

# PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA  
EXAMINATIONS  
COUNCIL

**JCE FRENCH**

**2025**



## INTRODUCTION

This marking report constitutes feedback on candidates' performance from the 2025 JCE French examination which was made up of 3 components: The Listening and Reading Comprehension (Paper 1), the Language Use (Paper 2) and the Speaking examination (Paper 3). The report is meant to help Centres to acquaint themselves with what is expected of the candidates and how the teaching syllabus is examined.

## PAPER 1: LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION

### General Comments

The component was derived from the listening and reading skills that candidates are required to have acquired at the end of their 3-year JC. This component had 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. However, an observation made was that a lot of candidates did not respond to some items across all the Centres. Candidates even left multiple-choice items without responses.

### Comments on Individual Questions

Extracts 1,2,3 and 5 comprised three multiple-choice items and two short-answer items. Extract 4 consisted of four multiple-choice items and one short-answer item.

### LISTENING EXTRACT 1

- 1 The item was looking for a specific fact, the name of the hotel. Most candidates did not do well in this item. Some candidates struggled with the spelling of the name (**Hotél de la Gare**), giving options such as **garde**, **guerre**, or **gjarre**. In some Centres, candidates did not even attempt the item.
- 2 The item required candidates to say the time for which the man was making his reservation. Candidates were to choose one option out of the three. The item was accessible to most candidates.
- 3 This item required candidates to give the number of people for whom the man was making the reservation. Most candidates did not do well in this item. Some candidates could not spell the number **deux** correctly, giving options such as **doux** and **duex**. Some candidates left it blank.
- 4 The item required candidates to find the correct spelling of the name of the man who was making the reservation. Candidates were given three options to choose from. The item was satisfactorily done by the candidates.



- 5 The item required candidates to say what the man needed to do to confirm his reservation. Candidates were to choose one option out of the three. The item was accessible to most candidates.

### **LISTENING EXTRACT 2**

- 6 The item was looking for a specific fact; the name of the person that Gabriel called. Most candidates did not do well in this item. Some candidates heard the name Elisa but could not spell it well. In some Centres, candidates did not even attempt the item.
- 7 The item required candidates to find a reason as to why Gabriel called. Candidates were to choose one option out of the three. The item was not accessible to most candidates.
- 8 The item required candidates to find a specific fact. They were required to say where Gabriel was. The responses to the item showed a lot of guesswork, as they randomly picked from amongst the three options given.
- 9 The item required candidates to find a specific fact. It also required candidates to analyse a given picture. Using the picture, they were to say in which direction Gabriel was supposed to go after passing between the Post office and the Marketplace. The responses to the item showed a lot of guesswork, as evidenced by their random selection from any of the three options given.
- 10 This was a short-answer item. It required candidates to say the number of the lady's apartment. The response to the item was a number *24* or *Vingt-quatre*. The item was not accessible to most candidates, and some left it unanswered. Some candidates wrote more than one number. There were responses such as 24 80. Some wrote the number in French in words, while others could not spell it correctly.

### **LISTENING EXTRACT 3**

- 11 The item required candidates to say what the lady was announcing. Candidates were to choose one option out of the three. Responses from candidates covered all the three options given.
- 12 This was a short-answer item. It required candidates to say the percentage reduction proposed for perfumes. The item was not accessible to most candidates. Some gave responses that had nothing to do with the reduction while others left the item blank.
- 13 The item required candidates to say what the offer was for those buying clothes. Candidates were to choose one option out of the three that were supplied. Responses from candidates covered all the three options given.
- 14 The item required candidates to write down what was needed to gain from this promotion. The item was not accessible to candidates. Some candidates who heard that one needed a card, went even further and wrote options such as *carte bancaire*.
- 15 The item required candidates to say where the client service of *Belgolux* shop is located. Candidates were to give one option from the three that were presented. Candidates gave responses covering all the three options.



**LISTENING EXTRACT 4**

- 16** The item required candidates to identify the dish that the girl and her brother eat in the morning. It also required candidates to analyse a given picture. The item was accessible to most candidates.
- 17** The item required candidates to identify where the family does their cycling. The item proved to be inaccessible to most candidates as they picked the correct response, *sur les pistes cyclables*. Some candidates went for option B, *sur la route*.
- 18** The item required candidates to identify what the family does after dinner. Candidates had to choose from three options. The item was accessible to most candidates.
- 19** The item required candidates to say what kind of books the girl loved. Although most candidates could recognise the type of books, they gave their responses in English as adventure, instead of the French version *aventure*.
- 20** The item required candidates to state the reason why the girl loved Saturdays. Three options were given, from which candidates were to choose one. Responses varied equally amongst the three options.

**LISTENING EXTRACT 5**

- 21** The item required candidates to identify the year in which *La fête de la musique* began. They were given three options to choose from. Responses covered all the three responses given.
- 22** The item required candidates to find a reason that made the festival important. Three options were given to choose from. In the passage, it was mentioned that the festival happened in an open space and that it took place every year. The two responses were therefore popular among the candidates' responses.
- 23** The item was a short-answer item and required candidates to say who chose the place for the festival. Some candidates tried to respond to the item but struggled with the spelling and gave responses such as *le mari*, which gave a different meaning.
- 24** The item was a short-answer item and required candidates to say how much one had to pay for the festival. Some candidates could not follow the issue of it being free and following up on the use of the combination, they gave responses from the top of their heads.
- 25** The item required candidates to identify the reason why, at times, the festival is held on Saturday after the 21<sup>st</sup> of June. Three options were given to choose from. Some candidates gave the opposite of the expected response, saying it was to limit the number of people who attended.



## Section B

This section was based on short reading extracts. Extracts 1, 2, 3 and 4 had two multiple-choice items and three short-answer items. Extract 5 had four short-answer items and one multiple-choice item.

### READING EXTRACT 1

- 26** The item required candidates to say what the document is. It had three options to choose from. The item consisted of a program of a museum showing opening and closing times. Most candidates picked option C, *l'annonce L'Ouverture du Musée Picasso*, as opposed to the correct response B, *la programmation du musée Picasso*.
- 27** This item was a short-answer question. It required candidates to say where *Le Musée Picasso* is located. Most candidates managed to find out where the museum is located, however, they mostly picked up the sentence that carried the response, with some even starting their response with national.
- 28** The item required candidates to identify the time of the day when the museum closes on Wednesday. They were to pick the correct picture from the three pictures that were provided. Candidates were to analyse the program given and use it to work out the time of the day when the museum closes. The item was not accessible to most candidates.
- 29** The item was a short-answer item. It required candidates to say on what day of the week the museum opened at 0939hrs. The extract mentioned that the museum opens at 0930hrs on weekends. Most candidates gave their response as *weekend*, rather than giving the specific date, either Saturday or Sunday.
- 30** The item was a short-answer question. It required candidates to find the reason why people could not visit the museum on Mondays. Most candidates just picked the statement that had the expression *fermé le lundi*.

### READING EXTRACT 2

- 31** The item required candidates to say who the recipient of the postcard 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 required candidates to say how many kids Omar Sy has. Some candidates managed to say the number of kids Omar Sy had, while others picked the sentence that referred to Omar Sy's siblings.
- 33** This item required candidates to say who François Cluzet was. Candidates had to pick the correct option from the three. Some candidates could not relate *vedette* to *star* and picked the other two options, being the producer and the screenwriter.
- 34** The item required candidates to say how Omar Sy made his breakthrough into the American film industry. Most candidates just picked long sentences from the passage and gave them as their responses.



**READING EXTRACT 3**

- 35** The item required candidates to say what Lupin is according to the text. The item was not accessible to candidates, as most picked the sentence *il est la vedette de la série Lupin*, and in so doing did not respond to the item nor show an understanding of its requirement.
- 36** The item required candidates to say what was proposed in the extract. Most candidates managed to pick the correct response, even though they just picked randomly without showing any understanding of what the item required.
- 37** The item was a true or false statement. It required candidates to say whether the statement that lessons take the whole day was true or false. Most candidates managed to find the correct justification, but some said it was true when it was actually false.
- 38** The item was a true or false statement. It required candidates to say whether the statement that one can register in November was true or false. Some candidates managed to say that it was false but failed to justify their response.

**READING EXTRACT 4**

- 39** The item required candidates to say to whom the letter was written. No name was given for the recipient, and the response expected was her penfriend (correspondent). Some candidates spelled correspondent wrongly, even though it was used in the extract.
- 40** The item required candidates to say where Lille is located. It was accessible for most of the candidates.
- 41** The item required candidates to identify the mode of transport that could be used in Lille. Candidates had to analyse graphics and pick the mode of transport from the three choices given.
- 42** The item required candidates to judge if the statement that it is not easy to move from one shopping centre to another is true or false and justify their response. Most candidates failed to find the true response that the statement is false, but they gave the correct justification.

**READING EXTRACT 5**

- 43** The item was a true or false statement. It required candidates to say whether the statement that Jean is an only child was true or false. Most candidates managed to say that the statement was false. In their justification, it became apparent that some candidates related *fils*, (son) with *filles*, (girl) as they mostly said that *il est un garçon*, (He is a boy).
- 44** The item required candidates to identify the profession of the mother. Three options were given to choose from. The three options were equally picked by the candidates.
- 45** The item required candidates to find a reason why Jean could not have an aquarium. Candidates picked long sentences from the passage and gave those as their responses.
- 46** The item required candidates to say what the family intended to do for Jean to celebrate his good performance in school. Candidates picked long sentences from the passage and gave them as their response.



## PAPER 2: SHORT ANSWER AND STRUCTURED

### General Comments

The main aim of the paper is to test candidates on their ability to communicate through writing. 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. In addition, they are also required to produce a variety of short, simple texts describing present, past, and future events, and also demonstrate their ability to use a range of basic vocabulary, very simple grammatical structures, and sentence patterns connected with simple linking words.

Generally, candidates managed to communicate, but with a lot of difficulty. They had difficulty coming up with simple French sentences; they showed a lot of struggles even in conjugation of '**er**' verbs in the present tense, which seem to be the easiest in French. There were also a lot of limitations with vocabulary and the usage of both the Future Tense and the Past Tense. Those who managed to use the tenses would make mistakes that mostly altered the meanings of the sentences.

However, some Centres seemed to have been well prepared for this paper. In such Centres, most candidates struggled with the '**Passé**' and the '**Futur Simple**' but did well in using the present tense and the '**Futur Proche**'. Many candidates demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary to be used for various situations of communication. This is indeed commendable.

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

The paper consisted of two sections, Section A and Section B. Section A was based on short answers requiring specific answers as well as creating very short stories based on pictures given, while Section B comprised of short messages in the form of an SMS and an email.

#### Section A

1 The item demanded that candidates give their personal information in a scenario of registering for a dance club. The item had 10 questions (a to j), and each was worth a mark.

- (a) **Nom et prénom**: the candidates had to give their name and surname. They did well generally, being able to provide their full names as required.
- (b) **Date de naissance**: needed them to give their birth dates, and although most were able to respond well, it was noted that in some cases, they were giving the current year (2025) instead of a realistic birth year for their age and, hence losing marks. It was noted that some candidates tried to fill in their birthdates, including the year, using full sentences. While this might be ideal for training them at Centres, on spelling, it is not realistic. The year is always written in numbers when filling out forms. Though they did not lose marks for *doing* this, it should be discouraged.
- (c) **Ville**: required them to give the names of their town. They were able to score marks in this item, as the majority were able to provide the required information. However, some were giving names of their physical addresses, and this should be discouraged, as they are expected to be able to distinguish between "**ville**" and "**quartier**."



- (d) **Nom d'école:** needed name of a school, and they got it right. However, they should be advised to avoid using the English versions like "JSS" and "Junior Secondary School" as was the case in most Centres.
- (e) **Niveau scolaire.** Here they were to give information on their level at school. They gave the names of schools in this item, mostly primary schools. This showed a lack of understanding of what "*niveau*" means.
- (f) **Langue de Communication:** they mostly demonstrated knowledge of what "*langue*" means, However, some put for example, "*anglaise*" instead of "*anglais*". While this is not wrong, it should also be explained that it becomes appropriate if written as '*langue française*', not just '*française* alone.
- (g) **Numéro de Portable:** this item required them to give a phone number, which in most instances was a challenge because they seemed not to understand what kind of number was being asked for. Centres ought to teach their candidates how to give authentic information, and in this case, cellphone numbers.
- (h) **Email:** most candidates did not know the right email format, and Centres are encouraged to teach their candidates. Responses to this item were varied, like "*@ thuto.com*", "*thuto@gmail*" "*thuto@email.com*" and "*thuto@mail.com*."
- (i) **Musique préférée:** in this item, candidates were to give their preferred music genre. It was noted that they tended to give names of musicians instead, and this led to the loss of a mark. Candidates also seemed not to know different '*genres de musique*'. They mostly put '*Amapiano* or just '*Piano*'. Maybe there is a need for Centres to expose candidates to different types of music, not just their local types.
- (j) **Jour d'entraînement préféré:** the item needed them to give their preferred day for training, being any of the seven (7) days of the week. Most candidates across most Centres mistook "*jour*" for "*jouer*" and gave sport codes.

- 2 This item presented a picture that the candidates had to interpret. The scenario was that they had a Facebook blog and wanted to update it with their school routine. The picture showed a boy at school performing different activities, and candidates had to use the pictures to say what they do at school. The activities were represented in the form of 4.

Examples of phrases were '*j'assiste au cours / j'ai cours avec Madame D, je fais mes exercices, je discute mes avec mon prof, mon prof m'aide, je vais à la bibliothèque/ pour étudier avec mes amis, je travaille avec mes amis, je joue aux échecs avec mes amis*. Candidates were able to identify some of the verbs they were expected to use to communicate. However, they lacked knowledge of simple sentence structure. They communicated with very poor sentence structure, mostly using misspelled words or unconjugated verbs. Many candidates failed to use the correct vocabulary for the game of chess, which is supposed to be "*les échecs*" and opted to use the English version.

Centres are advised to train candidates more on pictorial interpretations; encourage them to always identify '*situation de communication*' (*c'est qui? où sont-ils?, que font-ils, comment etc'*) to



help them best describe the pictures. The candidates should also be given practice in writing simple 'subject-verb' or 'subject-verb-object' sentences.

- 3 Candidates were required to study the picture and describe what was happening in the picture. It was a race at school or at the stadium with other children cheering or shouting. The expected vocabulary included '**Ce sont des élèves / Ils sont au stade / à l'école / au terrain de sport / ils font de l'athlétisme / ils courent. Les autres élèves crient et ils s'amuse**n't'. To gain marks, candidates had to express themselves using simple sentences with good structure and appropriate vocabulary. Candidates struggled a lot with this item. They mostly managed to identify the expression '**ils font du sport**'. However, they mostly ended there with no knowledge of the verbs '**courir**' and '**crier**'. Very few candidates managed to use the verb '**courir**'.

### Section B

- 4 In this item, candidates were to write an SMS of 40 to 60 words to their cousin to tell them about their holiday plans. The guidelines were represented in the form of pictures, and they were expected to show their creative skills by using the pictures to guide them to write the SMS. They had to;

- Mention that they were packing their clothes or preparations
- Mention their mode of transport or where they are going to lodge
- Mention the airport and that they were travelling by aeroplane
- Mention activities done during the holiday

Generally, candidates did well in this item. They managed to communicate most of the essential elements like '**aller en vacances**', '**voyager**', and '**nager**'. Most of them struggled to identify the verb '**faire les valises**' and opted to use other words carrying the same meaning, like '**ranger les vêtements**'. This was commendable and should be encouraged all the time. Centres should encourage candidates to avoid the use of English words but to try to use the little French they have acquired, because, at this level, marking is done based on communication and not 100% correctness of structures. Many gained marks for the use of tense because the nature of the question demanded that they use mostly present or future tenses, which are easier in French compared to the past tense. Centres are, however, still advised to ensure that candidates are conversant with different tenses as per the expectations of the syllabus.

This year, most candidates showed that they had thoroughly read and studied the stimulus before they wrote, unlike the other years where they would ignore the stimulus. Centres are therefore commended for ensuring that candidates were advised on this.

- 5 In this item, candidates were presented with two options, A and B; they had to choose one. Candidates mostly picked Option A, where they had to write an email to a friend inviting him or her to lunch. Six guidelines were provided in the form of questions for candidates to use in their answers.

Candidates were mostly able to use the correct format requested by the task. However, they mostly wrote an incomplete or wrong structure of the e-mail address, though they knew they had to write the e-mail. While others left out the 'at sign' (**l'arobase @**) or misplaced it, some left out the email domain or email provider, such as Yahoo, Gmail, Outlook, etc. It was evident that candidates knew



how the email address ought to be constructed, but they needed more practice with it so that they would not forget during the examination.

### Option A

Candidates were to write an email to a friend inviting them to lunch. Six guidelines were provided for the candidates to follow. Most candidates managed to communicate what was asked of them by guidelines (a) and (b) but had a lot of difficulty communicating other guidelines. They did not have the right vocabulary to express guideline (c), which demanded them to use the verbs such as '**reussir**'. Some were able to communicate the idea of passing exams with other alternative expressions, such as '**tu as bien travaillé**', which was very commendable. Guideline (e) was mostly misinterpreted as candidates took the verb '**apporter**' to mean '**porter**,' They mostly talked about clothes to wear during lunch. Guidelines also show the type of tenses candidates had to use; however, candidates generally failed to pick the different tenses presented in every guideline. At guideline (d), for example, they had to indicate what they had already done to prepare, but they mostly communicated what they were going to do to prepare. Candidates should be advised to always read and study the guidelines properly before answering.

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 to accept an invitation from a classmate to a picnic. Very few candidates opted 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 that ought to be followed. However, candidates seemed to lack skill in the use of both the Past tense and the '**Futur Proche**'. They mostly opted to write using the Present Tense. Candidates were mostly comfortable answering guidelines a) and e) only. Guideline b) was also supposed to be easy, but candidates mostly showed a lack of understanding of the verb '**se rencontrer**'. The notion of picnic also seemed not popular with some, as they would talk instead about going to the cinema instead of having a picnic. Guideline d) was in two parts, and candidates had to answer all the 2 parts to gain the mark. Some answered just one part and left out the other. The verb '**apporter**' here also posed a problem of misinterpretation.

Most candidates seemed not to understand the word '**se sentir**' and failed at both Option A and B to express their sentiments as was expected of them.

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 a subject and a 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 the word limit and format.



## PAPER 3: SPEAKING

### General Comments

The Speaking Examination (Paper 3) of the French Junior Certificate Examination comprised three tasks and was marked out of 40. The paper examined candidates' ability to apply the French language in different life situations through speaking.

In the first task, which was **Self Introduction**, candidates were expected to talk about themselves following a guide from the examiner.

Task 2 presented a **Role-Play**, where the candidate and the examiner engaged in a situation of communication by playing roles in a dialogue.

The last task was a **Topic Presentation** where candidates were expected to make a presentation on the topic they prepared before the day of the examination. The presentation is followed by questions based on the topic they presented.

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 although there is significant improvement in the way candidates speak French, there is still a need for improvement in terms of pronunciation. Although one ought to appreciate the fact that pronunciation varies from one person to another, the variation should be minimal and not affect or distort communication. Since this is an oral examination, pronunciation plays a vital role in whether a candidate gains or loses marks, as they are awarded marks based on whether they can audibly converse. Centres are therefore encouraged to practice phonetics with their candidates to ensure that they do not lose marks because they cannot 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. However, in some cases, candidates were ignoring what they had been asked to talk about and just made seemingly memorized introductions of themselves, ignoring the pointers given.

After the presentation, they had to respond to some follow-up questions about themselves and their immediate environment. Generally, they were able to respond well to simpler questions, and as the questions elevated in difficulty, for instance, being asked a negative question, most candidates failed to respond, and would mostly respond in the affirmative, and fail to justify their responses.

This demonstrated a lack of understanding of the questions asked about oneself, something that should ideally be simple to articulate at this level. Centres are encouraged to expose candidates to varied real-life situations where they can express themselves and talk about themselves, and their immediate environment, in different contexts. An observation was made that in some Centres, candidates would give the same type of response to a question, and this ought to be discouraged.

Centres should expose candidates to different ways of expressing themselves to avoid monotonous responses to questions.

At this level, candidates are expected to be able to respond well to basic questions centered around themselves, and therefore, Centres are urged to give candidates ample practice on different ways of answering a variety of questions about themselves.

The task is done in 2 minutes, and candidates should be trained on listening skills so that when they are asked a question, they can come up with an appropriate response to it.

In conclusion, Centres are encouraged to give candidates practice in understanding and answering questions through oral interviews and other means that will enable candidates to talk about themselves and build their confidence. Centres are applauded on the significant improvement noted in the way candidates attempted to respond to questions in full, instead of giving one-word answers as was the case in the past.

## **2 Role Play**

For this task, a candidate is made to pick one Role Play card out of at least 9 and given 10 minutes to prepare for their role in the Role Play. The cards are shuffled, and a candidate has to pick the card at the top to use in the Role Play. The candidate's Role Play card has five (5) tasks that the candidate is expected to play out during the examination when they have a dialogue with the examiner. When the time comes for the task, The candidate is allowed to use their card during the examination as a guide so that they follow their roles during the exchange with the examiner.

The role plays presented varied scenarios that the candidates had to study and ensure they understood so as to be able to decide on the right register to use during the dialogue. The scenario particularly guides the candidate on how to execute the first task of "Saluez." Some scenarios demanded the use of an informal register in greetings, which proved to be a challenge for most candidates who tended to mix the register, for example, "salut madame." Centres are encouraged to teach candidates how to greet in both formal and informal settings, not forgetting to show politeness, in different real-life situations.

The Role Plays presented various diverse scenarios that candidates were expected to study, understand, and play out. This proved to be a challenge for most candidates who demonstrated a lack of appropriate vocabulary to use to express themselves and say what they want. Centres ought to give candidates as much exposure as possible to different scenarios presented in the teaching syllabus and help candidates acquire adequate vocabulary and structures that they may apply in the role play task.

In task 3, candidates were asked a question regarding the service they needed, and the task was fairly attempted, showing that they understood the question asked and were able to provide the information needed. Although it did not impact on their marks, most candidates failed to come up with full structured responses, and instead, gave one-word responses. They should be taught how to answer questions in complete sentences to mimic real-life interactions.

Task 4 tested candidates' ability to ask questions, which proved to be very difficult for most candidates in various Centres. Most opted to read out the task instead of doing what the task demands. There were very few candidates who managed to score 2 or 3 marks for this task. This



calls for more practice from Centres to teach students how to ask questions related to real-life scenarios. They need to be taught question words and how to construct questions using simple structures.

The last task was for candidates to respond to either a question or a proposition and then either thank or take leave. Although this was seemingly a simple task, some candidates lost marks because they either failed to respond to the question / proposition or had to be prompted to thank or take leave. It is also evident that some Centres train their candidates to respond with either “*oui*” or “*non*” regardless of what is being asked. This creates an awkwardness in some cases because, for instance, if the candidate is asked “*Avez-vous des questions?*” and they respond with “*oui, merci / au revoir*” it clearly shows they did not understand the question.

Failure to follow the role play and know what task they should be performing at any given point during the dialogue with the examiner hinders the smooth execution of the role play. This ought not to be the case, however, since they are given the chance to follow the flow of role play as they are allowed to refer to their role play cards during the examination. The evident challenge is that they simply get lost during the course of the exchange. More practice is needed in this regard, so that they know how a role play is done and how to understand their roles in the role play.

### **3 Topic Presentation**

In this item, candidates were presented with a topic presentation booklet containing 10 topics, which was sent to Centres two (2) months before the day of the examination. Each candidate had to choose a topic and prepare to make a presentation on that selected topic during their examination.

The topics each had five (5) guidelines that the candidate was expected to address during their presentation. In some Centres, it was noted that the candidate would present on the topic, but not follow the guidelines given. Some would start off by explaining the topic before addressing the guidelines provided. This posed a challenge because the examination is timed, and such tendencies can end up disadvantaging the candidate, who might be timed out before getting into the actual presentation that addresses the guidelines given. A few Centres did well in addressing the guidelines and focusing only on those.

There was a significant improvement in some Centres in terms of pronunciation, although there is still room for more improvements. Centres are therefore further urged to incorporate phonetics, as it is part of the teaching syllabus, to teach candidates the sound system of French and hence improve their fluency in the language.

There is still a concern that in most Centres, candidates cluster in the same topics and leave out some. The topic presentation booklet sent to Centres has ten (10) topics from which candidates have to choose, and they should be encouraged to vary their choices of topics to avoid leaving others out.

This year, the topics that were most popular are: Topic 1: “*Ma Journée scolaire*” and Topic 3: “*Mes Matières scolaires*”, whereas the least popular topics were Topic 7: “*Le roman que je lis*” and Topic 10: “*Les sports au collège*.” In some Centres the topics were spread across, and this is commendable. Other Centres are encouraged to do the same and come up with means of ensuring that no topic is left out when candidates make their choices, so as to have variety and minimize chances of them influencing one another before and during the examination.



Although most candidates were able to make their presentations well, they had difficulties responding to follow-up questions after their presentations. This could be because they did not understand the topic in general, or they are limited in knowledge of how questions are asked. The other challenge that was evident was that they lacked knowledge of future and past tense, and when asked questions in those tenses, they got thrown off and failed to comprehend what the question is asking. Very few candidates were able to give correct answers to questions asked in other tenses besides the present tense.

### **CENTRES' PREPAREDNESS FOR THE FRENCH PRACTICAL EXAMINATION**

There is great improvement in Centre's readiness for the French practical examination, as Centres are now getting familiar with it and how it is run. Almost all Centres were prepared for the examination and had prepared the three (3) rooms required for the examination beforehand. However, Chief Invigilators in some Centres were new to their Centres and had not experienced the French practical examination in their previous schools. They were, however, ready to learn from the examiners and had the exam run smoothly, nonetheless. Training of the invigilators was poor in some instances, and the onus was on the examiners to ensure that all are briefed on the expectations of the French-speaking examination.

The requirement was for the Centres 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, like was the case in the previous year, used the library as the examination room, which has proven to be the most conducive because it has minimal disturbances.

Some Centres went further to cordon off the preparation and the examination rooms, which helped minimize noise and movement, something that is commendable and can ideally be done by all Centres.

It is also advisable that, where possible, the rooms be at a reasonable proximity to avoid delays during the examination, and to allow for quick assessment by the examiners in case they have to move between the rooms for whatever reason that might arise during the course of the examination.

In some Centres, the exchange of invigilators caused some delays, and they had to keep briefing each set of invigilators. It would be helpful to have all invigilators who are set to partake in the whole examination present on the first day when the examiners arrive, so that they can be briefed all at once, such that when they get started with the exam, there are no breaks necessitated by the briefing of incoming invigilators.

Centres are also advised to get all those who are to partake in the running of the French examination well-trained before the commencement of the examination.

It was noted in some Centres that the candidate list prepared by the Centres differed from the BEC list, and this raised concerns as to why candidates were grouped in a certain manner. Centres are therefore advised to use the BEC candidate list when they draw theirs, and to ensure that such a list shows the



candidates' topic numbers because some candidates tend to forget their topics of presentation, probably due to panic.

Centres are also advised to ensure that they provide the candidate attendance register to the examining team for signing by the candidates.

Some Centres were able to provide tags with candidate numbers and are applauded for such.

Lastly, chief invigilators are advised to familiarize themselves with the rules governing the administration of the French Oral exam and to ensure that they are followed, including ensuring that teachers of French do not interact with candidates at any point during the course of the examination. The quarantining of ALL French candidates is also mandatory and should not be altered at any point unless necessitated by the concurrent running of another BEC examination.

In conclusion, Centres are commended for the positive reception and hospitality accorded to the 2025 team of examiners, and such a gesture is appreciated.