

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2013

FRENCH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Performance in the 2013 examination was comparable with that of 2012. Many candidates displayed fair to excellent levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity and grammatical accuracy. Nonetheless, there is still much room for improvement.

Teachers are again encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language from electronic and paper-based sources to simulate real-life situations in which students may practise the target language. Teachers must continue their good work in engaging students in language learning by making it relevant, personal and meaningful.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to (i) listen to and understand a number of items in the target language and (ii) read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have a mastery of essential grammar as prescribed in the CSEC syllabus and vocabulary appropriate to this level of competence. The good performance on this paper was comparable with that of previous years.

Paper 02 — Free Response

Section 1 (Question 1) — Directed Situations

This section assessed candidates' ability to provide written responses in French to ten situations described in English. All situations drew on functions/notions and settings and topics (see syllabus) that should be within the experience of a 16-year-old candidate.

Although many candidates performed very well on this question and quite a number of them demonstrated excellent mastery of grammatical structures using an excellent range of appropriate vocabulary, far too many were still unable to master basic structures and were weak in areas such as subject-verb agreement, adjectival agreement and formation and usage of verbs in the present tense, even verbs as common as *faire*, *prendre* and *aller*.

It is advisable for teachers to guide students in how to approach the directed situations by identifying the function being tested in each situation, essential elements, usually two elements, and the vocabulary they have learnt which could be used to respond to each situation. Candidates can lose marks unnecessarily in this question by the inclusion of redundancies in their answers. The following table outlines the functions and topics tested on the 2013 paper.

SITUATION	FUNCTION/NOTION	SETTINGS AND TOPICS
(a)	Describing a place	Describing a bedroom
(b)	Giving advice	Taking an examination
(c)	Requesting with reasons	Speaking to a principal
(d)	Expressing prohibition/obligation	Expressing school rules
(e)	Expressing approval/opinion	Commenting on a television programme
(f)	Expressing feelings	Responding to good news
(g)	Apologizing with reason	Cancelling an event
(h)	Calling attention	Taking precautions in school
(i)	Suggesting location and time	Planning to meet
(j)	Narrating	Commenting on a sporting event

Specific comments on individual situations

Situation (a)

Candidates were required to state two things they like about their room. The majority of candidates performed very well, rendering appropriate responses. However, many candidates made errors of adjectival agreement. They also seemed unaware that adjectives used after *c'est* are invariable, hence errors were incurred as in *J'aime ma chambre parce que c'est *grande et *verte*. Spelling was often incorrect, in particular spelling of the words *confortable* and *couleur*. Weaker candidates sometimes invented words for their description, such as **relaxment*.

Situation (b)

This situation required candidates to give two pieces of advice to a friend who is nervous about taking an examination. It proved to be challenging for many candidates as they had difficulty interpreting the word “advice” in the question. Many were able to give only one piece of advice. Other candidates gave statements or wishes instead. *Bonne chance* was frequently misspelt. Errors included the use of the *vous* form of address for a friend, the misspelling of the imperative form of – *er* verbs (**études bien*) and incorrect versions of “do your best” (**votre faire meilleure*.) Few candidates scored full marks.

Situation (c)

Candidates were required to give two reasons for wanting to speak to the principal. Those who responded succinctly and directly to this question scored full marks as for *J'ai mal à la tête et je voudrais aller chez moi*. Many candidates, however, opted for less concise responses and scored a lower mark as a result ; for example, *j'ai envie de parler au directeur parce que j'ai besoin *d'aider *à choisir mes matières et j'ai oublié **lui donner une lettre importante*. Many candidates erred by using the familiar form (*tu/te*) to address the principal, supplying the incorrect position/use of the indirect object pronoun (*Je voudrais parler *à vous*) and using *environ* and *vers* in place of *au sujet de* and *parce que* for *à cause de*.

Situation (d)

For this situation, candidates were required to state two school rules. It was heartening to note the significant number of candidates who were able to identify the need for some form of interdiction/expression of obligation. Some were not able to identify the appropriate form needed for the setting, an email for a pen pal, and instead used expressions appropriate for a sign or public notice (*défense de..., ne pas +infinitive*.) Far too many used *non* with an infinitive as a form of interdiction. The verb *attendre* was sometimes used to translate “to attend”. An example of an excellent response was *Il est interdit de manger et de boire dans la classe*. Misspellings and incorrect gender frequently occurred for the words *chaussures*, *uniforme* and *chaussettes*.

Situation (e)

Candidates were required to write an email to a friend stating two things they like about a television programme. This was very well done by most candidates, with examples of correct responses being *J'aime la vedette Christina Aguilera et les effets spéciaux* and *C'est amusant et intéressant*. Nevertheless, high frequency words such as *amusant* and *intéressant* were often misspelt.

Situation (f)

This situation was problematic for many candidates who seemed unable to express two feelings in response to receiving good news. There was a wide range of responses including *Chapeau, félicitations, je suis content pour toi, je sais que tu es content, je souhaite que tu réussisses à l'université*. Those who inappropriately wrote *c'est bon, meilleurs vœux* and *bonne chance* as expressions of feeling, gained only a partial score. Many candidates were only able to write one feeling.

Situation (g)

For this situation, candidates were required to write an apology from a teacher cancelling a specific activity. Most candidates were only able to score a partial mark, as they opted to give a reason for the cancellation, rather than apologizing for the cancellation of the activity. Candidates must be encouraged to read the questions carefully to avoid this kind of error. Quite a number of candidates equated a cancellation with a postponement, using *je dois repousser...remettre...* An example of a correct response given was *je suis désolé mais je dois annuler le concert*.

Situation (h)

For this situation, candidates had to write two precautionary measures to take following numerous thefts in the classroom. Performance on this question ranged from poor to very good, with the main challenge being the lexical content of the response. Few candidates used *laisser* when it was needed, opting instead for *quitter* and *partir*. *Regarder* was used as a substitute for *garder* and *surveiller*. Incorrect versions of the imperative form of *prendre* and of disjunctive pronouns and possessive adjectives were prevalent. A reasonable attempt to convey a response was *Mettez vos livres dans vos sacs et évitez de *mettre vos porte-monnaies*.

Situation (i)

Candidates had to write a note for a study partner stating where and when to meet. The situation was generally well handled, with few candidates omitting an element. However, the verbs *rencontrer* and *retrouver* were often misspelt and candidates generally did not recognize the need for the reflexive version of these verbs where required. An example of a good response was *nous pouvons aller à la bibliothèque à deux heures*.

Situation (j)

In this situation candidates, in the guise of a sports reporter, were required to give two reasons for an abrupt end to a match. Responses were varied, spanning the continuum from poor to excellent. Reasons chosen for the abrupt end to the match were often inappropriate. Failure to choose the correct tenses for the response was also common, as were misspellings of weather-related expressions such as *il faisait mauvais*, *il pleuvait...*

Section II (Question 2/Question 3) — Letter/Composition

This section assessed candidates' ability to produce a piece of writing in French, of about 130–150 words, based on an outline given in English. Candidates had the choice of writing either a letter or a composition.

The responses in this section ranged from excellent to poor. This year the majority of candidates attempted the letter. Although inaccuracy of expression impeded the flow and coherence of the writing of some candidates, most demonstrated that they were familiar with the vocabulary and idiom relevant to restaurant activities. This question elicited a better performance from candidates than the composition.

Question 2: The Letter

This year fewer candidates wrote beyond the given word limit. Candidates generally wrote more prolifically for the first two paragraphs of the letter but rather less for the third, while the final paragraph of the letter often consisted of one sentence. This imbalance affected candidates' marks since the final cue in the rubric invites candidates to showcase additions to the range of idiom and grammatical structure in their essay using, for example, future tense or question formation. The improvement previously requested in the use of the correct format for letter headings and greetings, salutations and closure was present this year. There was evidence that candidates had prepared their opening and closing remarks in the letter, for example, *Je m'empresse de t'adresser ces quelques mots....* and *je dois terminer ma lettre, je dois faire mes devoirs maintenant*. However, candidates should not make these remarks too long at the expense of dealing with the requirements of the set topic within the word limit.

(i) Range of vocabulary and idiom

Candidates generally demonstrated knowledge of the essential vocabulary and idiom for the context of restaurant operations. However, there were many errors of spelling and accents (**beacoup*, **color*, **dejuener*, **baîment*, **ouvriture***tres*.) The word *restaurant* was often given several different spellings in the same essay. Invented words (**rompage*, **furnitures*) were also evident.

Better candidates saw the opportunity in the first cue — preparations made before the opening of the restaurant — to use vocabulary and idiom learnt in the context of household chores or odd jobs done to earn pocket money. Thus, there was good use of *faire la cuisine*, *passer l'aspirateur*, *laver la vaisselle* (often misspelt), *balayer le plancher*, *faire du shopping*, *acheter des marchandises* (this word was lifted from the reading comprehension and still was often misspelt), *nettoyer les tables/fenêtres*, *ranger la chambre* (several candidates did not seem to appreciate that they needed to change this to *salle*)... We also saw significant numbers of candidates using *place* for *endroit/lieu*.

In handling the second cue, what took place on the day of the opening, the more successful candidates introduced vocabulary learnt in the restaurant context to good effect. There were candidates who described the place as *plein à craquer*. As to what the clientele ordered, we saw evidence of work done on French dishes. *Ratatouille*, *quiche*, *coq au vin*, *macaronis au gratin*, *poulet rôti*, *poisson grillé*, other related vocabulary such as *garçon*, *patron*, *cuisinier*, *chef*, *nourriture*, *repas*, *entrée*, *dessert* and adjectives such as *délicieux*, *incroyable*, *fantastique* were often used.

In most scripts the reaction of clients, requested in the third cue of the rubric, was reasonably well handled. Most candidates used the verbs *aimer* /*adorer* with nouns such as *l'ambiance*; *l'atmosphère*. It was pleasing to note candidates using some appropriate verbs as *s'étonner* and *s'amuser* for the clients' reaction. However, some candidates struggled somewhat to find the appropriate word for 'food' as in **manger la cuisine*, **aimer le mange*.

The fourth cue should have given candidates the opportunity to use the future tense/ immediate future. Some did so very ably, using simple but appropriate vocabulary, as in *le restaurant sera plus grand*, *ma mère et moi allons faire la cuisine française*, *nous allons agrandir le resto*, *ouvrir un mini-bar à côté du restaurant*.

However, there were still far too many instances of candidates' obvious failure to master the future tense, for example, **Ma mère sera aller cuisiner la cuisine de chinois*, **nous pienterions*...

(ii) Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar

The letter required the use of the *passé composé* in the first three sections. Many candidates were only able to write in the present tense or made errors in attempting to form the *passé composé*, especially with reflexive verbs (**s'es amusent*). Verb formation in general was weak (**nous avons adorons*, *ma famille et moi eu*, *nous avons ouvri*). At times, candidates used *vous* to signify "they", and the imperfect tense to express completed action. Some errors also betrayed candidates' non-comprehension of grammatical functions (**nous propres* for "we cleaned", **nous avons eau les jardins* and **nous avons peinture le restaurant*). Subject-verb agreement continues to be a challenge for candidates. There were many instances where *parler* was used in place of *dire* as in **les gentes ont parlé ce ils voudrait retourner*. Adjectival agreement was handled poorly on the whole, and incorrect use of pronouns (**ma mère a dit moi*) was also evident. Lack of subject /verb agreement was frequently seen as in **Ma mère et moi ont acheté* and **Tout le monde ont aimé le resto*. There were problems with the position and agreement of adjectives: **Un neuf restaurant*, **c'était bleue et jolie*, **tout la famille était contents*, **tous le mond*, **l'ané dernier*. Omission of and wrong choice of partitives occurred often (**j'ai acheté le nurriture*, *riz*, *poulet*, *bananes*, *pommes*).

Among other errors noted were the use of *des* after *beaucoup* (which was often misspelt), omission of prepositions after verbs like *aider* (* *J'ai aidé ma mère nettoyer la cuisine*) and problems with use of *que* — **Je pense ça est un bon idée. Ils parle ce est très jolie.*)

Below is an example of a good letter as submitted by a candidate.

Chaguanas, le 12 mai

Mon cher ami Juan

*Bonjour! Ça va? J'espère que tu vas très bien. J'écris pour te *dire au sujet de ma vie. En premier lieu, ma famille et moi avons un nouveau restaurant. Oui! le restaurant *a ouvri il y a deux *semaine.*

*Avant *d'ouvrir j'ai mis le couvert, j'ai balayé. Ma mère est cuisinière et elle était la chef maîtresse. Elle a cuisiné tous les repas, les entrées er le dessert. Mon père *elle a aidé. Nous étions essoufflés quand nous avons * terminés mais les gens attendaient devant le restaurant.*

*Quand ils sont entrés dans le restaurant, ils se sont étonnés parce que le restaurant était incroyablement.** Le garçon *portais une chemise blanche et un pantalon noir. Nous étions occupés mais *en fin nous nous sommes bien amusés.*

**Dans l'avenir la famille voudrait cuisiner les plats du monde. En ce moment ma mère apprend *comme cuisiner les plats *de chinois à l'étranger. Probablement je *peux travailler dans le restaurant comme cuisinier.* sera super! D'accord, mon ami. Au revoir, écris vite*

*Ton ami Ché
Amitiés*

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Dire A ouvri Semaine D'ouvrir Elle a aidé Terminés Incrediblement... Portais En fin Dans Comme De Peux *Sera	Change of verb Change of verb form Pluralisation Use of noun Use of object pronoun and preceding direct object agreement Removal of agreement Insertion of adjective Change of verb ending Spelling correction Change or preposition Use of preposition Redundancy Change of tense Use of subject	parler a ouvert semaines l'ouverture l'a aidée terminé joli portait enfin à à Pourrai Ce

Question 3: The Composition

Fewer candidates chose to write the composition and very few of them performed well on the question. Candidates tended to write about camp activities which had little to do with the world of work and more to do with other camps they had attended. Some assumed that training for the "world of work" involved preparation for their role in participating in housework. Others invented words for abstract concepts (**entrepreneurshippe*) rather than making use of terminology well within their grasp (*répondre au téléphone, écrire des lettres, parler aux clients.*)

As in previous years, the problem of inaccuracy is a great source of concern. Few candidates seemed to have done a rough copy of their essay and corrected and improved on it before submission. The time allotted for the completion of this paper allows for this to be done and teachers need to practise such techniques with their class, as well as techniques for checking the work once it has been written, in order to eliminate avoidable errors.

(i) Rubric

Content used in response to the rubric was generally fair for the first paragraph of the composition. For the second paragraph candidates tended to draw on their experiences at sporting and summer camps which had little connection with preparation for the world of work. The third paragraph was often rather sketchy as candidates struggled to find ideas to respond to the rubric. As in the case of the letter, the final paragraph of the composition tended to be very brief. The paucity of ideas on what might be learnt at such a camp and how the experience gained there would be used appears to have affected accuracy and range of expression. Candidates would be well advised to plan their essay before beginning to write, as planning would also help to guide them on their choice of essay.

(ii) Range of vocabulary and idiom

Candidates were generally less proficient in producing the appropriate vocabulary/idiom for the composition, particularly when responding to the second cue which required them to state what was learnt at the summer camp. There was wide use of English words and phraseology (**l'été camp*, **le announcement*, **travail experience*, **les vêtement suitable pour travail*, **comment sitter*) and verbs inappropriate for the context (**se débrouiller mon temps*). The verb *attendre* was often erroneously used for “to attend”. The efforts to render “a summer camp” were fraught with error, as in **été camp*. The word “camp” itself had many variations — *campe*, *campaign*, and even *champagne*.

(iii) Knowledge and mastery of essential grammar

As in Question 2, verb forms and tenses were often poorly handled. The *passé composé* of the verb *apprendre* was frequently incorrect. Candidates encountered difficulty in trying to use the passive voice when they attempted to express the notion of “being chosen”.

In addressing the first cue, how the school leaver was selected, many candidates wrote that their teacher had chosen them. They had much difficulty with the position of the direct object pronoun, **ma professeur a choisi moi*. Other problems encountered were less easily identified: **J'écouté sur la television*. *L'été camp était pour étudiants aime moi*.

However, better candidates used the opportunity to use structures and vocabulary associated with doing well in school to good effect, for example, *j'ai été choisi parce que j'ai réussi aux examens; j'ai reçu les *meilleres notes*.

The second cue, requiring candidates to define what was learnt at the camp, was often handled in very few words but not accurately — **j'ai appris comment parler avec les gens, les vêtements porter et jamais être en retard*.

Some constructions used required the passive voice but candidates had difficulty in doing so. For example, some candidates wrote **Ils ont donné \$300 pour le camp*.

The third cue required the candidate to use either the future or the conditional tense. This was not often successful as candidates tried to conceive an idea in English and render it in French. **Je utiliserais quelle j'ai connais quand je sortir chercher pour travail*.

In responding to the final cue, most candidates had difficulty with register and in recognizing to whom their comment should be addressed: **Tu sera apprendre beaucoup des choses*. **Prochain année plus étudiants aime moi, faut vas parce que C'est tres important!*

Generally speaking, candidates had good ideas but lacked the facility in the target language to express these ideas in an accurate and coherent manner.

Below is an example of a good composition submitted by a candidate.

**Récement, après mes examens de sciences économique mon collègue m'a choisi à assister à un camp pendant quinze jours à la banque nationale. La banque a eu l'intention d'apprendre à vingt élèves au sujet du monde *du travail.*

*Pendant quinze jours j'ai appris quelle licence on doit avoir *à être comptable, avocat, médecin et professeur, le salaire normal de plusieurs emplois et la technique de s'entendre avec vos collègues et votre patron.*

*J'utiliserai l'expérience à choisir *un licence et, bien sûr un emploi. J'essaie de choisir entre* être médecin et *être avocat. Egalement je pourrai m'entendre bien avec mes collègues de travail et mon patron aussi *dans l'avenir.*

*Quant à moi, je pense que le camp m'a aidé *beaucoup et ce **peut vous aider aussi. Le camp aura lieu la* année prochaine et c'est une bonne opportunité * pour recevoir beaucoup d'information au sujet du monde du travail.*

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTIONS REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Récement, après Economique A Du A etre L'expérience A Un Dans M' a aidé beaucoup Ce La Pour	Spelling and accent Adjectival agreement Preposition Preposition Preposition Accent Accent Preposition Gender Preposition Position of adverb Omission Requires elision Preposition	Récemment, après économiques Pour De pour être l'expérience Pour une A m' a beaucoup aidé ca l' de

Recommendations

The following are recommended for teachers:

- Have students check their work in class before submission.
- Teach skills of written communication to students as early as Form 1/Grade 7, beginning with sentences and short paragraphs.
- Teach specific essay-writing skills to students of Forms 4 and 5, including use of connectives, range of language, paragraphing and respect for the word limit. Candidates continue to write at unnecessary length on the first two components of the letter/composition and dismiss the final component in one sentence, thereby depriving themselves of the opportunity to showcase a wider range of expression.
- Have students practise to build their essay/ letter around what they know in French rather than what they do not know in French. Looking up words in a dictionary encourages students to write in this mode and dictionary use for essay-writing should be discouraged except for checking purposes.
- Identify, with students, some structures which introduce a wider range of expression into their writing.

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.

Section III (Question 4/Question 5) — Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue

This section required candidates to choose to complete either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options and candidates were to write between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

Question 4: The Contextual Announcement

As it drew primarily from the contexts of school and daily routine, this question was well within the range and ability of candidates as required by the syllabus. In comparison with previous years, many more candidates attempted this option in Section III. For the most part, candidates wrote responses respecting the length demanded; exceptionally short or long responses were fewer than in previous years. Candidates were generally clear as to the format expected for this question. While some candidates opted to use the cues as a guide to write the announcement in point form, others took the opportunity to create poster-like announcements. This does not provide any advantage or disadvantage to candidates.

It is recommended that candidates read the question carefully. Although the majority penned responses that accurately interpreted the question, there were still quite a few who did not understand that the announcement was to be written on behalf of their mother, for a sibling. These candidates wrote the announcement from the point of view of a teacher who was advertising lessons. Yet others wrote as if they were the ones seeking the lessons instead of their mother. Candidates generally produced announcements which included all clues.

The following are comments on candidate performance for each of the cues.

- (i) Purpose of the announcement: In most instances, candidates stated very clearly the purpose of the announcement, for example, *Ma mère a besoin de quelqu'un pour enseigner deux matières à mon petit frère/mon frère cadet*. In addition, candidates were able to navigate around the word for “lessons”. One good technique frequently employed was the use of rhetorical questions to begin the announcement – “*Vous vous entendez bien avec les enfants? Voulez-vous travailler à une grande maison...?*”
- (ii) Age of the person taking the classes: This was stated accurately in most cases, (*Mon frère a ... ans*) but there are still candidates who need to recall that *avoir* is used to give someone’s age.
- (iii) Subjects, time and duration of classes: Most candidates were able to accurately identify at least two subjects. Some erroneously used *sujet* in place of the word *matière*. While some candidates were able to represent time accurately, others had difficulty in doing so. Some candidates chose to use the 24-hour clock. Instead of using the verb *durer* to indicate the duration of the classes, many candidates gave a start and end time. An example of such a response follows:

*Ma mère propose que les cours de mathématiques seront *les mercredis et vendredis pendant deux heures de 16 h à 18 h et les cours de français seront deux heures *les jeudis de 16 heures à 18 heures et trois heures *les samedis matins de 9 h à 12 h.*
- (iv) Two important qualities of the person(s) providing the classes: The answers produced here were varied. Many candidates used expressions which would have required use of the subjunctive after a verb of wishing/wanting, after an indefinite antecedent or after *Il faut que ...* Some candidates have not mastered the use of impersonal verbs such as *falloir*. Other candidates avoided this by simply using *devoir*.

- (v) Tuition fee and contact details: Many candidates were able to express this well, with some using the future tense as in *ma mère payera* and *cette personne recevra*, or equally appropriate expressions such as *nous pouvons vous payer...* or *le prix est négociable*. Candidates used a range of monetary symbols, with the Euro employed in the majority of cases. Many candidates demonstrated that they have not mastered the imperative, particularly in the second person plural form. Other candidates used alternatives such as *Veuillez contacter...* The majority of candidates omitted the *le* required before a telephone number.

Below is an example of a good contextual announcement submitted by a candidate.

*Un Professeur est très * nécessaire!*

*On a besoin d'un bon professeur pour enseigner deux matières. Le professeur enseignera un étudiant *seule qui a quinze ans.*

*Le professeur doit pouvoir enseigner le commerce et la littérature pour la * classe** troisième. Les *clases auront lieu pendant le weekend entre deux heures et quatre heures** après-midi * les samedis et les dimanches pour trois mois.*

*Le professeur doit être, patient et être de *bon humeur. On peut vous payer trois cents euros par mois.*

*Si cela vous *interesse, vous pourriez me contacter *à 721-4627 ou j'aibesoindevous@gmail.com.*

*Merci beaucoup pour votre aide *on avance.*

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE	CORRECTION REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Nécessaire	Accent	nécessaire
Seule	Gender	seul
Clase	Spelling	classe
Troisième	Omission	de troisième
Après-midi	Omission	de l'après-midi
Bon	Gender	bonne
Interesse	Accent	intéresse
On avance	Preposition	à l'avance
A	Omission	au

Question 5: The Contextual Dialogue

This question required candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the context of travel, with specific reference to making arrangements for hotel accommodation, as well as shopping to a lesser extent. Moreover, these arrangements for hotel rooms were being made via a telephone conversation. All of the aforementioned are well within the range and ability of candidates at the CSEC French level. However, while some candidates were able to exhibit mastery and to respond appropriately and accurately to the majority of the cues using language that flowed naturally, others struggled.

The contextual dialogue was again the preferred choice of many candidates. There were many excellent and very good scripts, as many candidates were able to follow and respond to all of the cues and use appropriate and correct vocabulary, idioms, expressions and structures.

It should be noted that many candidates attempt this option without first reading all of the information given in order to discover how the dialogue will unfold. Close and detailed preliminary analysis of the dialogue is important.

Most candidates respected the word limit. Very few wrote beyond what was required; most of those penalized for length fell short of the minimum number of words.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Although quite a few candidates misunderstood some cues, they were still able to complete the dialogue. On the one hand, some candidates were able to maintain the telephone conversational style throughout, through interjections like *une minute, ne quittez pas* and *parfait*). On the other hand, other candidates wrote as if the tourist was physically before the receptionist, introducing themselves with expressions like *bienvenue*, or concluding by saying: *voici votre clé*, or **Tiens les clés pour les chambres*, and *voici votre carte pour la chambre*.

The following are comments on candidate performance for each of the cues.

- (i) Greetings: The majority of candidates were able to produce an appropriate greeting as a telephone response for a hotel receptionist, many opting to identify a hotel name. Far too many candidates had difficulty wording their offer of assistance to the customer. With regard to register, too many candidates still used the informal *tu* instead of the required formal *vous*.
- (ii) Responses to the tourist's request(s): Candidates generally responded adequately to the tourist's request, offering a variety of room options for the four - member family, some with more structural and lexical accuracy than others. Examples of good performance included *Si vous voulez, nous pouvons vous donner un grand appartement pour la famille entière* and *Il n'y a pas de chambres avec deux ou trois lits. Je peux vous donner deux chambres qui sont séparées*.
- (iii) Information on accommodation: Candidates suggested myriad options to render their descriptions of the layout of the rooms, for example, *Nous avons un appartement avec deux chambres.....Aussi, ça donne sur la plage*.
- (iv) Suggested solutions: Candidates produced varied expressions such as *je propose* and *je vous conseille de louer un appartement*. Candidates also continued to have difficulty in expressing larger numbers correctly. They also were confused by two expressions — *les chambres doubles* and *les deux chambres*. Some used both expressions interchangeably whilst others treated them as two different options.
- (v) Payment arrangements: Most candidates realized that there needed to be discussion on the means of payment. Some resorted to English because they did not know the monetary terms, but others rose to the challenge and produced expressions such as *l'argent, espèces, payer comptant, payer par chèque* and *arrhes*, as well as other options. At this point in the dialogue, most candidates did not use the required future tense. Additionally, it was evident that most did not understand that a fitting ending comment was required to bring the conversation to an amicable close.

Below is an example of a good contextual dialogue as submitted by a candidate.

Le touriste: Bonjour Madame/Monsieur

Vous: *Bonjour Monsieur. Est-ce que *voulez-vous faire une réservation à notre hôtel Hilton*

Le touriste: Oui, je voudrais faire une réservation pour ma femme, mes deux enfants et moi-même pour sept nuits. Mais nous ne voulons pas séparer les enfants.

Vous: *Chaque chambre peut seulement contenir deux personnes*

Le touriste : Mais nous ne voulons pas séparer les enfants.

Vous : *Oui, Monsieur. Soit une chambre pour les deux adultes et l'autre pour les enfants soit chaque chambre pour *une adult et un enfant.*

Le touriste: Ah non! Vous n'avez rien d'autre à nous proposer?

Vous: *Vous pouvez choisir cela ou vous pouvez louer un appartement avec deux *grands chambres avec les *jumeaux lits*

Le touriste: Alors, c'est combien par nuit?

Vous: *Chaque nuit coûte *un mil cinquante euros.*

Le touriste: 1050 Euros! Pour un appartement! Et les chambres doubles?

Vous: *Le coût d'une chambre double est soixante (60€) euros.*

Le touriste: Nous allons prendre les deux chambres à 60 Euros.

Vous: *Alors, le coût est deux cents euros avec *la taxe inclu. Par carte bancaire ou chèque*

Le touriste: Nous payerons par carte de crédit.

Vous: *D'accord. Je vous * enverrai l'addition à votre compte, aussitôt ** possible.*

L'Agent: Merci Madame/Monsieur.

CANDIDATE RESPONSE	CORRECTION REQUIRED	CORRECT RESPONSE
Voulez-vous	No inversion	vous voulez
Une adult	Article and spelling	un adulte
Grands chambres	Agreement of adjective	grandes chambres
Jumeaux lits	Inversion	lits jumeaux
Un mil	Article redundant and spelling	mille
La taxe inclu	Article gender and spelling	taxe inclus
Enverrai	Spelling of verb form	enverrai
Aussitôt possible	Incomplete expression	aussitôt que possible

Recommendations

It was noted that grammatical, lexical and structural accuracy posed the greatest challenge to candidates in demonstrating writing skills. In addition, candidates must be cognizant of the importance of punctuation, and more specifically the rules of capitalization. Teachers must equip their students with the tools and continue to provide ample opportunity to practise writing in general, and writing these two question types in particular. Such practice must begin from early in the foreign language learner's life.

An asterisk () indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure. Two asterisks (**) indicate an omission.*

Section IV (Question 6) — Reading Comprehension

This section assessed candidates' ability to read and understand a short selection in French. However, the questions on the selection and candidates' answers were in English.

The reading passage was well within the capability of the candidates and the topic was familiar to them. Most candidates performed satisfactorily, with a significant number of them scoring in the range of good to excellent.

The passages used for testing comprehension are very concise texts that are generally between 130 and 150 words. There is therefore little room for redundancy with this restricted content. In classroom practice, students should be encouraged to identify the key words or elements in the questions as a preliminary strategy, before attempting to answer the questions. This might help them to read critically and arrive at a sound understanding of the text.

Some answers submitted were ambiguous owing to candidates' poor use of English. Consequently such candidates would not have earned the maximum marks.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

What are Mr Chrétien's profession and marital status?

Mr Chrétien's profession was usually correctly rendered as vendor, salesman or merchant and candidates also correctly referred to him as a shopkeeper. *Célibataire* was sometimes interpreted as celebrity or divorced or married. Candidates needed to be clear and specific in their answers, as the term "businessman" was rather broad and unspecific to render *marchand*.

Question (b)

Where had Mr Chrétien travelled before?

This question was very often answered incorrectly as candidates did not take note of the word "before" in the question. It is clear that candidates did not look carefully at the title of the selection, which in this case would have given them the correct answer. Answers which stated that he had only travelled within his own country were scored as correct. Some answers elaborated on the text as in "he went to Guadeloupe with his cousin to purchase gifts for his cousin's boutique". A careful, word-by-word examination of the sentence should avoid such errors.

Question (c)

State TWO things that Mr Chrétien did last month.

Candidates were generally able to identify two of the four possible answers to this question and most scored the two marks allotted to it. Loss of a mark was incurred when candidates wrote that Mr Chrétien bought merchandise in a small boutique.

Question (d)

What did the security officer ask Mr Chrétien to do the first time?

Most candidates were able to identify that Mr Chrétien removed his shoes, although a few opted for "socks". The word *bijoux* presented a problem for many candidates who variously referred to other items (accessories, gold, metal, hat) or omitted this element of the response.

Question (e)

What happened when Mr Chrétien passed through?

This question was generally well handled. Even though the expression was often awkward, (“the alarm started sounding”, full points were awarded.

Question (f)

Why was Mr Chrétien angry?

While most candidates were able to obtain full marks for this question by saying that the alarm went off twice or again, others wrote that it went off “continuously”, an example of how ambiguity may impede the award of full marks.

Question (g)

What happened on the third attempt?

This answer was also well handled. Candidates who did not obtain the mark wrote vague responses such as “he went through” or responses from their own surmising of what happened –“he had no problems with security”.

Question (h)

What did Mr Chrétien decide to do on his return trip?

The verb *se coucher* was not well understood. In cases where the candidate wrote that Mr. Chrétien hid, or slept, the candidate usually did not interpret Mr. Chrétien’s behaviour correctly and placed him “under” or “next to” the scanner. Many candidates thought that he passed his baggage on or under the scanner.

Question (i)

How did the security officers react this time to Mr Chrétien’s behaviour?

Although candidates usually understood that the security officers prevented Mr. Chrétien from taking action or told him that it was not allowed, they were less proficient in rendering the word *étonnés* which was rendered as “puzzled”, “angry” or even “pleased”.

Question (j)

Explain why Mr Chrétien made the decision that he did.

Many candidates wrote at length on this question but did not include the key element which was that Mr Chrétien did not want to endure again the same situation he went through the first time.

Recommendations

- Candidates must be encouraged to read the entire selection and all the questions before attempting to answer.
- Candidates must note the marks allotted to a question and be guided as to the number of necessary elements required in their response.
- Responses should be read over to ensure that they make sense in English and that they are not distorted or ambiguous.
- Candidates should be aware that writing two responses in the hope that one may be correct would earn them no mark.
- Candidates need to remember that one word carelessly used can change the meaning of a sentence.
- Candidates must note that reproducing French words from the passage will not gain marks.

Paper 03 — Oral Examination

This paper assessed candidates' ability to (i) produce appropriate responses in the target language in a number of situations, (ii) read aloud a short passage in the target language, (iii) respond in the target language to general questions based on four out of six topics indicated in the syllabus. An attempt was made to link the theme of the reading passage with the general questions in order to create a more natural flow from one task to another.

As in previous years, performance in the oral examination ranged from weak to excellent. This year many examiners were pleased with the candidates' responses to the oral situations and guided conversation. It was suggested that the performance of weak candidates reflected inadequate readiness for the examination. There is cause for concern when examiners state that some candidates remain silent or respond with *je ne sais pas* in Sections I and III of the examination.

Section I — Responses to Situations

In this section the majority of candidates demonstrated that they were well prepared. They displayed a good degree of knowledge of the vocabulary required to communicate ideas appropriately and their responses were well thought out and organized. Many candidates manipulated grammatical structures with a commendable degree of accuracy and range of idiom. However, weaker candidates had difficulty with basic functions such as ordering a drink, giving an excuse, expressing agreement and making a suggestion. Common lexical deficiencies mentioned by examiners included the following:

- *Bonne fête des mères*
- *Seize, quatre-vingt-dix*
- *Eteindre, allumer, fermer, ouvrir*
- *Réparer*
- *Je te présente*

Grammatical errors which occurred frequently included:

- Confusion of *tard, plus tard, en retard*
- Confusion of *est-ce que, qu'est-ce que* and *quell*
- Use of an auxiliary verb in the present tense (**où sont vous allez?*)
- Incorrect use of *d'accord* for *pas de problème*
- Confusion of *aller, avoir, faire* and *être*
- Incorrect use of pronouns (**tu peux aider moi, * je voudrais inviter tu*)
- Omissions (**vous pouvez chez moi*)
- Errors of register, *tu* and *vous* in the same sentence

However, examiners noted some excellent use of idiom in this section, such as:

- *Mon réveil-matin ne marche pas*
- *Ma mère est femme au foyer*
- *Zut alors! J'ai vraiment besoin de cette robe*

Section II — Reading Passages

Most comments received from the examiners indicated that candidates found it to be the most challenging of the three sections. Examiners commented that the passages were of an appropriate level of difficulty but that candidates struggled to show comprehension, fluency, correct intonation and even correct pronunciation of discrete sounds. Teachers may need to re-examine the amount of time and the methods used to foster good performance in this section.

The following were commonly mentioned as deficiencies:

- Anglicization of words (*clients, quitter, pays, pile, nationale, matin, héros*)
- Pronunciation of final consonants (*temps, cartes, minuit, au secours, tout d'un coup, lit*)
- Vocalization of silent verb endings (*manquaient*)
- Inability to differentiate between final *e* and *é* (*répondré*)
- Failure to produce liaisons (*Champs-Élysées, de temps en temps, quelques-unes*)
- Careless rendition (*de* and *des, collèges* instead of *collègues*)
- Erratic phrasing and lack of fluency
- Distortion of discrete sounds (*juillet, ainsi, feu d'artifice*)
- Unfamiliarity with abbreviations and numbers (*M. Lacoste, le 14 juillet, treize*)

Section III — Guided Conversation

Performance by candidates ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory but examiners were pleased with the general level of comprehension and the candidates' responses. The longer questions proved to be the more challenging ones. Candidates at times based their answer on a grasp of one word in the question without processing the entire question. This occurred, for example, when candidates were unsure if they were being asked which country they had visited or which one they would like to visit. There was some unfamiliarity with the words *métier, pièces, quartier, idéal, à l'étranger, moyen de transport*. Although candidates made errors in their use of tenses, it was reported that at many centres answers were well developed and a wide range of idiom was used.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to continue exposing students to authentic samples of language and simulate real-life situations in order to practise the target language. There is also need to practise numbers, as some candidates were unfamiliar with the format for giving their phone number. Candidates should also be discouraged from requesting many repetitions of a question.