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# A-LEVEL FRENCH

7652/3T & 7652/3V Paper 3: Speaking  
Report on the Examination

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7652  
June 2019

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Version: 1.0

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## **Administration**

Teacher-examiners should be familiar with what is required for the correct administration of the tests which is set out in detail in the booklet Notes and Guidance: Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams. Some key reminders are provided below with page references to the above booklet so that the detailed instructions can be consulted.

Recordings should be saved in .mp3 format. File-names for individual student recordings should comply with the required format and all necessary information should be provided, including the name of the teacher-examiner (page 13).

The tests should be introduced according to the information provided in the Summary of Procedures. Once the examiner has stated which stimulus card the student has chosen there is no point asking the student to identify this. The stimulus card should be identified by the letter of the card only and not by its theme and/or sub-theme. Teacher-examiners, in other words, should keep to the script set out in the Summary of Procedures (page 20).

There is a requirement that a hardcopy of each Candidate Record Form, signed by both student and teacher, is enclosed with the test recordings together with the attendance sheet. Centres are also reminded that where they have sought and received approval for their IRP titles, a copy of the IRP approval form with the adviser's approval statement should be enclosed with the tests.

## **Timings**

It is crucially important that the correct timings are adhered to in each part of the test (page 15). Teacher-examiners did not always comply with this and this sometimes had an adverse effect on the marks awarded for the discussion of the Individual Research Project. Examiners listen to and mark a test for 18 minutes, at which point they stop marking: if a Part 1 discussion lasts 8 minutes (as some did) and the IRP presentation lasts 4 minutes, only 6 minutes of the IRP discussion is listened to and marked, and this will invariably mean a lower mark across the 3 Assessment Objectives for the discussion than would have been the case had the timings been correct.

## **Conduct of the speaking tests: Part 1 Discussion of the Stimulus Card**

On the whole the tests were conducted well and, where teacher-examiners asked the right sorts of questions, students were able to achieve high scores. Some issues remain, however, around the approach needed to allow students to access the higher marks for Assessment Objective 2 and for Assessment Objective 4.

## **Assessment Objective 2**

AO2 relates to the student's understanding of the material on the card. A significant number of teacher-examiners allowed students to under-achieve on this assessment objective by simply accepting the student's response to the first printed question and then moving on to the second printed question. Many students were very selective in the information from the card that they referred to; students also misinterpreted the information on the card; some students gave a very brief response to this first question. If, in any of these scenarios, the response went unchallenged, if there was no further exploration of the material on the card, the understanding of that material could not be judged to be any better than limited or very limited, and the mark for one of those bands was awarded. This is particularly significant in the A-level speaking test as the student has only 5 minutes to prepare the card. There was evidence in many cases that the text had been

skimmed and that the detail of the information had been missed, resulting in either over-generalised or quite inaccurate summaries of what was stated on the card.

It should also be noted that the mark for Assessment Objective 2 is not linked to, and will not be influenced by, any explanation of or information about the visual material on the card. It is inappropriate for students to describe what they see in photographs. The material on the card refers to anything that is printed, and this includes the heading above the visual, although both students and teacher-examiners often overlooked this.

It is also worth reminding teacher-examiners that the requirement of the student to ask two questions in the course of the discussion is linked to Assessment Objective 2. In the A-level speaking test, if the student failed to ask two questions and was not prompted to do so by the teacher-examiner, the mark for AO2 could not be higher than 3 out of 5 ; if the student asked only one question, the mark could not be higher than 4 out of 5.

### **Assessment Objective 4**

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

Most teacher-examiners have understood the importance of tailoring their questions to provide opportunities for their students to achieve the higher marks for AO4. They have realised likewise the need to avoid asking questions inviting students to give a personal opinion about general issues linked to themes and sub-themes (Do you think the Internet is something positive or negative? What are the disadvantages, in your opinion, of single-parent families? – for example). Asking the right sorts of questions needs detailed and thoughtful preparation: teacher-examiners are required to conduct a discussion around the sub-theme on the stimulus-card in the context of France and/or the French-speaking world. This should be a recurrent feature of the 5 to 6 minute discussion: some teacher-examiners were clearly not aware of this and relied solely on the student's response to the 3<sup>rd</sup> printed question for "ticking the AO4 box". In such a case, however, the box was ticked in a very limited way.

In performances where the critical response was either good or very good, it was encouraging to see that some students were now drawing on their knowledge and understanding of themes and sub-themes from beyond the material in course-books. It would seem that the confidence they had in marshalling and using this knowledge influenced their choice of card in the Part 1 discussion, where cards with the more obvious sub-themes for AO4 were chosen over others. It was not always the case that students chose the most recently studied Year 13 sub-theme.

### **Part 2 : The Individual Research Project**

Students seem to have really engaged with the IRP and there were some truly outstanding performances on an enormous range of interesting subjects that showed how they had acquired extremely thorough topic-based knowledge and understanding and could demonstrate an excellent critical evaluation of their research subject with real enthusiasm and conviction.

Titles were not always well chosen, particularly where they were not totally focused on francophone culture but involved detailed comparisons with things in Anglo-American culture or were simply too general and so did not provide the necessary critical and analytical approach. To ensure that a student's topic is suitable, teacher-examiners are strongly advised to complete an

IRP approval form prior to finalising the student's title and email this to the French IRP Adviser. Popular IRP topic areas included francophone music, fashion designers, films, historical topics and social and political issues.

### The IRP Presentation

While some teacher-examiners allowed their students to talk for over 3 minutes, it was far more common for presentations to be on the short side in many schools and colleges, lasting around a minute in a few cases, and frequently barely 1½ minutes. While students should not be allowed to talk beyond the specified 2 minutes for their IRP presentations, they should be advised to maximise the time available to them to demonstrate how well they have understood and assimilated research-based knowledge through the development of key findings. Some students just used their presentation as an introduction to what they were going to discuss, with phrases like *Je vais parler sur... Je vais explorer... Je voudrais parler de... Je discuterai...* Others devoted much of the time to giving personal reasons and anecdotal accounts as to why they had chosen that particular topic, or else spent too long talking about resources used. A few students delivered their presentations at too fast a pace, which impacted on comprehension and the subsequent mark awarded by the examiner.

### The IRP Discussion

There were several examples this year where students had listed questions on lines 3-10 of the CRF and teacher-examiners just followed these through in order, often moving on from one question to the next without further exploratory questions. Some teacher-examiners allowed their students to deliver mini-presentations after each question, lasting for up to 4 minutes, and did not engage in what was meant to be a discussion by pursuing at least some of the points made. Some then ran out of questions before the 9 minutes had elapsed and so put the onus back on the students to continue talking by asking *Tu as autre chose à dire?* Teacher-examiners must ensure they lead their students away from prepared answers as soon as possible to avoid delivering large amounts of pre-learnt material. As students are credited for the way in which they deal with unpredictable elements, teacher-examiners must ensure opportunities for following up and/or challenging points made in initial responses are not neglected.

The teacher-examiner's questions should be sharply focused on the title of the IRP, as listed on the Candidate Record Form. Questions on broader aspects of the topic area, particularly those seeking largely factual information, do not provide the necessary opportunities for the student to give appropriate evidence to support his/her arguments, or justify conclusions that would demonstrate an excellent critical evaluation of the chosen topic.

### Assessment Objective 3

In IRP discussions in particular students demonstrated an impressive grasp of a wide range of varied vocabulary and complex structures, though the application of grammar was not always as accurate as it should have been. Familiar common and sometimes serious errors were still too frequent.

Conjugation of verbs - *ils promouvoir ils voter nous devons ils avons ils ont croyé elle a mourir*

Impersonal Verbs - *je me semble que les Intouchables est s'agit de...*

Subjunctive (or not) - *ils veulent pour le racisme s'arrêter bien qu'il y a il faut qu'on sait je pense qu'il ne soit pas*

Passive - *il avait adapté par les mesures qui prises les joueurs ne sont pas donné l'occasion de...*

Negatives - *c'est ne pas je n'ai jamais pas entendu*

Pronouns - *pour intégrer ils il-même avec leur ça arrête eux l'aide qu'ils ont besoin*

Possessives - *ils...sa son musique je voudrais se marier*

Adjectives and adverbs - *une mal chose un repas vite il chante rapide le seulement personnage*

Comparisons - *aussi populaires comme... plus bon similaires que plus meilleur*

Confusion with - *parce que/à cause de penser à/de faire/rendre connaître/savoir  
peintre/peinture bénévole/bénévolat droit/droite surpris/surprenant choquant/choqué  
temps/fois/heure chose/choix qui/que/dont*

Faux amis - *sentence éventuellement issue préjudices actuellement*

Invented words - *évoluer restreindre exprimer disrespects involver performer  
expérencier rélévant espécialement*

Students' use of numbers was far from convincing in many cases. Some wasted valuable seconds as they laboured over reading statistics from cards with varying degrees of accuracy, and dates were often highly dubious.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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