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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FRENCH **0520/21**

Paper 2 Reading **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 45

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

This document consists of **14** printed pages.

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General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: • the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme • the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions • the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that: • marks are not deducted for errors or omissions • marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate • the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

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Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Incorrect answer when clarification might be needed for a second examiner
	Mark given – clarification – rarely used
	Benefit of doubt given
Highlighter	To highlight a specific mistake
Off page comment	Rarely used
	Something missing
	Message unclear
	To confirm blank pages seen
	Harmless addition
	Part of the response invalidates an otherwise correct answer

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Additional Guidance

The following guidance underpins the detailed instructions provided in the mark scheme. Where a decision is taken to deviate from this guidance for a particular question, this will be specified in the mark scheme.

Often the additional guidance points will have to be weighed up against each other, e.g. the answer might look or sound like the intended word/phrase in French, but if what the candidate has written means something different in French from what is expected, the mark cannot be awarded.

It is not possible to list all acceptable alternatives in the mark scheme. If you encounter an answer which is not covered by the mark scheme, you will need to make a decision about whether it communicates the required elements (in consultation with your Team Leader if necessary, or with your Product Manager if you are a single examiner), and award marks accordingly.

- **Crossing out:**

(a)	If a candidate changes his/her mind about an answer and crosses out an attempt, award a mark if the final attempt is correct.
(b)	If a candidate crosses out an answer to a whole question but makes no second attempt at it, mark the crossed out work.

- **More than the stipulated number of boxes ticked/crossed by the candidate:**

(a)	If more than one attempt is visible but the candidate has clearly indicated which attempt is his/her final answer (e.g. by crossing out other attempts or by annotating the script in some way), mark in the usual way.
(b)	If two attempts are visible (e.g. two boxes ticked instead of the one box stipulated), and neither has been crossed out/discounted by the candidate, no mark can be awarded.

- **For questions requiring more than one element for the answer, 1 and 2, where the answers are interchangeable:**

(a)	Both of the correct answers are on line 1 and line 2 blank (or vice versa) = 2 marks
(b)	Both correct answers on line 1 and line 2 contains a wrong answer (or vice versa) = 1 mark

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- **Mark for communication:** Answers requiring the use of French (rather than a non-verbal response) should be marked for communication. Tolerate inaccuracies provided that the message is clear. However, do **not** accept incorrect French if the word written by the candidate means something else in French (unless the mark scheme specifies otherwise).

(a)	If you read aloud what the candidate has written, does it sound like the correct answer? Would a native speaker of French understand it?
(b)	Does what the candidate has written look like the correct answer, e.g. one letter missing but no other word created? Would a native speaker of French understand it?

- **Annotations used in the mark scheme:**

(a)	Underlined – Words that are underlined must be included in the answer for the mark to be awarded.
(b)	(….) – Words that are bracketed are not required for the mark to be awarded but are perfectly acceptable as part of the answer.
(c)	INV = invalidation. This is used when the additional material included by the candidate is judged to invalidate an otherwise correct answer and therefore prevents him/her from scoring the mark. (INV = 0)
(d)	tc = 'tout court'. This means that, on its own, the material is not sufficient to score the mark.
(e)	HA = harmless addition. This means that the candidate has included additional material which, in conjunction with the correct answer, does not prevent him/her from scoring the mark.

- **No response and '0' marks:**

(a)	**Award NR (no response):** If there is nothing written at all in the answer space or If there is only a comment which does not in any way relate to the question being asked (e.g. 'can't do' or 'don't know') or If there is only a mark which isn't an attempt at the question (e.g. a dash, a question mark).
(b)	**Award 0:** If there is any attempt that earns no credit, e.g. the candidate has copied out part or all of the question.

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- **Extra material:** Candidates need to answer the questions in such a way as to demonstrate that they have understood the text. The mark scheme cannot cover all eventualities so where specific instructions are not provided, the examiner must check the text to ensure that the correct elements which would attract the mark are not contradicted or distorted by any extra material. The following general rules should be applied:

(a)	Extra material, mentioned in the mark scheme, which reinforces the correct answer or in itself constitutes an alternative correct answer:	This is acceptable and is not penalised.
(b)	Extra material which constitutes an alternative answer, **but which is not explicitly mentioned in the mark scheme**:	The examiner needs to decide, by consulting the transcript/text and the Team Leader if necessary, whether the alternative answer constitutes: (i) an alternative correct answer, in which case this falls into category (a) and the answer should be rewarded, or (ii) an answer which on its own would be rejected, in which case this falls into category (c) and the answer should be rejected.
(c)	Extra material which constitutes an alternative answer **specifically** rejected in the mark scheme:	This puts the examiner in the position of having to 'choose' which the intended answer is. The examiner cannot therefore be sure what the candidate has understood and the mark cannot be awarded.
(d)	Extra material which distorts or contradicts the correct answer:	This affects communication. The examiner cannot be sure what the candidate has understood and therefore the mark cannot be awarded.
(e)	Extra material introduced by the candidate and which does not feature in the original text:	This affects communication. The examiner cannot be sure what the candidate has understood and therefore the mark cannot be awarded. It can sometimes be difficult to draw the line between what is a deduction made by an able candidate on the basis of what they have read and pure guesswork. Therefore, where a particular answer is not covered by the mark scheme, the examiner should consult the Team Leader.

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- **Cross-language marking standards for Question 4 and 6:**

Question 4

- Accept HA (harmless addition) on Question 4 if a few words are added that do not invalidate the answer.
- The subject needs to be unambiguous. (Personal pronouns/possessives need to be used in such a way as to make the answer unambiguous).
- Any manipulation of language must be correct, including where a candidate adds extra material that is not required in order to answer the question.
- Answering in a different time frame may be acceptable depending on the context of the question.

Question 6

- A precise lift is needed, not just the location of material.
- Use definitions of HA (harmless addition) or INV (invalidation) to deal with extra information.
- The subject needs to be unambiguous. (Personal pronouns/possessives need to be used in such a way as to make the answer unambiguous).
- Any manipulation of language must be correct, including where a candidate adds extra material that is not required in order to answer the question.
- The response needs to be a direct answer to the question.

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Detailed Mark Scheme

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(a)	C	1	
1(b)	F	1	
1(c)	D	1	
1(d)	A	1	
1(e)	B	1	

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(a)	H	1	
2(b)	G	1	
2(c)	C	1	
2(d)	B	1	
2(e)	E	1	

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3(a)	A	1	
3(b)	C	1	
3(c)	C	1	
3(d)	C	1	

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3(e)	A	1	
3(f)	B	1	
3(g)	B	1	

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
Before marking **Question 4**, read the section *Additional Guidance*.			
4(a)	pour (célébrer) la fête (du) printemps	**1**	Needs idea of purpose or intention e.g. elle voulait… even if implied, e.g. c'était la fête du printemps. Past tense required if conjugated verb used.
4(b)	des/beaucoup de lanternes (rouges)	**1**	**Tolerate** les but not de/la/le/omission Accrochées/attachées aux arbres dans le jardin **HA** but must stop at a suitable point. Past tense required if conjugated verb used.
4(c)	Il faisait (trop) chaud.	**1**	**Tolerate** il était / c'était Comme **INV** La mère de Violette préparait toutes sortes de plats exotiques is **HA** as explanation as to why it was hot in the kitchen, but is not an answer in its own right. **Note** Sa mère préparait…= 0 ('sa' does not fit with question.) **Accept** très instead of trop **Accept** À cause de la chaleur / la cuisine était chaude Past tense required.
4(d)	leurs/des manteaux/un manteau/leur manteau	**1**	**Refuse** leur manteaux/un manteaux/manteau(x) with no article **Refuse** elles se sont mis… If conjugated verb used must be past tense.
4(e)	1 Il y avait du soleil.	**1**	**Accept** reasonable alternatives e.g. le soleil brillait etc. **Refuse** il faisait chaud
	2 Il faisait froid.	**1**	**Note** Both of the correct answers are on line 1 and line 2 blank (or vice versa) = 2 marks Both correct answers on line 1 and line 2 contains a wrong answer (or vice versa) = 1 mark Past tense required.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4(f)	dans la rue principale	**1**	Look carefully at any response that contains *Un appartement.* For example *Un appartement dans la rue principale* does not answer the question, but a response such as *Son appartement se trouve dans la rue principale* is fine. Also tolerate a similar response in the past tense. **Tolerate** principle (misspelling) **Tolerate** sur
4(g)	Elle a poussé des cris de joie. Elle a crié de joie avec / par des cris de joie	**1**	**Tolerate** les but not de/la/le/omission Car la vue était extraordinaire **HA** Installée sur le balcon **HA** If candidate has produced a different paraphrase, the idea of the cris (plural) is essential. If conjugated verb used, must be past tense.
4(h)	(Il avait l'air) effrayant	**1**	If conjugated verb used, must be past tense. **Refuse** une grande surprise / surprenant Il crachait des flammes **HA** but not an answer in its own right **Refuse** Elle avait l'air effrayant - ambiguous
4(i)	Ils / Les spectateurs applaudissaient.	**1**	À son passage **HA** **Accept** Long lift of *Excités, tous les spectateurs applaudissaient à son passage.* **Tolerate** tout les spectateurs… Past tense required.
4(j)	l'énorme quantité de nourriture	**1**	**Accept** reasonable indications of large size, e.g. (il y avait) beaucoup de, la grande quantité de, la quantité abondante de etc. **Accept** De voir l'énorme quantité de nourriture Placée sur une grande table **HA** but addition of *Placée* tc **INV**

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4(k)	Elle est végétarienne.	1	Accept answers that define a vegetarian such as *elle ne mange pas de viande.* **Tolerate** past tense e.g. elle était Il y avait beaucoup de légumes et de fruits **INV**

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
5	a6, b4, c8, d5, e7	5	

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
Before marking **Question 6**, read the section *Additional Guidance*.			
6(a)	1 glisser (sur la glace)	1	Il était capable de… **INV** If this occurs with both answers which would otherwise be correct, penalise first answer and then annotate second answer with a tick and give the mark.
	2 s'arrêter sans tomber	1	De **INV** (de glisser sur la glace) Again, only penalise once if it is the only element incorrect in both answers. **Accept** comment glisser / comment s'arrêter sans tomber
6(b)	sa mère / la mère de Daniel	1	**Refuse** son mère qui adorait le patinage **HA**
6(c)	Il a vite fait des progrès.	1	Past tense required. Idea of progress being quick needed. **Tolerate** de/du **Tolerate** placing of *vite* elsewhere in the sentence
6(d)	Il (en) a (longuement) discuté avec ses parents.	1	Reference to idea of making a list **HA** but not an answer in its own right. Past tense needed. Verb needs a subject.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
6(e)	1 ses études (secondaires)	**1**	Responses must answer the question, so additions will usually **INV** e.g. l'impact que ça aurait sur ses études / sur ses études / le manque de temps à consacrer à sa vie sociale.
	2 sa vie sociale	**1**	However, **accept** le temps à consacrer à sa vie sociale / le temps à consacrer à ses études **Refuse** son vie sociale
6(f)	Il était épuisé.	**1**	**Accept** <u>très</u> fatigué Accent at end of épuisé / fatigué needed. **Accept** trop épuisé/fatigué Parce qu'il avait 5 heures d'entraînement chaque jour **HA** but not an answer in its own right. Conjugated verb in past tense required. Étant **INV** Look out for unexpected answers that do convey the same message e.g. *sa routine était épuisante.*
6(g)	Il se couchait (très) tôt le vendredi (soir).	**1**	Needs reflexive pronoun **Accept** les vendredis Past tense needed. **Refuse** use of dormir
6(h)	Il prenait davantage de risques sur la glace.	**1**	Idea of <u>more</u> risks required, however expressed. **Tolerate** risque singular De plus en plus sûr de sa technique et de son style… **HA** but not an answer in its own right. Ce qui lui permettait de bien se placer dans les compétitions locales et nationales **HA** but not an answer in its own right. Past tense needed.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
6(i)	Il a été sélectionné pour les Jeux olympiques (de la jeunesse).	1	Past tense required unless expressed differently such as il participera aux Jeux olympiques de la jeunesse. Check carefully for soundalike rule if verb misspelt. If there is additional material at the beginning, make sure that it still answers the actual question asked and is in the correct tense.

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