



AS

French

7651/3 Speaking

Report on the Examination

7651
June 2024

Version: 1.0

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Administration

There was clearly greater familiarity this year with the process of uploading tests and documentation to the Media Submissions Portal. Detailed instructions for this can be found in section 5 on pages 13 and 14 of the Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams Summer 2024. As well as the recorded tests, the attendance register with the names of teacher-examiners added should be uploaded to the Media Submissions Portal. This is so that any TTPRs sent to the centre can identify the teacher-examiner(s) to whom the report refers. Recordings should be saved in .mp3 format. Filenames for individual student recordings should comply with the required format.

The discussion of each sub-theme must last between 6 and 7 minutes, and it should be noted that marking will stop 14 minutes after the first printed question for the first discussion has been asked. The tests should be introduced according to the information provided in the Summary of procedures. Once the examiner has stated which stimulus card the student has chosen there is no point asking the student to identify this. The stimulus card should be identified by the letter of the card only and not by its theme and/or sub-theme. Teacher-examiners, in other words, should keep to the script set out in the Summary of Procedures on Page 20 of the instructions booklet.

Conduct of the speaking tests

On the whole the tests were conducted well and, where teacher-examiners asked the right sorts of questions, students were able to achieve high scores. There were still some serious issues, however, around the approach needed to allow students to access the higher marks for Assessment Objective 2 and for Assessment Objective 4. Attention is drawn to the points set out in the next two sections of this report as, in a significant number of cases, there was scope for marks to have been improved had the correct approach been taken in the conduct of the tests. It should be noted, too, that these were the two most common areas on which examiners commented in the TTPRs they sent back to centres.

Assessment Objective 2

AO2 relates to the student's understanding of the material on the card. A significant number of teacher-examiners allowed students to under-achieve on this assessment objective by simply accepting the student's response to the first printed question and then moving on to the second printed question. Many students were very selective in the information from the card that they referred to; students also misinterpreted the information on the card; some students gave a very brief response to this first question. If, in any of these scenarios, the response went unchallenged and there was no further exploration of the material on the card, the understanding of that material could not be judged to be any better than limited or very limited, and the mark for one of those bands had to be awarded. It should also be noted that the mark for AO 2 is not linked to and will not be influenced by any explanation of or information about the visual material on the card. It is inappropriate for students to describe what they see in photographs. The material on the card refers to anything that is printed, and this includes the heading above the visual, although both students and teacher-examiners often overlooked this.

It is also worth reminding teacher-examiners that the requirement of the student to ask a question in each discussion is linked to AO2. In the AS speaking test, if the student failed to ask a question and was not prompted to do so by the teacher-examiner, the mark for AO2 was brought down by one band. If a question was asked beyond the cut-off point in either discussion, it did not fulfil the requirement and so a penalty was incurred. For this reason, teacher-examiners are advised to prompt the student to ask a

question earlier rather than later in each discussion as the question must have been asked before the 7 minutes have elapsed.

Assessment Objective 4

As set out in the specification, AO4 is about showing knowledge and understanding of, and responding critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.

Most teacher-examiners have understood the importance of tailoring their questions to provide opportunities for their students to achieve the higher marks for AO4. They have realised likewise the need to avoid asking questions inviting students to give a personal opinion about general issues linked to themes and sub-themes (for example: Do you think the Internet is something positive or negative? What are the disadvantages, in your opinion, of single-parent families?). Asking the right sorts of questions needs detailed and thoughtful preparation: teacher-examiners are required to conduct a discussion around the sub-theme on the stimulus-card in the context of France and/or the French-speaking world. This should be a recurrent feature of the 6-to-7-minute discussion: some teacher-examiners appeared not to be aware of this and relied solely on the student's response to the third printed question for AO4 content. In such a case, however, the AO4 content was very limited.

In a significant number of tests, teacher-examiners did not make full use of opportunities provided by a student's response to a question to explore further the reference that had been given. For example, references to a French or francophone voluntary organisation, a law affecting families and partnerships, a singer, musician or film actor or director, remained unchallenged and would have been a very effective way of encouraging greater spontaneity as well as demonstrating more detailed AO4 knowledge and understanding. This practice limited the mark that could be awarded. Simply 'name-dropping' with little or no development did not enable students to achieve high marks for this Assessment Objective.

In those performances where the critical response was either good or very good, it was encouraging to see that more students were now drawing on their knowledge and understanding of themes and sub-themes from beyond the material in course-books, although this tended to be on sub-themes such as voluntary work, cultural heritage, cinema, and francophone music. Examining technique can help students with the sub-themes of the changing nature of the family and the cyber-society in that there is no requirement to keep to the focus of the stimulus card throughout the entire discussion. It would be unrealistic to expect a discussion about grand-parents, for example, or cyber-bullying – in the context of France and/or the French-speaking world – to be sustained for 6 to 7 minutes. Teacher-examiners should therefore note that the sub-theme on the card sets the scope for the discussion.

Stimulus cards in the 2024 series

Some students clearly had not understood that the purpose of the first printed question was to assess their understanding of the information on the card, and instead began 'setting out their AO4 stall'. There was therefore an issue here with how students are advised to use their preparation time and it is important to get the message across that the information on the card should be read and processed carefully so that, in response to the first question, students can give as detailed a summary of the content as possible, and the test can then move on.

Cards A and B: *La famille en voie de changement*

Card A encouraged some very good discussions about how the family unit in France has changed and evolved over recent years, and those students who had a good grasp of knowledge related to this demonstrated a good or very good critical and analytical response, giving opinions about *Le mariage pour tous* as well as showing awareness of the opposition that there was to this law. Questions inviting an explanation of the difference between marriage and the PACS were generally not well-handled. Some of the discussions on Card B remained focused exclusively on the role of grand-parents and discussions became quite laboured. This again emphasises the importance of moving away from the specific focus of the card to a discussion of the broader sub-theme.

Cards C and D: *La « cyber-société »*

There was some impressively detailed knowledge about on-line purchasing habits and trends in France and, indeed, across the French-speaking world, but this was often an area in the discussion where teacher-examiners switched the focus to the students themselves, asking about their experience of shopping on-line, and such questions obviously limited the scope for rewarding AO4 knowledge and understanding. This was also a tendency with Card D towards questions such as *Pourriez-vous vivre sans votre téléphone portable ?* or *Comment avez-vous utilisé votre téléphone le week-end dernier ?* Such questions have no place in this speaking test and teacher-examiners are advised to avoid them.

Cards E and F: *Le rôle du bénévolat*

The text for both of these cards was presented in bullet-point form but many students found it difficult to break down and communicate the relevant information in response to the first printed question. Teacher-examiners also seemed reluctant to steer their students through the response to question 1 in a way that would gain them more marks: it is perfectly acceptable, and indeed would be recommended good practice, for the teacher-examiner to follow up a student's initial response with something like: *Dans le texte il y a quatre options (avantages) et vous en avez mentionné deux. Quelles / quels sont les deux autres?* The best advice, however, is to encourage students to concentrate, in their preparation time, on processing the detail of the text. In that way they can give a full and detailed summary in response to the first question.

Cards G and H: *Une culture fière de son patrimoine*

Card H was better dealt with than Card G in terms of understanding information on the card, doubtless because the language and context in Card H linked to cultural heritage were more familiar. The ensuing discussion for both cards was generally well-handled. Cards on this sub-theme from previous series seem to have been well-used to extend the range of knowledge and understanding, and this was once again a topic area with which students engaged well, bringing in a wide range of theme-related knowledge specific to France and/or the French-speaking world.

Cards I and J: *La musique francophone contemporaine*

There was evidence again this year that this specification has had some success in converting students to French and/or francophone music. Both of these cards were well understood and prompted some very engaging and interesting discussions. Where students were invited or encouraged to do so, there was evidence not just of knowledge and understanding, but of a genuine appreciation, of some musicians and artists. That said, for some students, knowledge and understanding were limited to artists such as Edith Piaf and Celine Dion, and there were some rather unfounded claims about the universal appeal across the French-speaking world of these two singers.

Cards K and L: *Cinéma – le septième art*

Angoulême proved quite challenging in terms of accurate pronunciation even though students heard their teacher-examiner say it in the phrasing of the question, but this was really the only obstacle in the text. Summaries generally showed a good understanding of the purpose and the increasing popularity of this film festival. The text in Card K was better understood and handled than Card L. That said, both cards produced some interesting broader discussions of the sub-theme and, increasingly, good use was made of the opportunity for students to talk about a favourite French or francophone film that they had watched and appreciated independently of their classroom teaching and learning.

Assessment Objective 3

As in previous series, many students showed a reasonable grasp of grammar, and in some cases demonstrated an impressively wide range of vocabulary and complex language. However, the application of grammar was sometimes quite inaccurate and uneven, with familiar common and sometimes serious errors being much in evidence. Examples given below are not exhaustive but they could usefully be taken as areas on which to focus attention in preparing students.

Mispronunciation that caused confusion and lapses: *personnes/pourcent*

Conjugation of verbs – *ils promouvoir ils sont écouter je appris ils a devenu ils vont reçoit*

Subjunctive (or not) – *bien qu'ils sont il faut que je dis il pense que la musique soit*

Passive – *elle est transmettre ils ont développés je n'ai surpris pas*

Pronouns – *vous s'amusez ils...ses chez leur les films qui ils regardent quelque chose qu'on doit être fier de*

Adjectives and adverbs – *les mals acteurs la seulement option c'est vite*

Negatives – *je ne vois pas rien c'est ne intéressant pas*

Confusion with – *parce que/à cause de choquant/choqué surprenant/surpris bénévole/bénévolat penser à/de connaître/savoir jeunes/gens temps/fois/heure chose/choix assez/aussi très/trop/plus/beaucoup*

Verb + infinitive – *ils voulaient de voir il peut devient j'aime peuve je préfère de parle*

Faux amis – *effectif éventuellement sensible assister*

Comparisons – *si important comme plus bien les plus bons films*

Anglicisms – *ils ont un bon temps ; le texte est autour si ; ils ne pensent pas sur comment sérieux c'est*

Invented words – *protector provider promoter admitter resticter recogniser expérierer especialement*

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.