

3.3 FRENCH (501)

In the year 2019, KCSE French Examination was tested in the following three papers;

Paper 1 (501/1) – tested Listening Comprehension, Dictation and Composition.

Paper 2 (501/2) – tested Reading Comprehension and Grammar.

Paper 3 (501/3) – tested Reading Aloud, Exposé and Conversation. This is an oral paper.

3.3.1 CANDIDATES' GENERAL PERFORMANCE

The table below shows the performance of candidates in French (501) in the years 2018 and 2019.

Table 13: Candidates' Overall Performance in French for the years 2018 and 2019

YEAR	PAPER	CANDIDATURE	MAX SCORE	MEAN SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION
2018	1	3,697	45	19.59	8.06
	2	3,697	30	11.6	5.3
	3	3,705	25	19.28	3.9
	Overall	3706	100	50.4	17.26
2019	1	3901	45	22	7.76
	2	3901	30	8	5.08
	3	3899	25	19	3.81
	Overall	3901	100	50.49	15.26

The following observations can be made from the table above:

- There was an increase in candidature by 195 in the year 2019 compared to 2018.
- There was an improvement in overall performance from a mean score of 50.4 in 2018 to 50.49 in 2019.
- In paper 1, the mean score increased from 19.59 in 2018 to 22 in 2019, while in papers 2 and 3, there was a drop in mean score by 3.6 and 0.28 respectively.

3.3.2 French Paper 1 1 (501/1)

This paper consists of three sections:

Section 1: LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Passages 1-5

This section deals with different situations such as advertisements, interviews, news items, etc. and is marked out of 15 marks. The candidates are required to listen twice to the recorded material with in-built pauses then they answer the questions.

Weaknesses

Inadequate vocabulary to talk about “*médicament/ fréquence/ conditions (consultation médicale)*”.

Advice to teachers

- Expose learners to a variety of long and short listening comprehension passages through integration of ICT in learning and teaching of French.
- Teach a wide range of vocabulary on “*Les moyens de transport*”

Section 2: Dictation

Dictation consists of a passage recorded on a tape, with various punctuation marks and is marked out of 5 marks. The passage is read three times. The first time it is read through for the candidates to acquaint themselves with the text. The second time, it is read with pauses calculated to enable the candidates to write down what they have heard. The third and the last time, it is read without pauses to enable candidates to make any necessary changes in their work.

Weaknesses

Poor use of punctuation marks and wrong spelling of vocabulary on parts of human body, accidents and professions.

Advice to teachers

More practice on the use of a variety of vocabularies in dictation passages.

Section 3: Composition

This section has two questions: one on functional writing and the other on creative writing. In functional writing, candidates had a choice between writing a speech and an official letter. In creative writing, candidates were given a choice between two situations where they were to begin their compositions using given clauses.

Weaknesses

- A number of candidates were not able to apply speech writing skills as they seemed to do it the English way. Sentence structure, conjugation and spelling issues were common in composition writing.
- Candidates’ inability to link their composition to the given guiding clauses.
- Inability to narrate clearly in the past.

Advice to teachers

- More practice on composition writing.
- Expose candidates to a variety of questions focusing on interpretation and application.
- Expose students to more creative writing tasks using past tenses.

3.3.3 French Paper 2 (501/2)

This paper consists of 2 sections.

Section 1: Reading Comprehension

This section is marked out of 15 and consists of a number of passages which the students are to read, understand and correctly answer questions based on the content of the passages.

Weaknesses

- Candidates' inability to interpret vocabularies in the questions.
- Candidates picked sentences straight from the passages in answering questions that required them to do some analysis and come up with responses written in their own words.
- Candidates' inability to interpret requisite vocabulary.

Advice to teachers

- Expose students to extensive reading so that they can widen their vocabulary base.
- Expose learners to higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy such as application and analysis so that they can know how to answer questions in reading comprehension.

Section 2: Grammar

Questions 4, 5 & 6

This section is marked out of 15 and tests the use of pronouns, prepositions, adjectives, verbs and modes. The candidates were to rewrite sentences given in correct French, fill in the blanks and use speech acts to give different ways of saying something.

Weaknesses

- Most candidates rewrote sentences without reflecting on the grammatical aspect being tested.
- Some candidates were unable to find suitable words to fill in and end up with a coherent paragraph.
- Some candidates' responses lacked the cultural etiquette of communication.

Advice to teachers

- Advise candidates that before they embark on rewriting, they should first determine the grammatical aspect being tested.
- Put more emphasis on French syntax with particular attention on prepositions and conjunctions.
- Expose learners to intercultural aspects of linguistics.

3.3.4 French Paper 3 (501/3)

This is a face to face examination administered by assessors. It tests the candidates' knowledge of communicative and grammatical skills as well as vocabulary. It also tests their ability to understand the input stimulus and instructions and respond by using their skills in an oral context. The paper has 3 sections which are marked out of 25.

Section 1 Reading Aloud (Cards A and B).

Section 2 Exposé (Cards A, B, C and D)

Section 3 Conversation

Each candidate is given 15 minutes to prepare after choosing cards at random for both sections 1 and 2. Use of dictionaries, textbooks or any external material is not allowed.

Section 1: Reading Aloud

The candidate is required to read a passage aloud in French while paying attention to pronunciation, liaison, rhythm, articulation, punctuation and intonation. It could be a dialogue, a monologue or a description. Both cards are of equal difficulty and more or less the same length.

Weaknesses

- In card A, some candidates had difficulties in pronouncing words such as “*l’environnement, projets, gestes, quotidienne, morceaux and le cas voisin*” while in Card B, some candidates were unable to pronounce words such as “*proviseur, les dessins, en plus, l’environnement, projet and désordre*”.

Advice to teachers

- From the time they join Form One, learners should be given more work on pronunciation, phonetics, communication approach and poetry.
- Teachers should also give learners more group work.

Section 2: Exposé

Candidates were to pick a card at random out of the 4 subjects provided and were to analyse and synthesize their ideas in a coherent and logical manner with appropriate vocabulary and expressions. Candidates were to do oral presentation on a given topic while paying attention to fluency, relevance, intonation, articulation and coherence. They were given two minutes to talk on the topic of choice.

Weaknesses

Some candidates had difficulties in presenting their ideas fluently and coherently. Some also demonstrated lack of articulation, intonation and relevancy.

Advice to teachers

- Emphasize on oral usage of the French language through communicative approach. This can be done through group work, French poems, drama and music festivals.
- Teachers can use audio recordings to help learners develop or improve their listening and oral skills.

Section 3: Conversations

Candidates were required to engage in a conversation in French with the assessor based on a minimum of 4 topics that are in the syllabus such as school life, family, technology, environment, transport, hobbies and tourism.

Weaknesses

Some candidates had difficulties in expressing themselves in French and also communicating based on the topics asked by the assessors.

Advice to teachers

- Teachers should use communicative approach in teaching learners right from Form One.
- Integrate the use of ICT, audio recordings and group work.
- Encourage learners' active participation in dramas, music festivals, poems and French clubs so that they can improve their communication skills in French.