CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FRENCH **0520/42**

Paper 4 Writing **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.

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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
	Mark awarded on **Question 1**
	Used to show original mark not awarded.
	Task/Bullet point 1 completed. Numbered ticks 1 to 5 refer to tasks/bullet points 1 to 5. One tick = partial task completion. Two ticks = task fully completed.
	Something missing. In the left margin = task omitted. In the body of the text = significant word missing.
	Benefit of doubt given
	Recorded in right margin to indicate that the candidate has provided detailed information that merits awarding.
Highlighter	In **Question 2** – Examples of connectives highlighted In **Question 3** – Examples of cohesive devices, and complex structures and vocabulary highlighted.
 **or IR**	Section of text not relevant to the task. Has to be agreed with Team Leader.

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Annotation	Meaning
	Message unclear
Off page comment	Usually used to annotate practice scripts to standardise examiners.
	To confirm blank pages seen
	Occasionally used to underline examples of errors/inaccuracies

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Additional Guidance

- **Crossing out:**

(a)	If a candidate changes his/her mind over 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.

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

(a)	tc = 'tout court' and means that on its own the material is not sufficient to score 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. This could, for example, include the candidate copying all or some of the question, or any working that does not earn any marks, whether crossed out or not.

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- **Optional questions:**
  Mark all questions attempted by the candidate. Where the candidate attempts more than one of the alternatives in **Question 3**, the marking system will take the best mark.

- **Using mark schemes with grade descriptors:**
  Start at the bottom of the mark scheme and work upwards through the descriptors when awarding marks.

  The marker should look at the work and then make a judgement about which level statement is the 'best fit'. In practice, work does not always match one level statement precisely so a judgement may need to be made between two or more level statements.

  Once a 'best-fit' level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:

  - If the candidate's work convincingly meets the level statement, award the highest mark.
  - If the candidate's work adequately meets the level statement, award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range (where middle marks are available).
  - If the candidate's work just meets the level statement, award the lowest mark.

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Detailed Mark Scheme

Question	Answer	Marks
1	**Candidates are required to complete 5 gaps in French. Read all of the items that the candidate has listed and award marks as follows:** • Award 1 mark for each correct item. • In **Question 1**, award marks for items wherever the candidate has written them provided the candidate has made clear which part of the form they refer to. • Mark for communication. Tolerate inaccuracies, provided that communication is not impeded. • If spelling is inaccurate, start by referring to the table below. Refer to the questions below if no decision on the spelling you have encountered is recorded there. If you read aloud what the candidate has written, does it sound like the correct answer and would a native speaker of French understand it? 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? • Reject misspelt words which suggest a word with a quite different meaning. Where nouns are usually plural, accept the singular and vice versa. • Expect candidates to know countries in the target language (use the sound-alike and look-alike rule) but accept any spelling for towns/cities/villages. • All answers must fulfil the communicative purpose described in the rubric.	**5**

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<table>
<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answer</th><th>Marks</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>

Vous organisez des activités pour un club de vacances dans votre quartier.

Complétez le poster <u>en français</u>.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>ACCEPT</th><th>REFUSE</th></tr>
<tr><td>Gap 1
(1 mark)</td><td>Any day, e.g. lundi, jeudi, dimanche

Accept: le week-end</td><td>Refuse vocabulary that cannot be considered as a day, e.g. semardi.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gap 2
(1 mark)</td><td>Any appropriate place or location in the neighbourhood, e.g. 33 rue des lilas, à côté de la gare, stade</td><td>Refuse vocabulary which cannot be considered as a place or location in the neighbourhood, e.g. centre-ville, or the name of a town/city.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gap 3 and 4
(1 mark each)</td><td>Any activity, e.g. cuisiner, dessin, football, karaoké</td><td>Refuse vocabulary which cannot be considered as an activity.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gap 5
(1 mark)</td><td>Any appropriate item or food, e.g. appareil photo, argent, bonbons, cahier, casse-croûte, chapeau, crème solaire</td><td>Refuse any item or food that cannot be considered appropriate in this context, e.g. buffet

Refuse drinks, e.g. eau</td></tr>
</table>

</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Candidates complete a directed writing task in French of approximately 80–90 words on a familiar, everyday topic.** • If a candidate has completed most tasks rather than all, but the 10–12 descriptors are the best fit in other respects, then the answer can, in theory, access the lower end of the 10–12 band. • In the top two bands, the word *opinions* also includes reasons, explanations, etc. • If a candidate answers in a different time frame to the one required by the task, the answer to the task does **not** meet the criteria *completes the task in the required level of detail* and *meaning is clear and communication is achieved.* The word count (80–90 words) is for guidance only. You should mark everything that the candidate has written. **Les fêtes** • **Décrivez ce que vous faites normalement le jour de votre anniversaire.** • **Qu'est-ce que vous aimez recevoir comme cadeaux ?** • **Donnez des détails sur une fête traditionnelle dans votre pays.** • **Préférez-vous passer les fêtes en ville ou à la maison ? Pourquoi ?** • **Comment voudriez-vous fêter le prochain Nouvel An ?** Note: If the information is clear but in the wrong tense i.e. Future for Conditional or modal usage, candidates may access 11 marks provided that all other tasks are conveyed effectively. **Écrivez 80–90 mots en français.** Read the whole answer and award a mark out of 12 using the table below.	**12**

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Marks	Descriptor	Guidance
10–12	• Completes all tasks in the required level of detail. • Provides consistently relevant information and opinions. • Meaning is clear and communication is achieved, although there may be some linguistic inaccuracies. • Uses straightforward vocabulary and structures. • Links words and phrases using a range of simple connectors.	Examples of linguistic inaccuracies: lapses in agreements, tenses/time frames, spelling. Examples of linking words and phrases: *and*, *or*, *but*, *because*, *then*
7–9	• Completes most tasks in the required level of detail. • Provides mostly relevant information and opinions. • Meaning is mostly clear and communication is generally achieved, despite linguistic inaccuracies. • Uses limited vocabulary and structures with some repetition. • Some attempt to link words and phrases using a range of simple connectors.	
4–6	• Completes some tasks with some of the required detail. • Provides some relevant information. • Meaning is sometimes clear and some communication is achieved, despite linguistic inaccuracies. • Uses basic vocabulary and structures with frequent repetition. • Some attempt to link words or phrases using a limited range of simple connectors repetitively (e.g. *and*, *or*).	
1–3	• Attempts task(s), with little or none of the required detail. • May provide information; is almost always irrelevant. • Meaning is unclear and communication is rarely achieved. • Uses isolated words/phrases appropriate to the task. • Little attempt to link words or phrases.	
0	• No creditable content.	

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	**Candidates choose one of two tasks (an email/letter or an article/blog) and complete it in French in approximately 130–140 words.** Task completion • A response can only be considered complete if all elements of all part-questions are attempted reasonably successfully. • If a task is *What did you think about the movie?* and the candidate answers *The movie was interesting* (and nothing else), then they do **not** meet the criteria *Gives detailed information, opinions/reactions and explanations*. Range • When the criterion starts with *Uses*… read it as *Uses successfully*…. • Complex structures: there is no defined list of what constitutes a complex structure; it is based on the usual understanding of standard classroom practice at this level. It would also depend on the context of the piece of writing that the candidate has produced. Accuracy • Gender errors need to be considered under Accuracy. • Extremely short answers with no errors cannot be awarded a mark of more than 4 for *Accuracy* as the candidate has only provided *some accurate spelling and grammar.* • If the answer to one bullet point has an error in the first sentence (e.g. incorrect tense), but the second sentence is completely accurate, you should mark the answer holistically.	

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Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	**<u>Une longue promenade</u>** **Vous êtes parti(e) un matin pour faire une longue promenade. Écrivez un e-mail à votre ami(e) belge pour lui raconter votre expérience.** • **Avec qui avez-vous fait cette promenade ?** • **Qu'avez-vous pensé de l'endroit que vous avez visité ?** • **Qu'est-ce que vous avez fait à l'heure du déjeuner ?** (Some context expected.) • **Quels sont les avantages de la marche à pied ?** • **Qu'allez-vous faire pour votre prochaine sortie ?**	**28**
3(b)	**<u>Un problème à l'hôtel</u>** **Vous avez fait un séjour à l'hôtel. Malheureusement, vous avez eu un problème. Écrivez un blog sur votre expérience.** • **Donnez des détails sur cet hôtel.** (Size, situation, amenities) • **Décrivez le problème que vous avez eu.** • **Quelle a été votre réaction ?** (Negative reaction to the problem not reaction to a solution.) • **Quels sont les avantages de faire un séjour dans un hôtel ?** (Expect general comment in the present tense.) • **Où aimeriez-vous passer vos prochaines vacances ?**	**28**

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Task completion

Marks	Descriptor
9–10	• Completes all tasks. • Provides detailed information, opinions/reactions and explanations. • The writing is focused and wholly relevant.
7–8	• Completes most tasks. • Provides straightforward information, opinions/reactions and explanations. • The writing is mostly relevant.
5–6	• Completes some tasks. • Provides some information, opinions and simple explanations. • The writing is more relevant than irrelevant.
3–4	• Attempts some tasks with some success. • Provides basic information and opinions. • The writing is occasionally relevant.
1–2	• Attempts task(s) with little or no success. • Provides some information and is almost always irrelevant.
0	• No creditable response.

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Range

Marks	Descriptor
9–10	• Uses extended, well-linked sentences frequently. • Uses a wide range of simple and complex structures listed in the syllabus to produce sentences of varying length. • Uses a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the task(s).
7–8	• Uses some extended sentences, mostly well linked. • Uses a range of structures listed in the syllabus, including some complex structures, to produce sentences of varying length. • Uses a range of vocabulary appropriate to the task(s) with occasional repetition.
5–6	• Uses some extended sentences, with some evidence of linkage. • Uses simple structures and attempts to use some complex structures listed in the syllabus. • Uses mostly straightforward vocabulary appropriate to the task(s) with some repetition.
3–4	• Uses simple structures and makes no attempt at using the complex structures listed in the syllabus. • Relies on repetition of a small range of straightforward vocabulary.
1–2	• Uses isolated phrases and makes some attempt at basic structures. • Relies on repetition of a small range of basic vocabulary.
0	• No creditable response.

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Accuracy

Marks	Descriptor
7–8	• Accurate spelling and grammar; not necessarily faultless. • Occasional errors in spelling and grammar do not impede communication.
5–6	• Mostly accurate spelling and grammar. • Errors in spelling and grammar sometimes impede communication.
3–4	• Some accurate spelling and grammar. • Errors in spelling and grammar frequently impede communication.
1–2	• Rarely accurate spelling and grammar. • Errors in spelling and grammar persistently impede communication.
0	• No creditable response.

Irrelevance

- Sections of material unrelated to any of the bullet points will be disregarded.
- If the whole answer to **Question 3** is irrelevant (e.g. contains no evidence of being related to the bullet points set), award 0 for *Task completion*, *Range* and *Accuracy*.
- If **Question 3** is attempted but communication is not achieved (i.e. the candidate misunderstood the question), award a maximum of 4 for *Range* and a best fit for *Task completion* and *Accuracy.*

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