



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2006

FRENCH

ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

Contents

1.	General Introduction	3
1.1.	The Syllabus	
1.2.	The Examination	
1.3.	Number of Candidates	
2.	Oral Examination	5
2.1	Introduction	
2.2	Performance of Candidates	
2.3	Analysis of Candidate Performance	
2.4	Conclusions	
2.5	Recommendations to Teachers and Students	
3.	Ordinary Level	14
3.1	Introduction	
3.2	Performance of Candidates	
3.3	Analysis of Candidate Performance	
3.4	Conclusions	
3.5	Recommendations to Teachers and Students	
4.	Higher Level	27
4.1	Introduction	
4.2	Performance of Candidates	
4.3	Analysis of Candidate Performance	
4.4	Conclusions	
4.5	Recommendations to Teachers and Students	
5.	Exemplars of Standard	44
4.1	Ordinary Level	
4.2	Higher Level	

Leaving Certificate French Examination

1. General Introduction

1.1 The Syllabus

The current syllabus for Leaving Certificate French was examined for the first time in 1997. Candidates may take the examination at Higher Level or Ordinary Level, but the syllabus is common to both. It is a communicative syllabus, organised around the needs, expectations and interests which pupils bring to the foreign language classroom. Tasks assessed involve both productive use of the language (oral and written skills) as well as receptive use (reading and listening comprehension).

1.2 The Examination

The Leaving Certificate Examination in French, at both levels, is comprised of three components: an oral examination, a written paper containing both reading comprehension material and a written production section, and a listening comprehension test. The marks allocated are as follows:

		Higher Level	Ordinary Level
(a)	Oral Examination	100 marks	80 marks
(b)	Paper I – Reading Comprehension	120 marks	160 marks
	Paper I – Written Expression	100 marks	60 marks
(c)	Paper II – Listening Comprehension	80 marks	100 marks
	Total:	400 marks	400 marks

Oral Examination

In 2006 the oral test was conducted between 27th March and 7th April. The examination, which lasts approximately twelve minutes, is school based, but it is administered and assessed by external examiners. All candidates were recorded. A monitoring and moderation process was carried out during June and July.

Written Examination

The written and aural components of the examination were held on Tuesday, 13th June 2006, beginning with the written examination at both Higher Level and Ordinary Level from 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon, followed by the Listening Comprehension Test from 12.10 to 12.50 p.m.

1.3 Number of Candidates

A total of 27,809 candidates presented for the Leaving Certificate Examination in French examination in 2006. The percentage of candidates who sat the Higher Level and Ordinary Level papers was broadly similar to that of previous years. As is the norm, the number of candidates who opted for the Ordinary Level paper exceeded those who chose the Higher Level.

Table 1: Leaving Certificate French participation rates 2002 – 2006, at each level

Year	Total French Candidature	Higher Level	% of Total	Ordinary Level	% of Total
2002	32,116	15,212	47.4%	16,904	52.6%
2003	32,491	15,054	46.3%	17,437	53.7%
2004	31,434	15,164	48.2%	16,270	51.8%
2005	30,589	14,611	47.8%	15,978	52.2%
2006	27,809	13,421	48.3%	14,388	51.7%

The tables below show the number of candidates taking the examination at both levels in the past three years and the percentage of candidates achieving each grade.

Table 2: Leaving Certificate French – Grades

Higher Level

Year	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2004	15,164	5.9	5.8	7.3	8.6	10.0	10.0	12.2	11.7	9.9	8.2	6.9	3.3	0.2	0.0
2005	14,611	5.2	5.8	7.3	8.7	10.0	11.0	11.9	12.2	10.7	7.9	6.5	2.7	0.2	0.0
2006	13,421	7.3	6.4	7.6	8.8	9.8	9.8	10.8	10.8	10.3	8.1	7.1	2.9	0.1	0.0

Ordinary Level

Year	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2004	16,270	0.2	1.1	3.5	7.1	10.5	13.2	15.0	14.9	12.2	9.0	8.0	4.6	0.7	0.0
2005	15,978	0.1	0.7	3.1	7.4	12.7	14.9	15.1	13.1	10.9	8.1	7.7	5.3	0.9	0.1
2006	14,388	0.1	1.0	2.9	6.5	11.0	13.8	13.0	13.3	11.1	9.4	9.2	6.7	0.9	0.1

2. Oral Examination

2.1 Introduction

The format of the oral examination in 2006 was the same as that of previous years. It consisted of a conversation of approximately twelve minutes duration during which candidates were given the opportunity to display their proficiency in the spoken language. Candidates had the option of bringing in a document of their choice. This could consist of a photograph or picture, a newspaper or magazine article, a literary text or a project. All candidates were marked out of a total of 100 marks, which were allocated as follows:

Pronunciation	20 marks
Vocabulary	20 marks
Structures	30 marks
Communication	30 marks

The oral component accounted for 25% of marks at Higher Level and 20% of marks at Ordinary Level. The oral examination is conducted in the same way for both Higher Level and Ordinary Level candidates. All candidates are marked out of a total of 100 and the marks of Ordinary Level candidates are adjusted at a later stage.

2.2 Performance of Candidates

The performance of candidates in 2006 spanned the total range of abilities, and marks achieved were broadly in line with previous years. Examiners commented on how well-prepared most candidates were. They showed enthusiasm and a great willingness to communicate and it was evident that many had worked extremely hard to prepare. Many candidates revealed a degree of proficiency suggesting a very high level of competence in mastering oral communication skills. Both candidates and teachers are to be congratulated for their success in this area. However, at the other end of the scale, there were some candidates who failed to answer the simplest of questions, either because they were unwilling or unable to do so.

2.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

(i) Pronunciation

The standard of pronunciation varied widely, reflecting the range of ability and level of preparation of candidates. It was encouraging to note that a considerable number of candidates who had never been to France displayed a very high standard of authentic pronunciation and intonation. However, examiners reported a lot of problems with pronunciation, despite the fact that it accounts for 20% of the total oral mark. Many candidates experienced difficulty with correct French sounds. Candidates should also realise that, if they do not say a lot during the test, their pronunciation mark may be affected.

Some candidates, though willing to talk, focused on the amount they could say rather than on the clarity of their pronunciation. Often, where their vocabulary was excellent, their pronunciation was not. It was particularly evident in the case of passages learned by heart, where candidates had put in a lot of effort at memorising sentences from text-books or written notes. However, they were unable to pronounce many words correctly, rendering their material almost unintelligible.

Examiners this year highlighted the following problem areas:

- Not distinguishing the difference between *je / j'ai* and *il / elle*.
- Pronouncing the last consonant or syllable, e.g. *ans*, *dans*, *et*, *pied*, *temps*, *beaucoup*.
- Pronouncing the *-ent* ending of the third person plural.
- Pronouncing adjectives always as though in the feminine form, e.g. *content*.
- Confusion of *aîné / âne*; *collège / collage*; *deux / douze*; *cours / courses*.
- Mispronunciation of school subjects, e.g. *français*, *chimie*, *biologie*.
- *Soleil*, *pareil*, pronounced like *travail*.
- Not making correct liaison, e.g. *mes amis*.
- Mispronunciation of common words: *sæur*, *piscine*, *banlieue*, *famille*.
- No effort to pronounce the French [r].
- Failure to distinguish between the [u] and [y] sounds e.g. *vous / vu*, etc.

(ii) Vocabulary

Most candidates had mastered a sufficient range of vocabulary to communicate at a basic level on topics concerning their daily lives and the world of young people. Many candidates used a rich and varied vocabulary and displayed a good mastery of adjectives and expressions of comparison or contrast, which enriched the quality of the communication. They easily recognised key question words, which enabled them to develop topics, and were able to discuss generally a wide range of subjects. Some used their well-prepared documents to display the depth of their vocabulary. Others had prepared the vocabulary necessary to discuss social problems, and were able and willing to give their viewpoint on these topics.

However, some candidates appeared to lack the vocabulary needed to give some basic information about themselves. This is material which they would be expected to have covered for Junior Cycle, e.g. family, pastimes, where they live, description of their house, school, etc. These candidates had difficulty with everyday vocabulary, including numbers, time, weather, food and school subjects. Many of them showed a lack of examination preparation, with an inability to use obvious conversational phrases such as *je ne comprends pas* or *pouvez-vous répéter la question, s'il vous plaît*. They also failed to understand key words such as *décrivez, expliquez, où, pourquoi, quand* and *combien*. Typical conversational openers such as *qu'est-ce qui vous intéresse?* were often not understood by these candidates.

The most common errors in vocabulary were similar to those noted in previous years. They included:

- School subjects often not known, with the English word being used instead, or else confused with Irish, e.g. *fraincis* instead of *français*.
- The use of *collège* instead of *faculté / université*.
- Using *facilités* rather than *équipement / services*.
- Confusion between certain words, e.g.
 - *copains / copines; voyager / travailler; aîné / année ; quatre / quatorze ; sujet / matière ; ménage / manger ; boisson / besoin ; équipe / équipement*.
- Misunderstanding the words *prochain* and *dernier*, or *hier soir / demain soir*, leading to answers being given in the incorrect tense.

(iii) Structures

As with the other areas of performance, the competencies of candidates in the 2006 oral examination differed greatly. Many showed that they had a good grasp of the three basic tenses and the ability to move easily between them. Others demonstrated a good use of idiomatic expressions and of Conditional and even Subjunctive tenses. Some candidates opted to use the phrase *je voudrais* or *j'espère* when asked questions about the future, and avoided giving a future tense. Examiners in these cases had to probe further, to see whether or not the candidate had mastered this tense.

A knowledge of the basic grammatical structures is essential in order to compose sentences and respond to the examiner's questions. Candidates are expected to be able to compose relatively straight-forward sentences using present, passé composé and future tenses. They should also be able to use adjectives, prepositions and pronouns correctly. Those who are more competent in the language tended to move on to more complex constructions, using subordinate clauses and a wider range of tenses.

As always, the main difficulties were with verbs. With certain candidates there was little differentiation between the tenses, particularly when difficulties with pronunciation meant that all endings sounded the same. In these cases it was nearly impossible for the examiner to determine which tense was being attempted.

The most common failings were

- Echoing the question form used by the examiner, e.g. *Je regardez.*
- Confusion between *j'ai / je suis* and *c'est / il y a*.
- Expressions of quantity, e.g. *beaucoup des amis, trop des devoirs.*
- Use of *être* instead of *avoir* for age, e.g. *je suis dix-huit ans.*
- Agreement of adjectives, e.g. *ma grand frère.*
- Use of the auxiliary *avoir* instead of *être* in the passé composé.
- Absence or misuse of the definite or indefinite articles.
- Incorrect use of possessive adjectives.
- Difficulty with prepositions, e.g. *au le cinéma, à le weekend.*
- *J'étudie* pronounced as *j'étude.*
- Incorrect preposition before a place-name, e.g. *en Paris.*

(iv) **Communication**

Several factors influenced the marks that candidates achieved under this heading. A high mark in communication depended on the candidate's ability to converse with the examiner in an authentic manner. It involves listening, understanding and responding to the questions asked in a manner that is as spontaneous, flowing and comprehensible to a monolingual French speaker (the oft-mentioned "Français unilingue") as possible. Good pronunciation is a prerequisite for good communication, and candidates should be aware that inaccurate pronunciation can affect their ability to communicate effectively.

Many candidates had the ability to develop a subject without needing constant prompting. However, the oral examination should resemble a normal conversation as much as possible, so a candidate who insisted on reciting large chunks of learnt-off inappropriate material, or who was incapable of adapting to the examiner's questions, was marked accordingly. The examiner will intervene judiciously when an answer risks becoming a monologue, in order to ascertain whether the candidate is depending solely on rote learning or is, in fact, able to maintain a spontaneous conversation. Some candidates did not seem to be aware that they were being assessed on their ability to communicate, not to recite.

Many of the questions asked or topics introduced arose naturally from what the candidate had already said. Depending on their ability and willingness to communicate, relatively simple questions about a particular topic may have developed into a more in-depth discussion. In these cases, the examiner is not looking for specific knowledge, but is affording candidates the opportunity to express personal opinions, reactions and feelings, as well as to describe and narrate. Good candidates will have the necessary strategies to overcome any gaps in vocabulary or lack of opinions on a particular subject.

(v) **Document**

Candidates may choose to bring in a *document* - a photo, illustration, or text - for the oral examination. It is not assessed separately but the candidate's competency in discussing it was taken into account in the final mark. As was the case in previous years, only about

half of all candidates availed of this option. In some schools almost every candidate had a document, whereas in others no document at all was presented. Most candidates chose to bring in a photograph or illustration. There were not many projects or literary texts. Candidates should be aware that a solid object should not be presented as a *document*, but a photograph could be used instead.

Examiners who see the difference that a well-prepared document can make are very much in favour of this option and many suggested that it should be a compulsory part of the oral test. They noted that it provided an opportunity for candidates who were competent in the language to shine, as they could demonstrate knowledge of more complex structures and vocabulary. At the same time, it allowed other candidates who were not as competent in the language the opportunity to prepare to a certain extent in advance, and thus they were less nervous in the examination room and were more comfortable at speaking French when it came to a discussion of their document. Some Examiners felt that the confidence level of these candidates increased after they had spoken about their document.

The more usual topics covered by the documents involved holidays, pastimes, sports, class exchanges, school tours, family, friends, concerts and weddings. Some of the more interesting ones mentioned by Examiners dealt with subjects such as AIDS in Nigeria, orphans in the Ukraine, teenage pregnancy, racism, obesity, Bono as a musician and campaigner, Guy de Maupassant. Examiners recommended that more thought should be given to the choice of document and more time to the preparation. It could be used as a means of exploring aspects of French life and culture. Photos of individuals or pets did not always offer great scope for discussion and development. Candidates in some schools prepared the same document. In one case, for example, half the candidates brought in the same document on road accidents, with the same material which was, in the examiner's opinion 'learnt off' by all the candidates.

Documents which were obviously put together at the last minute, and which were not well-prepared, were of little benefit to the candidate. Certain candidates had little to say after the initial presentation, which they had learned by heart. Others were able to describe what was in the photo, e.g. *Ma soeur est à gauche, et elle porte un pull bleu*, but were unable to use it as a point of discussion. This suggests a lack of knowledge as to the correct approach to preparing the document. Some candidates were not prepared for questions on it. Candidates should note that, just as in the general part of the conversation, examiners are not looking for a monologue, and so will intervene judiciously in order to look for an authentic response.

2.4 Conclusions

- Most candidates showed a great willingness to communicate and made a genuine effort to make the most of their spoken French. They were familiar with the basic topics and issues.
- As in previous years, performance varied according to the level of competence in the language and to the level of preparation of the candidates. Excellent results were achieved by candidates who had never spent time in a French-speaking country. Some candidates, however, showed deficiencies in basic vocabulary and knowledge of grammatical structures, and had difficulty in carrying on a conversation in French.
- Good pronunciation is vital for communication, yet many candidates had difficulty with French sounds, intonation and rhythm.
- A well-prepared and well-chosen *document* was of great value to candidates of all levels of ability, and examiners universally recommended this option.
- Reciting excessive amounts of learned-off inappropriate material, often with poor pronunciation and intonation, was of little communicative value.
- During the interview, candidates were invited to describe their own personal situations and to express their own views. Discussion can take place on almost any subject/topic of the syllabus, including those of everyday relevance to students such as school, family, pastimes, money.

2.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

Teachers should:

- Speak as much French as possible in the classroom, starting from the earliest days in First Year. Oral communication attunes the student's ear to the language.
- Encourage spontaneous use of French, and avoid over-correction of students' errors.
- Make the student aware of the importance of good pronunciation for good communication.
- Teach pronunciation systematically, starting early in First Year.
- Reinforce basic vocabulary as often as possible so that students have repeated exposure to everyday topics. Refer particularly to the Behavioural Objectives in the Leaving Certificate French Syllabus.
- Teach students to manage a conversation by being able to ask for repetition or clarification where necessary and by being able to express incomprehension.
- Encourage students to avoid simple *Oui / Non* or monosyllabic answers but to try and develop their answer.
- Explain to students that a personal, authentic response, which expresses their personality, is better than using pre-prepared material inappropriately.
- Make students aware that the oral examination is ideally a conversation, and that they must expect the examiner to intervene judiciously with questions based on responses.
- Encourage students to prepare and present a *document* for the Oral examination. Advise them not only to be able to describe what is in the picture or text, but to anticipate follow-up questions and what sort of discussion might arise.
- Remind students that they should be prepared to enter into discussion and to express their own opinions and feelings, not simply describe or narrate. Make them aware that this discussion may arise from everyday topics, (e.g. what do they think of a certain school rule? Should students give up sport in Sixth Year?) as well as current affairs / or more 'abstract' type topics of the syllabus.
- Revise and practise the Present, Passé Composé and Future tenses.

- Train students to listen carefully to the oral examiner and always to attempt a response, even if it is to ask for repetition or clarification.

Students should:

- Be aware that the examiner is there to support them and to enable them to demonstrate how much French they can speak.
- Treat the oral examination as a normal conversation in which the examiner is interested in finding out about them and their opinions on various topics. Be ready to talk about themselves, their friends and family and their interests.
- Realise that if they repeatedly tell the examiner that they know nothing about various subjects (e.g. hobbies, sport, films, TV, current affairs, etc.) or that they do nothing at weekends or with their friends because they are studying so hard for their examination all the time, then they are closing down opportunities to talk about pertinent topics.
- Listen carefully to the whole question the examiner asks, not just to one word which they recognise. If they do not understand, or if they did not hear the question clearly, they should say so, in French. The examiner will repeat or rephrase the question.
- If they make a mistake and are immediately aware of it, then correct it (e.g. *je aller, non, je suis allé ...*). The examiner will be impressed.
- Remember that pronunciation and intonation are important and that poorly pronounced words may not be understood by the examiner.
- Try and develop their answers so that they do not just give a *Oui* or *Non* answer. Saying two or three sentences on the subject, without further prompting, will be of benefit.
- Be aware that the examiner will intervene in a judicious manner with further questions if the examination risks becoming a type of monologue instead of a conversation. This is because he / she has to assess their ability to communicate naturally.
- Devote time to learning basic grammar and vocabulary. Poorly learnt-off paragraphs, often badly pronounced, will not impress the examiner. The ability to use and adapt simple, correct personal statements will be of much greater value.
- Practise in particular the present, passé composé and future tenses, including the negative form.

- Make sure they understand the question words *Pourquoi, où, quand, comment, qu'est-ce que, combien de*, etc.
- Practice answering questions with the correct *je* ending of the verb. Note that they must not pronounce the final *-e* in a word, even though the examiner has pronounced the *-ez*, e.g. *Vous regardez souvent la télé? Oui, je regarde la télé tous les soirs.*
- Learn to recognise a question asked in the Past Tense, and key words indicating the past such as *l'année dernière, l'été dernier, hier soir*, etc.
- Listen for words such as *l'année prochaine, au mois de septembre, après le Leaving Cert, demain, samedi prochain*, etc. as they will normally be asked a question in the future. Practice the Future tense.
- Choose a *document* which interests them, which can be a picture, a text or a project. Give themselves enough time to prepare it. This will give them confidence going into the examination.
- Try to anticipate the type of questions which the examiner may ask on the document. The examiner will want to see if they can discuss it.

3. Ordinary Level

3.1 Introduction

The analysis of candidate performance and the conclusions and recommendations contained within this report are based on the detailed reports submitted by the Assistant Examiners, Advising Examiners, and Chief Advising Examiner at Ordinary Level. It is hoped that this report will prove helpful to both teachers and students in their classroom practice and in their preparation for future examinations.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following materials:

- The Leaving Certificate French Syllabus
- The Leaving Certificate Ordinary Level 2006 Written Paper, Listening Comprehension Paper, and Listening Comprehension CD
- The Marking Scheme for the Written Paper (www.examinations.ie)

The French Ordinary Level examination comprises three components – Written, Aural and Oral. This section of the report deals with Written and Aural components only. The Written paper consists of two sections – Reading Comprehension and Written Expression.

Reading Comprehension: (160 marks)

There were four questions, each carried 40 marks. All four questions must be answered.

Written Expression: (60 marks)

There were three sections, A, B and C, with a choice in each section. Each question carried 30 marks. Candidates were able to choose **one** exercise from each of two sections from A, B and C.

Listening Comprehension: (100 marks)

There were five sections. All questions were to be answered.

3.2 Performance of Candidates

A total of 14,388 candidates sat the 2006 Leaving Certificate French examination at Ordinary Level. Although the total number of candidates sitting French at this level shows a decrease of 1,590 on the 2005 figure, the total percentage of Leaving Certificate candidates - 28.23% - remained broadly similar.

Table 3: Performance of Ordinary Level candidates from 2002 to 2006

Year	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
2002	16,904	1.0	19.9	40.8	30.3	6.7	1.2	0.1
2003	17,437	0.8	22.4	42.7	28.4	5.3	0.6	0.0
2004	16,270	1.3	21.1	43.1	29.2	4.6	0.7	0.0
2005	15,978	0.8	23.2	43.1	26.7	5.3	0.9	0.1
2006	14,388	1.1	20.4	41.1	29.7	6.7	0.9	0.1

The results for 2006 are broadly in line with those of the previous years. The combined A+B+C result was 61.6%, while the combined E+F+NG result was 7.7%

3.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

The 2006 French Leaving Certificate Ordinary Level paper met with generally favourable reaction. The Written Production section was favourably received and the Listening Comprehension section was welcomed by all. Candidates performed best at the Aural Comprehension and least well at the Written Production.

Written Paper

SECTION I – Reading Comprehension

Question 1

The passage dealt with the use of mobile phones while driving. Although the subject matter was of interest to young people, some candidates had difficulty. In some cases, candidates relied on their general knowledge of the rules of the road and road safety rather than reading the text carefully. Candidates did not adhere strictly to the instructions given.

1. (a) & (b). Most candidates merited marks for mention of “traffic”. “*Prévisions routières*”, “*les travaux*” and “*éviter*” were not understood. Incorrect answers included “provisional routes/roads”, “work in the area”, “provisional drivers”.

2. (a) & (b). Candidates merited marks for some version of “difficulties on the route”. Lack of vocabulary was evident. “*Bouchons*”, “*embouteillage*” were not known. “Don’t drive at night” was given for “*conduite la nuit*” and “hot points/areas of the summer / places that are hot in summer” were offered for “*points chauds*”.

3. (a) & (b). The answers to these questions were confused with the answers for question 4 and vice versa. “*Coupez la sonnerie*” and “*branchez la messagerie*” were not understood by some. Partial marks were often awarded here for “listen to message” and “stop and pull in”. “*Un lieu adapté*” was beyond the grasp of most. Incorrect answers included “have a phone”, “leave a message”, “send/take a message”, “switch off the phone”.

4. This part was not answered well. Candidates did not understand “*rappelez / dès que*”. “Use the message minder” was given by some. “Pull in and take the call” was often given. Many candidates used the answer to Question 5 as an answer here also.

5. This was generally very well answered. Incorrect answers included “make the call for you”.

6. This question was usually correctly answered, with either or both “driver is distracted / reaction time is doubled” being given.

7. The majority of candidates mentioned “accident” or “incident” here. Only a minority recognized “*en cas de panne*”.

Question 2

This question was answered better than the previous one. The subject matter again was student friendly.

1. Many candidates scored well here. “Holiday” and “studying abroad” were frequently given. However, some did not answer from the correct section and used the title for their response. Incorrect answers included “to get away from your family for a year”, “to learn a new culture/language”.

2. This was very well answered. A minority did not understand “*à partir de*” and they answered “under/less than 15”.

3. This was very well answered. “A good dose of maturity” was a popular answer. Reference to entering college as a mature student appeared from time to time. There was no mention of bilingual.

4. Few candidates scored full marks here. Partial marks were awarded for mention of “English” but “*passer*” and “*épreuve*” were not known. Disappointingly, many thought that “*passer*” means “to pass an exam”.

5. Generally well answered. Recurrent incorrect answers revealed an element of guesswork. “Parents” or “the TOEFL organization” were incorrectly given.

6. Generally well answered. A minority of candidates gave “July to September” as an answer.
7. Any mention of “language” allowed candidates to score 4 marks here, but comprehension of “*faire du tourisme*” was sadly lacking.
8. Usually correct but some candidates incorrectly added “per week” or “as rent”.
9. The majority of candidates scored 2 marks here. A lack of comprehension of “*l’année suivante*” deprived them of full marks. Even though “school” was mentioned in the question, some wrote “college” in their answer.
10. Fairly well answered. Partial marks awarded frequently due to omission of “for when you return”. Those who recognised “rules of the university” left out “of your choice”.

Question 3

This text was accessible for most candidates. Extraneous material was a problem in Questions 1, 2, 3 and 5. Many did not recognize when they were required to manipulate.

1. Well answered but some candidates thought “*le surnom*” meant “surname” and answered “Parker”.
2. Well answered but many candidates incurred a penalty for extraneous material: “*pour six années supplémentaires*”.
3. A small number of candidates failed to answer this correctly. “*épouser*” was not understood and the extraneous phrase “*et des enfants dont il rêve*” incurred a penalty.
4. Reasonably well answered – (a) was a recurrent incorrect answer.
5. Well answered with two or three correct references to the relationship with his father. Some candidates started quoting as soon as they saw the word “*père*” and stopped before they got to the correct quotation.
6. Very well answered. Few candidates attempted manipulation.
7. Generally well answered. “*Il fait du basket sur console*” was sometimes given, indicating a failure to see or understand the word “*aussi*”.
8. Fairly well answered. Many candidates gave two correct points while others had incorrect answers such as “he had two villas/houses – one in San Antonio and one in Texas”, “he owns/has a Ferrari/ 4x4”. Many felt that Tony Parker’s earnings were an

indication of lifestyle. “He had security/protection for his family” was another incorrect answer frequently offered.

Question 4

This text and the accompanying questions received favourable comment from both examiners and candidates alike. It was welcomed as a piece of literature which was within the comprehension of candidates at this level and consequently scoring was high, with many achieving the full 40 marks.

1. Very well answered. A penalty was incurred for the inclusion of “*je me sentais idiote et devenais de plus en plus complexée*”.
2. Well answered, with some penalties were incurred for extraneous material. An incorrect answer offered was “*le vêtement traditionnel des ouvriers, qui tenait chaud mais manquait d’élégance*”.
3. Reasonably well answered but a lack of understanding of “*laide*”, “*maigre*” and “*mince*” was sometimes evident. Recurrent incorrect answers were (a) and (b).
4. Well answered but a sizeable number of candidates offered the answer in English, “14 years”.
5. The answer here was usually correct. A penalty was incurred for beginning at the words “*ma brève scolarité ...*”.
6. Very well answered with several correct answers being offered. Manipulation was attempted.
7. Very well answered, showing an improvement in grammar awareness. “*Enflammées*” was the most frequent correct answer. “*Belle*” was offered as an incorrect answer.
8. Good global comprehension was evident in answering here. Most candidates knew that “her father did not encourage her”, “there were arguments at home”, “she spent a lot of time in her bedroom”. A sizeable number incurred a penalty for thinking that Pierrette was a boy!

SECTION II – Written Expression

The questions were considered fair but some candidates had problems with forming the present, passé composé and future tenses. Basic everyday vocabulary was lacking in some cases. Candidates are only required to answer three written questions, but many answered more than three.

Candidates had a choice of (a) or (b) within each Section A, B and C.

The Cloze test was by far the most popular choice, with the Formal Letter the least popular.

Question A (a) – Cloze-test

This question was attempted by most candidates and high scores were recorded. Many scored the full thirty marks. Care should be taken with transcription as marks can be lost due to carelessness. The fourth and seventh gap caused most difficulty with “*grande*” and “*joli*” often in reverse slots, indicating a failure on the part of the candidate to notice the agreement of the feminine noun and adjective. The accent was sometimes omitted from *à* - further evidence of careless transcription.

Question A (b) – Form-filling

Generally questions 1 – 5 were well answered.

Questions 1 & 2 Some candidates confused Nom and Prénom.

Question 3 The year of birth was sometimes omitted.

Question 4 “*Lieu*” posed a problem for some candidates.

Question 5 The name of a country was sometimes given for “*nationalité*”.

In Questions 6 – 9 a minority of candidates did not use full sentences in their answers, although they were reminded to do so in the instructions.

Question 6 “Languages spoken” was well answered, although with a minority offering only one language.

Question 7 The word “*genre*” was not always understood here and many candidates gave irrelevant answers. Examiners expressed surprise at the lack of understanding of the word “*genre*”, considering its usage in every day language and especially in the Leaving Certificate English course.

Question 8 Much inappropriate material was used here and many candidates failed to make the connection with the previous question.

Question 9 The verb “*travailler*” was sometimes mistaken for “to travel”. “*J’adore Mickey Mouse / Disneyland*” was frequently given.

Communication marks were generally high while marks for Language were not as high. Language marks awarded were mainly in the middle or bottom category. Many candidates misspelled “*français, irlandais* and *anglais*”. Verbs, tenses and vocabulary posed problems in some cases.

Question B (a) - Message

This was less popular as a choice than Q.B (b). The tenses and vocabulary required posed problems for some candidates.

C1. The present tense of “*j’organise*” was lacking, “*je suis organise*” being the most popular option. “*une boom*”, “*une party*” were much used for “*une boum*”. “Best” friend eluded most. Some attempts included “*bon ami*”/ “*bon copain*”, while many candidates just left this part of the sentence out completely.

C2. The phrase “to buy some food and drinks” was very poorly handled. “*cuisine*” was sometimes used for food while “*boits/boîtes/boire*” were used for “*boissons*”. Poor spelling was a problem here but most candidates mentioned “*acheter*”.

C3. Few knew the word for “soon” but many attempted a mention of a specific time. The majority of candidates failed to find the verb for “to clean up the house”.

Misspelling of “*boum*” was prevalent. “*Meilleur*” was totally unknown. It was quite common to see “*je suis aller*” for “I have gone”.

Question B (b) – Postcard

This was a more popular choice than Q.B (a).

C1. There was a general failure to correctly translate “*j’ai fini*” and a number of candidates were unable to spell “*les examens*”.

C2. The phrase “*faire du camping*” was not generally known and attempts at this often included “*je suis camp(ing)*”. “*Campail*” was mentioned more than once. Attempts to express the weather conditions were very poor. “*Météo*” once again was frequently used here.

C3. The future tense was a problem for some but candidates succeeded in expressing “*je vais visiter / aller à*”. “*Demain*” was known by some. “To hire a bike” was not known generally with the majority stating “*je hire un vélo*”.

Tenses were not known and vocabulary was lacking.

Question C (a) – Diary

This question was fairly well answered.

C1. “*Je suis arrivé*” was very rarely correct. “*J’ai arrivé*” or “*je arrive*” were given. “Yesterday” was sometimes omitted and some candidates gave “*dernier jour*”. “5 p.m.” was rarely given as was “*17 heures*”. “*À cinq heures*”, with or without the “s”, was given but there was no mention of “*de l’après-midi*”, “*du soir*”.

C2. “In Paris” was often “*en Paris*” and some successfully managed “*il faisait froid*”. Many candidates lacked the vocabulary for a “new coat”. “*un duffle-coat*” was used by many.

C3. “*Je suis fauché*” was not generally known, with many settling for “*je n’ai pas d’argent*” but a lot of candidates were unable to handle the negative of the verb. The verb “*chercher*” evaded many and “*regarder pour*” made a frequent appearance. “*un petit boulot*” was known by many candidates.

Language: “*arrivé*” often had the wrong auxiliary verb. Formation of the negative was a problem for some candidates and vocabulary was lacking in areas such as “*chercher*”, “*mi-temps*”, “*manteau*”.

Question C (b)

This was the least popular choice but was very often chosen as an extra question. Specific marks for Format were awarded here, as well as marks for Communication and Language.

Format

Top of page: Most candidates merited 1 mark for general layout. Errors included the omission of the year or of “Ireland”. “*Chère Madame*” was frequently used, as was “*Cher Madame*”.

Closing Formula: Some candidates did not attempt to use the closing formula and opted instead for “*à bientôt*”, as though they were writing a letter to a friend. When a formula was attempted, marks were lost for omission of accents and spelling errors.

C1. “Your teacher has given you her address” was poorly attempted.

C2. “You would like to work as an au-pair”. This was well attempted but candidates were unable to say “for her”. They attempted “summer” but many could not manage “*prochain*”.

C3. This was the best of the three communicative tasks. Almost all candidates made a reasonable attempt at “*j’adore les enfants*” but “*je fais du babysitting*” became “*je regarder voir après enfants*” or “*je babysité*”. The words “*souvent*” and “*en ville*” were not known.

Language: Again, there was a poor attempt at tenses and a formal register was absent, e.g. “*ton adresse*”. Candidates lacked basic vocabulary which probably featured in their preparation for the oral examination.

Listening Comprehension

There was widespread welcome for such a suitable Aural Test for this level. The clarity of the recording and the speed of the speakers helped to make this Listening Comprehension Test accessible to Ordinary Level candidates, and gave a welcome boost to their confidence. It was felt that this was a good example of a CD which was suited to both Higher Level and Ordinary Level candidates.

Section I

This section was very well attempted with full marks being scored by many.

- 1.(i) Usually correct.
- 1.(ii) Usually correct. “He left/quit school” was a popular answer. Incorrect answers included “he went to the theatre”, “he was expelled/kicked out of school”.
2. Very well answered.
3. Very well answered. A minority of candidates got partial marks for either “family” or “friends”.

Section II

1. Usually correct.
2. Usually correct. Languages well recognised.
3. Usually correct.
4. Usually correct.

Section III

1. Surprisingly few candidates knew the meaning of the word “*portable*”, despite the fact that it was mentioned several times in Q.1 of the Written paper. Instead, answers included “portable DVD”, “gym membership”, “a computer”, “portable TV”.
2. Usually correct.
- 3.(a) Usually correct.
- 3.(b) Few candidates answered correctly “at the end of the month”. They heard “month” and offered such possibilities as “after a month”, “in two months” or simply guessed “when he gets paid/a job”.

Section IV

1. Usually correct.
2. Usually correct.
3. Sometimes marks were lost for (b) or (c).
4. Usually correct.

Section V

- 1.(i) Reasonably well answered but not everyone picked up on “handball”.
- 1.(ii) Reasonably well answered. “Lisbon” was the most common mistake.
2. This was sometimes incorrect, with candidates opting for (a) “shot” or (c) “drowned” instead.
3. Fairly well answered. A surprising number of candidates did not know the days of the week.

3.4 Conclusions

- The 2006 paper proved accessible to Ordinary Level candidates. Results were broadly similar to those of previous years.
- Although candidates had difficulty with some parts of the Reading Comprehension, this was balanced by other less-challenging questions, so that candidates performed reasonably well overall.
- Candidates at this level continue to have difficulty with Written Expression, and more work is required in this area.
- Most candidates scored high marks in the Listening Comprehension test, which was considered very suitable for this level.

3.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

Teachers should:

- Ensure that students have regular, balanced practice in all of the language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Continue to cultivate grammar awareness in students at this level.
- Teach students to recognise the meaning of “*trouvez, citez, relevez, un mot, une expression, une phrase*”. Penalties incurred in the Reading Comprehensions would be greatly reduced by this knowledge.
- Remind students how to manipulate a Comprehension answer by changing the verb from 1st to 3rd person, and changing the pronoun “*je*” to “*il / elle*” and the possessive adjective “*mon / ma / mes*” to “*son / sa / ses*”, etc.
- Highlight the fact that penalties apply in the Reading Comprehension for failure to answer relevantly or for including extraneous material.
- Revise basic aspects of the syllabus: weather, negative form of verbs; verb tenses, agreement of adjectives and “*faux amis*” such as “*passer un examen*”, as evidence from the Written Production indicates problems in these areas. All candidates should be able to recognise and use Present, Future and Passé Composé tenses.
- The required Format/Layout for Formal Letter is available in the Appendix of the Marking Scheme. This format should be taught to all students at this level.
- Encourage students to devote any extra time to reviewing the work which they have already done.

Students should:

- Read the questions carefully. Before completing the examination they should re-read their answers together with the questions on the paper.
- Be careful to answer the Reading Comprehensions questions in the language required, e.g. Questions 1 and 2 in Irish or in English, Questions 3 and 4 in French.
- Base their answers in the Reading Comprehension questions on a careful reading of the text, rather than on their own general knowledge or on any illustrations.
- Carefully check the instructions which state in which section of the text the answer will be found. They should take care to provide an answer only from the relevant section.

- Choose only one clear answer in Multiple Choice Questions.
- Should devote any extra time to refining or improving their answers to the two questions required.
- Take care when transcribing words in the cloze-test - Section A (a) - as marks will be lost if mistakes are made in spelling or if an accent is omitted.
- Work at their basic grammar, in particular the present, passé composé and future tenses.
- Avoid using pencil to write their answers, as this can fade and answers may not be legible.

4. Higher Level

4.1 Introduction

The analysis of candidate performance and the conclusions and recommendations contained within this report are based on the detailed reports submitted by the Assistant Examiners, Advising Examiners, and Chief Advising Examiner at Higher Level. It is hoped that this report will prove helpful to both teachers and students in their classroom practice and in their preparation for future examinations.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following materials:

- The Leaving Certificate French Syllabus
- The Leaving Certificate Higher Level 2006 Written Paper, Listening Comprehension Paper, and Listening Comprehension CD
- The Marking Scheme for the Written Paper (www.examinations.ie)

The French Higher Level examination comprises three components – Written, Aural and Oral. This section of the report deals with Written and Aural components only. The Written paper consisted of two sections – Reading Comprehension and Written Expression.

Written Paper

Section I - Compréhension Écrite (120 marks)

Question 1 – A Journalistic Text

Question 2 – A Literary Text

Each of Questions 1 and 2 contained ten segments to be answered in French, followed by one segment to be answered in Irish or English.

Section II - Production Écrite (100 marks)

Question 1 (40 marks)

- Compulsory
- Choice of two Writing Tasks
- 90 words approximately

Questions 2, 3 and 4 (30 marks)

- Choice of two Writing Tasks in each
- 75 words approximately

Candidates were asked to answer Question 1 and two questions from Questions 2, 3 and 4. All questions to be answered in French.

Listening Comprehension Test

There are five Sections in this paper. In 2006 there were seventeen questions, some with sub-sections. The questions were to be answered in Irish or English.

4.2 Performance of Candidates

A total of 13,421 candidates sat the 2006 Leaving Certificate French examination at Higher Level. Although the total number of candidates sitting French at this level shows a decrease of 1,190 on the 2005 figure, the total percentage of all Leaving Certificate candidates - 26.34% - remained almost exactly the same.

Table 4: Performance of Higher Level candidates from 2002 to 2006

Year	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
2002	15,212	9.9%	23.7%	34.8%	27.1%	3.4%	0.1%	0.1
2003	15,054	8.3%	26.2%	38.9%	24.6%	1.9%	0.2%	0.0
2004	15,164	11.7%	25.9%	33.9%	25.0%	3.3%	0.2%	0.0
2005	14,611	11.0%	26.0%	35.1%	25.1%	2.7%	0.2%	0.0
2006	13,421	13.7%	26.2%	31.4%	25.5%	2.9%	0.1%	0.0

The results for 2006 showed an increase in the number of candidates awarded an A grade. However, the combined A+B+C grades came to 71.3%, similar to that of previous years. The combined E+F+NG result was 3%

4.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

Paper I - Section 1: Compréhension Ecrite

General

Performance in Q.1 was, in general, far better than in Q.2 in spite of the fact that one might think that the subject matter of a reclusive French novelist winning a literary prize and the effects of this on his elderly mother would not seem to be obviously attractive to

the cohort of Leaving Certificate candidates. However, the vocabulary here did not seem to present difficulties. Scores of 40+ were quite common.

In Q.2, however, candidates had some difficulty. The themes, however, should have appealed: a young female lawyer trying to succeed in a male dominated world while advising her handsome young cousin on his love problems across the social divide.

Question 1 – Journalistic Text

1. Few candidates failed to earn marks here. The most popular choice was *elle s'enquiert.....photo*, although marks were frequently lost for omitting a subject or for contradictory answers along the lines of *Elle n'est pas perturbée elle s'enquiert de la tenue de son fils*. Very few candidates offered *Loin d'être perturbée* as their complete answer. Some candidates misinterpreted *loin d'* and offered the manipulated answer: *elle est perturbée*.

2. Here even candidates who performed poorly elsewhere did very well and succeeded in finding two correct points.

3(i) This was generally well-answered. The participle most frequently offered was *renversées*. Candidates who experienced difficulties either failed to recognise *participé passé* or misinterpreted *désordre* and offered *vu* or *harcelé*.

3(ii) Generally correctly answered. Some marks were lost for excess material such as *Pas mal pour* or *harcelé par ses créanciers*

3(iii) Generally well answered.

4(i) Because the word *été* was misspelled in the text as *étais*, an additional answer (*d*) was accepted. A surprisingly high proportion of candidates chose the incorrect option *fière*.

4(ii) Few candidates earned full marks here as most answered with some form of the *dépression / perfectionniste* options. The detail of *action* seemed to elude the majority.

5(i) Generally well answered. Marks were lost for mistakes in manipulation or for incomplete answers such as: *Elle surveille comme le lait sur le feu*.

5(ii) There were difficulties here with both comprehension and manipulation. Incorrect answers included:

- *Les reactions qui donnera le matériau*
- *Il a très envie de publier....*
- *Il a sorti un papier....*
- *Il est un matériau précieux fournira une trame à son prochain roman*

Many candidates began with *Ils* referring to *reactions*.

6. When correctly answered, reference was made to the writer's reclusive lifestyle, his perfectionism, his depression, the literary award and the media attention. François was regularly taken to be a woman and was frequently confused with his mother. Consequently, it was often suggested that his phone never stopped ringing and that the paparazzi were camped on his doorstep. Less successful answers featured general remarks without supporting reference or else offered quotation without showing it to be clearly understood.

Question 2 – Literary Text

1(i) This was reasonably well answered. Some candidates failed to link *pleurait* and *larmes*. This resulted in answers such as *Sa première plaidoirie lamentable* or *Elle se sentait plus humiliée que jamais*.

1(ii) Generally well answered, but marks were often lost for excess material.

1(iii) Very few candidates appear to have understood *habile*. A frequently offered incorrect answer was *il l'entraîna vers un bar* prompting one examiner to suggest that *bar* and *avocat* were being linked, the latter being confused with a particular alcoholic drink.

2(i) Reasonably well answered. Common incorrect answers were *Tu étais là aussi, ajouta-t-elle avec une grimace*, and *Et bien, tu as été servi*.

2(ii) Reasonably well answered, although (a) and (d) were often offered.

3(i) Candidates who performed well recognised the key word *exigeant*. Marks were lost through either quoting excess material or incomplete quotation, e.g. inclusion of *Lui aussi aurait à faire ses preuves, d'ici peu*, or merely giving *Son père serait là pour l'observer*.

3(ii) Generally well answered. Marks were frequently lost for excess material from earlier in the sentence. (Some candidates even quoted the full sentence).

4(i) Very well answered

4(ii) Unfortunately, a lot of candidates seemed to confuse the Conditional and the Imperfect tenses, resulting in a large number of answers where *songeait* or *savait* were offered. There was also a tendency to offer more than one verb.

5. Often incorrect. Perhaps *agir* was not understood as (b) was a common choice, possibly also resulting from misinterpreting *la révolte* or *une rebelle dans l'âme* in the text.

6. Generally, candidates succeeded in offering one correct point. However, some confused Vincent and Charles, thinking that the former was the successful lawyer. Some answers were very sketchy and vague, suggesting a large degree of guesswork as the text was not fully understood.

Section II: Production Écrite

General

This year the Writing Tasks dealt with themes that would have been reasonably familiar to the candidates. In some cases a specific question was asked, with the aim of eliciting a more authentic response from the candidates. Thus, the elderly were to be discussed in terms of being the “forgotten”, modern holidays were to be contrasted with those in the 1950s, and sport was linked with friendship.

Those who performed really well addressed the issues set out in the tasks and developed them in idiomatic and accurate French. Others, however, relied heavily on inappropriate pre-prepared material without being willing or able to adapt it to the particular demands of the chosen task. Clichés and proverbs were sometimes deployed in a futile attempt to compensate for lack of real language skills.

A small number of candidates answered more questions than was required. This was generally of no benefit to them. In many cases, the decision to write an extra question was to the detriment of the three primary questions where mistakes were made which may have been avoided had candidates not been so rushed or had they used the time to re-read their answers.

Q.1(a)

This topic was handled reasonably well by most candidates in terms of content. They developed the idea that elderly people were *oubliées* in the sense of being neglected not only by the government but by their own families; they feel isolated and lonely; nobody visits them; they have worked all their lives and contributed to the Celtic Tiger economy, etc.

Possible solutions to this problem included the provision of more facilities in the community for old people to enjoy and the suggestion that people should make an effort to visit them. Some candidates mentioned their personal experiences with their own grandparents. A few candidates disagreed with the contention and cited cases of elderly people being included in their communities, playing golf, helping with community events and working in their parish.

However, some candidates relied on prepared material about problems in society in general, with only token reference to the elderly. These included racism, drugs, dangerous driving and violence. This often resulted in the inclusion of phrases such as *Le gouvernement doit faire face au problème / La solution la plus efficace est toujours la plus simple / Il faut que le gouvernement lance une campagne pour éduquer les jeunes*

avant qu'il ne soit trop tard, etc. These were used with little relevance to the task and were most often surrounded by long tracts of extremely defective French. One examiner reported that some candidates referred to Bob Geldof as an elderly person, thus allowing themselves an opportunity to introduce prepared material.

Q.1(b)

Many candidates introduced problems with smoking, drugs and depression here as a way of “recycling” prepared material. The result was that there was very often poor development of how the friend had helped. A large proportion of candidates wrote of how they had helped someone else instead of describing how they themselves had been helped. The task involved a *récit*, but this was often ignored by candidates who were intent on using ‘ready-made’ material.

It was encouraging to note examples of very good expression in both Q.1(a) and 1(b) where the candidates made honest efforts to write original, clear and correct French, unspoilt by cliché or rote learning. What they brought from the classroom was refreshing and authentic:

- *Ce n'est pas le cas dans chaque famille: moi je.....*
- *Moi, je visite deux personnes âgées de mon village deux fois par semaine, et je fais les courses pour eux.*
- *Au lieu de rendre visite aux grandparents le dimanche on fait du shopping....*
- *Quand ils seront morts tout le monde voudrait leur argent mais quand ils sont vivants on les oublie.*
- *Pour moi parler à mes grandparents c'est un moyen d'échapper au stress.*
- *Ils gardent tous les souvenirs du siècle dans leur cœur.*
- *Ceux qui vivent dans les maisons de retraite n'ont pas de liberté, ils n'ont pas le droit d'avoir un animal...*
- *Maintenant, je suis heureux et je compte entrer à la fac l'année prochaine mais je n'oublierai jamais ce conseil qu'Alan m'a donné ...*
- *Personnellement, je n'avais jamais bu mais pour faire comme les autres j'ai pris un verre d'alcool.*
- *Je suis devenu ivre après avoir bu deux ou trois verres.*

However, in both tasks a number of language problems were in evidence, including:

Elision:

- *la image / je adore / le hôpital / je aide / le équipe / je habite / pas de amis / parce que il / ma amie / pas de aide*

Present Tense:

- *le problème est augmenter / Ils sont vivait reclus chez leur*

Use of Pronouns:

- *Il a aidé moi / Avec ils / Il rappelle moi / les gens ne leur veulent avoir pas / j'écoute la / j'adore elle / nous les devons visiter / Il a conduit moi à l'école / Je lui aide / ils sont abuses chez ils*

Agreement of Adjectives:

- *les gens sont oubliées / toutes les weekends / le mois prochaine*

Use of Demonstrative Adjectives:

- *Cet problème / cette statement (sic) / ce declaration.*

Use of c'est:

- *C'est n'est pas / cette un problème grande / C'est ne pas / il n'y a pas respecté*

Verbs / Tenses:

- *j'ai l'intention à aide mes parents / je ne voudrais pas à penserai que je oublié / mon grandpère vivre seul / je n'aime pas a oublié de ma famille / je cherché parlé très bonne pour mes nerves / ils était travaille / Je passé le temps*

Miscellaneous:

- *Beaucoup des étudiants fumeur et je commence à fumeur être dans le vent / Je pence il y a serait plus de clubs pour les personnes ages et donc ils ne serait oubliées de notre société*

Q.2(a)

There was some misunderstanding of the phrase *très mal entendu*, resulting in many diaries recalling how well last year's trip went and setting out extensive plans for the return visit. Even many of those candidates who did fully understand the task failed to develop how or why they did not get on with their exchange partner, opting instead for unflattering portraits, e.g. *Il est têtu / arrogant / pas gentil, etc.* Many had difficulty with finding formulae for expressing dissatisfaction with the situation / mother. Rarely did one encounter *Je me sens en colère / je me sens fâché, etc.*

When candidates did write in a natural direct style, the results were often wonderful:

- *Maman m'énerve. Elle a organisé ce séjour sans rien dire*
- *Elle pique mes vêtements*
- *Il a volé mon iPod et il a écrasé toutes mes chansons préférées*
- *Elle m'embête! Elle ne mange que du poulet et des grenouilles avec des haricots verts. Quelle horreur!*
- *J'étais vraiment déçu quand elle m'a dit que je dois lui donner ma chambre pour son séjour.*
- *Ce garçon m'agace beaucoup et je ne pense pas que je puisse rester ici quand il arrivera.*
- *Jean arrivera la semaine prochaine! Il me met en colère. Nous étions toujours en train de bagarrer l'été dernier.*

However, in spite of these gems, language problems were also found:

- *Je lui déteste / Isabelle a détesté moi / Je n'ai pas une bonne humeur / Il a fait ma chambre renversées / Mes parents lui adore*

Two constructions in particular were handled badly: "the girl / boy I did an exchange with" and "I got on very badly with"

Q.2(b)

Some excellent writing was produced here. The guidelines given were very precise and, as a result, fewer opportunities for digression presented themselves. Some difficulty was in evidence when candidates were handling the “your teacher asked you to...” task, e.g. *ma prof dit à moi pour... / mon prof me dire t’envoyer une letter sur la informatique*, and when faced with the task of requesting an e-mail, e.g. *pourriez-vous e-mail moi?* Other familiar errors regularly appeared:

- *Mon prof été heureux*
- *J’ai déteste la passé compose*
- *Je comprendre les gens français*
- *Je suis etudier le français dans l’école pour quatre années.*

Problems with register also arose: e.g. *vous / votre / vos* confused with *tu / ton / ta / tes*.

Q.3(a)

This task was attempted by fewer candidates and it was mainly those who fared well in other parts of the examination who wrote on this topic. In those cases, the stimulus material was well exploited. Candidates referred to examples of stories they had read in papers or magazines, they gave their opinion of them and they attempted to explain why people are obsessed with them. As a result, the scores were often in the 27 to 30 marks range.

A few candidates who chose this task clearly did not fully understand what was required and so tended to repeat the statement in the question throughout the course of the answer. One candidate played safe in giving his own position: *Je les achète, mais c’est ma soeur qui les lit!*

Q.3(b)

This task proved to be a very successful option as it allowed for good adaptation of material already covered in preparation for the Oral. Greater availability of money, changes in transport, and the Internet were cited as the main factors contributing to change. For many candidates, it provided ample opportunity to demonstrate their skills in both Present and Imperfect tenses. Most of the emphasis was on holidays today, however, rather than how they used to be. Some fine examples of idiomatic language were in evidence:

- *Autrefois on allait à la plage en voiture. On nageait et si on avait de la chance on achetait une glace et on prenait beaucoup de photos.* (A good example of accurate simplicity and flair ... and related skilfully to the photo in the stimulus.)
- *Ils ne sont plus contents avec un pique-nique au bord de la route. Ils préfèrent des vacances dans un pays où il fait toujours beau temps.* (Again, a keen awareness of the stimulus.)
- *On préfère l’ambiance des pays étrangers.*

- *Elles ont changé, selon moi, à cause des bonnes économies dans les pays occidentaux et car aujourd’hui voyager à l’étranger c’est beaucoup plus facile.*
- *Néanmoins, je pense aussi que ces voyages à l’étranger élargissent nos horizons et nous rendent plus ouverts.*

However, all was far from perfect and some candidates struggled with several constructions:

- *Cinquante ans plus tard* often confusingly appeared for *Il y a cinquante ans* and *dans les 1950’s* often served for *dans les années cinquante*.
- *Vacances* appeared regularly in the singular, adjectives and nouns were confused in relation to countries, e.g. *ils vont à l’Allemande*, and poor attempts at direct translation grated, e.g. *maintenant les personnes ne voit pas morts mange dans la suburb sde la rue*. (For the benefit of a French monoglot, we would suggest that the candidate meant “Now people wouldn’t be seen dead eating at the side of the road”.)

Q.4(a)

Those who opted to write about *la politesse* were, in general, well able to express sound viewpoints in idiomatic and accurate language. They referred to a lack of manners when using mobile phones, aggressive behaviour on the roads, the fact that very few say “please” or “thank you” anymore, lack of respect for parents and the elderly, and declining standards of discipline and manners at school.

Q.4(b)

Only a minority of candidates addressed the issues raised by the stimulus. As one examiner put it succinctly, “Candidates just saw the word “sport” and off they went”. Problems inevitably arose with *jouer à la / au* and *jouer au sport* being used instead of *faire du sport*.

Some general observations on Production Écrite

Strengths:

In the work of candidates who achieved an overall grade A or grade B, there was evidence of careful preparation over the years by dedicated teachers. This was to be seen in passages of wonderfully idiomatic French, displaying a rich vocabulary, where complex sentences were handled expertly, with very few mistakes in verbs, agreements or spelling.

Weaknesses:

In the spirit of offering assistance and guidance to all those preparing for the Leaving Certificate Examination in French, the following areas of difficulty are offered for consideration.

- Widespread use of poorly adapted prepared material
- Keep it simple! Examples abound of candidates attempting too much
- Poor paragraphing
- Agreements missing or *incorrect*
- Tenses with *si*
- Accents missing
- *Un pay*
- Confusion of
 - *Un gen / une personne*
 - *Notres / nos*
 - *Cettes / ces*
 - *Mieux / meilleur*
 - *Mal / mieux*
 - *Écouter / entendre*
 - *Raconter / rencontrer*
 - *C'est / il y a*
 - *passer / dépenser / penser*
 - *Campagne / paysage*
 - *Habiller / habiter*
 - *Et / est*
 - *À cause de / parce que*
 - *Être / avoir, e.g. J'ai fatigue, je suis faim, ils ont en retard, ils sont peur*
 - *Il y a / il est / c'est*
 - *Où / ou*
 - *Facilités / installations*
 - *Copain / copine / copaine*
 - *Personnes / gens*
- Incorrect Continuous Present
- Negatives, e.g. *C'est ne pas / c'est n'est pas*
- Misuse of prepositions, e.g. *Nous avons rencontré avec toute la bande / A la centre-ville / regarder à la télé / être content avec / dans le soir / dans Irlande*
- Spelling of *un problème, aujourd'hui, l'alcool, le pays, le gouvernement, de temps en temps, le temps, rencontrer, travail/travailler, tout le monde, l'été dernier etc.*
- Poor handling of verbs, e.g. *Ils prendrent; ils buvent; ils faissent*
- Misuse of Relative Pronouns, e.g. *je ne sais pas qu'est-ce que ils pensent!*
- Omission of *que* in phrase such as *je pense / crois que...*
- Expressions of quantity such as *Beaucoup des* instead of *beaucoup de*.
- Sightings of *j'agrée avec* are still being reported!

Paper II - Listening Comprehension Test

Examiners considered that the pace and clarity of delivery of this year's recording and the standard of vocabulary and syntax featured were appropriate. Some candidates, however, had difficulty with this section of the examination. In many cases candidates were able to recognise individual words, but had difficulty in understanding their context. It is clear that more emphasis needs to be placed on effective tape work.

Section 1

1(a)

“Did silly things” and “amused others” were the popular answers here and answering was generally good.

1(b)

This was well answered.

2.

This was reasonably well answered. “His career might end” or “Losing his money” were the popular answers.

3.

Few candidates captured the idea of “surrounding himself with friends or family”.

Section II

1.

Most candidates did not give the correct number / concept here.

2.

Most candidates succeeded in getting only one point correctly here. “Force” was the most common response.

3(a)

Well answered. “Culture” was the most commonly offered answer.

3(b)

Few candidates got the correct answer here.

4(a)

Generally well answered, but some gave “the people who speak it” (i.e. without “identity”) as an incomplete answer.

4(b)

Well answered. “Only a small number of pupils do them” was the most common response.

Section III

1(a)

Generally well answered, but it is clear that *viens de* was not widely understood.

1(b)

This was generally well answered. Some difficulties arose with *bon marché*, hence answers referring to walking. *Démodé* was not always understood either.

2(a)

This was very well answered.

2(b)

The concept of “think / reflect” was missed by quite a number of candidates.

3(a)

Few answered this well. References to the Internet were common and *remonté* seems to have been interpreted as *romantique* by many candidates.

3(b)

This was well answered.

Section IV

1.

Few answered correctly here. “They have to have / mind children” was a common response.

2(a)

This was well answered, with “sacrifices” and “not for them” being the most common response.

2(b)

Most candidates succeeded in getting one point correct. Some blank responses reported.

3.

Few got two correct points. *Orgueil* was rarely understood. Some blank responses reported.

4.

Most candidates grasped the concept here, although *aiderai* was sometimes misinterpreted as *aimerez*.

Section V

1(a)

Few candidates identified “Handball”. “Basketball” was the common response.

1(b)

Not many candidates identified “Croatia”. “Spain” was the common response.

2.

Examiners reported that there were a number of blank responses here or guesses involving “tree”.

3.

Few candidates answered this fully.

4.4 Conclusions

- The 2006 French Leaving Certificate Higher Level examination produced some excellent work. The higher percentage of A grades in particular is indicative of the hard work put in by many candidates and the comprehensive preparation carried out by their teachers in the classroom.
- Although some candidates had difficulty with some sections of the Reading Comprehension, most candidates fared reasonably well overall in these two questions.
- Examiners felt that a proportion of candidates who chose to sit the Higher Level paper this year would have been better advised to select the Ordinary Level paper instead.
- Simple, accurate writing, which addresses the stimulus material, will be rewarded. Learned-off material with inappropriate clichés and proverbs, and which is poorly adapted or irrelevant to the question set, is of limited value.
- As in previous years, many candidates continue to have difficulty with the Listening Comprehension section.

4.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

Teachers should:

- Ensure that students have regular, balanced practice in all of the language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Remind students of the importance of recognising the meaning of “*trouvez, citez, relevez, un mot, une expression, une phrase, un élément, un aspect, un détail*”. Penalties incurred in the Reading Comprehensions would be greatly reduced by this knowledge.
- Constantly revise basic grammar, including the main verb tenses, agreement of adjectives, plurals, negative and interrogative forms, and prepositions.
- Advise students to devote time to learning to write simple and grammatically correct sentences.
- Advise students that they will score better in the Production Écrite section of the paper if they write an authentic, personal response which focuses on the question asked, rather than attempt ‘pre-packaged’ paragraphs from text-books or notes which are not relevant to the task.
- Encourage students to devote any extra time in the examination to reviewing the work they have already done.
- Encourage students to listen to French tapes, CDs, French language radio and television programmes to help prepare for the Listening Comprehension test.

Students should:

- Practise manipulation skills for the Reading Comprehension. When manipulating, be careful to make the necessary adjustments to verbs, pronouns, adjectives, etc. especially when changing Direct Speech into Indirect Speech or First Person narrative into Third Person narrative.
- Be very aware of the significance of words such as: *Citez, Relevez, Trouvez, Phrase, Expression, Mot, Élément, Aspect* as used in questions.
- Practise identifying grammar elements.
- Navigate carefully through a literary extract in order to understand character, motivation, sequence of events, etc. Try to visualise the actions / events.

- As preparation, try to read some French short stories or even a short novel rather than relying solely on past papers.
- Remember that answers in Comprehension must make complete sense. So, be careful where you begin and end a quotation.
- In Q.6, points should be very precise and quotations and references must support them. In practice, it would be a good idea to read Q.6 first as it can often give a sense of the direction or focus of the passage.
- For Production Écrite, choose very carefully the written tasks that will allow them to display their strengths.
- Note that prepared material must be adapted to new context to ensure relevance. Putting in a learned-off paragraph on, e.g. drugs, will not earn the marks, no matter how excellent it is, unless it is relevant.
- Read the task very carefully. Be sure that they know what they are being asked to do. Focusing on only one word, e.g. *le sport*, may not necessarily be appropriate.
- Practise *récit* / narrative writing in order to develop effective techniques, in particular correct use of passé composé and imparfait.
- Practise formulation of questions / requests / enquiries, etc. as these may be required in diaries, letters, messages or e-mails.
- Revise and refresh vocabulary / structures / idioms / techniques prepared for Junior Certificate.
- Make sure to demonstrate their skills by using a variety of tenses.
- Always check agreements, verb endings, pronouns and prepositions before leaving a piece of writing.
- Write in a personal, authentic, spontaneous way, expressing their own ideas, preferences, opinions and experiences.
- Simple ideas, directly and effectively expressed in correct, idiomatic French, generally work better than clichés, proverbs, and ‘showy’ pre-prepared phrases used inappropriately for their own sake.
- Structure their ideas. Use paragraphs to guide the reader through the Introduction, Development and Conclusion.
- Avoid writing at much greater length than required by the instructions. The more students write, the greater the tendency to make mistakes.

- Remember that three written tasks are required. Rather than answering a fourth question, which is unlikely to get a higher mark, perhaps the time might be more usefully spent getting the required three correct.
- Listen to French radio or TV stations for practice for the Aural test
- Practise listening to the whole sentence rather than the ‘punch line’ in the Listening Comprehension.
- Listen for the idea / concept rather than the just key words alone.
- Wait until after the second or third hearing before writing the final answer. Rather than answering after the first hearing, keep an open mind for as long as possible in order to identify more detail and nuance which may come from later hearings.
- Practise numbers.
- Do not use pencil! It tends to fade and it is very difficult to read on pink paper.
- Try not to cross out lots of material as it leads to very untidy work which is often extremely difficult to read.

5. Exemplars of Standard

The exemplars of written production on the following pages have been selected from the scripts of candidates who sat the Leaving Certificate French examination at Ordinary Level and Higher Level in 2006. These exemplars should be read in conjunction with the Examination Papers and Marking Schemes available on the website, www.examinations.ie.

These exemplars are reproduced as they were written by the candidates, with their own spelling and punctuation retained. The exemplars are set out in the following order:

Ordinary Level Written Production

- **Section B**
 - (a) Message
 - (b) Postcard

- **Section C**
 - (a) Diary
 - (b) Formal Letter

Higher Level Written Production

- Q.1 (a)
- Q.1 (b)
- Q.2 (a)
- Q.2 (b)
- Q.3 (a)
- Q.3 (b)
- Q.4 (a)
- Q.4 (b)

5.1 Exemplars of Standard – Ordinary Level

Section B (a) - Message

Leave a message for Bernard/Bernadette who is staying with you. Say that:

- You are organising a party for your best friend Caroline/Carl.
- You have gone to the supermarket to buy some food and drinks.
- You will be back soon to clean up the house.

Exemplar 1

Je vous laisse cet petit mot parce que je suis organise un fête pour mon ami, C. Je suis allé au supermarché que acheter la nourriture et la boissons pour un fête. Je serai retour a midi que a vaisell la maison.

A tout a l'heure.

S.

Comment : This candidate was awarded 12/15 for Communication and 10/15 for Language. There was a good sense of register, with an almost fully correct introductory phrase. *Ami, nourriture* and *retour* were known and the message was generally clear. Three correct tenses were used, i.e. *je laisse, je suis allé, je serai*.

Overall mark : 22/30

Exemplar 2

Le 5 juin. 13.05p.m.

Bonjour Bernadette,

Comme on ça va?

J'ai oraniséune fête pour Caroline. C'est un anniversaire! Elle à 18 ans.

Je suis allé ou supermarché avec Alex.

J'ai achète boire et mange.

J'ai arrive a lá masion et j'ai tidie ta maison. Merci.

Comment: This candidate was awarded 8/15 marks for Communication and 2/15 marks for Language. Basic vocabulary was lacking, e.g. friend, food, drinks, and the third point especially was very badly expressed. The grammar was very poor so a low mark for Language was awarded.

Overall mark: 10/30

Exemplar 3

Bernard,

Je suis oranise un fête pur votre ami Carl. J'ai à le supermarché pour nourriture et boit. J'irai retourné á se laver la maison.

J.

Comment : This candidate was awarded 7/15 for Communication and 2/15 for Language. The message was not very clear, with an incorrect reference to “my best friend”. *Aller* and *boissons* were not known, and the use of *se laver* for “to clean up” made the third point difficult to understand. The language was poor, and the candidate was unable to give a correct Present or Passé Composé tense.

Overall mark: 9/30

Section B (b)

You are on holidays in Kerry. Write a postcard to your penfriend Thomas. Say that:

- You have finished your exams and you are on holidays.
- You are camping with some friends but the weather is awful.
- You will visit Killarney tomorrow and hire a bike.

Exemplar 4

Kerry, le 6 juillet.

Cher Thomas,

Cathal ici! Ca va? J'ai fini mon bac et je suis á vacances á Kerry.

Je suis camping mais il fait froid. Le temps, il n'est pas formidable mais le terrain de camping est joli.

Demain. Je louerai un veló et je visiterai Killarney. J'espere voir plue de la champagne.

Amities

C.

Comment: This candidate was awarded 14/15 for Communication and 13/15 for Language. It is an example of a very good attempt at the postcard. The message is very clear. There is a good range of vocabulary, including the word *louer* and adjectives such as *formidable* and *joli*. The candidate could correctly use the Present, Passé Composé and Future tenses.

Overall mark: 27/30

Exemplar 5

Cher Thomas,

Je fini mon examinations et j'ai à vacances! Je suis camping avec mon amis mais il fait froid est il fait pleut! J'irai visiter Killarney et hire un velo!

Amities J.

Comment: This candidate was awarded 8/15 for Communication and 2/15 for Language.

The message is fairly clear but the language is poor, apart from *j'irai visiter*. The words for “examinations” and “to hire” are not known and there are errors in two basic weather phrases. The present tense of *finir* is incorrect.

Overall mark: 9/30

Exemplar 6

6ú juillet.

3, le Paris

Francis.

Chèr Thomas,

Ca va? Je me commence la fac à Mercerdi. Je me voici en vacances en Espagne avec mes copains. Il y a très beau.

Je suis camp avec mes copains et en temps fraud. La nourriture beau et j'aime je vais au restaurant McDonalds/

Je me visiter Killarney demain et en peut voile.

A bientôt.

N

Comment: This candidate was awarded 7/15 for Communication and 1/15 for Language. This is an example of a postcard where the Communication is fair but the Language is very weak. Phrases such as *je me commence*, *je me voici*, *il y a très beau*, *je suis camp*, *je me visiter* and *en peut voile* show that this candidate has very little knowledge of tenses and verb endings.

Overall mark: 8/15

Section C (a)

You have just returned home from a school trip in Paris. Note the following in your diary:

- You arrived home yesterday at 5 p.m.
- In Paris it was cold and you bought a new coat.
- Now you are broke and you will look for a part-time job.

Exemplar 7

Cher Journal,

Je suis très fatigué en ce moment. Je suis arrivé sain et sauf, hier soir à quinze heures. J'ai passé une semaine à Paris avec mon école. J'ai eu un temps superbe. Cependant le temps faisait terrible. Il neige chaque soir, et il fait trop froid. J'ai acheté un nouveau "duffle-coat". La nourriture était délicieuse, mais je n'aime pas les escargots et les jambons de grenouilles. J'ai visité tous les monuments célèbres; la tour d'Eiffel, l'Arc de triomphe et la Louvre. J'ai marché dans la Sainte-Chapelle. Il y a une petite rue piétonne avec des magasins et des cafés. Elle était très belle. Nous avons pris un tour en bateau sur la Seine aussi. Je n'ai pas beaucoup d'argent, et je ne suis pas content. J'espère travailler dans un supermarché avec mon ami Paul cet été, pour mon petit-boulot. Au revoir!

Comment: This candidate was awarded 12/15 for Communication and 10/15 for Language. This is an example of a good diary entry. The message is clear although there is a certain amount of irrelevant material on French food and Paris. There is some good vocabulary, but surprisingly a basic word such as "coat" is not known.

Overall mark: 23/30

Exemplar 8

Lundi, le 6 juillet

Cher Journal,

*Demain je suis arrivé à ma maison à cinq heures.
J'ai été à Paris, il fait froid mais j'ai acheté un manteau.
Je n'ai pas d'argent. J'ai cherché un job.*

C.

Comment: This candidate was awarded 9/15 for Communication and 5/15 for Language.

Communication is reasonable, although the word *demain* for "yesterday" is unfortunate. The candidate was unable to translate "I bought a new coat", but otherwise the vocabulary is fair. Incorrect tenses are used in *il fait froid* and *j'ai cherché*.

Overall mark: 14/30

Exemplar 9

13 juin 2006

Cher journal,

Je suis très bien. Je suis arrivé à la maison à cinq heures, après midi. À Paris c'est froid et j'ai acheté un manteau nouveau. Je chercherai pour un petit boulot parce que je n'ai pas d'argent.

À court d'argent, je ne vais pas au cinéma avec mes copains.

À bientôt, S.

Comment: This candidate was awarded 11/15 for Communication and 8/15 for Language. Good communication here, so the message is quite clear, apart from the use of the English word “coat”. The last sentence is not really relevant. Language is reasonably good, with a correct Future tense *je chercherai*, and a correct negative form, *je n’ai pas*.

Overall mark: 19/30

Section C (b)

Write a formal letter to *Mme Annick Deschambre, 25 rue des Francs, 75010 Paris*. In the letter say that :

- You are learning French and your teacher has given you her address.
- You would like to work as an “au pair” for her next summer.
- You love children and you often baby-sit in town.

Exemplar 10

*Mme Annick Deschambre
25 rue de frances
75010 Paris*

*Betty Donoghue,
Garden Villas,
Athy,
Co Kildare
13 ú juin 2006.*

Màdame,

*Je suis parle français dans une lycée et mes professeur à la moi tu addressais. Je voudrais a travail “au pair” l’été dernier. J;adore jeunne et j’ai baby-sité dans en ville. Veuillez agree, l’expression de mes sentiment distinguèes.
A beintôt*

Betty.

Comment: This candidate was awarded 0/6 for Format, as the layout is incorrect, both at the top and the bottom of the letter. This is a pity, as candidates who attempt the Formal Letter should ensure that they are familiar with the correct format. Other marks awarded were 2/12 for Communication and 1/12 for Language. There is no sense of register. The vocabulary is very poor and most verbs are incorrect.

Overall mark: 3/30

Exemplar 11

Mark Donoghue
Garden Villas
Athy
Co. Kildare
Irlande

Athy, le 12 mai

Mme Annick Deschambre
25 rue des Francs
75010 Paris

*Chère Madame,
Je voudrais perfectionner mon français. Mon prof donné votre lieu de naissance. Je voudrais travailler comme un au pair l'été prochaine. Veuillez trouver ci-joint mon C.V. et j'envoie une photo et des références. J'adore les enfants et j'aime faire du baby-sitting dans le village tout le semaine. J'espère recevoir une réponse favorable. Veuillez agréer l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.
Mark Donoghue.*

Comment: This candidate was awarded 5/6 for Format, 10/12 for Communication and 10/12 for Language. This is an example of one of the few Formal Letters which merited high marks. The layout is almost fully correct. The message is very clear, with a good sense of register, including the formal “vous”. There are some excellent phrases, such as *veuillez trouver ci-joint* and *je voudrais perfectionner mon français* (despite the small spelling errors), *j'envoie une photo* and *j'aime faire du baby-sitting dans le village*.
Overall mark; 25/30

5.2 Exemplars of Standard – Higher Level

Q.1 (a) - 40 marks

Selon *Paris Match* (Section I, Q.1), Jeannette est devenue, à l'âge de 91 ans, « *la maman la plus célèbre de France* ». C'est un cas exceptionnel. En réalité, les personnes âgées sont les oubliées de notre société. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

Exemplar 1

Les personnes âgées sont les oubliées de notre société et comme jeune personne moi-même, je trouve ce problème avec des personnes âgés très inquiétant. Beaucoup des personne jeunes très active et il na pas le temps pour parlé avec les personne âges.

Aujord'hui, dans notre société, On peut personne prendre des drogue et Si un personne voudrais de l'argent. On peut voler les personnes ageês parce qui Il doivent peux.

A mon Avis, Nous devons visite et parle avec les personnes ageês. Beaucoup des personnes âgées très importante. Nous devons faire les paitence et nous devons aidé les personnes âgées.

Aujord'hui, dans notre societe, á la supermarche, Beaucoup les advirtisements et les magasins de vetements pour les jeune personne. Est-ce-qui cest le histoire?! Pourquoi les personne âgées sont les oubliées de notre sociéte et est-ce-que le solution?! Je pense si Nous travaillons encore et visité les personne âgees, Ils seront meilleur !

Communication = 7. While this candidate's answer is relevant, a French monoglot would have major difficulty in understanding the argument. The meaning of sentences such as *parce qui il doivent peux, on peut personne prendre, nous devons faire les patience, est-ce-qui cest le histoire, and les advirtisements* is very unclear.

Language = 7. There are many mistakes in spelling, and even with transcribing words which appear in the stimulus material. Accents are ignored or else vary from word to word. Basic rules of agreement are not respected and several verb endings are incorrect. There are, however, a few good verbs (*je trouve / on peut voler / ils doivent / nous devons / je pense / ils seront*) which help bring this candidate's mark to the top of the bottom category.

Total mark: 14/40

Exemplar 2

Oui – malheureusement, c'est vrai. En effet, il se passe souvent qu'une personne âgée meurt toute seule, oubliée par leur société et même par leur famille. C'est affreux, il va sans dire, mais comment se fait-il que ça a lieu ? De nos jours on vit plus long que jamais. Cependant, ceux qui vivent jusqu'à quatre-vingt dix ans vont voir tous leurs amis mourir devant eux. Ils seront donc très isolés. Même leurs enfants peuvent mourir devant eux. Auparavant aussi la famille habitaient toute ensemble dans la même maison, tandis que maintenant les enfants doivent être plus mobiles et il leur faut bouger partout pour le travail. Alors nous sommes plus riches, et pourtant nous ne soutenons pas nos familles. Les personnes âgées habitent toutes seules, sans vouloir qu'une visite chaque semaine. Je trouve ça honteux que la plûpart des jeunes croient qu'une seulle visite serait trop ennuyeuse.

Communication = 20. Stimulus material well exploited. Two clear points are made to explain the isolation of elderly people. No irrelevant material and the register is appropriate.

Language = 18. Idiomatic French, rich vocabulary, and complex sentences well handled. Few mistakes in verbs, agreement or spelling. This candidate has avoided clichés or vague generalisations.

Total mark: 38/40.

Exemplar 3

À vrai dire que les personnes âgées sont les oubliées de notre société. Dans le vingt-et-un siècle, les personnes âgées ne sont pas plus important dans la famille comme ils était dans l'autres temps, surtout en Irlande. Maintenant, il semble que les gens oublient que les personné âgées sont sages et ils savent beaucoup envers la vie.

Beaucoup de personne âgées habitent aux hôpitals ou aux maisons avec beaucoup d'autre personnes âgées. À cause de ça, ils ne sont pas une part de société en général. Ils ne devraient pas être dans ces hôpitals s'il n'est pas neccessaire, parce que il augment le problème.

La solution de ce problème est de chaque personne faire davantage pour les personnes âge de notre société. On ne devrait pas oubliées les personnes âgées, ils sont très important de notre société.

Communication = 13. Relevant, addresses the topic. Points reasonably well made, with a clear conclusion.

Language = 11. Vocabulary adequate and verbs generally correct. Rules of agreement are generally respected and there are not too many mistakes in spelling.

Total mark: 24/40.

Question 1 (b) – 40 marks

Dans l'extrait de *le secret de Clara* (Section I, Q.2), Marie et Vincent se conseillent et se soutiennent. Racontez comment un(e) ami(e) vous a aidé(e) avec un problème que vous aviez dans votre vie. (*Votre récit peut être réel ou imaginaire.*)

Exemplar 4

En marchant sur la plage avec mon meilleur ami, nous avons parlé des nos examens blanche. Je l'ai expliqué que je n'étais pas content avec mes resultats et que j'étais très deçu.

Il m'avait dit que "John tu as beaucoup de travail à faire et tu doit consacrer plus de temps sur vos études et ce n'est pas trop tard si tu commences maintenant".

J'étais furieux avec lui, comment il peux me donner une conseil comme ça. Je l'ai répondu "tu sais rien, peut-être je raterai mes vrai examens".

La même soir j'étais chez moi. J'ai pensé sur la conseil qu'il m'avait donné. Je ne pouvais pas avouer que j'ai beaucoup de travail à faire.

Maintenant je suis dans le examen du français et car il m'est conseillent je peux passer cette examen et je me sens que maintenant je tirais le Diable par la queue.

Communication = 10. This answer sets the scene well, with a simple yet effective opening. However, half way through the passage the argument becomes less clear. The use of a poorly understood idiomatic phrase in the last line adds to the confusion.

Language = 11. Middle category for Language. Vocabulary is adequate and verbs are generally correct, despite some simple errors, e.g. *il peux / tu doit*. Rules of agreement and gender are generally respected.

Total mark: 21/40.

Exemplar 5

Pendant mon enfance, le plus grand problème était la natation. J'en avais peur depuis que j'étais un bébé. Je n'étais pas capable de nager, pas du tout. Cependant, à l'école primaire mes parents m'ont forcé aller à une piscine avec ma classe chaque mercredi. Pour dire la pure vérité, je détestais la piscine pour quelques raisons dont je suis sûr. J'ai détesté les odeurs horribles et l'eau, mais mon meilleur ami, David m'accompagnait partout dans la piscine bien qu'il puisse nager sans doute.

À l'âge d'onze ans, je n'avais pas déjà appris à nager parce que j'avais vraiment peur de ne pas être capable de flotter. Un jour avant d'aller pour m'habiller avec les autres garçons, un professeur m'a demandé de rester dans la piscine. Je lui ai dit "Mais, pourquoi dois-je rester ici Madame, l'autobus va part sans moi? Elle n'a rien dit sauf que j'étais capable de nager. Elle tout simplement a pris les appareils de flottation sur mes bras. Puis, David est rentré afin de me chercher. Il m'a aperçu sans les trucs. Soudain, j'avais mal à l'estomac. Je voulais crier mais David m'est soutenu. Il m'a aidé à nager pendant dix secondes. Désormais, je pouvais nager tout seul. C'était à cause de David!

L'après-midi, mon visage rayonnait en rentrant chez moi. Quand j'ai ouvert la porte j'ai appelé à ma mère. "J'ai appris nager tout seul Maman. Tout seul!" j'ai crié. Elle avait des larmes dans ses yeux.

Le soir quand mon père est arrivé chez nous et j'ai dit la bonne nouvelle. "Bon," il a dit "La semaine prochaine on ira à la plage". Le fond de mon estomac a disparu.

Communication = 20. Very clear story-line, helped by the introduction of direct speech at times. Stimulus material was well exploited.

Language = 19. Idiomatic French. Rich vocabulary. Complex sentences well handled.

Total mark: 39/40.

Exemplar 6

J'étais un fumer. J'ai commencé à fumer pour les différentes raisons. Tout d'abord à cause de la pression du groupe. Certaines prétendent que c'est normal. D'autres disent que c'est très dangereux. Mon ami disent que c'est très mauvais pour la santé. Mon ami est vrai. Personnellement j'ai arrêté à fumer à cause de mon ami. Il pense que c'est une habitude dégoûtante. Cependant je sais certaines jeunes sont accros au tabac. Je suis très contente avec mon ami que me aidé. Ça coûte trop cher et j'ai dépensé tout mon argent pour les cigarettess. Je pense que c'est un problème très grave.

Communication = 8. The candidate here has focused more on using prepared material about the dangers of smoking rather than on the actual question asked. There is a rather perfunctory reference to the help that the friend gives, and yet this should be the main focus as candidates were asked to *Racontez comment...* and told that their answer should be a narrative (*récit*). The communicative intention was therefore not completely fulfilled.

Language = 10. Vocabulary adequate and verbs generally correct. Incorrect use of *est vrai* instead of “avoir raison”.

Total mark: 18/40

Question 2 (a) – 30 marks

Votre mère vous a annoncé que le garçon / jeune fille, avec qui vous avez fait un échange scolaire en France l'été dernier, et avec qui vous vous êtes très mal entendu(e), vient chez vous pour deux semaines.

Qu'est-ce que vous notez à ce sujet dans votre journal intime ?

Exemplar 7

Cher journal,

Ma mere m'a juste donné des nouvelles horrible, Pierre vient chez nous dans une semaine et il va rester pour deux semaines. Je ne m'entend pas bien avec lui, il m'énerve et il est tellement ennuyant. Quand j'ai passé mes deux semaines avec lui en France l'été dernier pour l'échange scolaire j'ai rien fait parce que il ne voulait rien faire. Je voulais tout voir en France mais il ne se lever pas le matin donc j'ai passer les jours dans la maison. Je lui déteste mais je vais beaucoup faire avec lui pour lui montrer que la vie peut être chouette!

Communication = 15. This candidate has addressed the question well, with no irrelevant material. There is a clear explanation of what went wrong during the exchange and why he/she dislikes Pierre. There is also a strong concluding sentence. The register is appropriate for a diary entry

Language = 12. Despite a few errors, there are some complex sentences well-handled, the vocabulary is good and there is a good range of tenses.

Total mark: 23/30.

Exemplar 8

Cher journal,

Me voila dans ma chambre mais je ne peux pas dormir parce que je suis tellement ennuyée. Qui a dit que la vie est belle? Ma vie est un desestre! Ma mere m'a dis que François passera deux semaine en Irlande – chez moi!

Tout est allé a vau l'eau! Mais quoi faire? L'été dernier, j'ai disputé avec François chaque jour! Je ne suis pas en plein forme! J'ai la tete ailleurs! Je deteste François, il est très ennuyeux! Vous avez beau le nier! Je te trouve François un petit peu distant. J'en ai assez! Je suis très fatigüe. N'oublions pas, après la pluie, le beau temps!

À demain journal.

M.

Communication = 9. Reasonably competent treatment of the stimulus material, but this candidate uses a collection of clichés, not always correct or relevant, and not necessarily appropriate for a diary entry. A more authentic, personal response, focusing on François and on what had happened the previous year, would have been of more benefit.

Language = 8. Middle category for Language. Vocabulary is adequate and verbs not always correct.

Total mark: 17/30.

Question 2(b) – 30 marks.

Students from Lycée Jean-Monnet in Toulouse have written to your school. They want to hear about Irish students' experience of learning French. You e-mail them back, making the following points:

- Say that your teacher has asked you to reply to their enquiry, and that you are delighted to do so.
- Say how long you have been learning French, and the standard you have reached.
- Say what you like and dislike about learning French.
- Describe how French has been useful to you outside the classroom.
- Ask them to e-mail you, telling you about their experience of learning English in the classroom.

Exemplar 9

Salut la classe de terminale!

On a lu le courriel que vous avez envoyé pendant le cours de français, et c'était génial!

Le prof m'a demandé de répondre à vos questions et moi, je suis ravi de faire ça!

Car je suis en terminale, j'apprends le français maintenant depuis six ans – on n'avait pas le choix! Toute de même je trouve ça super, et mon niveau de français est, - enfin, assez élevé.

Ce qui m'a plu le plus, c'était d'apprendre un peu de la culture française. J'adore la grammaire aussi, alors que les autres aiment imiter l'accent, mais c'est vachement difficile, à mon avis. Dehors du cours de français, j'ai pu lire les romans de Michel Houellebecq – je me passionne pour la lecture et je vais continuer avec cela pendant l'été sans aucune doute.

Je vous serais infiniment reconnaissant si vous me repondriez en nous racontant comment l'anglais vous a plu!

Amitiés,

La classe de terminale

Communication = 15. This answer meets all of the criteria for the Top Category in Communication, with the five points well covered. The register is appropriate and there is no irrelevant material.

Language = 15. Each point is well developed in idiomatic French. While there are some small inaccuracies, these do not detract from the quality of the work.

Total mark: 30/30.

Exemplar 10

13th June

Télécopie

*Chères élèves du Lycée Jean-Monnet,
Mon nom est Mary Smith je suis étudiant pour la ma finale examens en ce moment.
Ma professeur dit moi que vous écrivez un fax parlerons pour des information – la
irladais école vie.*

*Personnellement je pense c'est formidable ce une école en France est parlerons
pour information sur école irlandais. J'adore français prèmierment j'ai étudiant depuis
six ans, je commencer dans college maintenant je puis parle francais bonne. Je suis aller
en étrang l'été dernier pour trois semaines et j'ai ameloir beaucoup. Aussi la français je
ameloir avait assitér pour le bac. C'est vrai français est un belle langue maintenant vous
écrivec tu expression sur la irlandais langue.*

Communication = 3. Very poor treatment of the stimulus material. A French monoglot would have a great deal of difficulty in understanding the different points.

Language = 3. Most verbs are incorrect, there are many mistakes in spelling, and the basic rules of agreement are not respected.

Total mark: 6/30.

Question 3(a) – 30 marks

« La presse à scandale dépend de l'hypocrisie de ses lecteurs. On la condamne, mais on l'achète et la lit avidement ». Qu'en pensez-vous?

Exemplar 11

*Tout les monde agréent que les paparazzi sont détèstable, oui. Mais beaucoup de monde
adorent les photographes de Justin Timberlake à la plage.*

*À mon avis ces journeaux sont une gaspillage de temp, d'argent et de papier. The Star,
The Sun, Hello, Heat, les gens qui achètent les sont le probleme. Les célèbres ont la
necesite de l'espace. Mais les paparazzi et la presse sont en tout les cafés, en tout les
pubs, en tout les boites nuit et sur chaque plage. Je déteste la presse à scandale et les
paparazzi.*

Communication = 8. Fairly competent treatment. Reasonable level of textual coherence.

Language = 7. The vocabulary is adequate, the verbs are generally correct and there are not too many mistakes in spelling or in agreement.

Total mark: 15/30.

Exemplar 12

Je ne soutiens pas du tout cette déclaration. Mais d'abord il me faut constater que, bien que je les lise, c'est ma sœur qui les achète, et qui les laisse partout dans la maison, (et voire dans le WC). Alors je ne peux pas m'empêcher de les lire! Et pourtant c'est ça – ces scandales sont tout simplement un bon divertissement. On pourrait dire que c'est néfaste pour les victimes bien sûr, mais aussi pour la publique. Quand même, prenez le cas de la France, là où la presse n'a même pas dit que le Président, François Mitterand, avait deux enfants dehors de son mariage! Quoi qu'il en soit, il y a certaines choses que la publique doit savoir. Donc la presse à scandale peut être même nécessaire.

Communication = 15. Clearly argued, authentic and relevant.

Language = 15. Idiomatic and accurate, with a rich vocabulary.

Total mark: 30/30.

Question 3(b) – 30 marks

En Vacances. Été 1956.

Cinquante ans plus tard, comment les vacances ont-elles changé, et pourquoi?

Exemplar 13

Il y est beaucoup de raisons pour le changements et les vacances. Je sais toujours du les grande vacance dans U.S.A. du espagna, du Portugal etc. Chaque vacance nous irions – c'est-à-dire – ma famille et moi, à visiter beaucoup de célèbre monuments dans beaucoup de pays. Aultre fois, c'était souvent que les gens iraient en dehors leur pay.

Premièrement, l'argent. Beaucoup de familles ne a fait pas l'argent à aller i les vacances en Italie, USA etc. Si, tu fait, tu a de la chance. Une bonne vacances était un visite à la plague pour une semaine ou une jour. Il était un temps avec la famille ou le mari et la femme. De nos jours c'est très rarement à écouter que les gens qui n'sont pas aller visiter en pay pour les vacances. De nos jour, les gens ont plus argent.

Deuxièmement, au la vie des familles est changement. Autrefois les gens ont bonne hemeur avec l'autre gen, de nos jours tout le monde est busy tous le temps! Autrefois, les gens avoir plus temps. Quand nous avons temps et argent on devrrait aller en vacances dans les pays enhours Ireland, nous n'a pas bonne avec un facile vacance comme autrefois.

Communication = 5. Although the candidate attempts to make two distinct points, difficulties with grammar and vocabulary make the answer extremely difficult to comprehend.

Language = 5. Serious problems with language are evident throughout. There are errors in vocabulary, in basic grammar and tenses, and in spelling.

Total mark: 10/30.

Exemplar 14

Cinquante ans plus tard, il y avait beaucoup de changements avec les vacances. En Irlande, les personnes sont très riches et à cause de cela, nous allons à l'étranger pour les vacances. Nous pouvons rester dans un hotel grand qui est cher et aussi nous pouvons faire les choses que nous voudrions. Par exemple, si on est près de la mer on peut faire de la voile ou faire les escalades de roches dans les collines.

Néanmoins, les avions sont très mauvais pour l'environnement et pour la santé. Ils consomment beaucoup du charbon et beaucoup du pétrole et c'est un grand problème. Je pense que les vacances ne sont pas bien.

Communication = 10. This candidate makes a reasonable point about modern holidays, i.e. that people nowadays have money and can afford to travel abroad. However, there is some irrelevant material in the second paragraph. This is a typical example of a candidate who tries to use learnt-off material which has not been adapted to the question, and which therefore is of little value.

Language = 9. Vocabulary is adequate and verbs are generally correct.

Question 4(a) – 30 marks

Une spécialiste de l'étiquette a écrit dans le *Journal de Montréal* : « La politesse est en déficit grave! Les bonnes manières sont en voie de disparition. »

Donnez vos réactions.

Exemplar 15

Je dois dire que je suis d'accords. J'ai remarqué que les bonnes manières sont difficile de trouver de nos jours!

Parmi les jeunes, on ne trouve pas du tout des bonnes manières. Il me semble qu'ils ne savent pas comment dire les mots "s'il vous plaît" et "merci". En fait, ils se concernent avec leurs besoins et c'est ça! Je sais que je parle en général et il y'a des bons jeunes, avec des manières mais certains jeunes donnent un "nom mauvais" a l'autres.

Dans la société, dans les magasins, il n'y a pas du tout la politesse. Les vendeurs dans les magasins prennent l'argent mais ils ne me disent pas le prix! Et où est le mot "merci", je me demande?

Le monde a besoin de les manières, mais que faites? Je pense qu'il faut donner l'éducation aux enfants, aux jeunes, aux adultes. Les manières sont essentiels dans la vie et on doit changer. Maintenant, il prend beaucoup du temps mais "Paris n'était fait dans un jour! "

Communication = 12. Good exploitation of the stimulus material, with examples taken from every-day life to back-up the candidate's argument. However, there was a lack of coherence in the final paragraph.

Language = 11. Vocabulary good, and some complex sentences are well handled. The various grammatical errors indicate a mark at the bottom of the Top Category for language.

Total mark: 23/30.

Exemplar 16

C'est bien dommage mais je me sens aussi que le comportement des jeunes et des gens en général a empiré. Je me suis aperçue autour de moi une hausse dans l'utilisation des gros mots parmi mes amis et mes proches. Moi-même, je n'ai pas l'habitude de s'en servir afin de m'exprimer. Mais vous me demandez, comment en sont les autres arrivés là? La racine de ce problème reste chez les parents, selon moi. La raison que je n'utilise pas les grossièretés tient au fait que mes parents ne l'ont jamais supporté. Cependant, il y a des parents qui n'exigent pas le respect envers les autres chez leurs enfants, et par résultat, c'est trop souvent qu'on entend les gens qui jurent comme les charretiers dans les rues et ailleurs.

Mais que pourrions-nous faire afin de supprimer ce comportement et accueillir encore la politesse ? Il faut sans doute combattre le mal à ses racines et mettre la pression sur les parents d'apprendre à leurs enfants dès le plus jeune âge le geste fondamental de la politesse. Si on râle à le faire, on devrait dire adieu aux bonnes manières pour toujours. Pour moi, ça sera un jour tellement triste.

Communication = 15. This piece of writing belongs in the Top Category. A personal response from the candidate, with a clear argument and a strong conclusion.

Language = 15. Idiomatic French, rich vocabulary, and complex sentences well handled. The few mistakes do not take from the quality of this answer.

Total mark: 30/30.

Question 4(b) – 30 marks

Le slogan officiel de la Coupe du Monde 2006 est *le rendez-vous de l'amitié*. Est-ce que cette aspiration est vraie pour le sport en général, non seulement pour le foot?

Exemplar 17

Je suis d'accord avec cette affirmation le sport est un bon moyen pour rencontrer des nouvelles amis mais malheureusement la concurrence prend alors souvent le dessus entre les gens. Parfois les gens qui suivent leurs équipes surtout les équipes de foot causent beaucoup de problèmes. J'en ai marre, ça me revolté de voir ces gens souvent les irlandais toujours en état d'ivresse à la télé, je le trouve honteux.

Par contre, je crois que ce slogan est une bonne chose. A mon avis par sport les gens peuvent rencontrer beaucoup de gens. Et pour un peu qui sont la chance il le peut faire leur profession!

L'année dernière je jouais au hockey avec mon équipe à l'école et par conséquent j'ai fait beaucoup de nouvelles amis; mais c'est vrai dire que nous n'avons pris pas nos hockey au sérieux, nous passions la plupart de nos temps bavardent donc nous n'avons

pas gagné quelque chose mais il faut prendre des choses du bon côté, j'ai fait beaucoup d'amis!

Enfin bien que la concurrence soit bonne quelquefois l'importance de l'amitié pour le sport est indispensable.

Communication = 12. Good, genuine response to the question. The candidate refers to competition among supporters, set against the possibility of making friends through playing sport. Personal details about the candidate's own experience reinforce the clarity of the argument. However, a French monoglot would have difficulty understanding "*pour un peu qui sont la chance*".

Language = 10. Some good idiomatic French and some complex sentences correctly handled, e.g. *bien que la concurrence soit bonne*. But there are also mistakes in spellings, a failure to put in accents, and some grammatical inaccuracies, so not quite Top Category.

Total mark: 22/30.

Exemplar 18

Je suis d'accord avec cette affirmation jus'qu'à un certain point, de plus il soulève néanmoins une question essentielle. On ne peut nier le fait que le sport en général est "le rendez-vous de l'amitié" – Il est important dans l'école et dans la maison. Quand on est en terminale, la pression des examens est très forte et le sport est bon pour la santé et l'esprit!

Mais nous ne pouvons pas oublier le dopage sportif. Si on gagne à l'aide d'un drogue, ce n'est pas vrai, c'est de la tricherie et ce n'est pas juste! Nous sommes engagés dans une guerre non déclarée contre un ennemi sans visage et comment nous pouvons gagner cette guerre?

*Il faut que le gouvernement introduire des contrôles anti-dopage plus efficaces parce qu'il est un vrai mauvais exemple pour les jeunes à mon avis!
Le dopage sportif – le rendez-vous de l'amitié? Je ne pense pas!*

Communication = 6. This is a typical example of a candidate who seems to have seen the word "*sport*" in the question and attempted to introduce learnt-off material on certain aspects of sport, which were not relevant in this case. Thus the candidate begins with a few generalities and then moves on to sport being good for health in Sixth Year. The second paragraph is given over entirely to the use of drugs in sport, with an inappropriate memorized cliché about waging war on a faceless enemy. The third paragraph suggests that the government should get involved. There is only a vague attempt to address friendship in sport, the required answer. The mark awarded barely brings the candidate out of the Bottom Category.

Language = 7. As the communicative intention was not fulfilled, the marks for Language are correspondingly low, and are just about Middle Category.

Total marks: 13/30.