



General Comments

The new examination model was set in place this year. There were two sections in the written examination: written comprehensions and two essays. The aural comprehension followed in the third hour. The oral examination was also novel insofar as candidates had to prepare a speech about an object, a photo, or a topic chosen by them before the examination.

Oral Examination

There were three teams: two in Hobart and one for the North and North West.

Three criteria were assessed: Criterion 1,2 and 10.

The candidates were well prepared and seemed to enjoy speaking about their object, photo or postcard. They were able to showcase their knowledge and made very commendable efforts to speak with acceptable pronunciation. The objects varied from bracelets, chains, photos of sporting activities and trips to France. The most unusual was part of a horseshoe and foot.

The interesting thing for the examiners in that section of the conversation was that they were able to see who *was saying the truth* as they recognized the friends on the photos. The examiners had fun asking questions which were highly predictable according to the theme presented. An important point should be made clear to the candidates: in the heat and enjoyment of the conversation, examiners may ask questions which are beyond the level of the candidates. If this is the case the candidates are never penalised for not having been able to handle these questions appropriately.

Some general comments:

Depuis quand, il y a longtemps que still pose problems for candidates. Many do not understand what it means.

The use of the *imparfait* and of the future were also problematic for some candidates.

Examiners would like the use of *on* to be more widespread in the conversation part to reflect the language use in France and other francophone countries.

Some candidates gave their maximum energy level to the rendition by heart of the *object part* of the examination. In some cases all the energy was expended and some candidates lost focus in the *conversation part*.

A useful sign that the *object part* is finished could be inserted in advance. Perhaps the candidates could put the object away signaling that they have finished and that the examiners can take over to ask questions. This would make the examination process run more smoothly.

Reading and Responding

Question 1

Candidates experienced difficulties with:

- (b) *la chaleur, n'en est que plus beau*. These were hardly known.
- (d) *rheumatism* is not well known by this generation.
- (e) *de passage* only 3 candidates out of 113 knew this expression *évoqué quelques souvenirs* an expression that was hardly known.

Question 2

The marking team felt that this section was too specific and favoured those with an interest in such a specialized activity.

- (a) was very unclear
- (e) 2 easy marks but *engagement* led us to accept many answers.

Question 3

- (a) only 3 out of 113 got 3 marks here. *Tout au nord* and *en plein centre* were unknown.
- (h) *un réseau d'échanges* was hardly known.

If candidates did not know *donner rendez-vous* they lost marks in 2 questions (e) and (h). Most did not know it and the examiners chose not to penalize candidates twice.

- (d) *petites annonces* was hardly known.

Other comments

It was amusing that a couple of candidates and one examiner thought *le chat* was the cat. Amusing also was the interpretation by a few candidates that *ce petit mot* meant *this little motel*.

Writing in French

The examiners were generally impressed by the overall standard of essay writing. Candidates should ensure that they have addressed all the externally assessed criteria on the examination paper. In this section, candidates were required to write two essays in French, the total word count for both being around 250 words. Some candidates only wrote one essay, thus losing marks.

All the questions lent themselves to repetitions of work done in class. However it was important to package the information according to the required form. Some marks were lost when the writing did not correspond to the form chosen.

All questions appealed to candidates and there was not one question which was favoured by a greater majority of candidates.

Some candidates chose question 5 *It was an unforgettable weekend* but unfortunately did not provide extraordinary reasons for why it was so memorable and out of the ordinary. In question 6 there were memories of the mid-year exam about The Tasmanian of the Year and the candidates did very well in this instance.

The following points should be noted:

Many candidates did not COPY correctly from the paper!! Words like “grand-mère” and phrases like “la semaine prochaine” were frequently misspelled. There is really no excuse.

The examiners found it sometimes VERY hard to mark work in pencil.

Many candidates would have benefited from doing a draft copy of the essay. Marking was sometimes VERY hard with all the crossings out.

We feel that pre-tertiary level candidates should know that Grannies (unless VERY old-fashioned) are addressed these days as “tu” by their grand-children, so some penalties were applied for not using the correct form of address, or not spelling “chère” correctly.

We were impressed by the accuracy of past participles in most cases, although the past participle of “ouvrir” was variously written as “ouvri” or “ouvru”.

Those verbs conjugated with “être” in the Passé Composé created a lot of problems.

Being the first year of such a model it needs to be stressed that teachers should encourage candidates to use a greater variety of tenses and structures. We would recommend that the word requirement of essays be lengthened to give candidates more chance to show what they know. A list of what to include could be made-up at a moderation meeting.

In the setting of the essay topics greater care should be made by the setting examiners to clarify the tasks. Use of 4a, 4b for example could be adopted.

Listening and Responding

Criterion 1 was assessed.

There were 5 spoken texts on a CD. The candidates did not have the visual support they have had the last years. The texts were read very clearly and at a speed that was normal. The nature of the texts was varied and the vocabulary accessible to the majority of the candidates.

In spoken text 1, some candidates did not know the meaning of *petit ami*, *planche à voile*, *ski nautique*.

Most candidates did not understand *les soeurs Williams*. The examiner noted that candidates did not know French regions. *La Martinique* posed problem for candidates.

In spoken text 2, *mon voisin* was not widely known.

In spoken text 3, candidates experienced difficulties with the physical descriptions not understanding words like *mince*.

In spoken text 4, candidates confused *La Provence* with *la province*. Some did not know *chambre d’hôte*. *Le courrier électronique* was not known by the majority of candidates.

In spoken text 5, candidates had problems with *observer*, *les amis de mes parents*, *meilleur*, *moins cher que*, *pas compris*.

The examiner was impressed by the level of understanding from the majority of candidates.

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority
PO Box 147, Sandy Bay 7006
Ph: (03) 6233 6364 Fax: (03) 6224 0175
Email: reception@tqa.tas.gov.au
Internet: <http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au>