

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/01

Speaking

## General comments

The majority of recordings this year were audible, but there were a few problems. Before beginning examinations, examiners need to ensure that conditions are suitable – that they are conducting and recording examinations in as quiet a room as possible and the Centre is organised to prevent accidental disruption. There were a number of recordings badly affected by school bells and noise nearby, and one or two which were interrupted by someone coming into the room during the recording.

Examiners should satisfy themselves that the recording system is adequate: remembering that an examiner's voice tends to be more dominant, they should make sure that the tape recorder or microphone is positioned to favour the candidate rather than the examiner – it is vital to be able to hear the candidates clearly, but it is also important to be able to hear the questions an examiner asks. Examiners both external and internal should be provided with correct candidate names and numbers and should use these to introduce each candidate at the beginning of his/her examination. Cassettes need to be labelled to show the Centre and syllabus details and the order in which candidates appear on each side (that is, recording order, rather than numerical order) – this makes the task of moderation much simpler, as particular candidates from the sample can then be located more easily.

Examiners should make sure they are familiar with the timings of the examination: 3 to 3½ minutes for the candidate's Presentation (uninterrupted by the examiner, unless the candidate is clearly unable to continue without assistance), followed by 7 to 8 minutes of Topic Conversation and 8 to 9 minutes of General Conversation, giving a total time of approximately 18 to 20 minutes. In order to avoid disruption to candidates and the loss of parts of an oral, the examination of a candidate should **not** be split between two sides of a cassette, so a maximum of **two** examinations should be recorded per side of a 90-minute cassette, and only **one** per side of a 60-minute cassette. Before despatching the examination material, examiners should check that all candidates forming the sample have actually been recorded and are audible.

For each candidate, a mark should be entered in each column of the Working Mark Sheet. Each mark corresponds to one of the elements of the mark scheme, so there are 3 columns relating to the Presentation and 5 columns for each conversation section. The last column for each conversation section should record the marks awarded for asking questions: where candidates do not ask any questions, even when prompted to do so, a zero (0) must be recorded in that column. Additions should be checked and marks transferred to the MS1.

## Topic and Topic Conversation

Most Centres are accustomed to the need to relate topic presentations to France or francophone culture in some way. A few candidates still give only a brief nod to the requirement ( *Ici, comme en France...*) but only a small minority seem entirely unaware of the requirement – teachers should make sure that all candidates know about this, and realise that a lack of appropriate reference may cause their marks for content/presentation to be halved.

There was a wide range of interesting topics chosen, from the factual, (*Le fast food en France, Le Scoutisme, Victor Hugo*), the social and general, (*Les familles monoparentales, L'immigration illégale en France, Les jeunes, Le sport, La mode, Les médias*), the more philosophical (*Discrimination contre les femmes*) and the personal, (*Les parfums, la langue française au Canada*), with several this year dealing with various aspects of the Internet, and references were made to France, the Ivory Coast, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Senegal.

The general social topics (*La famille* for example) are often the ones least related to France, whereas those which clearly define the scope of interest (*Le racisme en France* for example) make the point from the outset. The very factual, mundane topics (*Mes vacances au/en...* for example) are often limited in ideas and opinions, so score less well for the content/presentation mark, and in addition do not lend themselves to later development in sufficient depth. If topics cannot be developed beyond the basic levels which would be appropriate to an IGCSE examination, however good the candidates might be, their marks in the topic conversation section are not going to reflect their true abilities. Examiners need to be aware that they should not be merely asking for a reiteration of the topic material in the Topic Conversation section: questions should require candidates to develop and extend their original material. Candidates who have prepared thoroughly for the examination will have considered what questions might be asked of them, but even with a topic which has already been tested in a mock examination, examiners should be able to vary questions so that there is no lack of spontaneity or feeling of over-rehearsed questions and answers.

The topic presentation itself is not the place for questions. This may over-extends the time allocated for this exercise and may create consequent pressure of time on other elements of the test. The end of the presentation is often an appropriate place for a candidate to ask a question and this will lead naturally into the topic conversation section. Candidates are expected to ask questions of the examiner in the topic conversation section and if they do not, the examiner should prompt them to do so.

### **General Conversation**

This is often a difficult area for both candidate and examiner. The examiner needs to find a topic of interest for discussion and is likely to begin with something straightforward, everyday and well within the candidate's capabilities. At A/AS level, however, it is inappropriate to continue asking questions about school routine, the weekend, holidays, all of which would be very suitable for a conversation at IGCSE level. However well candidates respond to this kind of question, it is unlikely that they will score marks in the top bands of the mark schemes, since this type of question is simply not appropriate at this level. Conversation should move on rapidly from this kind of question, so that the candidate is challenged to express ideas and opinions, and develop them as far as possible. The examiner needs to be prepared to engage with the candidate in this, otherwise this is not a conversation, but merely a formulaic series of questions and rote answers.

It is not expected that examiners will try to cover every area studied during the course, but two or three topic areas, discussed in depth, will give candidates opportunities to show what they are capable of. In a Centre with several candidates, candidates should not all be asked the same questions: they will all have different areas of interest, and the examiner needs vary the topic areas accordingly. Examiners should not necessarily view responses given by candidates as "right" or "wrong" – candidates are entitled to express their own opinions and should be given the opportunity to do so and defend their points of view. The aim on the examiner's part should be to establish a natural conversation, and as for the candidate, he or she should not restrict him/herself to simple sentence answers, but should be prepared to develop those answers. The candidate who restricts him/herself to short, accurate responses, relying on good comprehension and accuracy, is also restricting the marks available for responsiveness, and providing information and opinions, since there is a limited amount of language which can be assessed.

In this section too, candidates are required to ask questions, and though many did so, quite a number did not, and some who were prompted to do so said they had no questions to ask. Candidates should be reminded that there is a total of 10 marks allocated to asking questions, 5 in each conversation section, and if they do not ask questions when prompted, they are throwing away a possible additional 10 marks. Where candidates do not ask questions in one or other conversation sections a **zero** should be recorded in the final column of the Working Mark Sheet for that section – marks cannot be awarded where no questions are asked.

Overall, the vast majority of Centres tried hard to conduct the examination as the syllabus requires and worked on giving their candidates every possible opportunity and eliciting the best responses from them. Candidates had usually researched their topics well and were able to give a good account of themselves. Centres and candidates alike should be congratulated on their commitment and performance.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/02

Paper 2

## General comments

The performance of the candidates on this paper was overall satisfactory. The paper proved to be as demanding as the previous year. Candidates found the texts accessible but in many cases difficult to rephrase or manipulate. A number of candidates produced excellent performances, giving the main points in clear, succinct and idiomatic French, whilst the weakest gave vague or no answers and used less than accurate and grammatical French.

Copying wholesale from the text was again a common feature this year. This does not, show comprehension and therefore can gain no marks.

In **Questions 3 and 4** where candidates are required to answer in French, the rubric quite clearly states that candidates should answer “sans copier mot à mot des phrases entières du texte.” They may use material from the passage but they must answer in such a way as to demonstrate understanding of the text. Candidates should try to express relevant ideas using different vocabulary or structures. Even small changes to the original show that the candidates can handle the ideas and the language. Examples of manipulation of the language and content are given under the comments on specific questions.

It was encouraging to note that fewer candidates copied out the question as part of their answer thereby saving a great deal of time.

Some candidates failed to complete all of the questions on the paper. It is extremely important that candidates learn to manage their time well. **Question 5** is worth 20 marks and failure to start and or to complete this can affect the overall mark on the paper quite dramatically.

In **Question 5** the rubric states that both parts of the question should be answered in 140 words in total. Candidates should observe the word limit because only limited latitude is allowed beyond this figure. Candidates will not be awarded content marks after the 140 words. No introductory remarks about the subject are needed. They will gain no marks and only use up valuable words out of the 140 maximum.

In general candidates should aim to use 90 to 100 words for the resume and 40 to 50 words for the personal response. This relates closely to the content marks available for each part.

Some candidates wrote a general essay in answer to **Question 5**. In this case the candidate will score 0 for content because the information presented must be drawn from the two texts. The essay will be treated as a personal response and therefore can only score up to five marks.

The same five point language grid is used for assessing quality of language in each of **Questions 3, 4 and 5**. This means that candidates must maintain a good level of accuracy throughout the paper if they are to score high marks overall.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

This question was not answered as well as in the previous year. Candidates had in some cases difficulty finding correct alternatives for all the definitions. Minor copying errors were tolerated. Most candidates grasped the idea that only one word was required and not a phrase.

- (a) This was generally well done.
- (b) This proved to be extremely difficult. *Inculte* was little known. Some candidates thought it was a verb and offered *provoque* instead of the adjective *vierge*.
- (c) This was well done.
- (d) This was quite well done. Both *nuire* and *abîmer* were accepted.
- (e) This was generally well answered.

### Question 2

This task proved to be extremely difficult and required the candidates to manipulate the grammar of the sentence. Minor spelling mistakes were not penalised but grammatical mistakes were. Candidates do not need to change the vocabulary in the sentence but merely to re-arrange the words and make any necessary changes to the grammar.

- (a) This question was quite well done. Many different formulations were accepted including *On a construit des bâtiments en bord de mer ce qui a eu/et cela a eu/action qui a eu...*
- (b) This question was generally well answered.
- (c) This question proved to be very difficult. Most candidates failed to include any form of *on dit* and merely re-wrote the sentence omitting the first three words. The use of *à ce qu'on dit/selon certains/sont censés* would have obtained the mark.
- (d) This question was quite difficult though a greater number of candidates this year managed a correct form of the subjunctive. The use of *ne* before the subjunctive was rarely seen.
- (e) This was quite well answered, but only the best candidates managed successfully both the passive and the agreement. The past participle of *envahir* surprisingly caused problems.

### Question 3

Candidates who copy whole sentences and even paragraphs from the text are not demonstrating comprehension of the text even if they include the correct information within the answer. The candidate must show some ability to alter the text; without doing so they will score no marks. A lot of copying from the text was observed.

- (a) Most candidates managed to score 2 of the 3 marks for this question. They realised that tourists wanted to live as they did in their own country and did not adapt to the local culture. Further marks could have been obtained by referring to their excessive demands for energy, water and food.
- (b) This question was quite well answered. Clearly the candidates were able to define *infrastructures* as *installations (aéroports)*, *services (magasins)*, but did not relate them to the economic activity.
- (c) This was well answered though it caused considerable misunderstanding for some candidates. Most gave swimming and golf as the two sporting activities that use a lot of energy, as mentioned in the text, and that the energy is used to fill the pools and maintain the golf courses. Some candidates thought that the energy used was physical energy and wrote about how tiring swimming is. Some did not refer to the text at all and included wrongly the use of motor boats for water skiing.

Where candidates did mention the correct sporting activities, there was a great deal of copying. Many copied the text instead of making changes thereby failing to score marks. *Le remplissage des piscines* would have been rewarded if it had been re-phrased as *pour remplir les piscines*. Similarly, *l'entretien des parcours de golf* would have been given a mark for *parce qu'il faut entretenir les parcours de golf*.

- (d) This question was generally well answered. Nearly all the candidates managed to say that tourists pollute the environment, but some failed to add that the environment is particularly sensitive.
- (e) This question was quite well done. Most candidates stated that tourists damage the environment. Many managed to link the damage to a reduction in the number of tourists in the future. Only the best candidates were able to see the full meaning of *l'effet boomerang*, in that it was the environment that attracted the tourists in the first place.

#### Question 4

- (a) This question was well answered by most candidates. They made the points that tourists brought new behaviours/habits, that local inhabitants were greatly influenced by them and so changed their own habits and culture. Many candidates failed to establish that the local inhabitants had had little contact with other cultures before the arrival of the tourists and were therefore vulnerable.
- (b) This question was well done. Nearly all the candidates referred successfully to profits as one of the common elements but the second, the distribution of the profits, was often confused with the generation of profits. The remaining two points were well answered and a range of answers were accepted for each: the first was positive or fair or the locals did not benefit, the other was negative or unfair or the organisation sought a system that is more just.
- (c) Most candidates scored at least one of the two points available. Questions that begin with *d'après vous* look for the candidate to give a personal opinion based on the text. The most common answers given were *ils sont riches, ils travaillent dur/ils ont besoin de repos/ils sont stressés*. A significant minority took *droit* too literally and said that it was a legal right to go on holiday.
- (d) This was well done. Both points were clearly made, firstly that tourism will last or bring long term benefits, and secondly that the environment and the local inhabitants would be protected.
- (e) This question was well answered but some candidates merely copied sections of the text instead of re-using words. Some manipulation must take place such as *les grands développements restent propriété étrangère* or *les étrangers financent les grands développements* and *beaucoup de produits sont importés de l'étranger*.

#### Question 5

It is essential that candidates manage their time correctly so that they answer all the questions on the paper.

Candidates should stick to the word limit. It would be unfair to candidates who do find ways of summarising succinctly if lengthy essays in excess of 200 words were given full marks. Similarly, if candidates write significantly less than 140 words, they cannot be expected to be awarded the full language mark.

It is vital to recognise the importance of the rubric defining the task. There are two clear questions to answer:

- 1/ A summary of the texts;
- 2/ A personal response to the subject.

140 words is the aim for the two sections and only a limited number of words beyond that figure is allowed – usually the completion of the sentence. Clearly candidates should consider writing a summary consisting of 90 to 100 words which can gain 10 content marks.

There were two clear areas indicated for the summary: *Résumez les conséquences du tourisme sur l'environnement et sur le mode de vie des gens*. The mark scheme is constructed to take account of this dual task. The question also states *telles qu'elles sont présentées dans ces deux textes*, so candidates can only gain marks by making reference to specific details in the texts. This part of the exercise is to get the candidates to focus on the main issues of the two texts. No introduction to the answer is necessary and, given the amount of information to be summarised, they should not waste words on general reflections.

The remaining 5 marks for content require candidates to give a brief personal response to the topic of 40 to 50 words, which is marked as a mini essay taking account of ideas, personal point of view and interest of response. If a candidate writes only a general essay it will be regarded as a personal response and can only score a maximum of 5 marks out of 20.

Language is marked on a global assessment out of 5 as illustrated below:

- 5** Very good. Consistently accurate. Only very few errors of minor significance. Accurate use of more complex structures.
- 4** Good. Higher incidence of error than above but clearly has a sound grasp of the grammatical elements in spite of lapses. Some capacity to use accurately more complex structures.
- 3** Sound. Fair level of accuracy. Common tenses and regular verbs mostly correctly formed. Some problems informing correct agreement of adjectives. Difficulty with irregular verbs, use of prepositions.
- 2** Below average. Persistent errors in tense and verb forms. Prepositions often incorrect. Recurrent errors in agreement of adjectives.
- 0-1** Poor. Little or no evidence of grammatical awareness. Most constructions incomplete or incorrect. Consistent and repeated error.

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- 0-1** Poor. Little or no evidence of grammatical awareness. Most constructions incomplete or incorrect. Consistent and repeated error.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/03

Essay

## General comments

Candidates were given a choice of six questions, one on each of the following topics: *Aspects contemporains de la francophonie, Les jeunes, L'ordre public, La vie urbaine et rurale, Les sports, L'innovation technologique*. The essays were marked out of 40, with 24 marks for Language and 16 for Content.

Overall the candidates performed less well this year than last year. At the top end of the range, essays showed evidence of a sound grammatical awareness, confident use of idiom, a praiseworthy level of fluency and a suitable range of vocabulary. Essays had a relevant introduction and a well-linked and coherent argument leading to a conclusion.

At the lower end of the range, candidates displayed little or barely adequate grammatical accuracy and an inadequate range of vocabulary. The essays were characterised by considerable irrelevancy and generalisation, with little focus on the issues involved.

## Common linguistic difficulties included:

- Common misspellings: *resource, existence, aggression, problem, honour, gas, traffic, tranquillité, damage, autorité*.
- Confusion of homonyms such as *ces/ses, on/ont, sa/ca, s'est/c'est, cela/ceux-là*.
- Confusion/misuse of: *qui/que, ce qui/ce que, entre/parmi/chez, chaque/chacun, faire/rendre, pendant que/tandis que, opportunité/chance, depuis/puisque* (to express 'since'), *bon/bien, mauvais/mal, meilleur/mieux*.
- Omission of *ne*, particularly when followed by *que*.
- Gender of very commonplace nouns: *problème, manque, valeur, crime, pollution*.
- The use of *tu* or *vous* instead of *on* when making general statements and the ability to use the correct related pronoun and possessive adjective.
- Wrong agreement of the verb form after pronoun objects: *le manque d'éducation les empêchent...*
- Confusion of *leur* (indirect pronoun) and *leurs* (adjective): *Ils n'aiment pas que leur parents leurs donnent des ordres*.

Most candidates, across the ability range, would doubtless benefit from leaving sufficient time to make a systematic check through their completed essay in order to eliminate some of the above linguistic mistakes that could have been made through carelessness under the pressure of the examination.

## Comments on specific questions.

### Question 1

This was by far the least popular question, attracting only three candidates. Hence, constructive comments that would be helpful to future candidates cannot be made.

## Question 2

This was a very popular question, appealing to candidates across the ability range. Quite a large number had, however, some difficulty in understanding *les valeurs*. Here, there was a tendency to write about aspects of young people's behaviour which their parents disapprove of, such as skimpy clothing, staying out late, piercing, tattoos, smoking and drinking. Analyses of the extent to which this is a problem more often than not were limited to simply stating that disagreement on such matters leads to arguments between parents and their children. Some candidates, however, focused more closely on the question and explained why, in their opinion, young people have different values. Amongst others these included the view that in their parents' day there were many fewer outside influences such as the media, and that values were handed on by the church and the family; that in modern society working parents are able to spend less time with their children; that increasing divorce and separation rates make it inevitable that young people see the world from a disillusioned angle. It was generally felt that even if the younger generation of today do have somewhat different values, they will nevertheless behave as responsible parents when the time comes.

## Question 3

This was also a popular question and was generally well answered, with well-structured answers leading to a variety of conclusions. However, a relatively small minority of candidates wrote about various forms of violence rather than about the rising crime rate and possible ways of reducing it. A common approach was to list different types of crimes, to analyse various factors responsible for them, such as poverty, unemployment, a penal system that is too lenient, prison overcrowding, lack of discipline in schools, and then to suggest ways in which the crime rate might be reduced. These included much more severe sentencing as a deterrent, and more efficient attempts to rehabilitate prisoners.

## Question 4

This question was also very popular, but generally the standard of answers was not particularly high. Many candidates were content to write everything they knew about the topic without taking the time to plan, select and organise a relevant answer. Two common approaches were to examine the advantages and disadvantages of living in a large town, or to compare urban life with life in the country. Those candidates who focused on the question set gave various examples of aspects of town life that contribute to make life there increasingly unbearable, considering for example, overcrowding, a rising crime rate, the ever-increasing cost of housing and pollution. *Qu'en pensez-vous?* generally received the response that the drawbacks of urban life were counterbalanced by the advantages of living there, although quite a number of candidates pointed out the potential benefits of making the quality of life in rural areas more attractive, so as to reduce the number of people migrating to the towns.

## Question 5

This was a much less popular question, and not particularly well done, as quite a large number of candidates treated it as *la valeur du sport*, discussing such ideas as sport as a way to a healthy life, the social doors it opens, entertainment, a job, an escape for some from poverty. Candidates who focused on *les valeurs* mostly agreed with the opening statement of the question, using trends in professional sport as a background against which to set their answers, and illustrating their argument with well-chosen examples. They tended to argue that whilst to some extent such values as fair-play, good sportsmanship, accepting defeat gracefully and respecting officials' decisions still exist, particularly in amateur sport, they are increasingly under attack. The use of performance-enhancing drugs, corruption, bribery, greed, cynicism, the need to win at all costs and arrogance were deemed by many to be the characteristics of modern professional sport, and deeply deplored.

## Question 6

Again, this question was not a very popular choice. Most answers were unfortunately quite weak. Too many essays were restricted to a survey of the negative aspects of owning a computer, such as eye-strain, lack of exercise, the availability of pornography, back ache, addiction to violent games. On the other hand, stronger candidates did focus more accurately on the implications of *avoir peur* and *un monde où l'ordinateur est roi*. Job losses, hacking into government and armed forces' files, Internet fraud, and viruses were some of the things we could be afraid of in today's world where the computer does to an extent dominate our lives. Most candidates came to the conclusion that although society could become too dependant on computers, it will never be ruled by them.

# FRENCH

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Paper 9716/04

Texts

## General comments

The paper produced a wide spread of marks, but with a more substantial proportion in the middle and lower reaches of the scale than at the top. All questions were attempted, but so few candidates answered on *Le Chercheur d'Or* and *Tanguy* that it is impossible to comment usefully on trends, strengths and weaknesses. As expected, Molière and Zobel were the most popular authors. That said, there was a good response to the return of Mauriac, and a fair degree of interest in that of Flaubert.

Only one or two Centres presented a significant number of candidates who wrote at excessive length. The pattern was clearly defined, and it appeared that in these isolated cases, it had not been explained to candidates that an essay which could have scored a high mark was capped at a maximum of 17, as has been the case for some considerable time. A number of candidates, notably from Centres with a very small entry, answered two questions on the same text. There were even some instances of candidates attempting six essays. It must be repeated that this practice is self-penalising.

The vast majority of scripts were legible and well presented. Examiners continue to draw attention to the fact that some candidates do not state, in **Section B**, which essay they are attempting, and it is not always easy to tell. There is no need for candidates to waste time copying out the title, but they should be told to write clearly the number and letter of the question they have chosen. Candidates should also be aware that there is no merit in reproducing objective information about dates of publication, first performances of plays and other facts which, in most cases, have no bearing on the essay topic. An introductory paragraph which outlines the candidate's approach to the question and communicates a clear understanding of its implications is of much greater value.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

Mauriac: *Le Nœud de vipères*

- (a) There were considerable variations in the amount of detail candidates supplied about the situation described in the extract. Candidates who knew the text well had no difficulty here, but a small number failed to establish that the scene unfolds in Paris, and assumed that the church was in Calèse, thus distorting the answer. There was some uncertainty about why Louis went to the café, and about the accidental nature of his presence at the planned meeting. In the second part of the question, most sympathised with Louis' attitude and justified it by referring to his betrayal by Robert and the determination of the others to get their hands on the inheritance. It would have been refreshing to find some suggestion that he was at least partly responsible for the conspiracy against him. However, most candidates tended to take a 'black and white' approach. Conversely, commentary on Hubert's nauseating hypocrisy, characterised by his crossing himself with holy water, did not require a balanced judgement. Candidates were curiously reluctant to state that it was typical of him, insofar as it revealed his complete inability to perceive any conflict or even ironic contrast between his true preoccupations and the superficial display of piety.

- (b) Relatively few candidates opted for the essay question, and their performance was generally weak. In some cases, the essay was completely off the point, and little credit was gained by those who did not focus on the material referred to in the question. Candidates did not seem able to comment on the contrast between Hubert's attitude and that of Janine, let alone to analyse the letters in order to point out, for example, the importance to Hubert of destroying the evidence in the interests of the family's reputation. It was not possible to answer this question adequately without an understanding of the two characters' differing interpretations of Louis' 'conversion', and it was regrettable that candidates who were not in a position to do this opted unwisely to attempt this topic.

## Question 2

Molière: *Les Femmes savantes*

- (a) Most candidates gave a clear and detailed account of Martine's 'crime' and the significance of Chrysale's reaction. Few failed to understand that he was avoiding a confrontation he was bound to lose. That said, most candidates found it difficult to maintain the standard of the first part of their answer when tackling the issue raised in the second. It was simply not enough to paraphrase Martine's ungrammatical utterances in order to demonstrate their comic effect. Once again, candidates did not seem to appreciate the nature of Molière's comic techniques. The issue here was one of interplay and excessive reaction, not just of the inaccuracy of Martine's grammar. A major misunderstanding was the notion that Martine was deliberately making mistakes in order to annoy Philaminte, whereas it is in fact her naturalness, in comic contrast to the artificiality of the other women, which is at issue. Comments on Bélise were mostly sound but some candidates included irrelevant references to her dealings with Clitandre.
- (b) The above comments on (ii) are equally valid for the way in which many candidates dealt with the essay question. They tended to labour the issues which might be considered as 'dramatic' without going on to say that the whole point of the play is to provoke mocking laughter at the expense of those whose pretensions are not matched by their performance.

## Question 3

Anouilh: *Becket*

- (a) Candidates showed a good awareness of the strained relationships in this scene, but many were less clear about the precise reason for Folliot's annoyance, failing to refer to the conflict concerning the King's intention to tax the Church, and his cavalier suspension of the discussion just before this extract. Interpretations of *la chasse* reasonably included hunting animals and hunting women! Comments in Becket's behaviour during this exchange were usually sound in terms of his loyalty to Henri and his apparent self-confidence. Weaker candidates tended to paraphrase the text without drawing any conclusions. Few tackled the important issue raised by Becket's questions about being 'worthy'. In the third section, candidates understandably preferred the attitude of the Archbishop, and their explanation for this preference ranged from the superficial to the mature and sensitive.
- ((b) Candidates who chose the essay question showed little knowledge or understanding of the issues it raised. Essays contained little beyond narrative and character study, the latter loosely linked to the title as an instance of dramatic interest. There was very little evidence that this aspect of the play had been studied, despite the highly inventive use of scene changes, lighting, registers of language, humour, and so on. Examiners are aware that most candidates do not have the opportunity to see a performance of a play they are studying, but will continue to expect some awareness of the author's intentions and the well-documented reasons for a play's enduring success. Candidates should also feel free to comment on perceived weaknesses, provided that they can defend their argument with detailed examples.

#### Question 4

Le Clézio: *Le Chercheur d'or*

- (a) The first appearance of this text produced sound work from the few who chose it. They had a good understanding of Alexis' obsession with the sea and the implications of that for the narrative. The role of Denis in introducing Alexis to the world of nature and giving him an expectation of adventure were also competently documented. In the third section, weaker candidates confined themselves to the obvious point about Alexis' prolonged absence, without referring to the father's fragile state of mind as a consequence of his financial problems.
- (b) Only one or two candidates tackled this question. They were not able to muster sufficient material to make their answers a valid basis for this report.

#### Question 5

Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*

- (a) Candidates showed a good knowledge of Emma's reading at school, and a clear understanding of the effect of this on her life. Whilst almost all were able to describe the Romantic dreams which she sought to turn into reality, there was a wide range of performance when it came to supplying relevant detail. All could write about her disappointment with Charles and with marriage, and most included appropriate references to Léon and to Rodolphe. Despite repeated mentions of *des romans à l'eau de rose*, only the most able ventured to point out that the inability of human beings to live up to Emma's expectations must be seen in the light of her own perpetual immaturity. What was missing from many answers was not critical comment about the men in her life but examples of her unrealistic attitude. There was, likewise, little mention of La Vaubyessard, the perfect example of her naïve perspective.
- (b) This oft-quoted line was not well understood by most of those who elected to write about it. Candidates wrote disparagingly about Charles' inability to provide for Emma's needs. Whilst they understood that Emma felt the need to marry in order to escape from her father's farm, they seemed reluctant to lay any of the blame for the failure of the marriage at the door of Emma herself. An analysis of her irrational behaviour throughout the novel would have been more useful than a catalogue of Charles' shortcomings.

#### Question 6

Del Castillo: *Tanguy*

- (a) It was pleasing to see that some of the candidates who answered this question realised that it was worth mentioning the positive aspects of Tanguy's experience. Indeed, Tanguy's experience of people was mixed, and it was not possible to give a good account of this question without establishing that point. Candidates were generally able to discuss Tanguy's lapses into despair. Those who had a good knowledge of the final section of the book naturally reached a positive overall conclusion.
- (b) Many essays on this question offered little beyond narrative. Some candidates did not seem to know where *Les Illusions détruites* began and ended. There was a general lack of relevant detail in the answers, suggesting a rather random approach to the task and therefore, perhaps, insufficient familiarity with the text to make this question a viable choice.

### Question 7

Camus: *Les Justes*

- (a) Answers to this question were disappointing. Rambling accounts of the aims of the terrorists were no substitute for a proper focus on the relationship between Kaliyev and Dora, which is, after all, the context in which the remark is made. What was wanted was an account of the logic of the extremist, and the sacrifice this necessitated, along with some balanced critical comment on their dedication to the cause.
- (b) What has been written about *Becket* in this report applies equally to this play. Why has the dramatic quality been criticised? Do you agree that it is too wordy and static? Candidates were able to give some examples of the tensions within the play, but a balanced and detailed appraisal was lacking.

### Question 8

Zobel: *La Rue Cases-Nègres*

- (a) Inevitably, this question presupposed an understanding by candidates of the idiom *en dit long*. Those who discussed the length of José's education did not score well. Little more credit could be awarded to those who devoted much of their essay to José's early life, M'man Tine's views on the importance of education and her heroic efforts in this regard. The question clearly asked for comments on José's experience of the education system as a reflection of social attitudes and values. Those who chose to answer the question directly were suitably rewarded.
- (b) Candidates found this question quite straightforward in essence, although not all followed the evolution right through to the end. Credit was awarded largely for relevance and appropriate detail. Essays which indulged in narrative and generalisation could not be given the same credit as those which cut out unnecessary preamble and got on with the business of describing the influences and experiences which led him from innocent boyhood to militant manhood.