

FRENCH 2

1. GENERAL COMMENTS

The questions were standard ones for the level of the candidates. The questions were within the scope of the syllabus and rubrics were clear. The performance of the candidates, though satisfactory, did not measure up to that of last year's.

2. A SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' STRENGTHS

Most candidates limited themselves to the outline suggested for each question and thus avoided complete deviation. Very few of them wrote more than the given number of words and this helped to reduce the number of errors that lengthy essays usually attract. In essay ONE most of the candidates were able to answer the questions about themselves – name, age, school, etc.

In view of the above there were very few cases of blank answer sheets (i.e. candidates not writing anything at all).

3. A SUMMARY OF CANDIDATES' WEAKNESSES

The following weaknesses were observed:

- (1) Omission of accents; wrong accents.
- (2) Spelling errors including words found in the outline. The commonest was “*semaine*” which appeared in several scripts as “*samine*”.
- (3) Errors in conjugation of common irregular verbs like ‘être’, ‘avoir’, etc. Examples are ‘*J'est*’, ‘*Je buve*’.
- (4) Expression of age: ‘*Je suis 15 ans*’ instead of ‘*J'ai 15 ans*’.
- (5) Confusion between ‘à’ (preposition) and ‘a’ (verb).
- (6) Limited range of vocabulary leading to strange words coined from English like ‘*la day*’, ‘*la writé*’, ‘*le happièstly*’, etc.
- (7) Reproduction of model essays
- (8) Lifting of portions of comprehension passages.

4. SUGGESTED REMEDIES

It appears candidates are taught to write compositions on certain topics. This places a limitation on their range of vocabulary and even on their ability to string sentences together generally. Textbooks/manuals prescribed for JHS should be used by their teachers. I am referring to texts with dialogues, reading passages, comprehension questions, structural exercises, and summary of grammatical points. Where teachers have to adapt in view of the recommended 'Approche Communicative' they have to do so. "Activités Indiquées" should also be included to generate students' interest in the French language.

Lifting from comprehension passages to answer questions persists. A separation of the two papers will help curb it.

5. DETAILED COMMENTS

Question 1

This was an essay on candidate's happiest day in the week.

The first three questions in the outline dealing with personal particulars – name, school, place of abode – were handled very well in spite of some grammatical errors. The question required knowledge of the names of the days of the week in French and candidates handled this well. Some of them confused the topic with "The happiest day in my life" and gave specific dates. This also affected the tense used (the past tense/passé composé instead of the present)

The important points expected in the essay were the reasons for the choice of the day, activities on that day including places visited and meals taken. Candidate's general feeling on that day served as conclusion.

The two major problems for some candidates' were (h) – *Les endroits que vous visitez* and (j) – *Vos sentiments à la fin de la journée*. Such candidates obviously did not understand the sentences. In the case of (j) candidates had a problem with the structure of their answer. Most of them repeated the guideline e.g. '*mes (or vos) sentiments à la fin de la journée est content*' instead of the '*A la fin de la journée je suis content(e)*'.

Question 2

Candidates were expected to write a composition on life at school entitled 'A l'école' using pictures labelled A to F. Areas covered by the pictures were departure from home of Mensah and Ama, their arrival at school, groundwork, assembly, classes, break and activities during break, closing and return home from school.

The few candidates who attempted this question did quite well, though they had difficulty with picture C(i) and C(iii).

On the whole, the pictures captured the story line sufficiently and some satisfactory answers were produced.

As usual, weak candidates merely copied the guided questions and, where they knew the answers, simply added a word or two instead of constructing their own sentences.

Example, *Où vont les élèves? La maison.*

