

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

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PAPER 1: LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION

General Comments

This paper has two sections, Section A and Section B. Section A constituted a Listening Comprehension whose aim was to assess candidates' ability to demonstrate their listening competencies where understanding of oral information is concerned. Five short listening extracts 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 to each short extract and respond to the related items.

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.

Section B constituted a Reading comprehension, and candidates read five short extracts then responded to items based on those.

The performance of most candidates in this paper was average.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Each one of the five extracts comprised of three multiple choice items and two short answer items.

Listening Extract 1

- 1 The item was looking for a specific fact, the name of the person that François called. Most candidates did not do well in this item. Some candidates gave the name of a place instead of a person. In some Centres, candidates did not even attempt the item.
- 2 The item requested candidates to find a reason as to why François called. Candidates were to choose one option out of the three given. The item was not accessible to most candidates.
- 3 This item required candidates to recognize the profession of the person that François's friend needed to consult. It required candidates to pick one option from the three that were given.
- 4 The item requested candidates to find the correct spelling of the name of the doctor that Veronique was to consult. Candidates were given three options to choose from. Some candidates missed the first letter of the doctor's name which was given before the rest of the letters were spelt. They ended up choosing the option C, Roizard instead of the correct answer, which was option B, Croizard.
- 5 This item was a short answer item. Candidates were given a string of numbers which added to a telephone number and required to write the number quarante-sept (47). Although most candidates managed to write the number, some of them wrote more than just one number showing lack of understanding of the task. In some cases, on hearing quatre-vingt seize (96), some candidates broke it down to quatre-vingt (80) and seize (16). This was regardless of the fact that 96 was already captured in the question.

Listening Extract 2

- 6 The item was looking for a specific fact. It requested candidates to say on which date of the week the birthday celebration was to take place. Most candidates managed to understand the item and wrote the correct day of the week, samedi. However, there are some candidates who could not write the correct spelling for samedi, coming up with options like Sanedi.
- 7 The item was looking for a specific fact. It requested candidates to say the time at which the party was to start. Three options were given for candidates to choose from. In the listening extract the time was given as neuf heures du soir which can be translated to 9pm. However, the options given followed the 24hour clock system. Most candidates gave the response as option B, 09:00 and did not get the mark, as the correct response was option C, 21:00.
- 8 This item was a short answer item looking for a specific fact. It required candidates to say where the parents of the girl were going. Although some candidates heard the place where the parents were going, they struggled with the spelling of theater, with some writing it in English as theater and others using accents in an effort to make it French and writing théâtre. A lot of candidates did not respond to the item.
- 9 The item requested candidates to find a specific fact. It also requested candidates to analyze a given picture. The responses to the item showed a lot of guesswork, as they ranged from amongst the three options given.
- 10 The item requested candidates to find reason as to why Olivier could not go to the party. The response to be given was in the form of a place where Olivier was to go. Three options were given to choose from, and they were equally distributed as the correct choice by the candidates.

Listening Extract 3

- 11 The item requested candidates to find a specific fact. It required them to write the name of the person who responded to the telephone. Candidates wrote different spellings for Nathalie, with some writing Lathalie, Natalie and even Nathalien.
- 12 The item requested candidates to determine the mode of transport used by the man. They were to select it from three pictures which were given.
- 13 This item required candidates to find the destination of the man. The item had three options, which were all towns and all the three were mentioned in the extract. The choice of response was distributed amongst the three towns which shows that candidates did not really follow the extract but settled for guesswork.
- 14 The item requested candidates to find the specific date on which the man was to travel. Although it was clearly stated to be trente-et-un Janvier (31st January) Some candidates gave their responses as 30 janvier, which is trente Janvier showing that they did not fully hear the date. The item was not accessible to most candidates.

- 15** The item requested candidates to choose the time that passengers were requested to register their luggage. Most responses were distributed between option B quarante-sept and option C quarante-cinq.

Listening Extract 4

- 16** The item requested candidates to recognize ingredients used in a dish. It also requested candidates to analyse a given picture. The responses to the item showed a lot of guesswork, as they ranged from amongst the three options given.
- 17** The item requested candidates to say the meal that the client was having. The item proved to be inaccessible to most candidates as they gave dishes instead of a meal. Some candidates also gave their responses as petit déjeuner (breakfast) instead of déjeuner (lunch).
- 18** The item requested candidates to find the dish that the man chose. On the passage, the man requested for a dish with fish. The waiter did not mention fish, but rather talked about a dish with fish, le fillet du samon.
- 19** The item requested candidates to find out what the waiter proposed to the customer as a starter. Although the response was to be just une salade, candidates came up with a lot of options such as une salade grecque and une salade de la soupe.

It has to be noted that some candidate gave the correct response, salade for item 19 in item 17.

- 20** The item requested candidates to find reason why the customer did not immediately order the dessert. Three options were given from which candidates were to choose from. This item was to be treated through a system of elimination as the first two choices were not mentioned in the passage.

Listening Extract 5

- 21** The item requested candidates to say what the extract was about. They were given three options to choose from.
- 22** The item requested candidates to infer what un jour férié is. They were given three options to choose from.
- 23** This item looked for a place where the French would watch the military parade on July the 14th. This parade would be on television and the French would usually watch it from their homes. These two aspects were clearly stated in the extract and were equally treated as being correct.
- 24** The item requested candidates to say what the Champs Elysees is. The response was clearly stated in the extract as une grande rue à Paris.
- 25** Candidates were given three pictures and requested to choose the picture which shows an activity that takes place in the evening of July 14th.

Section B

This section was based on short reading extracts.

Reading Extract 1

This extract had two multiple choice items and three short answer questions.

- 26** The item requested candidates to say what the document is. It had three options to choose from. It was accessible to most candidates.
- 27** The item requested candidates to say on which date the activities were to start. Most candidates did not focus on giving a full date but rather gave but of the date. They gave responses such as Mercredi and Septembre.
- 28** This item was requested candidates to say who helps students during climbing. Most candidates got the item correct. However, some candidates gave the response as Madame Blanc showing lack of understanding of the difference between M. and Mme.
- 29** The item requested candidates to choose the sporting activity that the fourth level students did on Thursday afternoon. They were to pick the correct picture from the three given. Some candidates could not pick up the correct response, probably due to their lack of understanding of Tir à l'arc.
- 30** The item was a short answer question. It requested candidates to find the venue on Friday. It was accessible to most candidates.

Reading Extract 2

The extract comprised of four short answer questions.

- 31** The item requested candidates to say who the recipient of the post-card is. It was accessible to most candidates; however, some candidates wrote the name of the sender while others wrote the name of the place. Some candidates left it blank.
- 32** The item requested candidates to say where Laurent is. Responses varied between 5 Rue de la Paix, 75 002 Paris and Paris. However, some candidates copied the whole address, including the name of the recipient and could not get the item correct.
- 33** This item requested candidates to say what the weather was like in Cannes. It was accessible to most of the candidates.
- 34** The item requested candidates to say whether it is true or false that Romain enjoyed the weather during his vacation. They were to justify their response with a statement from the passage. Some candidates did not pick up a statement from the passage when giving the justification.

Reading Extract 3

This extract had one multiple choice item and three short answer questions

- 35** The item requested candidates to say where the villa was located. It was accessible especially since it had two possible options being A saint Paul and Sur la Côté d'Azur.
- 36** The item requested candidates to say if it is true that if one has to bring their own kitchen utensils. The item proved to be quite tricky to candidates as they could get the correct justification while giving the wrong response of whether the statement is true or false.
- 37** The item required candidates to say why people could not call the villa for assistance. Candidates were given three options to choose from. Most candidates gave option A La propriétaire n'a pas de portable and C La propriétaire préfère l'email. Only a few candidates chose option B Il n'y a pas de réseau dans la villa.
- 38** This item required candidates to say up to when the villa will be available. Instead of saying up to when the villa will be available, candidates tended to say from when it will be available up to when.

Reading Extract 4

This extract had one multiple choice item and three short answer questions.

- 39** The item requested candidates to say where the family lives. In the extract It was said between which two towns they lived. Candidates were to choose the correct response based on that.
- 40** The item requested candidates to say why the family is looking for a au pair girl Some candidates just picked up the statement which says une autre langue a nos enfants without the element of them discovering.
- 41** The item required candidates to say the nationality of the father. Some candidates just picked up the statement which talks about the nationality of the two parents and included the nationality of the mother in their response.
- 42** The item required candidates to judge if the statement was true or false and justify their response. The item was quite accessible to candidates as they could say that the family is active and had a lot of activities to choose from.

Reading Extract 5

This extract had two multiple choice items and two short answer questions.

- 43** The item required candidates to say the amount of milk needed to prepare pancakes. It was accessible to most candidates as they could easily pick it up from among the ingredients.
- 44** The item requested candidates to say which ingredient is not used in the making of pancakes. Although candidates might not be familiar with the correct response, east they would probably be familiar with the two other options, eggs and milk and get the response by elimination.
- 45** The item requested candidates to say what one does after putting the flour in a bowl. The order in which this is done was clearly given in the column for preparation, especially the adding of the milk.



- 46** The item required candidates to judge if the statement was true or false that one needs to turn the pancake when the colour changes and justify their response. The item was quite accessible to candidates as they could say that the statement is true. However, when it came to justify their response, some candidates wrote their own statements instead of picking it from the passage. Other candidates just picked part of the statement.

PAPER 2: COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE USE

General Comments

The main aim of the paper was to test candidates on their ability to communicate through writing, comprising two sections, Section A and Section B. After the 3 year Junior Certificate, they are expected to be able to:

- ☐ write simple phrases and sentences and ask questions on familiar topics related to their immediate environment,
- ☐ Produce a variety of short simple texts describing present, past and future events
- ☐ Use a range of basic vocabulary, very simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns connected with simple linking words
- ☐ Use and respond to basic language functions using polite and informal forms of greeting and address.

NB: Refer to Junior Certificate Examination Assessment Syllabus French 2023 Page 7

Generally, candidates struggled a lot in this paper. However, some Centres seemed to have done very well in preparing candidates for the examination. Most candidates struggled with the past tense and the future tense but did well in using the present tense. Many candidates demonstrated knowledge of wide range of vocabulary to be used for various situations of communication. This is indeed commendable. However, Centres are still advised to ensure that candidates are well prepared on the writing skill through giving them practice on writing memos, SMS, emails or short letters and notes.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Section A was based on short answers requiring specific answers as well as creating very short stories based on pictures given.

- 1 In this item, candidates were required to fill in an information card using their own personal information. Candidates generally did well in this item. However, it was evident that candidates did not know the words 'quartier' and they also lacked vocabulary on the 'genres de livres'; they mostly used English words such as comedy, adventure etc instead of . Again, where they had to fill 'sexe', they mostly resorted to English by just writing 'female' or 'male'. There is a need for centres to expose candidates to the French way of defining gender so that candidate may not lose marks.

Where candidates had to write 'langues parlees', many of them wrote 'anglaise' instead of 'anglais' or 'française' instead of 'français'. And this showed that some candidates cannot make a distinction between a language and a nationality. Centres are also advised to continue to expose candidates to different forms of 'carte d'identité' and 'formulaire' in French to expose them to a variety of vocabulary based on personal information.

- 2 In this item candidates were presented with pictures from which they had to write a magazine article talking about how they normally spend their afternoons. For candidates to score marks, they had to

describe each picture using the correct sentence structure and vocabulary. The item was accessible. Generally, candidates were able to identify verbs such as 'laver la voiture', 'regarder la télévision' and 'faire de la natation/nager' but they struggled with 'arroser les plantes/faire du jardinage/travailler dans le jardin'.

Though they managed to identify the verbs, they generally struggled to formulate meaningful sentences to communicate clearly what they do afternoons. Most candidates wrote the sentences without even conjugating the verbs. More conjugation practice needs to be done so that candidates may not lose marks.

- 3 Candidates were required to study the picture and write a short story on what the 3 friends presented like to do when they are together. The picture showed 3 friends in an Art room performing different Art types. To gain marks, candidates had to express themselves using simple sentences with good structure and appropriate vocabulary. They also had to focus their attention to the 'actions' presented by the picture; descriptions such as what the people are wearing may not help them gain marks. Candidates struggled a lot at this item. They mostly managed to identify the expression 'jouer de la guitare' with many spelling mistakes on both 'jouer' and 'guitare'. Very few candidates managed to use the verb 'peindre/faire de la peinture'. They also had to use the verbs dessiner and colorer/colorier. Only a few managed to identify these verbs. Some opted to using the word/noun 'dessin' as a verb. For example, they would write, Magalie dessin.

Centres are encouraged to give candidates ample practice on sentence construction and conjugation patterns.

Section B

Section B comprised of short messages in the form of SMS and a letter.

- 4 In this item, candidates were to write an SMS of 40 to 60 words, to their mother to let them know they will come back home late and to excuse themselves. They were presented with pictures to guide them to write the SMS. Candidates were expected to use all the guidelines (here represented as pictures), to write the SMS. They had to:

- Mention that they went to the supermarket to buy groceries
- Mention that they travelled by taxi/car
- Mention that while in town they met/saw a friend
- Mention that they went out with a friend to have coffee together.

Generally, candidates did not do well in this item. The nature of the question compelled them to demonstrate their knowledge of the past, present and future tenses. Many therefore lost marks for failure to use other tenses other than the present. It was evident that candidates lacked autonomy on the use of the 'Passé Composé' and the 'imparfait'. Centres are advised to ensure that candidates are conversant with different tenses as per the expectation of the syllabus. Emphasis must not only be placed on the present tense but all tenses.

However, most candidates did demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary by identifying words such as 'acheter, faire des achats, boire un café. Most of them struggled to identify the verb 'se rencontrer' or 'voir' and opted to just use English words and ended up losing marks. Many candidates lost marks also because they did not know how to apologise, they just wrote 'je apologise' instead of 'je suis désolé/désolée/je m'excuse/pardonne-moi'.

In some cases, candidates lost marks because they did not read the instruction; they ignored the stimulus and went straight to answering the question without using the pictures as guidelines. They only read the question which said they should tell the mother where they went and ignored other details of 'how they travelled, meeting a friend etc. Emphasis should be made to candidates to always take time reading and analysing the demands of the question before they can answer.

Different formats of short notes should also be taught to candidates, here instead of just a short note, candidates were writing emails (with email address, opening and closing salutations) without even respecting the proposed length of 40 to 60 words.

Some Centres, however, did well in this task, showing knowledge of the past tense and had the vocabulary to perform the task. Centres are advised to ensure that they expose candidates to a wide range of vocabulary to allow them to draw from the vocabulary bank for them to perform different tasks.

- 5 In this item, candidates were presented with two options, A and B; they had to choose one. Candidates mostly showed lack of knowledge of the format of the French letter. Most candidates wrote an e-mail format instead. There were instances where candidates wrote the English address of P.O Box... instead of Gaborone, le 15 avril as the address. Some also left out the names of the writer and the recipient of the letter.

Option A

Candidates were to write a letter to a friend to tell them about their new house. Most candidates were comfortable with this option.

Six guidelines were provided for the candidates to follow. Only a few candidates managed to answer all guidelines while others chose to ignore the guidelines and write about something else and they ended up losing marks. They seemed to have acquired a lot of vocabulary on this topic which made them get excited and carried away by just describing other things which were not part of the question. Candidates have to be advised to always stick to the expectation of the question.

Guidelines proposed different types of tenses to be used. Guidelines a), d) and e) proposed the Present Tense b) Passé Composé, c) imparfait while f) proposed le Futur. Most candidates ignored the tenses and wrote either in the present or near future tense.

Most candidates seemed not to understand the word 'serez', most probably because they did not know 'être' in the 'futur simple'. Those who got it right failed to conjugate it correctly, they wrote 'je serez content' instead of 'je serai content'.

Candidates should be encouraged to use expressions of sentiments and opinions to make their work creative. They should also be encouraged to use conjunctions and other linking words to ensure that their work flows.

Option B

For this option, candidates were asked to write a letter to a cousin to ask them to help organize a sister's party. Most candidates did not opt for this option, but those who did seemed to have vocabulary on the topic. respond to an email from a cousin who invited them for dinner. Most candidates did not opt for this option. Candidates were given six guidelines to use in their response. Like in Option A all the guidelines proposed different types of tenses which ought to be followed. However, candidates seemed to lack skill in the use of both the Past tense and the 'Futur Simple'.

Guidelines proposed different types of tenses to be used. Guidelines a), d) and e) proposed the Present Tense b) and c) Passé Composé, while f) proposed le Futur. Most candidates ignored the tenses and wrote either in the present or near future tense.

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In guideline e, candidates were supposed to explain why they want to organize the party with the cousin. Many candidates lost the mark because they misinterpreted it as 'explain why you want to organize the party for your sister. Most candidates failed to get this one correct for lack of vocabulary.

Generally, for item 5, candidates showed knowledge of vocabulary across the two options though limited at some guidelines. Their grammatical structures were also found to be very poor. Many candidates failed to construct simple sentences with subject and verb. Those who managed showed limitations in conjugation of the present tense and other tenses.

Most candidates also ignored the word limit for this section and chose to write very long prose with unnecessary or irrelevant information. Centres should therefore ensure that they enforce the skill of answering questions on their candidates, ensure that they fully understand the demands of the question and that they respect word limit and format.

PAPER 3: SPEAKING EXAMINATION

General Comments

The Speaking Examination (Paper 3) of the French Junior Certificate Examination, comprised of three tasks and was marked out of 40. The paper examined candidates' ability to apply French language on different life situations through speaking. In the first task, candidates were expected to talk about themselves following a guide from the examiner.

Item 2 presented a role-play, where the candidate and the examiner engaged in a situation of communication by playing roles, where for instance the candidate would be a client at a shop buying something.

The last task, Item 3, was a topic presentation where candidates were expected to make a presentation on the topic they prepared prior to the day of the examination. The presentation is followed by questions to check if the candidate understood what they were presenting about.

The syllabus was being examined for the second time this year, and generally, candidates' performance was somewhat poor compared to the previous year. However, some candidates in some Centres were able to display good knowledge of the French Language structures and vocabulary through speaking, a good sign that centres are on the right track in helping candidates achieve this outcome.

It is however worth noting that there is still room for improvement in as far as pronunciation is concerned. Since this is an oral examination, pronunciation plays a vital role in whether a candidate gains or loses marks because they are awarded marks based on whether they are able to audibly converse or not. It was observed that a lot of candidates across Centres still struggle with speaking French. Centres are therefore encouraged to practice phonetics with their candidates to ensure that they do not lose marks because they could not be heard or understood due to mispronunciation of French words.

Comments on Individual Questions

1 Self Introduction

In this task, candidates were expected to present themselves following pointers from the examiner. Unlike the previous year where they were at liberty to say as much as they wanted or could, this time they were told what to present on. However, in most cases candidates were extending beyond what they had been asked for, and in some instances they did not even cover what had been asked for. After the presentations, they had to respond to some questions about themselves and their immediate environment.

It was generally observed that candidates came with a memorized version of this item, and as a result it became hard for them to follow the examiners instructions on how to tackle the item. The performance was average on this item, but generally candidates did manage to utter something comprehensible about self. However, most candidates were thrown off by the questions asked, and this showed that they did not understand what information was being asked for. They also struggled with responding to questions that had a negative structure. Centres are encouraged to expose candidates to varied real life situations where they can express themselves and talk about themselves and their immediate environment under different contexts. In some instances, candidates lost marks because when they were asked to talk about

themselves they instead talked about other people. It was also observed that in most Centres candidates lost marks because they failed to give reasons for doing something, or for liking something, as asked in the questions following their presentations about self. Candidates ought to be advised to refrain from cramming and rather learn how to talk about themselves with ease so that even when asked for specific information they are able to respond appropriately. Centres should desist from making candidates cram information because they get thrown off and confused if things are asked in a different way than what they had anticipated.

The task is done in 2 minutes and therefore candidates should be encouraged to listen and follow guidelines given by the examiners and avoid going astray in their presentations and missing what has been asked for because they end up losing marks as a result.

In conclusion, Centres are encouraged to give candidates practice in answering questions through oral interviews and other means that will enable candidates to talk about themselves and build their confidence. Although it does not impart on the candidates' marks, Centres are encouraged to teach learners to respond to questions in full sentences instead of giving one-word answers as was the case in most Centres.

2 Role Play

In this task, there were 10 Role play cards that were shuffled and a candidate had to pick the card at the top to use in the role play. They were given 10 minutes to prepare for the role play prior to the examination. Each role play card presented five (5) tasks for the candidate to perform during their exchange with the examiner. The candidate was at liberty to consult the card during the examination as a guide so that they follow their roles during the dialogue with the examiner.

It was however noted in some Centres that candidates tended to read out the wording in the card instead of performing what the card says they should do. For instance, where a card says "saluez le vendeur" the candidate would say "saluez le vendeur" instead of doing what the task is asking them to do, which is to greet.

The first task for all role plays was for the candidate to greet. Since the setting was mostly formal, candidates should have shown politeness in their greetings, but that was not the case in some Centres, and candidates just said "bonjour" without a title to show respect, as in "bonjour madame". Although this did not affect their scores, Centres are encouraged to teach politeness to candidates as should be applicable in real life situations.

For task 2 of the role play, candidates were expected to say how they wish to be assisted, in response to the examiner's question of what they want. In most cases, candidates came up with good propositions with good structures like "Je voudrais acheter de la viande/ des médicaments/ des stylos" etc. However, there were notable instances where pronunciation became a challenge in some role plays, like those that were making propositions for "tickets, bottes, pain" could not properly say the items. More pronunciation practice is needed at Centres. Centres are encouraged to utilize the internet to assist their candidates with pronunciation to avoid risk of losing marks due to poor phonetics.

Some candidates struggled with vocabulary of naming the item they would like to be assisted with. For instance, most of those who had to buy medication at the pharmacy had difficulties with the correct vocabulary for the item, and many used the word “medicin” which is the English version but means something different in French (it means doctor). This costed them marks.

In task 3, candidates were supposed to give more information on the item they want as per the examiner’s question. It was observed that for some Centres, this task was fairly attempted, with candidates managing to give the information on how much of something they want to buy, or the size they wanted. However, some candidates struggled to respond to questions asked about the services they sought. Some would give colours where they were asked for size. Centres are encouraged to give candidates ample practice on role plays by following the teaching syllabus that has a lot of scenarios where candidates can draw practice on seeking service from various service providers, mimicking real life situations.

Task 4 tested candidates’ ability to ask questions. During the exchange with the examiner, there is a role in the card where the candidate has to ask a question. Many missed out on this because they were failing to follow their role as depicted in their role play card. However, there were Centres where candidates were able to construct good question structures suited to their cards, earning the 3 marks.

In the last task, candidates were supposed to respond to the proposition made by the examiner and demonstrate their ability to take leave using expressions such as “au revoir madame/monsieur, bonne journée madame, à bientôt.” Generally, candidates were failing to answer the question asked by the examiner but were able to take leave mostly. It was also noted that in most centres candidates could not take leave as the task stated, and had to be prompted, which costed some marks. Some could not take leave at all even after prompting, resulting in loss of marks. Centres are urged to impact knowledge of expressions that they should use to show politeness in conversations, such expressions as “merci, s’il vous plait” and the use of “madame/ monsieur” during a conversation with an elder.

Centres are encouraged to engage with candidates in real life conversations to prepare them for this task, they also ought to be taught how to follow a role play card, and to also learn to follow a conversation that depicts a normal everyday dialogue between a service provider and a client. Emphasis should also be made on the use of polite register in dialogues.

3 Topic Presentation

In this item, candidates were presented with a topic presentation booklet containing 10 topics, which was sent to Centres three (3) months prior to the day of the examination. Each candidate had to select one topic and prepare a presentation on it.

The topics each had five (5) guidelines that the candidate was expected to address during their presentation. Generally, the presentations were poor, and in some instances candidates were panicking and this resulted in them forgetting to cover some of the points in the guidelines. It was also noted that although candidates had had ample time to prepare their presentations, they failed to deliver well because of challenges of pronunciation. Some candidates had difficulties pronouncing words as they should be, and examiners had to dissect the meanings and sense of their utterances to understand what they were trying to say.

It was also noted that some candidates ignored the guidelines and presented on their topics without following the given guidelines, resulting in loss of marks. It is therefore important that Centres encourage candidates to treat each guideline as a question that needs to be responded to. They may add their own information but have to ensure that they address the given guidelines for their topic of choice.

Although the topic presentation booklet sent to Centres had ten (10) topics from which candidates had to choose, it was noted that in some Centres candidates were presenting the same topics and there was lack of variety. This was also observed the previous year, where the majority of candidates were presenting on “Ma Famille.” This year the cluster was on “Mon College” in most Centres, and in some, more than 50% of candidates presented on “Mon Professeur Prefere”. Such trends are discouraged as they bring suspicions that there is a lot of teacher influence on the candidates’ choice of topic. This is so because an observation was made that in some Centres, candidates seemed to have a template of the same topic and presented the same information with changes or differences here and there. Centres are advised that although candidates may be assisted during their preparation for this examination, they should be allowed to prepare their own presentations without being given a template that is alike for everyone in that Centre. Centres are advised to desist from such practice because it affects the authenticity of the candidates’ presentations.

Candidates who were able to present well on their topics mostly struggled with answering the follow up questions after their presentations. This was a sign that candidates cram their presentations without necessarily comprehending what they are saying, and without adequate information about their topic so that they can be able to respond to any question related to their topic.

Few candidates were able to respond to questions and even use a variety of tenses in their presentation, something which is commendable because the teaching syllabus does have scenarios that teach the use of other tenses besides the present tense.

Generally, it was noted that Centres still need to work hard to teach candidates the use of the future and past tenses, in addition to the commonly used present tense. That will help candidates in their ability to narrate stories and express themselves well without being restricted to the present tense. Candidates also need practice on responding to questions related to their everyday lives and their immediate environment.

There is also a need for Centres to advise candidates to choose varied topics from the 10 that they are presented with, so as to avoid clustering in the same topics and having some topics being left out. The Centres are also advised to desist from writing presentations for their candidates but should rather only offer guidance and help them work on their pronunciation and confidence.

Centres’ Preparedness for the French Practical Examination

Most Centres were prepared for the examination in the sense that the three (3) rooms required for the examination were identified and somewhat prepared beforehand. However, Chief Invigilators in most Centres should train the invigilators and get them familiarized with the administration of the French Speaking Examination.

The requirement was for each and every Centre to have 3 rooms for the administration of this practical component, being:

1. The Quarantine room
2. The Preparation room and
3. The Examination room

Most Centres used the library as the examination room, which proved to be the most conducive because it had minimal disruptions. It is also worth commending those Centres that went further to cordon the 3 rooms, especially the examination room, thus alerting people that there was an ongoing examination and they ought to stay clear of those and avoid disturbances and distractions. In some Centres, the 3 rooms selected for the examination were far from the rest of the school buildings, making them very conducive because there was minimal disturbance. It is also advisable that whenever or wherever possible, the rooms be at reasonable proximity of each other to avoid delays during the examination that can be caused by distance between the rooms.

In most Centres, examiners were delayed to start the examination because upon arrival, they noted that the invigilators did not know what was expected of them and the examiners had to brief them before commencement. This caused delays because such briefings by examiners had to be done whenever new invigilators were coming in to replace the outgoing ones. Centres are advised to get all those who are to partake in the running of the French examination well trained before the commencement of the examination

There are instances where the examining team is supposed to finish a Centre, and this sometimes calls for working beyond the school's operating hours and, therefore Centres are requested to be accommodating to such cases for the smooth running of the examination without putting either the candidate or the examining team at a disadvantage.

Finally, Centres are also advised to ensure that they avail the candidate list, and the attendance register to the examining team. Centres that were able to provide tags with candidate numbers, candidate list and the BEC attendance register, are commended for such. Last but not least, chief invigilators are advised to always be vigilant and ensure that rules governing the administration of the French Oral exam are followed, including ensuring that teachers of French do not interact with candidates at any point during the administration of the examination. The role of the teachers of French ends with the preparation of rooms for the examination.

In conclusion, Centres are commended for the positive reception accorded to the 2024 examining teams and such a gesture is appreciated.

Recommendations

- Candidates ought to be given more practice on all skill areas of the subject being speaking, listening, reading and writing so that they may develop their overall communication ability of the French language
- More listening practice tests would help candidates to sharpen their skills on listening comprehension and raising their general level of understanding.
- Candidates ought to be given more practice on writing skills to ensure that they communicate easily through writing.
- More exercises on different tenses such as talking about past weekend routine can also help building their skills in the 'passé composé' and 'imparfait.'
- Taking advantage of the internet to show the candidate places such as the 'cinema', museums and other places of entertainment can help build knowledge on such places (there were instances where candidates seemed not to know what a cinema is).
- It is also very important that during learning candidates are exposed to aspects of 'socio-culturel' because some of the content used in the examination is based on the French culture.
- More innovative approaches to working with candidates during their learning of the subject ought to be implemented as a way of continuing to motivate them to learn the subject and not give up during the process of answering questions.