

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

JCE FRENCH

2022



INTRODUCTION

This marking report constitutes feedback on candidates' performance from the 2022 JCE French examination which was made up of 3 components: the Listening Comprehension (Paper 1), the Reading Comprehension examination (Paper 2) and a third examination paper on Language Use (Paper 3).

All components for the 2022 marking session for JCE French were marked between the 6th December 2022 to the 19th December 2022, held at Naledi Senior Secondary School. Three examining teams were constituted, for which Paper 1 had three (3) examiners, four (4) examiners for Paper 2 and nine (9) examiners responsible for the marking of Paper 3. Papers 1 and 2 had no Team Leaders while Paper 3 had 2 Team leaders to share responsibilities in the supervision of the nine (9) examiners, also supervised by the Principal Examiner.

PAPER 1

GENERAL COMMENTS

This paper constituted a Listening comprehension whose aim was to assess candidates' ability to demonstrate their listening competencies where understanding of oral information is concerned. Two listening comprehension passages were recorded onto an audio CD which was played using an audio device or radio during the time of the examination. Candidates were required to listen and take down notes which would assist them in answering the questions that were based on the listening passages. Another CD was provided specifically for candidates with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in efforts to enhance inclusivity and access to the examination by the concerned learners. Candidates were required to apply their cognitive skills to deal with different items that were being tested. The items that were



presented to the candidates were set at comparable levels compared to those of the previous year's examination, with different items calling for different levels of cognitive engagement towards determining what the correct responses were.

The performance of most candidates in this paper was poor, although they did manage to get a few marks where multiple choice items were concerned. Overall, the component required candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the passages and yet they struggled to do so, as evidenced by their answers which were often not up to standard. In other instances, candidates continued as in previous years, to experience difficulties in understanding what the questions required. This was observed through their responses to some questions, especially prevalent in questions 4 and 5.

Comments on the individual items are as follows:

Item 1

This item required candidates to identify a character within the listening passage who was working with Bibo at the academy. Most candidates did well in recognizing the character, while some struggled in writing the response as they might have been confused by the ambiguous expectations observed in the rubric which called for them to tick instead of writing their answers in the space provided. Compensation was made for this anomaly.

Item 2

This was a multiple-choice question for which most candidates managed to tick the correct answer, which was letter B, "***des tomates***".

Item 3

This item required the usage of a descriptive adjective which candidates write as a response. Most candidates did not seem to understand the instruction as evidenced



by them writing words that did not have any relationship with a descriptive adjective. Some who made efforts also struggled to find the correct word, which was “**gros**”, but came up with alternative words such as “**gras**” which did not merit any mark.

Item 4

Candidates were required to find reasons for Bibo’s excitement within the listening passage. Most candidates, however, were unable to identify the reasons for Bibo’s excitement and came up with irrelevant responses such as “**Il plante des legumes.**”

Item 5

This item was designed to assess candidates’ ability to apply higher cognitive skills by inferring what evidence one could use to explain how Bibo’s mother was patient. Most candidates struggled with the item, and demonstrated their challenges in understanding the passage enough to be able to infer. Some of the responses given, such as “**elle plante des legumes**” simply demonstrated this lack of understanding as candidates failed to elaborate on their responses. Candidates ought to make better efforts in understanding the nature of the task for which they are required to provide a response, especially where inferential skills are implied.

Section B

These questions were based on the second listening passage which was about three students who loved nature and were working on a school project to clean the village river. The level of vocabulary used in the listening passage was found to be of a good level of cognitive demand and proved to be slightly shorter than that of the previous year.

However, the performance of candidates was not much different from that of the previous year, in which candidates did not do particularly well in the listening examination.



Item 6

This item called for candidates to provide Marie's age. Most candidates failed to write "**dix ans**" which was the correct answer and wrote "**dix un**" instead, demonstrating that they had only managed to identify the number that was used in reference to Marie's age, as mentioned in the passage, but however unable to correctly write the number. Some went to the extent of writing the number in brackets so as to explain the number they intended to communicate by writing **11** in brackets. This kind of response was marked wrong on the grounds that such candidates did not demonstrate evidence of having understood what Marie's age was, but ended up with a response that suggested she was 11 years old instead of 10 years old.

Item 7

This item required candidates to recognize a character, Paul, from the passage. The two acceptable responses were either "**ami ou voisin de Marie et/ou Jude**". Candidates struggled with the spelling of "**voisin**", often writing it as "**Voisen**" and "**voasang**", although they were not penalized to an extent of losing the 1 mark. However, responses for the word "**amie**" which were written as "**aime**" were not accepted considering the different meaning brought by the word "**aime**", which is the verb "**to like**".

Item 8

Candidates were meant to find out the reason why the friends were referred to as "**des copains inseparables**". Most candidates could not come up with the reason why the friends were referred to as the "**inséparables**", often having resorted to picking the sentence as it was, or writing "**inseparables**". These responses were clearly evidence that the candidates did not understand the nature of the task, and also failed to demonstrate enough understanding of the passage where the expression was utilized.

Item 9



This item required candidates to provide the colour of the river. Most candidates managed to get the correct answer which was “**bleu**”, although most times they wrote their responses with various spelling mistakes. For example, “**blu**”, “**blua**” and “**blue**” were some of the responses that candidates tended to give. A good number of candidates failed to demonstrate understanding of the passage and guessed their answers by simply mentioning different names of colours, such as “**h**”, “**marron**”, “**brun**” and “**gris**”.

Item 10

This item called for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of what evidence one could use to show that the three friends loved the environment. Most candidates did not perform well for this item, and simply came up with a list of activities that were being done at the river.

Item 11

This was a multiple-choice question which sought to establish how the friends felt when they found bottles and papers at the river. The correct response was “**mécontents**” and most of the candidates managed to get it correctly, with only a few candidates going for Option A (**curieux**).

Item 12

This question was based on comparison between Madame Alphinah and the other teachers. There appeared to have been an improvement on candidates’ ability to give comparisons. However, some candidates were not able to complete the comparison and only provided information for one side of the comparison, therefore only earning 1 mark instead of the 2 full marks which were available.

Item 13



This last question was testing the gist of the passage, and required candidates to explain in their own words what the story was about. Candidates only recognized the characters in the story, without being able to fully relate such characters to the story. They often lacked understanding of the gist of what was happening in the passage.

In order to experience better performance in the listening comprehensions, candidates ought to be given more practice on different types of listening exercises.

PAPER 2

GENERAL COMMENTS

The team observed that the candidature for 2022 was less than that of 2021 and it in terms of the workload; it was beneficial to this small team. We therefore managed to finish on time and meet the BEC deadlines. Generally, comparing with the previous years, the candidates' work is still of poor quality, characterized by lots of unattempted items, blank spaces, use of gibberish language and use of Setswana and English.

Comments on the individual Items are as follows:

Items 1-3

These were multiple-choice questions, involving the use of pictures that were meant to be understood and interpreted. The current responses were the choice of correct nouns and prepositions. Generally, item 1 was easily accessible to candidates from across all centres and all grade descriptions. The preposition '**dans**' was easily identified as the correct one to describe the position of the car.

For item 2, most candidates could not pick the correct noun '**boulangerie**' as the correct shop for buying bread. It was also easily accessible to candidates across all grade descriptions. However, Item 3 presented problems as only grade A candidates



could correctly interpret the action as *'faire de l'escalade'*. Across the different centres, all the three activities have appeared as the correct response. This clearly shows that there was a lot of guesswork.

Item 4

Pictorial representation

The picture used for this item depicted a woman walking with her horse in a desert/ by the beach/ river/ ocean. Candidates failed to access the correct responses for this item because instead of giving a description of the action, candidates tended to concentrate on the woman, how she looks (happy, smiling) and how she was dressed (a long dress, elegantly).

To get the two marks, candidates had to make mention of two notions: 1) a woman walking with a horse (1 mark) and where the scene took place – (in a dessert/ by the beach, river, ocean, etc) (1 mark). Other verbs that are synonymous with *"marcher"* were accepted, such as *"aller"* and *"se promener"*.

There were many examples where candidates failed to mention the word "horse" which is *"cheval"*. There simply guesses, suggesting all names of animals they could think of in French, such as *"chien"*, *"chèvre"*. Only the noun *"animal"* was acceptable.

- i) Une femme marche avec un cheval/ un animal (1) au dessert (1)
- ii) Une femme se promène avec un animal à la plage/ à la mer/ à la rivière (2)
- iii) Une femme va avec un cheval au bord de la mer (2)
- iv) Une femme marche à la plage (1)
- v) Une femme porte une longue robe et elle est contente (0)

Most of the candidates could not access this item due to lack of vocabulary. They could not get the two marks, as they tended to use Setswana and English words. The



words horse (English) and pitsi (Setswana) were very common. There was also usage of a lot of gibberish words like *“horse”*, *“l’horse”*, and *“donker”*.

Candidates should be aware of their choice of vocabulary and learn to use it correctly. They should be encouraged to read more and build their vocabulary banks. Reading short stories, doing research projects and presentations should be part of their teaching and learning.

Item 5

Map Reading:

The 2022 map was the map of a university campus, with only a few buildings. All the streets and the buildings were named. The map also had the key. It was not a complicated map.

Item 5 a): This item required candidates to locate a place, *“le café”* in relation to *“le bar”*. The correct response was behind *“derrière”* which means “behind”.

Considering the map meant used, responses such as *“devant”* which means “in front of”, could not be accepted because of the position of the entrances to the two buildings.

Item 5 b): This item required candidates to give directions from one point to another. The two designated points were the Primary School and the Youth Centre. The direction was clear, and there were many possible routes to take. Candidates relied on the use of street names and named buildings to pass on the way to the Youth Centre. Candidates have since improved on giving directions as these marks were easily attainable across all centres. Candidates have also shown an improvement in locating the required building by saying that it is on the right.

Item 5 c): This item required candidates to follow directions from the church to another building. To get the two marks, they had to state the destination which was the supermarket. Candidates who did not arrive at the required destination and gave



“l’épicerie” as their response got one mark. There were no marks allocated for responses on *“la boucherie”*, and *“la librairie”*.

SECTION B

The 2022 story presented a fictional reading text. It is a story about a group of boys who went to the village for their holidays. In their adventure, they went in search of treasure. It was intriguing for the boys as they went all out and ended up discovering the treasure that was to make them rich.

The context of the story is fun for young people even though the theme is not really part of their everyday life, and as such something that they could not easily relate to.

Item 6

The item required candidates’ specific knowledge of a place where Roger and Thato spent some part of their holiday. It was easily accessible to candidates as they could the answer from the first line of the text.

The possible responses were treated as follows:

- i) ***Au village*** (1)
- ii) ***Dans la maison (qui appartient) au grand-père de leurs cousins*** (1)
- iii) ***Dans la maison*** (0)

This last response did not get the mark because it was not specific enough.

Item 7

This item required general comprehension of the story. Candidates had to pick out a sentence from the first paragraph that shows that Mr Sebele is stingy, ***“avare”***.

The correct phrase was easily identifiable from the text as:

« C’est- à- dire qu’il ne veut jamais partager son argent ni dépenser une seule pièce. » (1).



Item 8

This item required the use of an adjective. Candidates had to pick a word from paragraph 2 that describes Mr Sebele. The correct response was “**(un homme) mystérieux**” for a total of 1 mark.

Item 9

This item requires candidates to give a synonym of the word ‘argent’ from the second paragraph. The only possible response was “**(la grosse) fortune**” which was worth 1 mark.

Item 10

This item required candidates’ demonstrate specific knowledge by identifying the character who was excited by the idea of looking for Mr Sebele’s treasure.

The correct response was, “**Kabelo**” (1).

Item 11

This item tested candidates’ ability to identify speakers in a text. It had two different phrases that each required a speaker. The correct responses were,

a) **Roger** (1) and b) **Kabelo** (1)

Item 12

This item tested general understanding of the story. Candidates had to tell the relationship between Kabelo and Roger. The correct answer was “**Ils sont cousins**” (1)

Item 13

In this item, candidates were required to state the feeling of the characters when they arrived at the basement. It was easily accessible to most candidates.



The correct response; (i) ***(Ils ont) peur*** (1)

Item 14

This item required candidates to show understanding of the text by narrating what Khumo was doing when the other boys were looking for the treasure. The item was accessible to candidates as most of them managed to pick the correct phrase that had the response. Those who lost the mark had left out the part of the sentence “***près de la porte...***” Some even put other prepositions like, “***à côté de.../ par la porte...*** ” (1) “***après de la porte...***” did not get the mark.

Some of the correct responses considered for credit were as follows:

- i) ***Il décide de rester près de la porte de la cave*** (1)
- ii) ***Il reste par la porte de la cave*** (1)
- iii) ***Il décide de rester à la porte de la cave*** (1)

Item 15

This item tested candidates’ ability to draw a conclusion from a paragraph, to give the main idea. It proved to be very challenging for most candidates because they simply reproduced the whole paragraph, a sentence or two sentences. This made them to lose the mark.

Some of the correct responses that were considered were:

- i) ***Ils sont riches*** (1)
- ii) ***Kabelo voit une boîte remplie de pièces glissantes*** (1)
- iii) ***Les garçons sont contents car ils ont découvert la fortune*** (1)
- iv) ***Ils ont trouvé la fortune*** (1)
- v) ***Nous sommes riches*** (0)

Item 16

This item required candidates to demonstrate understanding and say why the young people shout with joy in paragraph 6.



It was not accessible to most candidates as they failed to pick out the reason why the boys are so happy. Instead, candidates just copied down parts of the passage without showing any understanding. They could not even paraphrase the parts of the paragraph that they copied as the response.

Some of the correct responses that were considered were:

- i) ***Parce qu'ils ont trouvé la fortune*** (2)
- ii) ***Parce qu'ils trouvent l'argent*** (2)
- iii) ***Parce qu'ils trouvent la boîte qu'ils cherchent*** (2)

Item 17

This item required candidates to summarize the story, to give the gist of the reading text. To get the two marks, candidates had to identify two notions that emanate from this text, being:

- i) The boys going out to look for the treasure (1)
- ii) The boys discovering the treasure and or getting rich (1)

Most candidates again failed to get the two marks, as they could not summarize the text. Most of the responses that were observed came from all centers, often demonstrating that there was a lot of guesswork, copy and paste or even blank spaces where some candidates did not even attempt to write an answer.

Candidates also picked and wrote down any part/ sentence of the reading as the answer. Overall, there was poor performance on this item with few candidates getting marks.

The correct responses to be considered were:

- i) ***Le texte parle de garçons/ cousins qui cherchent la fortune dans la maison de Monsieur Sebele. (1), ils trouvent la fortune et deviennent riches*** (1)
- ii) ***Les quatre cousins cherchent et trouvent la fortune de Monsieur Sebele*** (2)
- iii) ***Les garçons cherchent et découvrent la fortune de Monsieur Sebele*** (2)
- iv) ***Les garçons sont riches car ils ont découvert la fortune*** (2)



In conclusion, it was noted that the examination continues to be somewhat challenging to the candidates. One can also attribute this to lack of vocabulary and limited understanding of the French language in general. Most of the candidates are still at knowledge and fail to apply themselves when it comes to tasks that demand higher cognitive skills that require understanding or demonstrating higher order skills. This has led most candidates to respond in Setswana, English or use gibberish language.

PAPER 3

GENERAL COMMENTS

Paper 3 comprises of two sections, Section A and B. Section A is a short answer structured grammar questions where the candidates are expected to handle the grammatical structures and apply them in answering. Section B comprises of a note and a friendly letter where candidates are expected to show their ability on the written expression, the ability to organize their ideas in an orderly manner, and also the ability to show originality and creativity.

Candidates were able to access items on Language Structure at Section A, a sign that candidates are given enough practice at the centres. However there is a need for centres to give practice on the use of different determiners in sentences. There has been a noticeable improvement with certain centres that have not been doing well in the past, centres such as 0217. However, there are centres which are still struggling with the section; centres like 0150 recorded quite a number of candidates who could not get any marks on the section.



In the 2022 examination series, many centres left Section B unattempted. Centres are therefore encouraged to give more practice on the continuous writing skills so that candidates can improve.

Comments on the individual Items are as follows:

Items 1-5

These items required candidates to use possessive adjectives, and a demonstrative adjective. The items were all accessible. However, candidates struggled with item 3 where they had to use the demonstrative adjective. Most candidates failed to put the feminine adjective, showing that they did not understand the gender of the word “*cousine*”, though the word is a common word used in French.

Items 6-9

Candidates were required to demonstrate their ability to construct sentences in the imperative form. The items were equally accessible to the 2022 candidates like the previous years. Generally, centres did well in these items. However, most candidates applied a wrong rule at item 6, where they had to leave the verb “*rends*” as it was, they applied the rule which applies only to /er/ verbs, by dropping the /s/ and ended up losing the mark.

Items 10-12

Candidates were required to change statements into the question format using “*est-ce que*” and the inverted method. There is generally a good improvement since the candidates scored marks for Part A where they had to use “*est-ce que*”. However, some candidates lost marks because they forgot to apply elision rule on the “*que*” where it is followed by a vowel. Candidates should be reminded that ‘que’ becomes “*qu’*” before vowels so that they may not lose easy marks.

For Part B, where candidates had to use the inverted method, some candidates lost marks for not changing the subject to a pronoun before inversion. For example, item



10(b) '*Les enfants profitent de leurs vacances scolaires.*' They wrote, '*Profitent les enfants de leurs vacances scolaires ?*' instead of replacing '*les enfants*' first with the pronoun '*ils*'.

Item 13-14

Here, candidates were expected to write questions to corresponding statements. For item 13, the use of the interrogative 'de quoi' posed a lot of difficulty to the candidates. They mostly failed to identify the interrogative. Centres are advised to expose candidates to as many interrogatives as possible for them to be able to access marks.

Items 15-18

For these items, candidates were required to respond to the questions in the negative form. Generally, the negative construction in these items was generally well mastered. This year there was a lot of improvement in items where candidates had to negate sentences with two verbs or where they had to change the articles to '**de**' in the negative. A good number of candidates accessed the items.

Items 19-23

For this set of items, candidates were required to put the correct determiner and prepositions in the spaces provided to complete a cloze text. Centres did not perform well in this part of the Paper. The content of the text was accessible and of the level of the candidates but they still failed to put the right determiner to complete the text. Most of the answers provided seem to have been guess work, showing very little understanding of what was read and the grammatical structures that needed to be applied. Centres are advised to give candidates more practice on such items and to also allow candidates to read as extensively as possible since this can also help them gain more vocabulary and structures in French.

Items 24-28



For this set of items, candidates were required to respond by providing conjugated versions of the verbs in order to complete the sentences in the cloze text. Candidates' performance in this part of the paper was very good this year, a clear sign that candidates were given practice. This year, candidates easily accessed the verb 'avoir', an irregular verb at item 28. However, quite a good number of candidates failed to conjugate the reflexive verb "**se débrouiller**" at item 26. They mostly wrote "**je se débrouille**" instead of "**je me débrouille**".

Items 29-33

Candidates were required to carry out tasks on adjectival agreement within the context of a cloze text. Candidates did generally well in these items. However more practice need to be given even for irregular adjectives so that candidates may not lose marks on these. Many candidates lost the mark for item 32, where they had to change "**nouveau**" to "**nouvelle**".

SECTION B

Section B of Component 3 comprises of a note, marked out of 5 marks and a friendly letter, marked out of 15. This part of the component is equally important since it allows candidates to apply the language acquired throughout the 3 years in written production. It is here that the candidates' ability to handle the mechanics of the language through structured items is examined.

Item 34

Candidates were expected to write a short note or message to their mother apologizing for going back to school to go and look for a lost key to the house. Many candidates were challenged by the word, '**clé or clef**' in French, because they may not use it on day to day basis at school. However they managed to apologise and use appropriate verbs and vocabulary to say they are going to school though they failed to explain why



they had to go back. They performed well in the item, many of them accessed the item except for centres such as 0150 which struggled a lot with sentence construction.

Item 35

Candidates were required to write a letter to a cousin inviting him or her to a sister's wedding. This year 2022, candidates struggled a lot French with constructing comprehensive sentence structures while many candidates even left the section unattempted or simply used English or Gibberish.

In conclusion, a decline was noted on the quality of the work that was presented by the 2022 candidates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Candidates ought to be given more practice on all skill areas of the subject including speaking, listening, reading and writing so that they may develop their overall communication ability of the language of French.
- More practice tests would help candidates to sharpen their skills on simple things such as note-taking for Paper 1 listening comprehension and raising their general level of understanding.
- More innovative approaches to working with candidates during their learning of the subject ought to be implemented as a way of continue to motivate them to learn the subject and not give up during answering questions.