

3.3 FRENCH (501)

In the year 2018, 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.

CANDIDATES' GENERAL PERFORMANCE

The table below shows the performance of candidates in French (501) in the years 2017 and 2018.

Table 14: Candidates' Overall Performance in French for the years 2017 and 2018

YEAR	PAPER	CANDIDATURE	MAX SCORE	MEAN SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION
2017	1		45	20.27	6.96
	2		30	9.47	5.42
	3		25	18.72	4.00
	Overall	3160	100	48.46	16.38
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	50.47	17.26

The following observations can be made from the table above:

- There was a decrease in candidature by 546 in the year 2018 compared to 2017.
- There was an improvement in overall performance from a mean score of 48.46 in 2017 to 50.47 in 2018.
- In paper 1, the mean score dropped from 20.27 in 2017 to 19.59 in 2018 while in papers 2 and 3, there was an improvement in mean score by 2.13 and 0.56 respectively.

3.3.2 French Paper 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 students are required to listen twice to the recorded material with in-built pauses then they answer the questions.

Weaknesses

Some candidates could not use action words in correct tenses. They lacked vocabulary surrounding "la sieste."

Advice to teachers

Learners should be exposed to a wide range of French vocabulary and expressions.

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 students 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

In some cases, candidates were unable to use accents correctly. Others were also unable to use compound words separated by hyphen. Generally, some candidates had poor sentence structures.

Advice to teachers

Teachers should give more practice sessions on dictation insisting on correct spelling and accents.

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 a recipe and a program. In creative writing, candidates were given a choice between two situations which were guided.

Weaknesses

Lack of vocabulary and confusion of tenses.

Advice to teachers

Learners should be given more practice on functional and creative writing.

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

Some candidates lifted sentences from the passage even when they were irrelevant.

Advice to teachers

Students should be taught how to read and understand the passages, then answer questions after comprehension in their own words. They should also be taught how to apply grammatical concepts. Teachers should also emphasise on subject/adjective transformations in indirect speech.

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

Some candidates gave plain responses devoid of the desired grammatical manipulation. Others filled in the blank spaces with any word without fully understanding the text.

Advice to teachers

Teachers should train students how to apply grammatical concepts. Teachers should also emphasize on communicative approach to language teaching.

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 candidates are 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

The candidates had difficulties pronouncing some words like “emboutillage”. Others did not have liaisons after vowels.

Advice to teachers ♦

Reading aloud should be taught right from Form One with emphasis on punctuation, pronunciation, intonation and liaison.

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

A few candidates lacked fluency, relevance, coherence, intonation and did not articulate their points well on the given topics.

Advice to teachers

More emphasis should be put on oral presentation based on several topics that are specified in the syllabus right from Form One so that learners can learn to be fluent and articulate in the French language.

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 had problems in communication based on the topics asked by the assessors.

Advice to teachers

Teachers should emphasize on communicative approach in the teaching and learning of the French language. More participation in French days, French poems, French music festivals, French drama festivals and French club activities should be encouraged in order to boost learners' oral communication skills.