

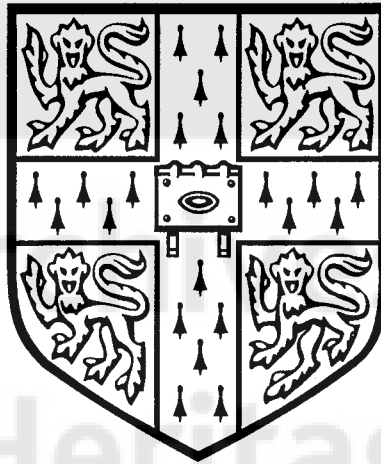
A Level

French

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FRENCH

Report on the June 1994 Examination

FRENCH

ADVANCED LEVEL

Subject 9110

*Paper 9110/1, 9110/2 and 8616/1 External Speaking Test**General Comments**Topic presentation*

Examiners were once again offered a wide variety of topics and most Centres had provided the requisite list of these a week before the examination. Examiners were pleased to be faced with a more cheerful range of topics than in some years, with fewer dealing with death and destruction, and candidates within Centres rarely chose the same topics, or in cases where this did occur, approached them from different angles. Candidates had generally chosen suitable topics leading to further discussion, but it was again evident that some topics of a more descriptive nature, e.g. *Notre maison de campagne* or *La vie de John Lennon* may not score highly on ideas and opinions in the presentation section of the sustained speech marking scale, and frequently fail to lend themselves to further discussion in the topic conversation. Centres are reminded of the statement in the syllabus that it is not intended that the candidate should recite a pre-learned passage: Examiners are looking for an interesting and lively presentation showing that the candidate has prepared the topic, but not to the point of over-familiarity. Where candidates have over-prepared their topics, there is often a tendency to gabble, and pronunciation and intonation suffer accordingly, however elaborate the language used.

Topic conversation

Candidates were prepared for this, and dealt reasonably well with this section of the examination; most could offer some further information and opinions following from their presentations, though limitations caused by some types of topic were apparent.

General conversation

It was noticeable that some candidates appeared considerably more relaxed and spontaneous in the general conversation than in the topic section, and most made some attempt to react to the Examiners' questions on matters of more abstract or topical nature, although a number of candidates this year seemed less informed, or less prepared to talk about matters of serious contemporary concern. Most managed to communicate; sometimes, perhaps, at a superficial level, but some were impeded by lack of the necessary vocabulary, and grammatical inadequacies, for instance, use of the conditional tense, constructions with prepositions, *j'étude*, *j'espère de...* verbs conjugated with *être* in the perfect tense, etc.

Overall, candidates appeared well-prepared for the examination, but generally performed less well than in previous years: candidates seemed considerably more tense and nervous than in past years and therefore possibly less able to do themselves justice. Rather than subjecting candidates to an ordeal, Examiners seek to create a reasonably relaxed atmosphere in which candidates can communicate and achieve their potential, and to mark these examinations positively.

Papers 9110/2 Speaking (Continuous Assessment)

Centres undertaking this option are again to be congratulated on the work produced. Moderators were presented with a generally wide variety of topics, with some particularly interesting presentations in the inter-active section.

The assessment criteria were on the whole well-applied and marking levels were appropriate. Administration was much improved; candidates performing interactive presentations were well-identified both in the teachers' notes and on the cassettes. It is helpful to know which members of a group have worked together, for assessment purposes, and it would also be useful to have noted on the cover sheet the titles of each candidate's presentations. The notes included on these at present were most informative and helpful.

Papers 9110/3 and 8616/3 Listening Comprehension

General Comments

With marks covering the full range, this test gives candidates the possibility of scoring extremely well—or extremely badly. In fact the concentration of marks lies in the 40% to 60% band, with a long tail down to the bottom extremity. One has the impression that candidates found this paper slightly more difficult than in previous years, and certain sections proved very demanding for a good many of them. This will be explored in more detail later. A number of recommendations made in recent years and that were beginning to be acted upon last year continue to be followed—fewer and fewer candidates present their scripts in pencil, very few rubric infringements were encountered this year, answers are targeted more precisely to the wording of the questions, fewer blunderbuss answers (hoping, by putting down every single thing that the candidate hears on the tape which might have some vague connection with the question, but not being sure what is relevant and what is not, in order to score a mark) were received. It is hoped that teachers will continue to exhort their candidates to pursue this good practice.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section 1

News Item 1

Rather than ask the candidates to provide the percentages, it was decided in this news item to get them to provide the group of people to whom a percentage or some other mathematical comment applied. Straightforward answers, names of groups, were required for *Q.1* to *Q.4*, and many candidates managed a good showing. The most difficult one was the last where a longer expression was needed and where each element was significant, *les salariés des entreprises publiques*—fewer candidates scored here.

News Item 2

It had not been felt that the legal language was beyond the ability of A-level candidates, and in any case the questions were mostly based upon non-legal matters. However this was the item in the entire test which gave the most difficulty.

Q.5 The answer to where the press conference took place was *au siège de la Ligue des droits de l'homme*; it was necessary to supply all the key elements, but extreme elasticity was permitted as far as spelling was concerned.

Q.6 Many candidates did not describe the attitude of Yves Ponthieu (one of pity rather than hatred), merely saying that he did not think about the real guilty person—in fact misinterpreting the text,

which says the opposite.

- Q.7 Again very few candidates were successful; instead of *acquittement*, many put *équipement*.
- Q.8 Very few candidates knew the expression *éclater en sanglots* (many variants were tried, e.g. *ensemble*, *sans bleu*, *semblant*).

Advertisement 1

- Q.9 For the full 3 marks here, candidates needed to get the correct verbs, the correct time scale (future) and the correct noun; many were successful, however many candidates seemed unaware of the construction *passer du temps à faire*, and confused by the *à*, quite often interpreted as the auxiliary, consequently implying a reference to past time.
- Q.10 Many phonetic representations of *la colle* (including *l'alcool*), *la main d'oeuvre* and *la livraison* (e.g. *livre à maison*) occurred, nonetheless a good many candidates provided two correct answers.

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- Q.11 Either right or wrong.
- Q.12 The desired answer was *foncer sur votre Mammouth, remplir un bulletin de participation, répondre à une toute petite question*; a variety of confused answers were supplied (*bulletin* regularly occurred as *bouton* or even *bouteille*).
- Q.13 This question was particularly aimed at the best candidates, *tirage au sort* being the correct answer.

Section 2

Part A

The drug help-line: as it turned out, this item gave amateur drug counsellors amongst the candidates great scope to reveal their skills, and examiners learned a lot from their expertise. Fortunately, it was possible to distinguish what was invented (in all good faith!) from what was authentically on the tape.

- Q.14 Candidates had three possibilities to choose from in (a); many made appropriate choices, but a number of inventions occurred (a lot to do with being unable to relate to girls—presumably connected to the fact that on the tape the expression *les garçons sont plus touchés que les filles* occurs). In (b) again choices were available, and most candidates were successful (some even recommending particular types of *papier à rouler*—*les Rizlas*!).
- Q.15 More invention from our amateur counsellors; what should have been stressed is that the help-line was available to those who did not dare speak to their children about drugs, it allowed a new perspective to be obtained, it gave the parents back their self-confidence and suggested that they gather information on the problem; any three points were sufficient for full marks; most candidates got the *new perspective point*, and many at least one of the others.
- Q.16 This is where the amateur counsellors really came into their own, with plentiful advice; examiners carefully scrutinized all suggestions and only awarded those which coincided with the tape; this often meant piecing together points which were split by the candidates in their general advice; in fact most candidates succeeded in gaining at least two out of five marks here, and a reasonable number got the full five.

- Q.17* The answers to parts (a) and (b) of this question were less predictable for the amateur counsellors and were consequently less well scored; in (a) the answer should have made reference to the parents putting pressure on their children to pass exams, to being overconcerned about their health and happiness; often candidates simply referred to excessive pressure, for which only one mark was given—more detailed specification was required; in part (b) they were less successful; he would feel that he did not have the right to fail or cry, did not live up to their image of him, could use drugs to justify his failure; most candidates stated that in the circumstances he was vulnerable to drug-taking, and for that one mark was awarded.
- Q.18* Marks were given for recommending calm talk between father and son and warning of the consequences of drug taking; it wasn't always certain whether the candidates transcribed this from the tape or used their own creative initiative; whatever the route, marks were given.

Part B

Carlos: this item was chosen as a striking contrast to the previous one. However, candidates seemed to score similarly on both texts.

- Q.19* Candidates scored quite well on this three-part question, although sometimes it was not clear who was doing the chasing or denouncing.
- Q.20* Another three-part question where candidates were generally successful; there was sometimes confusion about where incidents took place or on whose behalf or on who was the victim, but most candidates gained at least half marks here.
- Q.21* A surprisingly poorly answered question; confusion existed between *révélé* and *relevé* (no mark), and *occidentaux* was rarely met.
- Q.22* Most candidates realized that he was closely watched and his conversations listened to; but others invented other possible scenarios, in some of which it was Carlos who was spying and listening to conversations.
- Q.23* Apart from the occasional candidate who thought he was keeping pigs in his room (*cochon—cachant*), most deciphered the reference to weapons; Carlos's other habits were less frequently correct, although a fair number of candidates did get full marks.
- Q.24* From this point on candidates seemed to run out of steam, because this and the remaining questions were poorly answered. Only one mark available here, and few got it—a reference to *la Tchécoslovaquie* and Carlos being forced to leave the country was essential.
- Q.25* Very poorly done indeed—perhaps because it involved a little more general knowledge (of the existence of the PLO) and deduction from what had gone before than usual.
- Q.26* What should have been a simple question turned out to be a problem for many candidates: he was filmed at the airport with his wife—he was not making a new film, he was not meeting his wife after five years, he was not separating from his wife and going to France.

Papers 9110/4 and 8616/4 Reading and Writing

Comments on Individual Questions

- Q.1* Not quite such a straightforward task for the candidates as is often the case for True/False exercises. Many candidates made one error, and two or three errors were not unusual.

- Q.2 The rubric was perhaps misleading here. What was intended was an exercise in finding a word corresponding to a dictionary definition, i.e. for each word given, a **single word** in the text would provide the answer. But numbers of candidates gave whole phrases, e.g. for (e), where the word *barricade* was required, they wrote *sont tentés de se réfugier derrière les barricades*. Even leaving aside this problem, the question was not well done. Many answers seemed to be random; e.g. providing the word *reconstruction* for the definition *industrie qui se rapporte à l'acier*?
- Q.3 The question was quite competently done. Where marks were lost, it was not usually because of a difficulty in locating the terms of the answer, but an inability to render the information in acceptable English. The examiners need evidence that there has been comprehension, and this is not provided by translating literally, for example, 'ex-colonised francophones'. Although this is not a translation exercise, the answer must demonstrate comprehension.
- Q.4 The first question was quite testing, in that it did not focus on a specific part of the text but required a global understanding. Many candidates answered well, in drawing attention to the author's intention to counteract prejudices and *idées reçues*. The other two questions generally indicated adequate comprehension, though (b) required some element of personal interpretation (*selon vous*) as well as comprehension. It is important for candidates to meet all the elements required by these questions. For example, (b) had two main elements, one referring to *immigrés* and one to *travailleurs français*. The mark-scheme is constructed to take account of both parts, so a failure to give some response to the second half means the marks cannot be gained. The response to (c) was more straightforward in that it required information from the text. The main problem for candidates here is to process the information efficiently. For example, it is difficult to claim that the whole sentence beginning *Les deux tiers des élèves immigrés...* actually has any relevance to the answer required. For all the questions in this section, although the language of the answer is not assessed, the poor quality of some answers make it difficult for even the most sympathetic examiner to interpret what is being said.
- Q.5 Marks for this question were divided equally between content and quality of language. As has been mentioned in previous reports, candidates must be encouraged to examine carefully the terms of the rubric for the mark-bearing elements of the content. Here marks were allocated for three elements, *les origines de l'immigration; la situation actuelle de l'immigration; quelques comparaisons avec la situation dans votre pays*. Candidates who wrote 140 words about immigration in their own country could not score full marks. The majority of candidates kept within the 140 words, or close to it. There is no credit for writing very extended pieces. Indeed, candidates may well lose marks, since the terms of the task require a certain brevity and ability to formulate the response within fairly strict limits. A lengthy essay is not the purpose of the question. With regard to the language mark, there was the complete range of responses from excellent, correct and fluent French to exceptionally weak and incoherent writing. Examiners are hardened to such things but it is still a shock to find *ça n'est pas ça sérieux* = 'it isn't that serious' and *car les immigrés* = 'for the immigrants'.
- Q.6 One can only repeat the point made in last year's report: "There is no particular problem for candidates to locate, in the English text, the key element containing the answer. But there is a real problem in rendering that item into acceptable French." If candidates can provide a perfect translation of the information given in the text, they will score full marks, but translation is not the aim of the exercise. What is required is transfer of information, in any form of words which conveys the facts asked for and which is grammatically correct. Hence, *Johnny Halliday est un fort conservateur et il detest les autres parties* will score nothing for language and cannot even claim to convey the information about Jojo's political tendencies to a sympathetic native speaker. It is depressing (not for the examiners, but mainly for the candidates after all those years of learning the language), to find statements like, *c'est là qu'il trouve tout qu'il ai une besoin pour ...il pense qu'il fait existe là*.
- Q.7 The terms of the question fell into two clear parts, information about Johnny Hallyday and personal response, and these were marked equally (5 × 2 marks for content). The point can again be made about writing according to the terms of the rubric and sticking to the required length. The responses seemed to indicate that candidates had found the passage of some interest.

Numbers of answers said that this was the first time they had heard of Johnny Halliday and they were interested by this pop phenomenon (usually compared to Cliff Richard in terms of longevity). The writing in French provided the whole gamut of possibilities. The best candidates write well, but there are many disappointing answers, where language marks cannot be given because of inability to manipulate tenses or to make agreements. There are parts of the examination paper where the mark-scheme concentrates upon transmitting information (e.g. Q.4) but for this, the final question on the paper, 14 of the 24 marks are given for language, including accuracy.

Although this is a long and varied paper, there is no evidence that candidates found it difficult to complete within the time available.

Papers 9110/5 Essay

General Comments

The overall standard of performance was very similar to that of last year, and it is possible that there was a slight improvement at the top end.

Linguistically there is still considerable room for improvement, particularly at the lower end where the level of ignorance can be quite alarming. The weakest candidates are now having difficulty distinguishing between nouns and verbs, and have even begun to make such errors as *ils entres* or *les homment*. The result of learning vocabulary lists without systematic grammatical back-up has led, too, to the regular arrival of such expressions as *la seulement façon*. Candidates in this category are often incapable of expressing quite straightforward ideas:

- ...des personnes vivent avoir la peur de partir de leurs maisons;
- ...les parents des filles faisait la décision de qui on avait de se marier;
- ...elle n'a fait pas quoi je l'ai dit faire...;
- ...les gens devient violent aux personnes qui les font furieux...
- ...le fin n'est justifie les moyens jamais.

Less worrying, but still a cause for some concern, is the surprising ignorance of basic terms and expressions relating to the chosen topic areas. Even though candidates may have had statistics or other general material at their disposal, too many had clearly not mastered some of the relevant vocabulary. Many of those writing on **Rapports humains** confused *marier*, *se marier* and *épouser*; or included such expressions as *le cérémonie de la marriage*; *un église*; *personnes en amour* in their discussions. Those who chose the topic on **Transport** were often unsure of basic genders (*le voiture*, *la train*) or vocabulary (*les services d'emergency*, *la safety*, *la reliabilité*). Those writing on **Le Tiers Monde** spoke of *le trade*. And those who chose **La Violence** referred to *violence physique*, *la meutre*, *la viole*, *injurer* (for *blesser*) and *le peine de morte*.

The most common linguistic errors were to be found in the following areas, and not always among the weakest candidates:

- (i) errors of gender, particularly *la manque* and *la problème*;
- (ii) confusion of *parce que* and *à cause de*;
- (iii) confusion of *mal* and *mauvais*;
- (iv) indiscriminate use of *les*, *des*, *quelques* and *plusieurs* (and not infrequently *plusieures*);
- (v) malformation or misuse of *ce*, *cet*, *cette* and *ces*;
- (vi) confusion of *qui* and *que*;

- (vii) overuse of *chose*;
- (viii) uncertainty about the use and form of the passive;
- (ix) confusion of *pouvoir*, *vouloir* and *devoir*;
- (x) inaccurate conjugation of *faire* and *vouloir*;
- (xi) indiscriminate use of *il faut*, *il doit*, *il a besoin*;
- (xii) incorrect sequence of tenses in conditional clauses.

Candidates would be able to move from low marks to quite respectable ones if they properly mastered their vocabulary, and eradicated those mistakes born of basic grammatical misunderstanding. It should also be pointed out that quite a number of the weakest candidates were writing essays considerably longer than the length recommended in the rubric. Although this does not carry a penalty, it is often the case that candidates who write more than 500 or 600 words tend to leave themselves too little time to check; and indeed, too little time to prepare carefully the structure of their arguments.

The other principal weakness continues to be relevance. It is still the case that candidates are able to acquire a certain amount of useful material, and most have something to say about the topics set. But too often, even well informed and quite able candidates pay insufficient attention to the organisation of this material. Instead they simply rehearse a general essay roughly on the topic area, without directly addressing the question. Associated with this is the more general question of structure. Not all candidates are able to provide a clear framework for their essays, with an introduction, argument and conclusion. Although examiners do not insist on a particular model for the essay, it is always in the candidate's interest to make clear from the outset how the title is understood and where the essay is going, and to draw together at the end the implications of the discussion.

Nevertheless, at the top end of the scale it was very good to see candidates who were able to combine linguistic accuracy, variety of structures and a genuine sense of idiom with a clear-headed approach to the question.

One final comment on presentation. Examiners reported again this year on the declining standard of presentation: unclear and at times illegible handwriting, messy corrections, alterations added in pencil. This kind of scruffiness is not penalised for its own sake, but it does almost inevitably impede the examiner's ability to reach an assessment of the script.

Comments on Individual Questions

- Q.1** Very few candidates offered this question, and tended to be either very good or rather weak. The weakest listed the qualities of the ideal politician, but did not address the question as set. More sophisticated candidates had positive, interesting ideas and a clear sense of direction; several made an excellent attempt to distinguish between the two terms in the question. There were too few, though, for any significant general points to be made.
- Q.2** This was a popular question. Most of the candidates had something to say, and were able to give at least an adequate structure to their argument. The essays were divided between those who were able to explore—and had the linguistic confidence to challenge—the question, and those who fell into more predictable and safe areas. The weakest candidates offered a series of general comments on the problems of the Third World, and of their increasing dependence on countries whose high-interest loans force them ever deeper into debt. There were other essays, though, which looked at both sides of the question, and with varying degrees of analytical sophistication. Some spoke well of the exploitation which might be seen to characterise the West's attitude to the developing world and suggested that this constituted a form of dependence; others made the same point, but argued that there was a fundamental difference between this form of relationship,

and the total dependence which is that of the Third World. There were many difficulties with the conjugation of *dépendre*, and not only among the weakest candidates; more than a few opted for *sur* as the required preposition, in spite of the evidence provided by the essay title.

- Q.3* Many candidates chose this topic and essays covered a wide range of approaches. The weaker candidates found it difficult to address the question directly, and often drifted into essays on the liberation of women or the role of the family. For many too it proved difficult to move beyond the assertion that cohabitation is preferable to marriage because it removes the problems of separation and divorce. But there were also some very thoughtful and sensitive answers. Some did look carefully at some of the problems which marriage might be thought to solve—instability, isolation—and they suggested that it is often not so much the institution which might be at fault as the partners themselves who are unable to cope with the responsibilities, or who are not really suited to each other. It was regrettable—but perhaps not surprising—that only very few candidates expressed any optimism about the stability of human relationships.
- Q.4* This, too, was a popular topic. Once again it was the candidate's ability to control the material, rather than the amount of material, which distinguished the best answers. At the lower end of the scale, candidates offered a list of different modes of transport; they described the advantages of each one but did not explore how these related to the specific problem of which consideration is, or should be, the most important. Better candidates, often using much of the same kind of material, were able to achieve a much more clearly focused response. Many suggested that different considerations are important according to the purpose of the particular form of transport, arguing, for instance, that what is important for the police is not necessarily important for the holidaymaker, or the carrier of freight. The problem here was not one of thinking what to say, but of thinking clearly.
- Q.5* This was chosen by a large number of candidates, too. Once again there was a basic level of knowledge demonstrated by all but the weakest candidates, but it was the best essays which were able to move beyond simple expression of agreement with the title. The weaker candidates confined themselves to a few examples of gratuitous violence—domestic, political, racial—and affirmed that this was unjustifiable. Better candidates, though, sought to move beyond this and tried to imagine situations where it might be justifiable to use violence of one kind or another. Some uncovered problems without realising it when they argued that violent criminals should be punished with flogging or death; others, though, considered areas where such use of violent means may be allowable: self-defence, protection of the weak.
- Q.6* There were very few answers to this question. Several candidates were not together certain of the meaning, and may have confused *patrie* with *patriotisme* or *patronage*.

Papers 9110/6, 9110/8 and 8616/2 Coursework

General Comments

Course Work is now well-established as an element in both A Level and AS courses. It is part of candidates' studies which enables them to show what they can do when freed from the restraints of an examination paper.

The content of Course Work this year was much as in past years—AIDS, global warming, racism, etc. There was, however, a notable increase in the number of essays dealing with violence and television in the wake of the Bulger murder. Such a case is not, of course, rooted in France or French culture and many essays had no francophone element in them. The Subject Core will require a change in Syllabus from 1997, and will require there to be a specifically cultural element in the Course Work component.

Literature still forms a stimulus for some students. The most common text tackled is *L'Etranger*, despite its metaphysical difficulties. While some candidates merely re-told the story, and thereby exclude themselves from the higher categories for marks, others produced interesting work from another angle,

e.g. that of a reporter at Meursault's trial. A particularly original literary piece was that of a candidate who tackled environmental problems through Romantic poetry. The films of Marcel Pagnol also provided the starting point for many candidates, who analysed what it felt like to be Ugolin, or the guilt experienced by le Papet.

The presentation of work was variable. The use of word-processors can, of course, have a very positive effect. There were many candidates, however, who had word-processed their work, but failed to add accents. They were, naturally enough, penalised for accuracy.

The word-count is an important element. It ensures that all Candidates are producing approximately the same quantity of work, and like can thus be compared with like. It also ensures that Candidates focus their thoughts and do not ramble. It is the responsibility of the teacher to see that the word-count is adhered to, and that the declaration of the word-count on the cover-sheet corresponds to reality. Candidates who declare 1089 words and actually write 1400 + are penalised by the Moderator if the teacher has failed to do so.

Despite advice in previous reports, some Candidates were still falling victim to the temptation of plagiarism, i.e. wholesale lifting of material from books and articles. In some cases no attempt was made to alter the work, and in one, the plagiarist had woven together text, exercises and answers from a course book. Plagiarism is sometimes spotted by teachers. Those who feel that the work is not wholly that of the Candidate should not hesitate to draw attention to this in the Candidate's notes. In the Moderating process, a sample of work is generally scrutinised, but **all** candidates' notes are read. Candidates guilty of plagiarism are penalised.

Attention must be drawn to the role of the teacher in the drafting process. Only **one** draft of each piece should be looked at and commented on by the teacher. Some teachers' notes made it clear that they had seen at least two drafts. The final version for submission should not have corrections on it (even if it has serious need of them!).

Most moderators were struck this year by the very small number of adjustments or scalings that had to be made to teachers' marks—far fewer than in previous years. Marking is generally consistent within Centres. In the *Use of Language* section, it was noted that many teachers award 6 or above, and tend not to use the lower range of the category. It is expected that the full range of marks will be used in all categories. Moderators felt that this was a category in which teachers tended to be over-generous.

The Syndicate and the Moderators would like to express their thanks for the great effort which teachers put into Course Work—not only in the teaching, but also in the writing of notes on Candidates and in the marking and moderation of the Candidates' work.

Papers 9110/7 Thematic Studies

General Comments

This year's work ranged from the truly excellent to sadly thin and careless. Some outstanding candidates produced well constructed essays in pleasing, effortless French, demonstrating solid knowledge and control of their material. There were candidates who enlarged the scope of their answers (on *La Guerre*, for instance) with thoughtful references to such films as *Les Jeux interdits* or *Schindler's List*. Most stayed firmly with a single text but nevertheless showed some ability to analyse and discuss, rather than simply describe the contents of their chosen books.

At the lower end were candidates whose French was very poor indeed: *cette barriere indique le elargant social trou entre les, ses rêves ont craché quand il est visitée ses amis, elle s'est levée pour ce qu'elle a cru en* (with innumerable other phrases of the *affection qu'il a besoin de* variety). Typical lazy Franglais included *involver*, *expecter* and *suggester*. It would help enormously if candidates could be familiar with a basic list of literary and descriptive terms, even such obvious words as *personnage*, *roman*, *conte*, *décrire*, *auteur*, *lecteur*.

As usual, the other main problems were, first, lack of focus on the question: candidates made indiscriminate use of previous essays (especially on *L'Individu*), where general essays on Meursault or Antigone were brought out in answer to anything. Secondly, there was again a failure to match the text studied to a suitable question. There seems to be a strong tendency to choose the first question in each theme, regardless of its appropriateness—hence *Familles, je vous hais* after studying only the close-knit family in *L'Enfant noir*.

A. La Famille

As mentioned above, the first question made no sense when applied to Laye, but was immensely successful both for Bazin and Maupassant, producing some really substantial answers on the corrosive effects of jealousy and betrayed trust. There were also a few misplaced answers where candidates took the question to mean: 'Do you hate the families in these books?' Q.2 applied well to all four texts and produced many good answers, especially on *La Place*, showing how detachment and maturity bring understanding of earlier family difficulties. Answers to Q.3 were again good on Ernaux, though few candidates seemed to realise to what a powerful extent the book is about the father rather than the daughter. Most answers tended to offer external description of the parents rather than any guess at their possible point of view.

B. La Guerre

For Q.4 there was much solid documentary observation and some thoughtful comments on the atmosphere of fear and suspicion. There was also considerable haziness about what constitutes *un pays occupé*. Many candidates stuck to general comments about war or the *qualités humaines* which emerge in wartime. Answers to Qs 5 and 6 could easily have been confused as both tended to consist of lists of all-purpose heroic/patriotic/altruistic incidents with little discussion, for instance, on what candidates understood by patriotism. Those who had read Maupassant tended to produce the most cogent answers.

C. Le Théâtre comique

This was the least popular theme and Musset and Jarry were very little read. Candidates almost all chose Qs 7 and 9 on Molière, with some further reference to *Le Barbier de Seville*. For Q.7 there were many long answers which dismissed *vanité* in the first paragraph and then went on to list anything in the play which might be ridiculous. Some candidates wrote well about Arnolphe's vanity but omitted to explain how it could be funny. Answers to Q.9 sometimes extended pity to all the characters, including Chrysalde, Horace and the servants. But there were some perceptive attempts to wrestle with audience reactions to Arnolphe: to what extent is it possible to pity him for his feelings on losing Agnès?

D. L'Amour

Candidates almost all approached this new theme with much enthusiasm and understanding. Q.10 elicited some very good answers on *Carmen*, showing the blindness of the love-stricken José (and his ability to look back with some lucidity). There were a few excellent essays on tunnel vision in *Andromaque*, and the way characters lay waste to the feelings of others by their inability to see beyond their own. Q.12 was by far the most popular, and candidates wrote exceptionally sensitive, indeed heartfelt, answers on the predicament of Colette's Phil and Vinca, and on the links between love, suffering and death in *Moderato cantabile*. Some excellent answers on this topic are included at Appendix A.

E. L'Individu et la Société

In general, this theme produced too many diffuse answers showing how Meursault and/or Antigone fail to conform. For Q.13, some looked at the difference in society's attitude to Meursault before and after the

murder, and there were one or two brilliant analyses of the way Meursault's very existence threatens society. For Q.15, the best answers made clear attempts to identify positive and negative aspects of Meursault/Hugo/Antigone, and often attempted thoughtful comparisons between them. The statement was usually rejected (heroes can't be *faibles*), except sometimes for Hugo, but at least it made candidates look closely and examine these characters from an unexpected angle.

Paper 9110/0 Special Paper

The overall level of performance on this paper was generally comparable with that of recent years, though a higher proportion than usual of successful candidates gained a grade 1. All candidates were clearly aware of what to expect in each section and all but one completed the paper.

Many of the suggestions and recommendations that follow, relating to technique and approach, have been made before and candidates are advised to note them carefully. The paper sets out to test a candidate's ability to use the written language effectively in three quite different exercises. Each section has specific criteria for assessment; common to all, however, is the need to display a firm grasp of grammatical structure and to write accurate French.

Section A

It is worth pointing out to candidates that questions in this section of the paper often deal with more than simple comprehension, requiring candidates to comment on the tone or style of the writing, on the writer's implicit attitude as well as his explicitly stated views and on the writer's use of language.

Most candidates understood this passage on the development of tourism in France and were able to focus on the material required for the answers. Given that answers are assessed according to the three 'rolling criteria' outlined in the past: comprehension of question and factual accuracy of answer; quality and sophistication of language used and ideas expressed; linguistic accuracy—good candidates once again distinguished themselves by providing **accurate and concise answers, mostly in their own words** which allowed them to demonstrate their own command of the language. Answers which did little more than provide an appropriate part of the original text satisfied fully only the first of the three criteria outlined above and so scored only a small proportion of the marks available.

As has been stated in past reports, candidates are thus strongly advised to look on this section (and section C) as an opportunity to exploit their command of French, to demonstrate their own resources in terms of vocabulary and linguistic construction, as well as being an exercise in comprehension.

- Q.1* Many candidates were sensitive to the hint of amusement and irony in the writer's tone. Those who suggested a different reaction were given some credit as long as their answers were illustrated or explained by reference to the text. The weakest answers simply summarised the changes referred to but did not deal with what seemed to be the writer's attitude. [*fleuraient* was sometimes misconstrued as the Imperfect of *fleurir*.]
- Q.3* Most candidates agreed that the terms used suggested an occupying army and so scored well.
- Q.4* It was hoped here that candidates would put together the building permits in English and the buying of old stone to come up with the idea of restoring/re-building old properties in traditional style. The majority did.
- Q.6* Most candidates came close to the exact answer here but few understood that *la tutelle des Transports* referred to the ministry.
- Q.9* This question carried quite a number of marks and few candidates answered it really well, even when they appeared to understand the meaning of the original expression. [Given that this kind of question appears regularly on this paper, practice in the explanation/re-formulation of

expressions and words would be a useful preparation.]

Candidates are advised that the length of their answer is not important in this kind of question as long as their explanation is clear. Either of the following explanations of *mesuré à cette aune*, Q. 9(i), would be perfectly acceptable, for example:

jugé selon ces statistiques...

or:

quand on tient ces chiffres en compte pour évaluer l'importance du tourisme...

Qs2, 5, 7 and 8 were generally well answered.

Section B

This question produced the widest range of marks on the paper and some answers gave a strong impression that candidates had had little practice in this kind of exercise.

This impression showed up most clearly in the problems that many candidates found in relation to choice of tense, which is obviously a vital consideration in prose translation. With this in mind, candidates could perhaps be encouraged to spend the first 10 or 15 minutes of their work on this section concentrating solely on the tense required for each verb before moving on to the translation as a whole.

In this context the Pluperfect continues to be missed by many candidates, not only a fairly demanding example such as 'Mr. Bishop must have heard...', but rather obvious ones such as 'had been', 'he'd scored' and 'he'd met'.

Other constructions that candidates found difficult were:

'Philip wished he hadn't chosen...'—*Philippe regrettait...*

'not to mention...'—*sans parler de...*

'I should have handed it in...'—*j'aurais dû...*

'Philip had known him long enough...'—*Philippe le connaissait depuis assez longtemps pour...*

'that Mr. Bishop was so good at...'—*pour lequel Mr. Bishop était si doué/avait tant de talent...*

Once again this year, many candidates lost marks on areas of grammar which ought to be within the grasp of those entering for this paper. Future candidates should be encouraged to check the basic accuracy of what they write very thoroughly. The following list gives an idea of the main sources of error—

- choice of tense and verb form;
- word order;
- use of the Subjunctive;
- genders and agreements;
- constructions involving infinitives.

As in the past, certain words and expressions were treated positively by the mark scheme and any sensible attempt to provide a French alternative/ explanation of a word not known was treated sympathetically, and some credit given.

Section C

The generally upward trend in the quality of answers in this section was maintained this year.

As has been said before, in these usually discursive essays, the organisation and presentation of content and argument are obviously very important criteria for assessment. The best essays came from candidates who showed clear evidence of planning, who looked carefully at and discussed the precise implications of the title, who used specific references and illustrations, who varied the presentation of their material, who gave the essay a degree of individuality and conviction by means of personal comment... in short, those candidates who appeared to be using all their resources, linguistic and other, in a genuine attempt to persuade the reader of the validity of their argument.

Again as in the past, basic accuracy is a problem and some candidates produce excessively long essays rather than devoting more of their time to preparing and checking their work.

Candidates are advised that the points for checking mentioned at the end of section B apply equally well to section C. The following also caused problems this year:

- confusion between *gens* and *personnes*;
- the breakdown of constructions in the second half of a lengthy sentence, when, for example, a *de* needs to be repeated before a second infinitive or a *que* is required in the second clause to complement an introductory *quand* or *si* in the first;
- word order, especially in relation to the position of pronouns, negatives and *ne...que* and when *peut-être* and *aussi* are used at the beginning of a sentence or clause;
- confusion between *les* and *des* persists, so that 'English people generally like foreigners...' becomes *Des Anglais aiment en général des étrangers...* and 'These three countries are popular destinations...' is rendered as *Ces trois pays sont les destinations populaires...*

The overall impression of candidates' essays would be greatly enhanced if basic but recurrent errors on these vital points of usage were ironed out.

FRENCH 9110*Component Threshold Marks*

Component	Maximum Mark	A (1,2)	B (3)	C (4)	D (5)	E (6)	N (7)	U (8)
1	100	77 (62)	69 (55)	61 (49)	54 (43)	47 (38)	40 (32)	00
2	100	77 (62)	69 (55)	61 (49)	54 (43)	47 (38)	40 (32)	00
3	80	53 (40)	46 (35)	40 (30)	34 (26)	28 (21)	22 (17)	00
4	100	75	69	61	53	46	39	00
5	40	33	29	25	21	17	13	00
6	75	62	55	49	43	38	33	00
7	75	59	53	48	43	38	33	00
8	75	61	54	48	43	38	33	00

* The marks in brackets are the raw marks (out of 80 in Paper 1 and out of 60 in Paper 3) which are scaled to achieve their syllabus weightings.

Special Paper

1	61
2	48

Overall Threshold Marks

Combination	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
All	395	288	259	231	203	176	149	0

The percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Cumulative %	20.1	38.3	58.9	78.8	90.7	96.9	100

The total candidature was 1,805.

These statistics are correct at the time of publication.

FRENCH

ADVANCED SUPPLEMENTARY

Subject 8616

The reports in this booklet deal with the A level French syllabus (9110). The AS examination (8616) papers are in every case the same or part of the equivalent A level paper. No separate AS report has therefore been written, as comments on 9110 apply equally to 8616.

FRENCH 8616

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Maximum Mark	A (1,2)	B (3)	C (4)	D (5)	E (6)	N (7)	U
1	80	62	55	49	43	38	33	0
2	60	49 (41)	44 (37)	39(33)	34 (28)	30 (25)	26 (22)	0
3	60	40 (27)	35 (23)	30 (20)	25 (17)	21 (14)	17 (11)	0
4	60	45	41	36	31	27	23	0

* The marks in brackets are the raw marks (out of 50 for Paper 2 and out of 40 for Paper 3) which are scaled to achieve their syllabus weightings.

Overall Threshold Marks

Combination	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
1, 2, 3	200	146	130	116	102	89	76	0
1, 2,4	200	154	135	121	117	93	79	0
1,3, 4	200	143	124	111	98	86	74	0

The percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Cumulative %	14.4	25.4	37.3	56.8	78.0	87.3	100

The total candidature was 118.

These statistics are correct at the time of publication.