidates understood the idea of *moins stigmatisé* but there were some ambiguities with candidates attempting to use words like *stigmatisation* and *stigma*. In Q8(c), most candidates understood that the two families often chose to live separately but could not always explain the idea of *pour se préserver des désagréments*; often, the opposite idea was expressed because of the candidate's inaccurate use of the language (*pour préserver les désagréments*).

In Q8(d), some candidates misinterpreted the idea of *des rendez-vous et des surprises* as *des rendez-vous surprises*; in this type of question, candidates could answer with a conjugated verb (e.g., *elles se donnaient des rendez-vous/des surprises*), with a present participle (e.g., *en se donnant des rendez-vous/des surprises*) or simply by using *avec* (e.g., *avec des rendez-vous/des surprises*).

This question offered a similar level of demand as in 2306. The mean mark for this question was 5.91

### Question 9

Question 9 tests the candidate's understanding of a written text about a basketball player from Guadeloupe responding in French to questions in an open-response format. The text focuses on the first sub-theme of the *L'immigration et la société multiculturelle française*. Eight marks are available for this question.

This question proved to be slightly less challenging than in 2306. Most candidates showed good comprehension although they were not always successful in clearly articulating the answer; in Q9(a), some candidates offered the idea that Daryl was waiting for his mother which did not answer the question and others offered too many ideas and lost the mark due to the Order of Elements rule. Q9(b) was generally well answered but in Q9(c) there were issues with the emphatic pronoun *lui* which was sometimes incorrectly given as *soi*.

In Q9(d), some candidates offered too many elements and sometimes offered the idea that Daryl needed support which did not answer the question. In Q9(e), some candidates did not successfully communicate the idea of Daryl passing his *bac* and some offered the idea of signing his first contract as the evidence that Daryl had succeeded in his studies.

Q9(f) and (g) were mostly well answered and the mean mark for this question was 5.83.

### Question 10

Question 10 is the translation question from French into English. The translation continues to challenge many candidates at this level and candidates performed less well this year than on the translation in the 2306 paper. There are still too many candidates producing translations that do not read naturally in English or are simply not an accurate rendition of the original text. This year's passage was based on the sub-topic *le droit à la grève* and was written in a journalistic style: candidates would benefit from regular reading of newspapers in order to have a wider knowledge of vocabulary and a better understanding of the register needed.

Many candidates were unable to offer an acceptable translation of *conducteurs de poids lourds* in Box 1 and too many candidates failed to translate *chauffeurs*. Slightly better known were *pêcheurs* but *agriculteurs* proved difficult for many. In Box 3, *plusieurs* was poorly understood and some candidates incorrectly offered the perfect tense in English (have started) rather than the simple past; this would not be appropriate here due to the style of the passage which is relating events in the more distant rather than the immediate past. Box 4 was generally well translated although some candidates lost the mark for 'in/on the streets' which gives a different message; 'motorways' was not accepted as this would be a different lexical item but 'main roads' gave the correct idea and was credited. In Box 5, the word *menée* was poorly understood and many candidates failed to translate *ces* correctly, thus losing the mark. In Box 6, the word *carburant* was not well known as fuel and so it was decided to tolerate the alternative 'petrol' in this box. As a result, candidates coped reasonably well here. Boxes 7 and 8 were well translated by the majority of candidates although a minority lost the mark in Box 7 for the French spelling of *mesures*. In Box 9, a minority of candidates omitted the definite article which was needed here as

the idea referred to specific movements and a surprising number offered 'movements of protestation' which is not a natural expression in English. In Box 10, the use of the English perfect tense was appropriate here (helped by the inclusion of *déjà*) and many candidates successfully translated *entraîné*.

*Ralentissements monstres* in Box 11 caused problems for some candidates but most dealt well with Box 12, although there was a minority who translated *le nord-ouest* as the north-east. In Box 13, the idea of 'blockades of fuel depots' was successfully translated by only a few and *Celui de Brest* with the inclusion of the *ne...que* construction in Box 14 meant that this box was often unsuccessful. Many candidates succeeded in scoring the mark in Box 15, although some candidates lost the mark by using the word 'vans' for *camions* and a surprising number did not recognise *en fin de semaine*. The present tense was required in Box 17 (*les manifestants menacent..*); some candidates gave the verb in the past tense or failed to recognise the difference between *manifestations* and *manifestants*. Box 18 was unsuccessful as candidates were unable to accurately translate *gazole*, with most offering 'gas' or 'gasoline'. Box 19 required the use of a conditional tense which some candidates failed to recognise and *plafonné* caused problems in Box 20, although the suggestion that the protestors wanted the price to be put up to 80 cents a litre clearly made no sense in the context of a passage where protests are taking place against fuel prices.

Candidates are advised that they need to think about what they are writing and make sure that it makes sense; in Box 20, a minority of candidates translated *centimes* as 'centimetres'. Candidates should consider each verb tense, ensuring that they are conveying the same meaning as the English, and they must be careful to pay attention to detail, particularly with words such as *ces* rather than *les* or *des*. They should also be aware of negative constructions like *ne...que* and they should ensure that every word is considered, taking special care to offer the correct English spelling for words that are similar in the two languages (*mesures, professionnels, gouvernement, mouvement*) or those that are *faux amis* (*conducteurs, blocages*). This year, candidates lost marks for the use of the English 'lead' when they meant 'led'; this cannot be tolerated as a spelling mistake as the words have different meanings in English.

Vocabulary which caused particular difficulties this year included *carburant, entraîné, ralentissements, blocages, dépôts pétroliers, gazole* and *plafonné*. The most commonly scored boxes were Boxes 7, 8, 12 and 16. The poorest performances came in Boxes 1 (*Conducteurs de poids lourds et chauffeurs de taxis*), 11 (*Ralentissements monstres*), 13 (*ainsi que des blocages de dépôts pétroliers*) and 18 (*s'ils n'obtiennent pas des aides sur le prix du gazole*).

The mean mark for this question was 8.96 and the facility value was 0.45, showing that candidates continue to find the skill of translation the most challenging part of this paper.

## Comments on multiple-choice questions

### Question 1

This question tests aural comprehension and has four parts; the candidate is required to complete each sentence by choosing the correct ending. In this series, this question was based on a report about French media in Mali. Of the four parts, candidates found Q1(iii) the most accessible and Q1(ii) was the most challenging but, overall, candidates performed very well on this question. The mean mark for this question was 3.52.

### Question 5

This question tests reading comprehension and has four parts; the candidate is again required to complete each sentence by choosing the correct ending. This question was

focused on a text about the Belgian singer, Stromae. Candidates performed very well on this question; of the four parts, candidates found Q5(i) the most accessible and Q5(ii) was the most challenging. The mean mark for this question was 3.43.

### **Question 6**

This question again tests reading comprehension and offers four marks. The candidate is required to identify the four correct sentences from a list of nine based on the information given in the text. The topic of this text was the exhibition « *le Juif et la France* » during the Occupation. Candidates showed excellent comprehension of this text with many scoring full marks. The mean mark for this question was 3.62 and the facility value was 0.90.

It is interesting to note that candidates show excellent comprehension across the multiple-choice questions while their performance is often more varied across the open-response questions where they have to use their knowledge of the language to communicate their answers.

### **Conclusion**

This paper continues to offer a fair level of challenge to candidates at Advanced Level. It has been pleasing to see Centres and candidates responding to the advice given in previous years' reports. Every candidate should be aiming to answer the questions clearly and without ambiguity. While there are no specific marks for linguistic ability in this paper, the ability to produce grammatically accurate French allows the message to be successfully conveyed.

Whereas many candidates are able to demonstrate a good level of written French, unfortunately, there are still candidates who are not able to produce accurate sentences in the language and they are therefore not always able to communicate their answers clearly. Candidates at this level should be able to manipulate the language; they need to listen to the spoken material or read the text and express their answers clearly in their own words. They must avoid lifting from the text or transcribing from the audio but should instead aim to show their understanding of the text by giving the answer in their own words.

Areas of language on which candidates need to focus include tenses, especially the *passé composé* which seems especially weak, direct and indirect object pronouns, emphatic and demonstrative pronouns, the difference in use between the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*, the difference in meaning and use of the definite article and the partitive article (*les /des*), the understanding of questioning words and recognition of the passive voice. In addition, candidates need to recognise the importance of the knowledge of synonyms in order to help them express their answers in their own words rather than leaning too heavily on the original text.

It is pleasing to see that the candidates' performance on this paper continues to improve thanks to the hard work of teachers and Centres. Candidates are able to demonstrate reading and aural comprehension skills on a range of question types and they are able to translate from French into English. Moreover, they are able to cope with a range of written texts taken from different source types and a variety of audio material, all covering the range of sub-themes from this Specification. Many candidates show the ability to produce an accurate level of written French in order to answer the questions.

Based on their performance this year, candidates are offered the following advice. They should:

- give clear, unambiguous answers
- ensure that the language used is accurate
- avoid transcribing from the audio or lifting from the written text to answer questions
- offer one idea only for each mark available
- in Q4(b), use bullet points and offer one idea only for each bullet point
- have a secure knowledge of regular and common irregular verbs in all tenses
- learn to use direct and indirect object pronouns
- understand the correct use of emphatic and demonstrative pronouns
- be able to recognise the passive voice
- practise manipulation of language
- learn synonyms
- ensure they have a secure knowledge of topic-based vocabulary
- read literary texts and newspaper articles in French.