

FRENCH

<p>Paper 8129/02 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

- In **Question 1**, the word or words chosen as the answer must be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question. Candidates need to find a satisfactory replacement both semantically and grammatically.
- In **Question 2**, candidates are required to manipulate the sentence grammatically, not to alter its vocabulary or meaning unnecessarily.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not simply 'lift' (copy/cut and paste) items unaltered from the text. They need to manipulate the text in some way, re-phrasing by using different vocabulary or structures.
- In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates should not begin the answer by re-working the question.
- In **Question 5**, any material in excess of the word limit is ignored. Candidates should not write a general introduction.
- In **Question 5(b)**, candidates should be encouraged to venture some brief relevant ideas of their own without confining themselves to the material contained in the text.

General comments

The fact that scripts are scanned and marked on screen has created some issues of which candidates need to be aware: some appear to write a pencil version of their answers which they then write over (more or less accurately) in ink. Scanning does not clearly distinguish the pencil version from the ink one, which can make the script very difficult or indeed impossible to mark on screen, especially in a paper where a single letter or (or even a defining accent) may make all the difference between 1 and 0.

Legibility in general was sometimes a significant problem, with answers littered with crossings-out and squeezed-in insertions, not to mention poor or minute handwriting. In particular, candidates from some centres have a way of writing a *t* which involves curling the bottom of the letter upwards, inwards then outwards again which makes it impossible to know whether the word ends in *t*, *s* or *r*. This again can make all the difference between 1 and 0.

Thankfully, there were very few cases of centres submitting the text inserts with the answer booklets, a practice which significantly complicates the scanning and marking process.

Overall, the paper was felt to be an appropriate test, approachable by the overwhelming majority and similar in level of difficulty to previous years. The subject matter of the texts was clearly of some topical interest and relevance. There were many very good scripts from able and well-prepared candidates who handled all the tasks with commendable fluency and accuracy. At the other end of the range, there were some whose level of linguistic competence was over-stretched by what was being asked of them.

Most candidates knew how to set about tackling the different types of question, revealing a good level of familiarity with the format of the paper and the required tasks, although some failed to read the questions carefully enough or to take note of the indication in square brackets of the number of points to be made in each question.

Where candidates scored consistently poorly, it was often because they copied items unaltered from the texts in **Questions 3** and **4**, or because they allowed their personal opinions to dictate their responses, rather than focusing on what the text actually said.

There were few signs of undue time pressure, with most candidates managing to attempt all questions, although quite a lot of answers in **Questions 3** and **4** were unnecessarily lengthy, with candidates perhaps attempting to strike lucky by casting the net as widely as possible. Some candidates still tend to neglect the straightforward answer and over-complicate things. The most successful answers are often the most concisely and simply expressed.

Many candidates still feel the need to incorporate the words of the question as an unnecessary preamble to the answer, which not only wastes time for both candidate and marker, but also potentially introduces linguistic errors which can detract significantly from the overall impression for the Quality of Language marks – e.g. *En ce qui concerne la participation des femmes, les Jeux Olympiques ont-ils changé...* (**3(a)**); *Le pourcentage de femmes participant aux Jeux a-t-il évolué...* (**3(b)**); *Les femmes et les filles restent-elles désavantagées...* (**4(a)**). Answers beginning with *Parce que* or *En* are quite in order, indeed usually preferable.

Candidates would also do well to look at the number of marks awarded for each question (indicated in square brackets) as a guide to the number of points to be made. Some successfully set out their answers by separating the points as i)..., ii)..., iii)... etc.

In **Questions 3** and **4**, it is encouraging to note that copying wholesale from the text has diminished significantly in recent series, with more candidates understanding how to ‘work’ the text to avoid ‘lifting’, but it remains a common feature amongst the weaker candidates. It is important to remember that simply ‘lifting’ items directly from the text, even if they include more or less correct information, does not demonstrate understanding and therefore does not score marks. Candidates must show that they can manipulate the text in some way (even in a minor way) to provide the correct answer. They should try to express the relevant points using different vocabulary or structures. There is an encouraging trend for the stronger candidates to understand how to do this quite simply, avoiding unnecessary over-complications (see previous paragraph). Even quite small changes (e.g. transforming nouns into verbs or finding a simple synonym) or extensions to the original can show that candidates are able to handle both the ideas and the language – see specific comments on **Questions 3** and **4** below.

The paper ties the questions (and therefore the answers) to specific paragraphs (or occasionally to specific lines) in the texts. Candidates who find themselves writing the same answer for two questions need to pause for thought.

In **Question 1**, candidates nowadays appear more aware of the need for the words given as the answer to be interchangeable in every respect with the word or words given in the question – i.e. the word or words to be inserted must fit precisely into the ‘footprint’ of the word or words which they are replacing. The inclusion of unnecessary additional words (or the exclusion of necessary ones) invalidates the answer.

Candidates can sometimes help themselves considerably by narrowing down the options to words which are at least same parts of speech, or by matching (for example) singulars with singulars or feminine adjectives with feminine adjectives.

Question 2, on the other hand, is not the time to attempt to find other words for straightforward vocabulary items used in the original sentence. This question is a test of grammatical manipulation, not of an ability to find alternative vocabulary for its own sake. **Candidates should therefore aim to make the minimum changes necessary, whilst retaining as many elements of the original as possible.** They need to be aware, however, that alterations made to one part of the sentence are likely to have grammatical implications elsewhere, particularly in matters of agreement. Candidates should not attempt to cut corners by omitting the prompt at the start of their answers.

In **Question 5**, candidates should realise the importance of the word limits clearly set out in the rubric: a total of 140 words for both sections, 90–100 words for the summary of specific points made in the original texts and 40–50 words for the response. **Material beyond the word limit is ignored and scores no marks. This means that those candidates who use up the entire allocation of words on the Summary automatically receive none of the 5 marks available for their Personal Response.** Although there has been a marked improvement in this respect in recent series, candidates from some Centres still write answers in excess of the word limit, sometimes by a large margin, meaning that many answers to the **Personal Response** cannot be awarded any marks since the word limit has been exceeded before it starts.

These limits are such that **candidates cannot afford the luxury of an introductory preamble**, however polished. It appears that candidates are unnecessarily afraid of being penalised for not introducing the topic (maybe because of different practices in other subjects), but some simply waste a significant proportion of the available words on this for no reward. The word limit is already quite tight to achieve ten points and, from the very outset, candidates need to make the point as succinctly as possible and move on to the other nine. It is a summary/*résumé* of specific points from the texts that is required in the first part of **Question 5**, not a general essay.

It is strongly recommended that candidates count carefully the number of words that they have used as they go through the exercise and record them accurately at the end of each of the two parts, if only in order to highlight to themselves the need to remain within the limits. For the purpose of counting words in this context, a word is taken to be any unit that is not joined to another in any way: therefore *il y a* is three words, as is *qu'est-ce que c'est?*

The most successful candidates often showed clear evidence of planning and editing their material with the word limit in mind, but other scripts were littered with crossings-out, which greatly diminished standards of presentation and legibility.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a relatively straightforward first exercise which enabled a good proportion of candidates to get off to a positive start.

- **Item (a)** was correctly offered by most candidates.
- In **(b)**, *concourent* was identified by a large majority, although some lost the mark by not transcribing it accurately.
- **Item (c)**, proved the most difficult, with the frequent inclusion of *seulement* after the correct *soit* breaking the 'footprint' rule – see General comments above. *De plus*, *alors* and *ce n'est que* were also quite common.
- In **(d)**, candidates were largely successful in finding *depuis*, but a number reversed things with (*pour arriver*) *jusqu'à*.
- In **(e)**, the search for a feminine adjective correctly led many to *parfaite*, but *exponentielle* and *parité* also appeared quite frequently.

Question 2

There were some excellent answers to this question from the strongest candidates, but, as usual, the task proved quite demanding for candidates with an inadequate command of grammatical structures, or who failed to observe the basic rules of agreement.

Item 2(a)

The transfer into the passive proved straightforward enough for many, but some did not see the need to make the participle agree. Others lost the mark by changing the tense to a *passé composé*, or by the addition of a curious *par nous*.

Item 2(b)

The passive here required not only the agreement of the past participle but also the change from *à* to *de*, which proved problematic for many. Others missed out the necessary *par le CIO*.

Item 2(c)

There were a number of elements which made this a challenging task for many: the conjugation of *parvenir*; the sequence of tenses; the agreement of *leur* with *statut*. The omission of the necessary *y* compounded the problem.

Item 2(d)

The conjugation of another irregular verb (*atteindre*) again caused problems even for those who had done the difficult bit in recognising the need for a subjunctive. Others omitted the agreement on *soit atteinte*.

Item 2(e)

This item was not handled very well, maybe due to the reluctance of many candidates to form a simple negative with both *ne* and *pas*. Candidates who successfully negotiated *ni ... ni* often spoiled things by including *et*, and those who remembered the *n'* then destroyed it by the addition of *pas*.

Question 3

In **Item 3(a)**, most candidates scored the first mark either by saying that women couldn't compete in 1896 or that they could in 1900, or both, although there was some mixing up of the dates. There were plenty of easy ways to avoid lifting *admises*. Some did not make the point that their participation (second mark) was limited by the small number (five) of events open to them, simply stating that there were only 22 *sportives* or that each had to enter five events. Their performance (third mark) was limited by their attire (*portaient que des longues jupes et des chapeaux*).

In **Item 3(b)**, candidates found good ways of expressing a dramatic increase in numbers. Errors in calculating percentages were disregarded where possible. For the second mark, candidates were generally successful in finding ways of expressing the aim of equal numbers of male and female competitors, without lifting *parité*.

In **Item 3(c)**, the need for new Olympic sports to include women's events was generally well answered. The second mark referred to the tripling of the number of women's events, rather than necessarily a tripling of the number of women athletes. *Comporter* was sometimes thought to have something to do with *le comportement*, whilst others suggested that women would compete against men in all events.

In **Item 3(d)**, most candidates successfully scored both marks, although some unnecessarily lifted *l'introduction de la boxe feminine*.

Item 3(e) required mention of the women's football World Cup being organised in France for the first mark, and an understanding of *gagner du terrain* in this context for the second. Some interpreted this as meaning the acquisition of more pitches or the building of new grounds.

In **Item 3(f)**, successful candidates followed the prompt in the question (*aider à faire*) and replaced the nouns *démolition*, *érosion*, *combat* and *lutte* with corresponding verbs. There was some confusion caused by the suggestion that girls giving up sport regretted it or that they had to *choisir l'adolescence au lieu des sports*.

Question 4

Item 4(a) needed candidates to make the point that women athletes were more *visibles/médiatisées* and then to find ways to avoid simply lifting *un manque d'opportunités* (e.g. *elles manquent...*), *une insuffisance d'investissements* (e.g. *on n'investit pas suffisamment...*) and *la persistance de préjugés* (e.g. *il existe toujours...*).

Item 4(b) was the most successfully handled in this question, with candidates often scoring both marks, although some thought that it was women players themselves who were eliminated or that women's prize/appearance money actually exceeded men's.

In **Item 4(c)**, a good proportion of candidates thought that men were more professional than women in their approach, rather than achieving professional status more often. Others did not make it clear that their average monthly contracted salary was higher too.

In **Item 4(d)**, most candidates managed the first mark for pointing to the increased television coverage of women's sport. Some went too far in suggesting that none of the French team's matches were televised in the women's soccer World Cup in Canada, but a good number attempted (albeit with varying degrees of success) to produce the required conditional or conditional perfect to express how things would have been different in the case of the men's team.

In **Item 4(e)**, the increased participation in women's sport was generally successfully mentioned for the first mark, but some then lapsed into lifting *un profil rehaussé* (or misreading it as *un profit rehaussé*) and *l'égalité de statut*. The importance of women assuming key posts in the sporting world was well paraphrased by stronger candidates.

Question 5

(a) Summary

This question is effectively a **précis** in which being concise is part of the task. See **General Comments** at the start of this report for the need for candidates to embark directly on identifying and giving point-scoring information **without a general introduction**. *Les deux textes concernent les femmes dans le monde sportif. Le premier présente les progrès faits dans le sport féminin depuis 1896. Le deuxième indique ce qu'il reste à faire pour atteindre l'égalité des sexes dans ce domaine* wasted over 25% of the word allowance without scoring. A similar number of words could have been used at the outset to score the first 4 of the 10 marks available: *Depuis 1900 les femmes peuvent participer aux Jeux Olympiques (A). Leur nombre a augmenté énormément (B) et le but est d'arriver à 50 % en 2020 (C). Tous les sports olympiques offrent maintenant des épreuves pour les femmes (D).*

The mark scheme identified 14 rewardable points, of which most candidates managed a respectable number. The very weakest simply copied out verbatim chunks of the text, hoping randomly to chance upon some rewardable material.

In addition to the four points (A–D) above, the most commonly made included

- The increased participation of women in sport in general
- Women playing traditionally 'male' team sports, and the increased popularity of women's football in France
- Need for equality of professional status/prize-money/salaries
- Greater media coverage
- Breaking down barriers/overcoming sexist stereotyping and prejudice

Although there is no specific penalty for 'lifting' in this exercise as far as content is concerned, **excessive reliance on the language contained in the text is liable to be penalised in a reduction of the Quality of Language mark**.

(b) Personal Response

In the Personal Response many candidates did not read the question properly before seeing the words *argent, hommes et femmes* and jumping to the conclusion that they were being asked whether it was justifiable to pay sportswomen less than sportsmen. Sadly, this produced many answers which were irrelevant and unrewardable.

Those who did read the question produced some interesting points, mostly in favour of '*les vastes sommes*'. The justifications included:

- sportsmen and women have to train long and hard
- they have to make sacrifices, including time with their families.
- they represent the honour of their country
- they have to have a special diet and equipment which can be expensive
- sport can be dangerous, and they risk injury or even death
- sport is big business controlled by millionaires so they deserve their cut
- they help sell products and merchandise and make money for others
- their career is usually short-lived
- they are ambassadors and act as role models for young people
- they have a very special and rare talent which deserves to be rewarded highly, on the principle of supply and demand.

Of those against, the following were mentioned:

- there are those in far greater need
- other occupations/professions (surgeons, miners, firefighters) are paid much less yet are more important
- sport should be for love not money

- the money should be spent on encouraging everyone to do sport and become more healthy
- the money should be spent on better community sporting facilities or on reducing world poverty
- it makes the sportsmen and women arrogant and encourages excessive consumption and the cult of celebrity.

Quality of Language

The quality of language varied from the virtually flawless to the very poor. The strongest candidates wrote fluently and accurately, demonstrating a broad and flexible range of vocabulary and a robust control of structure. At the other end of the scale, the very weakest struggled with the rudiments of the language, finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

The approach to spelling in some scripts was at best phonetic: *assés, mal hallaise, célà, aubliiger, par appor a, pas sur le même pied d'estal* and the ubiquitous *faire fasse à*.

The choice between *ce, se, and ceux; sa and ça (sela); ces, ses, c'est and s'est; ci and si; on and ont; donc and dont; ou and où; par and part* often appeared random. The use of *eux* instead of *elles* caused particular confusion in answers which involved gender inequality. This was further compounded by the use of *légalité* for *l'égalité* (or even *l'illégalité*) *des sexes*.

This phonetic approach frequently extended to grammar too. *Les matchs aurait était diffuser; Elles n'on pas éteaint mis en avant*. The use of the infinitive *-er* ending – or indeed anything else that sounded similar – seemed interchangeable with the past participle (*-é*) in some scripts.

Agreements of adjectives with their nouns and verbs with their subjects (and even the process of making nouns plural) again appeared largely random in many scripts.

Not uncommonly, when attempts were made to make verbs agree as plurals, it was simply by putting an *s* on the end of the singular: *elles participes, ils gagnes*. There also appeared to be a belief that feminine/plural subjects of verbs conjugated with *avoir* require feminine/plural past participles: *les femmes ont gagnées, les chaînes n'ont pas diffusées...*

Incorrect verb forms were numerous, even for common irregular verbs such as *pouvoir, vouloir, devoir, prendre, courir, (par/de)venir, (per)mettre*.

Constructions with certain verbs took their usual toll, in particular: *encourager, décourager, persuader, aider, empêcher, réussir, permettre, interdire*. Attempts at forming passives were also problematic: *les femmes ont été permises; la France a été donnée/attribuée la Coupe*.

Comparatives *plus/moins ... que* caused some problems, with *plus beaucoup* appearing not infrequently, as did *nombre* with singular nouns (e.g. *participation/argent/diffusion*).

Although most of the above inevitably focuses on weaknesses, the linguistic ability of the majority of candidates certainly enabled them to transmit the required facts and opinions effectively, whilst the strongest candidates wrote very impressive, idiomatic, fluent and commendably accurate French which was a pleasure to read.

FRENCH

<p>Paper 8129/03 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to be successful on this paper, candidates need to read the questions carefully and take sufficient time to plan their essays before starting to write. They then need to create logical, well-illustrated answers on the actual question set, beginning with a clear introduction to the topic and ending with a conclusion that does not merely state what went before. In order to attain top marks for language they need to have a good range of complex grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions at their disposal.

General comments

Overall, candidates have produced a pleasing level of work, with few very poor scripts and, at the opposite end of the spectrum, a number of impressive pieces of writing.

The majority of candidates managed to communicate ideas on their chosen topics. Some candidates showed an excellent command of the language and produced mature answers. Candidates clearly engaged with their topics and most made a genuine effort to address the question set and construct a logical argument. There were few largely irrelevant essays. Most candidates showed a good understanding of the topics, which they were able to convey with varying degrees of success. The best scripts offered a mature response, with a wide range of pertinent points, using examples both from within their local communities and internationally. They also showed an extensive knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary.

The candidates' work was generally clearly presented although there were some examples of poor handwriting. Those who did not plan properly wrote essays that were poorly constructed and often full of alterations, making them very difficult to follow. Introductions were often too long and involved definitions and reworking of the title as well as spurious and sometimes misattributed quotations of little or no relevance. Lack of punctuation at times resulted in lengthy, convoluted phrases, where clarity suffered. There was an amount of repetition throughout some scripts and conclusions were often disappointing being merely a short reiteration of the points made previously in the essay rather than a considered judgement on them. Ideas were often presented in a muddled way with no clear prioritisation or sense of balance. It is clear that those candidates who define the terms of the question in their own mind and organise the material into some kind of order before writing will be more likely to gain the higher marks for content. Paragraphing was, at times, weak, with poor or inappropriate links and no clear development shown. Some candidates wrote their whole essay as one paragraph jumping from one idea to another. Candidates often did not have the skill required to present two sides to an argument without appearing to blatantly contradict themselves. Many candidates, however, did plan their essays carefully, defining their understanding of the question in their introduction and writing a coherent and convincing argument, arriving finally at a balanced conclusion. They used a range of structures and idioms and argued their case successfully.

The quality of language was variable, but most candidates were able to communicate their ideas. Weaker scripts, and even some good ones, showed inconsistencies in the use of basic grammar in particular the use of adjectival and subject-verb agreements, incomplete negatives, use of articles and infinitives. Many candidates also had difficulty with prepositions. Spelling errors or missed agreements were much in evidence, even in good scripts. There were also a number of scripts where candidates had made, perhaps, last minute changes, but overlooked how these impacted on the rest of the sentence, in particular on adjectival and subject-verb agreements. Most attempted to use a variety of structures and a range of vocabulary. At the top end, scripts showed an impressive command of the language, in terms of grammatical and lexical precision, as well a confident use of complex structures.

Some arguments were riddled with clichés couched in very superficial terms and simple language. Answers generally would have benefited from a wider range of clear and targeted examples.

The most common errors were as follows:

Incorrect spelling of common words: *écosystem, les loies, campaign, développement, government, environment, individue/individuel, le stresse, l'impacte, enforcir, concluire, composte, le peut de temps*

Missing out words e.g. articles and partitives in lists or enumerations, e.g.

*il y a beaucoup d' hôtels, restaurants, services et infrastructure;
ce qui s'applique à l'enfant, adolescents, jeunes adultes et parents.*

Random use of paragraph linking words such as *néanmoins, toutefois, tandis que, cependant*

Misuse of pronouns : *il faut s'en servir de ; il y en a des gens qui*

Use of *faire* instead of *rendre*

Overuse of *plusieurs*

The omission of *ne* in negative constructions

Frequent incorrect use of preposition after common verbs: *préférer de, sembler de, dépendre sur, aider de*

Anglicisms, e.g. *place* for *endroit*, *balancé* for *équilibré*, *consister de, en addition, définitivement, avertissements, individuel* for *individu, facilités, locaux, expérimenté*

Lapses of register, e.g. *ça, truc, boulot, tu* instead of *vous*

Inappropriate use of *personnes/gens* (e.g. *certains gens*)

Use of *qui* in contexts where *ce qui* was required

Using *cela* followed by a plural verb

Incorrect agreement of past participle e.g. *ils ont toujours faits*

Confusion between/misuse of : *ces/ses, les/des, bon/bien, mauvais/mal, c'est que/ceux que, ceux qui/ce qui, ou/où, a/à, mieux/meilleur, leur/leurs, près/prêt, comme/comment*

Question 1

Pour réussir dans la vie, il est essentiel d'avoir de bonnes relations avec les autres. Discutez.

This was a popular question. Most candidates agreed with the statement that good relationships are essential for a successful life. Examples were mainly drawn from contexts relating to school and/or work, family and the wider community. Often friendship groups, as well as partnerships or marriages were addressed. Occasionally the need to have a good relationship with oneself was mentioned as a way of leading a successful and fulfilled life. They spoke about the benefits of maintaining good relationships with all such as obtaining emotional support and practical help, candidates working better at school with their peers, teachers being more willing to help candidates with whom they get on well and employers being more likely to offer work or promotion. They also mentioned the personal benefits in terms of well-being and happiness. Candidates mainly referred to their own experiences and cultural or social backgrounds. A large range of very valid points were used to illustrate the importance of positive relationships from the start of life. The best essays went further and considered the need to learn to be independent in life and not rely too heavily on others, arguing that good relationships can stand in the way of achieving ambitions if others are always put first. Examples of unpopular or unlikable people who have done well for themselves and care little about what people think of them were also mentioned as well as those who had succeeded because of family wealth or status rather than establishing good relationships.

Recurrent language issues included the use of *avoir besoin de* and the use of *support* for *soutien*. *Avoir de bonnes relations* often became *avoir des bonnes relations* or *avoir une bonne relation*.

Question 2

L'éducation est le seul moyen de réduire la délinquance juvénile. Êtes-vous d'accord ?

This question elicited good responses and looked at how schools and parents can equip youngsters with the academic qualifications, but also the values, support and discipline that can protect them from wanting to commit crimes. The best candidates took a broad view of what was meant by education and discussed the importance of the family environment as well as school and academic results in enabling young people to choose the correct path in life. These candidates were able to offer up other solutions to tackling juvenile delinquency such as more severe punishments but also the need for social care to rehabilitate young criminals and avoid reoffending. Some candidates pointed out that young delinquents often have low educational achievements, have dropped out of school, or come from deprived homes. If parents' economic status was frequently seen as a key factor, some candidates pointed out that delinquency affects youngsters from all backgrounds and that peer pressure plays a key part, hence the need for parents to be vigilant and present for their children. Some candidates spoke of the negative or even brutalising effect that schools could sometimes have on vulnerable teenagers, where bullying and peer group pressure could lead to becoming involved in the world of drugs, alcohol and crime. They spoke of the need for radical changes in society to combat inequality and social injustice. These were seen as the root causes of addiction, crime and the gang culture prevalent among young people. With boredom and a lack of job prospects as further potential causes for youth crime, candidates were keen to see more leisure activities created as preventative measures to keep young people off the streets.

A recurrent language issue was the use of *facilités/aménités* for facilities and the use of *drogeurs* for drug addicts.

Question 3

Le travail – obstacle à la liberté ? Qu'en pensez-vous ?

This was a popular question. The best answers discussed the importance of work in people's lives and discussed the different ways in which it enables people to be free financially, creatively, socially and mentally. Many candidates were able to discuss the constraints put on people due to long working hours, harsh working conditions and the stresses and strains of working in a 24-hour culture. Mention was also made of impositions put on workers such as wearing a uniform, or having rules about dress, hair styles and tattoos. Some candidates made reference to modern slavery and child labour as extreme examples of workers being deprived of their freedom. Employment was most often viewed, thought, as the only way to achieve one's dreams and have status in society. Some candidates argued that work for some people, particularly artists and top sports professionals, can be a way of freeing their creativity and skill. Far from being an obstacle to freedom, work was also seen as a means to financial and intellectual freedom for women in some societies, enabling them to break free from patriarchal rules. Some answers were somewhat limited by candidates treating the question as the advantages and disadvantages of work rather than addressing the specific terms of the title. This led to the essay being in two rather contradictory parts with little link between them. These essays also tended to be quite repetitive. Most candidates concluded that work need not be an obstacle to freedom as long as a sensible work/life balanced was established.

A recurrent language issues was the use of *travaux* instead of *emplois* and confusion between *employé* and *employeur*. *Balancer* was often used instead of *équilibrer*.

Question 4

Il faut interdire toutes les armes nucléaires. Discutez.

This question was not widely chosen. The best answers focused very clearly on the undoubted dangers of nuclear weapons but also the necessity of keeping them in order to act as a deterrent to avoid future conflicts. Many candidates described in detail the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and suggested that the devastation and long-lasting impact on the environment and the local population should be a reason for a total ban. They went on to argue that tensions between countries, such as the US and North Korea, mean that the whole world could be on the brink of another disaster and that so much power should not be concentrated in the hands of a few world leaders. Some candidates were not able to differentiate between conventional and nuclear weapons, writing vaguely about the evils of war in general and often even confusing nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. There appeared to be, in many cases, quite a vague awareness of historical events and the development and deployment of nuclear weapons.

Question 5

La lutte contre la pollution doit commencer au niveau individuel. Partagez-vous ce point de vue ?

This was by far the most popular question and one which struck a chord with many candidates. Introductions included definitions of different types of pollution, key statistics and examples illustrating the increasingly alarming consequences of climate change. Often too much time was spent on describing the devastating consequences of all types of air, water and soil, as well as noise pollution, instead of discussing possible ways in which the threat might be countered. On an individual level, most candidates mentioned the 3 Rs of *réduire, réutiliser, recycler* as being the most productive ways of helping the environment. They also mentioned the use of electric or hybrid cars, use of public transport, *co-voiturage* or walking to get to work or school or to do local shopping. They felt that individuals can have a strong effect on the behaviour of others and Greta Thunberg was often quoted as an example of an individual who has raised awareness on a grand scale from simple beginnings. Overall, though, candidates felt that without government involvement, any individual action would be limited or even futile, and they called on governments to introduce stricter laws to punish industries and individuals who pollute. They felt that education, campaigns to raise awareness and policies to encourage the development of renewable energies were areas where governments should take a lead. The best responses included comments on the individual's role as a consumer in changing the ways in which the manufacturing and farming industries do business.

Recurrent language problems included misspellings of key words such *environnement, jeter, monoxyde de carbone, individu* and *renouvelable*. *Se servir de* was often incorrectly used.