

FRENCH

Paper 0520/42
Writing

Key messages

Candidates are advised to:

- respond to all parts of **Question 2**
- focus on the tenses required in **Question 2**, past tenses are not expected
- use linking words in **Question 2**, for example when giving opinions/explanations
- choose the option in **Question 3** which allows them to show what they know
- expand on the basic details of their responses in **Question 3**
- plan and organise answers into a coherent piece of writing, using extended sentences where possible
- edit and review work carefully to avoid removing important information
- present all work legibly and not to write in ink over a draft in pencil.

General comments

Many candidates presented their answers in a coherent way. In the responses to both **Question 2** and **Question 3**, candidates organised their ideas, linking them appropriately with conjunctions (e.g. *cependant, donc, ensuite, et, mais, ou, pourtant*), subordinate clauses (e.g. *comme, où, quand, que, si*) and adverbial phrases (e.g. *d'abord, d'habitude, pendant, plus tard*). The mark scheme seeks to reward well organised pieces of writing. Some candidates responded to each of the tasks in the questions as if they were discrete items and, in such instances, the writing tended to be disjointed and lacking a coherent thread.

In both **Question 2** and **Question 3**, there were some common errors which might be described as phonetic e.g. *et* for *est*, *ce* for *c'est*, *s'est* for *c'est*, *sa* for *ça* and *ce* for *se*. Candidates must carefully check their work as such errors compromise the intended meaning.

Candidates are reminded to use the vocabulary and structures used in the rubrics and questions carefully. For example, the miscopying of nouns can interfere with the intended message. In **Question 2**, *ville* was confused with *vie* and *activités* was rendered as *activities*. In **Question 3(a)** *cuisine* was frequently written as *cusine* or *cousine*. It is important to remember that possessive adjectives such as *votre* (e.g. *votre correspondant, votre région*) must be changed to *mon* or *ma* (e.g. *mon correspondant, ma région*), otherwise the message is lost. Candidates must also remember to manipulate *vous voudriez* from the questions into *je voudrais* in their responses, as *je voudriez / j'aimeriez visiter* does not convey a clear message.

The individual tasks in **Question 3** give a clear indication of the tense to be used in the response: candidates should frame their responses accordingly if they wish to achieve high marks for *Task completion*. It is also important that candidates fully understand what is required by all the elements of the question. Some candidates chose **Question 3(b)**, but they did not have sufficient knowledge of the vocabulary required to write successfully about charity work.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Vous cherchez un hôtel sur Internet.

In **Task 1**, candidates were free to choose any country in which to stay. The French spelling was expected where such a version existed. Candidates were quite successful in giving a facility at the hotel for **Task 2**. There were many different ideas which reflected the range of possibilities in a hotel, e.g. *court de tennis, piscine, spa*, as well as the more obvious, e.g. *ascenseur, parking, restaurant*. The most common item for the bedroom in **Task 3** was *lit*, others included *balcon, douche, salle de bains, télévision*. In **Task 4**, there

were many suggestions for activities in the area, especially sporting ones, e.g. *natation, surf, tennis*. Candidates should aim to provide a single word to fill gaps, but phrases were rewarded here, e.g. *nager dans la mer, visite au château*.

Question 2: Ma ville préférée

Most candidates were able to use familiar language and structures when responding to **Question 2**. Candidates who worked methodically through the tasks in order were less likely to omit one of them.

In the best answers, candidates produced accurate verbs throughout their response. Weaker candidates relied upon infinitives or offered inappropriate tenses and spelling of verbs. Weaker candidates also struggled to respect gender agreements when using articles, nouns and adjectives.

Stronger candidates used a range of basic connectors (e.g. *et, ou, mais, parce que, puis*), whereas weaker candidates tended to rely on *et* and *parce que*.

Candidates did not always specify that they were describing their favourite town. Full consideration was given to those who referred to the place where they lived, as it seemed fair that their hometown would be the place they liked most.

Task 1 was attempted well and many candidates could give several details about their favourite city, e.g. *ma ville préférée est le Caire, c'est une ville historique ; malheureusement il y a du bruit et de la pollution*.

Task 2 was also managed well, and some candidates even combined it with **Task 3**, e.g. *généralement, j'y vais le week-end avec mes amis pour faire du shopping*.

In **Task 4**, candidates who succeeded in saying where else they would like to visit adapted the interrogative form, e.g. *je voudrais aller à Rome parce que je veux acheter des vêtements à la mode*. There was no requirement to name the place and answers such as *je voudrais aller dans une ville au bord de la mer car j'aime nager* or *je voudrais aller à la capitale pour voir les navires* were valid responses.

Question 3 (a): Un échange scolaire

This was the more popular option.

Task completion

All the bullet points must be answered in the correct tense/time frame and in the correct person, and appropriate opinions/reactions/explanations must be communicated where required by the task in order to gain full marks for *Task completion*. A mismatch between the subject and the verb will result in ambiguity and the message not being communicated clearly.

Not all candidates understood the context fully and wrote as if they were staying at the French school rather than with a correspondent.

In **Task 1**, candidates were required to use past tenses to convey information about their journey to their correspondent. Some made a simple reference to how they travelled, e.g. *je suis allé en France en avion*, others mentioned what they did during the journey, e.g. *j'ai bu un jus d'orange et j'ai mangé du poulet. Puis j'ai lu un journal*, and some made a comment about the journey, e.g. *le voyage était long et épuisant, il a duré six heures*. These were all acceptable answers. Some candidates offered lots of details for this task but were not able to sustain the control of verbs and tenses. They should have focused on one or two simple points rather than risk compromising their responses.

In **Task 2**, candidates managed to convey a lot of relevant information about how they spent the evening, e.g. *le soir, j'ai regardé un film d'aventure avec toute la famille, le soir de mon arrivée j'ai fait une promenade dans le parc avec mon correspondant*. Again, some candidates were not able to sustain the control of verbs and tenses.

Many candidates successfully conveyed at least one difference between their school and the school of their correspondent in **Task 3**. There was an opportunity here to use more complex language such as comparative adjectives/adverbs, e.g. *l'école de mon correspondant est plus petite que mon collège*. Some candidates also used the possessive pronoun successfully, e.g. *il n'y avait pas beaucoup de différences*

entre son collègue et le mien... Candidates were free to use either *mon école* or *mon collègue*, but it is important to remember that *école* is feminine and *collègue* is masculine.

In **Task 4**, most candidates were able to give an opinion about French food using simple patterns such as *j'aime la cuisine française parce que...* or *je n'aime pas la cuisine française parce que...* The reasons were sometimes detailed and well-expressed, e.g. *j'adore la cuisine française car c'est varié et appétissant, cependant c'est un peu cher.*

In **Task 5**, candidates did not always understand that they had to describe the activities they would organise when the correspondent came on a future visit to them.

Range

Some candidates were able to use the complex structures listed in the syllabus to add interest and variety to their accounts, notably comparative adjectives and adverbs, object pronouns and subordinate clauses.

To achieve high marks for *Range*, candidates need to use a wide range of structures and vocabulary, and avoid the repeated use of *car / parce que...*

Accuracy

The accuracy of spelling, gender, use of the appropriate article, placing and agreement of adjectives and elision are all critical, as is the correct choice of verb tense and form. Candidates need to spend time checking the accuracy of their essay. There were some frequent errors which had an impact on the critical messages. Verbs are critical to the effective passing of information. It is vital that candidates show their ability to manipulate verbs consistently in a variety of tenses and persons.

Question 3 (b): Bénévole pour une association caritative

Very few candidates chose this option.

Task completion

All the bullet points must be answered in the correct tense/time frame and in the correct person, and appropriate opinions/reactions/explanations must be communicated where required by the task in order to gain full marks for *Task completion*. A mismatch between the subject and the verb will result in ambiguity and the message not being communicated clearly.

Candidates who chose this question did not always have sufficient knowledge of the vocabulary required to write successfully about charity work. The few who were successful usually used simple statements in the appropriate tense.

There was a little confusion about the meaning of the final task. Candidates were asked to state what others thought of their involvement and only a few candidates were successful, e.g. *mes amis sont très fiers de moi.*

Range

Only a few candidates were able to use the complex structures listed in the syllabus to add interest and variety to their accounts, such as comparative adjectives and adverbs, object pronouns and subordinate clauses.

To achieve high marks for *Range*, candidates need to use a wide range of structures and vocabulary, and avoid the repeated use of *car / parce que...*

Accuracy

The accuracy of spelling, gender, use of the appropriate article, placing and agreement of adjectives and elision are all critical, as is the correct choice of verb tense and form. Candidates need to spend time checking the accuracy of their essay. There were some frequent errors which had an impact on the critical messages. Verbs are critical to the effective passing of information. It is vital that candidates show their ability to manipulate verbs consistently in a variety of tenses and persons.