

FRENCH LITERATURE

Paper 8670/41
Texts

Key Messages

Teachers should:

- consider carefully which texts to prepare with their classes: some texts present conceptual problems that are challenging some candidates.

Teachers should train their candidates to:

- manage their time in the examination room, ensuring that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions
- ensure that they do not answer two questions on the same text, remembering that 'soit... soit' means 'either... or'
- think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write
- stay on track as they write their responses by referring back to the question regularly.

Candidates should:

- label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If passage-based questions are not properly labelled, it can look as though parts **(ii)** and **(iii)** have not been attempted
- start each new essay on a fresh page and be careful to attach any continuation sheets in order
- note keywords in the questions and explore all elements of each question
- answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read
- answer the question precisely; stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions
- finish with a concluding paragraph, which should summarise the points made in the essay and may include a personal judgement

General Comments

The passage-based questions were competently dealt with, on the whole; there were relatively few purely narrative answers and most candidates were able to locate the extract within the text and highlight the relevant issues. However, some candidates still attempt to answer these questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then not explaining what the quotation illustrates. It is important for candidates to give their own interpretation when quotations are used.

Successful candidates were able to dissect the title of essay questions and address each element in their responses. A brief introduction is usually sufficient and candidates should not waste time by describing the background to the work and its author. Narration irrelevant to the question should be avoided – remember that the Examiner has also read the text – but candidates should aim to demonstrate their knowledge of the text while remaining focused on answering the question.

As always, the best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes are often shown on the answer paper, although these should be crossed out to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Molière: *Le Malade Imaginaire*

Once again, questions on Molière were attempted by the vast majority of candidates, with both parts being equally popular.

- (a) The question was competently answered and the context was well explained.
- (i) Angélique is not surprised by her father's news, since she assumes that the intended husband to whom Argan is referring is her dearly-beloved Cléante. Her assumption is understandable, since Cléante has already told her by letter of his intent to seek her father's approval and, in her besotted state, Angélique cannot envisage marriage to anyone other than Cléante. Moreover, as 'une fille si obéissante', would she have allowed herself to show surprise had she known that her father was in fact referring to Thomas Diafoirus?
- (ii) The comedy lies in the 'quiproquo' – the fact that father and daughter are talking at cross-purposes, each referring to a different man, a misunderstanding that only the audience is in a position to appreciate. Better candidates also pointed out the comic effect of Argan's sudden change of character: from grumpy old hypochondriac, berating his servant in Act I, sc.2, to this pleasant, loving father, whose only concern is apparently the happiness of his daughter. Just one or two candidates picked up the witty aside of Toinette, 'La bonne bête a ses raisons', showing that the maid knows the real reasons why Béline would like to see her stepdaughters sent to a convent.
- (iii) While most candidates successfully analysed elements of Angélique's behaviour in this extract, some omitted to say whether they thought that this behaviour was typical of her. Her meek obedience is typical: as a well brought up young lady, she has been taught to respect her parents, she is not as worldly-wise as Toinette (and therefore has no reason to suspect that Argan can wish anything but good for her), and she cares for her father. However, this behaviour changes later in the play: for example, she and Toinette actively conspire against Argan's wishes and Angélique deceives her father in Act II, sc. 5, allowing him to believe that Cléante is her singing instructor.
- (b) There were some mixed answers to this question: some candidates found it challenging to explain why something makes us laugh resorted to recounting 'funny' scenes from the play without being able to analyse the source of the comedy. Better answers highlighted:
- The mockery of Argan's foibles, his hypochondria and his grumpiness.
 - The mockery of the blind trust that Argan places in the medical profession and his inability to see that his doctors are fleecing him.
 - The contrast between the rather sombre subject matter of the play and Argan's general silliness: e.g. in following Purgon's instructions in Act II, sc.2, should he walk up and down or from side to side in his room?
 - The satire of Argan's doctors, their odoriferous names (Fleurant, Purgon, etc.) and their quackery.
 - The parody of the medical profession as a whole, in which the mysterious rites and arcane practices of doctors are made to seem outlandish and ridiculous (a parody which reaches its climax in the 'cérémonie burlesque' of the 'troisième intermède').
 - Molière's use of farce; e.g. Argan's threats of violence against his maid and his apparent ability to run after Toinette with his stick, in spite of his claims of illness.
 - The comic use of verbal repetition, such as in the interchanges between Toinette and her master.
 - The use of irony; for example, Argan's concession that Angélique may marry Cléante, but only on the understanding that her husband train as a doctor.

It would also have been highly relevant to point out that it was important that the audience should laugh at Argan's hypochondria, because Molière's aim was to 'change customs by laughing at them'.

Question 2 – Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin*

Questions on the Zola work were attempted by many candidates, with **Question 2(b)** being slightly more popular.

- (a) (i) Most candidates recognised that Camille is reading not for pleasure, but in an attempt to educate himself (in order to make a good impression on his new colleagues at the ‘chemin de fer d’Orléans’), but it is not clear that he fully understands what he reads. The terse, rather bland historical tomes and popular science works that he pores over reflect his own insipid character and he struggles to get through more than twenty pages a night. His reading is certainly not helping him to understand those around him any better: rather ironically, he believes that his wife’s reluctance to read is an indication of her lack of intelligence.
- (ii) Thérèse’s boredom with her surroundings was recognised by most candidates and some also highlighted the fact that she can see no future, feeling trapped by her surroundings. What was less successfully identified was that Thérèse is shown to derive a certain pleasure from suppressing her own feelings, almost a sense of martyrdom – years of living in close proximity to the ailing Camille have taught her to do that. Moreover, the impatience with which Thérèse turns aside the books proffered by Camille hints at the more passionate side to her nature, which will soon come to the fore.
- (iii) While many responses correctly stated that Camille does not understand his wife, attempts to justify that statement were rather less successful. Having been spoiled from his earliest days by his mother, and being a rather simple soul, Camille has no concept of his wife’s more sensual nature. He believes that her refusal to read is evidence of her lack of intelligence, an ironic misunderstanding which throws into contrast the inadequate education that Camille has received. The very best responses identified that Camille has no romantic attachment to Thérèse, whom he treats as merely a good friend, and that, accordingly, he is totally unprepared to identify the signs of the love affair that is shortly to develop between his wife and his best friend.

- (b) There were some competent responses to this question, but the best were able to contrast the positive and the negative aspects of the relationship between Mme. Raquin and her son.

Camille is loved unconditionally by his mother. She has saved him from death and nursed him back to health on countless occasions during his 'longue jeunesse de souffrances'. Indeed, Mme. Raquin loves her son because of his frailness and, accordingly, she is determined to protect him from further harm, no matter what that may cost her. To that end, she is most reluctant to allow him to go away to college and 'gives' him Thérèse, not as a wife, but as 'un ange gardien', who will continue to care for his needs. She is devastated by his death.

However, such is her blind devotion to her son, that Mme. Raquin fails to recognise that she has raised a lazy, self-centered young man of rather low intelligence, who has no comprehension of the feelings of those around him. Camille knows how to play on his mother's devotion, threatening to fall ill again if she does not allow him to move to Paris, and so Mme. Raquin abandons her comfortable life in Vernon, and puts at risk her peaceful retirement and her financial security to move to the capital so that Camille can follow his dream. Moreover, Mme. Raquin fails to recognise that her over-protectiveness is smothering her son, driving a wedge between them. In his irritation, Camille stays away from the Passage du Pont-Neuf for longer and longer periods after work.

Having been tied to his mother's apron strings and protected from the world for so long, Camille has no understanding of Thérèse's feelings and no comprehension of her more sensual nature. He can see no risk in introducing the unmarried Laurent to the family home and he fails to spot the signs of his wife's growing infatuation with the new arrival. To that end, the relationship between Camille and his mother might itself be construed as a catalyst of the tragedy that ensued.

Question 3 – Jean Anouilh: *L'Alouette*

This was another popular question with slightly more candidates opting for **3(b)** than **3(a)**.

- (a) Parts (i) and (ii) were answered fairly well, but some candidates struggled with part (iii). The extract is taken from the start of the play as Jeanne describes her happy life as a shepherdess in Domrémy, before the appearance of the voices.
- (i) The voices are, of course, at the root of the whole story. Saint Michael, followed by Saints Marguerite and Catherine, exhort Jeanne to save the French king by leading his army to victory over the English. The same voices are subsequently claimed by Jeanne's persecutors to be those of the devil, leading to her arrest and trial.
- (ii) Jeanne's parents are simple peasants, ill-equipped to comprehend the events that have overtaken their daughter. Jeanne's father does not believe his daughter's account of the voices. He believes that she is hiding a relationship with a boy and is worried about the shame that she will bring upon the family when she returns home with 'le ventre gonflé, ayant deshonoré le nom de ton père'. He resorts to violence, believing that he can beat these ideas out of his daughter. Her mother is more sympathetic, but is similarly unwilling to believe Jeanne and advises her to submit to her father's will if she wants a quiet life. We learn little of Jeanne's brother, but she remonstrates with him for having lied to their parents about seeing her with a boy.
- (iii) The Examiners were looking for some reference to the structure of the play, perhaps including the idea of the 'play within a play'. 'Qui fera les voix?' indicates that the actors on stage want to know who is going to play the part of the heavenly voices. Jeanne responds that she will do the voices since, after all, she is the one who heard them. The actress who plays the part of Jeanne goes on to play the voices 'avec la grosse voix de l'Archange'.
- (b) The question was generally well answered and the best responses were able to highlight the contrast between Jeanne's apparent pride and her rather lowly status as a frightened young country girl. Jeanne herself admits to being 'orgueilleuse', but her pride comes from God: 'S'Il ne voulait pas que je fusse orgueilleuse, pourquoi m'a-t-Il envoyé son Archange...' She is acting on a higher authority and the voices empower her to lead the French army to victory. Her pride tells her to stop at nothing, even though death might threaten. Some candidates rightly pointed out that elements of Jeanne's arrogance might also stem from the exalted position she finds herself in: a friend of the King and royalty, hailed as the saviour of France. This arrogance certainly allows her

to stand up vigorously to Cauchon's accusations. Nevertheless, she remains a little girl and is still frightened at the idea of death at the stake. Ultimately, it is not pride, but a sense of honour (or perhaps predestiny) which causes her to reject 'une fin heureuse'.

Question 4 – Marguerite Duras: *Moderato Cantabile*

The question was attempted by few candidates, responses being equally divided between **4(a)** and **4(b)**

- (a) (i)** Some candidates struggled to decide whether Mlle Giraud was right to say that Anne would have a lot of trouble with her son. Of course, the piano teacher is frustrated at the boy's reluctance to play and his inability to remember what 'moderato cantabile' means. Anne is passionate about him and is stubbornly proud at her son's rebelliousness. The boy is the sole focus of her existence: 'C'est déjà fait, il me dévore', reveals that, from the moment of his birth, her son has consumed her, a simultaneous agony and joy. But the evidence suggests that her son is much more of a help than a hindrance to her. He may run wild, dangerously close to the water's edge while Anne is in the bar and he may burst in, constantly interrupting her increasingly intimate discussions with Chauvin, but the boy is the only stability in Anne's life. He leads his mother away from the bar when Anne is overcome by wine and inertia and, arguably, it is the child who protects Anne from the disgrace that would have arisen had her relationship with Chauvin been allowed to progress any further.
- (ii)** This was well dealt with by most candidates, the 'event' being the murder of a woman in a neighbouring bar. Her lover's cries of anguish fascinate Anne and drive her to learn more, leading to her meeting with Chauvin.
- (iii)** Also well dealt with by most candidates, who recounted Anne's regular visits to the bar, her developing relationship with Chauvin who plies her with wine and tells her his (imagined) version of what had happened in the relationship between the two lovers leading up to the murder, as a means of delaying Anne's departure..
- (b)** Some candidates found this a challenging question and had trouble explaining why 'Moderato Cantabile' should be an appropriate title for the novel. Some felt that the novel had a slow, moderate progression and that little happened. Others felt that the repetition of phrases and settings in the novel were reminiscent of the chorus of a song. They also highlighted the fact that the boy's music lessons allowed Anne to escape from the house and bear witness to the aftermath of murder. The key to the question, however, was the title's juxtaposition of self-control/discipline (modéré) and self-expression (chantant) which becomes the leitmotiv for the novel. Anne's life is 'moderato', strictly governed by the rules of the upper-middle class society to which she belongs. Music has rhythm and demands discipline, which is why Anne takes her son to music lessons to teach him the discipline that she is unable to instill in him herself. She is timid and 'modéré' at home but she longs for freedom and the ability to express herself (cantabile). It is the promise of a relationship with Chauvin which allows her to glimpse, albeit only briefly, a more fulfilled, happier, 'chantant' future.

Section 2

Question 5 – André Gide: *Les Caves du Vatican*

There were no responses to **Question 5(a)** or **5(b)**.

Question 6 – Albert Camus: *Les Justes*

- (a) The question was attempted by a fair number of candidates, most of whom explained quite successfully the differing attitudes of Kaliyev's colleagues. Much was made of Stepan's doubts and the fact that he needed to have a first-hand report of Kaliyev's execution before he believed that the group had not been betrayed. Dora's absolute faith in her lover was also mentioned and some candidates alluded to Voinov's support for Dora, though few addressed Boria's attitude. The more successful responses highlighted the role played by the Grand Duchess in inciting the suspicion of the revolutionaries and the fact that Kaliyev's unswerving belief in the cause and his determination to accept death as his reward made any idea of betrayal unthinkable to him.
- (b) This was easily the more popular of the two questions and was well answered by conscientious candidates, who appeared to show their enjoyment of the text. All of the group claim to be fully committed to the revolutionary cause, although each is driven by a different personal agenda. Stepan has been brutalised by three years in 'le bagné'. For him, the end justifies the means and he will happily break every moral boundary in his attempt to assassinate the Grand Duke. He is driven primarily by the desire for revenge and by the thought that death will free him from the shame of having survived when others had died in pursuit of the cause. Dora has no fear of death and is equally committed to the revolution, but ultimately she demands the right to throw the next bomb in order to be reunited in death with her lover. Voinov is intellectually committed to the revolutionary cause, but he loses his courage when faced with the horror of the physical act of assassination. Perhaps the only true revolutionary is Kaliyev: he is prepared to die for the cause in which he fervently believes. He sees himself as 'un justicier', not as a murderer.

Question 7 – Simone de Beauvoir: *Les Belles Images*

Question (b) was much more popular than **Question (a)**, the latter only being attempted by a handful of candidates.

- (a) Some candidates interpreted 'les hommes' to mean 'mankind', rather than simply 'men' and therefore went on to talk about Dominique's relationship with Gilbert, Gilbert's other lovers and other members of her family. The stronger responses addressed Dominique's role as something of a social butterfly; egotistical and shallow. She is entirely dependant on a man such as Gilbert to provide her with happiness and social status. She is devastated when Gilbert leaves her for a younger lover and her love quickly turns to fury and a desire for vengeance. She returns to her former husband, despite having slandered him for years, not out of any feeling of love, but merely because: 'socialement, une femme n'est rien sans un homme'.
- (b) There were some strong responses to this question and many candidates were able to recall a good deal of detail from the novel.

Laurence:

- Is the modern, independent, self-confident woman.
- She is committed to her career and earns well.
- She is happily married, but nonetheless has a lover.
- She has a strong and trusting relationship with her father.
- Despite her self-confidence, she is concerned at her daughter's malaise.
- She begins to doubt her own upbringing as 'une belle image'
- She begins to seek new meaning in her life.

Marthe

- Is the opposite of her sister in many ways.
- She is happily married to Hubert and has no thoughts of straying.
- She is a committed Catholic and her faith gives her strength and stability.
- Her relationship with her father is more distant than that of her sister
- She believes that religion is the answer to Catherine's concern at the evils of the world and urges Laurence to have her daughter confirmed.

Question 8 – Romain Gary: *La Vie devant soi*

This continues to be a very popular text. **Question (b)** was attempted by significantly more candidates, than **Question (a)**.

- (a) There is no doubt that the exposure of Mme. Rosa's children to the varied and multicultural society in which they live helps with their integration into that society. Momo takes Banania to 'le foyer noir' where he meets a variety of black people and listens to African music. Mme. Rosa insists that Momo be made aware of his Muslim culture and heritage, a role in which Monsieur Hamil plays a key part. M. Waloumba (Cameroon) and Mme. Lola (Senegal) each figure significantly in Momo's life. However, there is no clear evidence of any active attempt by Mme. Rosa to expose her children to other cultures and races as a means of integrating them. Rather, their integration is a natural result of the children's daily exposure on the streets to the mixed society in which they live. The best answers made this clear.
- (b) Responses to **Question (b)** were hampered in some cases by a misunderstanding of the French word 'sensible'. Some candidates interpreted the word as equating to the English meaning 'sensible' or 'practical' and went on to describe Momo's level-headedness, for example in the way that he dealt with Mme. Rosa's developing illness. What was required was an appraisal of whether the description of Momo as a **sensitive** child was adequate. The best answers provided both sides of the argument.

Momo shows sensitivity in a number of ways:

- He regularly feels lonely.
- He longs for a real mother and father and constantly seeks love and permanent security.
- He cares about the remarks others make about his race and religion (at school, for example).
- He is devoted to Mme Rosa and cares for her needs in her final days, respecting her desire not to end her days in hospital 'comme un légume'.
- He feels out of place and awkward on his first encounter with Nadine's blond children.
- He is a dreamer (consider the lioness that watches over him at night and the umbrella, Arthur).

In other ways, however, he is not at all sensitive:

- He doesn't cry often.
- He has a delinquent side and he steals without compunction.
- He is indifferent to the poverty, crime and overcrowding that he experiences on the streets.
- He is not shocked by the prostitutes, transvestites and pimps who feature so largely in his life.
- He is surprised at, but not revolted by Mme. Rosa's nudity and her 'grossesse' and he attends to her intimate needs without a second thought.

FRENCH LITERATURE

Paper 8670/42
Texts

Key Messages

Teachers should :

- consider carefully which texts to prepare with their classes: some texts present conceptual problems that are challenging for some candidates.
- encourage some candidates to address the passage-based (a) questions in section 1, which provide a ready-made structure for their answers and therefore offer better options for achieving reasonable to good marks than the freer option (b) alternatives, which provide no such inbuilt guidance on how to structure a response.

Teachers should train their students to:

- manage their time in the examination room, ensuring that equal weight is accorded to **three** questions.
- ensure that they do not answer two questions on the same text, remembering that 'soit... soit' means 'either... or'.
- think carefully about what the question is asking of them before they start to write.
- stay on track as they write their responses by referring back to the question regularly.

Candidates should :

- label questions with the number, and passage-based questions with **(i)**, **(ii)** and **(iii)**. If passage-based questions are not properly labelled, it can look as though parts **(ii)** and **(iii)** have not been attempted.
- start each new essay on a fresh page and be careful to attach any continuation sheets in order.
- note keywords in the questions and explore all elements of each question.
- answer with reference to the appropriate text, even if other works by the same author have been read.
- answer the question precisely; stating in the introduction what will be said and coming to interim and final conclusions.
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General Comments

The passage-based questions were competently dealt with, on the whole; there were relatively few purely narrative answers and most candidates were able to locate the extract within the text and highlight the relevant issues. However, some candidates still attempt to answer these questions by quoting often lengthy parts of the extract text, but then not explaining what the quotations illustrate. It is important for candidates to give their own interpretation when quotations are used.

Successful candidates were able to dissect the title of essay questions and address each element in their responses. A brief introduction is usually sufficient and candidates should not waste time by describing the background to the work and its author. Narration irrelevant to the question should be avoided – remember that the Examiner has also read the text – but candidates should aim to demonstrate their knowledge of the text while remaining focused on answering the question.

As always, the best responses were those that were carefully planned (rough notes are often shown on the answer paper, although these should be crossed out to avoid any misunderstanding) and which led to a clear conclusion.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1

Question 1 – Molière: *Le Malade Imaginaire*

Once again, questions on Molière were attempted by the vast majority of candidates. **Question (a)** was significantly more popular than **Question (b)**.

- (a) The question was competently answered and the context was well explained.
- (i) Most candidates rightly observed that Argan’s behaviour does not hold out much hope for Toinette’s prediction coming true. His fanatical obsession with his health and wealth, his frequent outbursts of anger and his regular mistreatment of his maid suggest that paternal tenderness is not a quality that Argan possesses. Nevertheless, there are signs that Argan might be moved. We see throughout the play that he is easily manipulated (by Béline, Toinette, Cléante and by his doctors), and he does have a tender side (consider the relationship that he has with his wife). Ultimately, Toinette’s prediction does come good: Argan allows Angélique to marry Cléante. The better responses were able to see both sides of the argument.
- (ii) **Part (ii)** was well answered by most candidates, who identified Toinette’s spirit, her willingness to stand up to her master and her ability to play to Argan’s hypochondriac tendencies as a means of getting what she wants. Of course, Toinette loves Angélique and will do what she must to protect her, but fewer candidates recognised the fact that she cares equally for Argan and does not want to see his reputation harmed.
- (iii) **Part (iii)** was less successfully addressed. Most candidates recognised that Argan’s threat to use violence was typical of him, and that slapstick comedy (Argan chasing Toinette around the chair, stick in hand) was a recurrent feature of the play, but fewer responses picked up on the use of word play to heighten the comedy – the staccato volley of negations and denials at the start of the extract – or the social comment on the proper role of domestic staff: “...quelle audace est-ce là à une coquine de servante de parler de la sorte devant son maître”.
- (b) The question was competently and comprehensively addressed by the vast majority of candidates. The stronger responses highlighted:
- Argan’s hypochondria and the dominant role that ‘la médecine’ has in his life
 - The vast sums of money that he pays out to his doctors (and his blindness to the fact that his doctors are fleecing him).
 - His genuine fear that death is imminent, for example, following M. Purgon’s threats in Act III, sc. 6.
 - His reluctance to listen to sensible advice from his brother, Béralde, and his maid, Toinette.
 - All of which factors lead him to his plan to marry his daughter to the younger Diafoirus doctor.
 - Such a move will provide him with lifelong healthcare for free, though it will ruin his daughter’s life, since Angélique loves Cléante, while Thomas Diafoirus is a fool.
 - Argan’s plan ultimately fails because he does not have the wit to counter Toinette’s trickery and he fails to account for the fact that Angélique’s true love for Cléante will not allow her to give way.
 - Argan recognises his daughter’s true feelings and abandons his plan, allowing Angélique to marry according to her wishes, providing of course that Cléante agrees to become a doctor.

Question 2 – Émile Zola: *Thérèse Raquin*

Tjis was another popular question, with significantly more candidates opting for **Question 2(a)** than **2(b)**.

- (a) (i) Most reponses picked up on the sombre, dark and humid epithets used to describe the haberdashery and its immediate environs and better responses linked this sinister atmosphere with the suggestion of future tragedy. However, many responses were short on finer detail. Few candidates mentioned Thérèse's horrified reaction when she first visits the property.
- (ii) There were some strong responses to **Part (ii)**. Most candidates highlighted the fact that the portrait represented a premonition of Camille's drowning, and many candidates recognised adjectives such as 'ignoble', 'blafardes' and 'grimaçant' which are used elsewhere in the novel to describe Camille and the poor health that he enjoys. Some candidates were sidetracked into describing the haunting role that the portrait later played in the marriage bedroom of Thérèse and Laurent. Fewer candidates mentioned that Camille is the only one to be delighted with the portrait. His belief that it gives him "un air distingué" sheds light on Camille's character and serves to underline the way in which Zola typecasts him as something of a dimwit.
- (iii) This was perhaps the best answered of all three parts. The majority of responses saw Thérèse's behaviour as typical and explained how her childhood with the sickly Camille had trained her to be passive and suppress her feelings. The stronger responses picked up on "attendre en frémissant", highlighting Therese's repressed sensuality and the impact that the arrival of Laurent was to have on her.
- (b) Candidates seemingly found this question somewhat challenging and not many opted to answer it. What Examiners were looking for was an appreciation of how the author used light and shade to:
- set scenes of dull monotony or mystery
 - herald impending tragedy
 - hold out fleeting glimpses of freedom and happiness for Thérèse and Laurent
 - highlight the couple's horror in having to live with their crime
 - underline the final tragic dénouement

Question 3 – Jean Anouilh: *L'Alouette*

A fair proportion of candidates attempted **Question 3**. **Question 3a** was significantly more popular than **Question 3b**.

- (a) There were relatively few attempts to describe the context of the extract or to identify the characters and their precise roles. Conversely, there were many examples of candidates providing often irrelevant, pre-learnt material about the author and his works.
- (i) Cauchon is telling Frere Ladvenu that they cannot intervene to stop Jeanne's father from beating her. Cauchon's comments reveal a certain fatalism: "Nous n'y pouvons rien" and "Nous ne pouvons que jouer nos rôles," At the same time, his allusion to 'roles' and phrases such as "Nous ne connaissons Jeanne qu'au procès" and "...tel qu'il est écrit, et à son tour" sound like stage directions and reflect an objectivity among the characters, and particularly Cauchon, towards the events in the play. His negative mark about "cette petite scène de famille" continues the theatrical allusion – Cauchon and Warwick are spectators of a scene within a scene. "Nous lui ferons encore bien plus mal" is phrased as a calm but sinister threat of things to come.

- (ii) Although most candidates recognised that Warwick was referring to Jeanne, many struggled with the adjective 'illuminée'. Though nothing more than a fifteen-year-old shepherdess ('une jeune fille'), Jeanne has been 'illuminated' or enlightened by God through his Archangel, Michael, and the voices ('les Voix') of Saints Marguerite and Catherine who have instructed her to save the French king by leading his army and defeating the English invaders.
- (iii) Some responses to **Part (iii)** went into great detail about Jeanne's home life and her relations with her father, mother and brother. However, the question was quite specific in asking what we learn about her family 'in this extract'. As a simple peasant, Jeanne's father is not afraid of resorting to corporal punishment and he seems intent on using his belt to beat out of her the desire to save France. Cauchon describes the scene as 'désagréable'. Her father's question, "What would you have done in my place, my lords, if your daughter had said that to you?" goes unanswered. Warwick identifies a missed opportunity in that his 'service de renseignements' should have identified the problem from the start and arranged with Jeanne's father to shut her up and nip the trouble in the bud.
- (b) **Question 3 (b)** was attempted by only a handful of candidates. Although there was occasional reference to moments of tension in the plot, the majority of the responses showed only superficial understanding of the techniques used by the author to heighten or resolve dramatic tension during the play. Examiners were looking for references to factors such as:
- the use of the 'play within a play'
 - Jeanne relating her own story
 - Jeanne playing the role of the heavenly voices
 - the comedy with Beaudricourt that lightens the tension
 - the unexpected dénouement to the play

Question 4 – Marguerite Duras: *Moderato Cantabile*

The question was attempted by a good number of candidates, almost all of them dealing with **4(b)**.

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to describe the difficult progress of the boy's piano lessons and Mlle. Giraud's growing frustration with him and his mother. There was a little more difficulty in defining Anne's attitude toward her son: she is, in equal measure, frustrated by and fiercely proud of his stubbornness.
- (ii) It is not entirely clear from the text who makes this remark. Examiners accepted the contention that it was Chauvin who comments that he has seen Anne passing the bar for more than a year; that he had been spying on Anne from outside her home and that he was infatuated with her, though a romantic development would never come to pass. However, it seems more likely that Anne's observer here is not Chauvin, but the patronne of the bar. Her red knitting is clearly symbolic of the danger she has recognised in the Chauvin/Anne connection, which she has been watching for some time. 'La patronne' is aware that the developing relationship is not a healthy one (because she knows who Anne's husband is and she is conscious of the vast difference in social status between Anne and Chauvin) and she feels that it is possibly reaching a climax: "il était visible qu'à son gré les choses prenaient un tour déplaisant".
- (iii) There was divided opinion as to who ordered the wine, but a few candidates correctly identified Chauvin as ordering the third glass only. Most candidates acknowledged the calming effect that the wine had on Anne and some identified that Chauvin took advantage of Anne's nervous preoccupation with the murder at the café to keep plying her with wine. Fewer candidates went on to acknowledge that three glasses of wine were clearly too much for Anne, who returns home in an inebriated state to a dinner party, much to her husband's embarrassment, and subsequently vomits on her son's bedroom floor.
- (b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Section 2

Question 5 – André Gide: *Les Caves du Vatican*

- (a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.
- (b) Though few in number, there were some rather successful analyses of ‘intelligent characters’, including the scientist, Anthime Armand-Dubois, the crafty and scheming Protos, and Lafcadio Wluiki, who works his way back into the Baraglioul family fortune.

Question 6 – Albert Camus: *Les Justes*

This was a very popular question, equally divided between **6(a)** and **6(b)**

- (a) Some candidates appeared to be misled by the inclusion of Skouratov’s words prior to the actual question, since they chose to expound events leading up to the killing of the Duke and Kaliayev’s arrest and imprisonment, thus overlooking – often completely – the question as to whether or not Kaliayev was discredited in the eyes of his colleagues. Other candidates assumed that Skouratov had indeed carried through with his threat and published his allegations. Nevertheless, there were some competent responses which highlighted the high regard in which Kaliayev was held by his colleagues (except Stépan); the strong support of Dora for her lover, the suspicion which the visit by the Grand Duchess raised, her attempts at persuasion and Kaliayev’s response; Stépan’s final acknowledgement that Kaliayev had not betrayed them, but only when he has received a first-hand account of Kaliayev’s execution. Regardless of how they reached their conclusions, most candidates acknowledged that Skouratov did not succeed in discrediting Kaliayev.
- (b) Candidates were generally more successful at answering **Question 6 (b)** and there were some strong analyses of Voinov, his initial enthusiasm for the cause, his subsequent fear and shame, his desire to quit the group and his subsequent re-recruitment, turning from his cowardly conduct to find a way of standing in solidarity with his comrades again.

Question 7 – Simone de Beauvoir: *Les Belles Images*

A good proportion of candidates attempted **Question 7** and responses were equally divided between **7(a)** and **7(b)**.

- (a) The question was well answered. Some candidates had difficulty working out the precise nature of Gilbert’s relationships with his women, but his character was well understood. In the main, candidates could have made more of Gilbert’s esteem for Laurence and the hideous effect of his crass treatment of Dominique – both of which were often covered only briefly, despite being strong character indicators.
- (b) Responses to **7 (b)** were less convincing. There was inevitably a fair amount of guesswork, since Marthe does not play a prominent role in the novel. This also meant that answers were often unbalanced as candidates had much more to say about Laurence, which in turn tended to lead to mere storytelling in several instances. However there were some competent responses which contrasted the modern, thinking, restless woman, Laurent, with her more traditional and contented sister. Unfortunately, a few candidates failed to identify that Marthe’s sister was Laurent and went on to describe the relationship between Catherine and her younger sister, Louise.

Question 8 – Romain Gary: *La Vie devant soi*

This continues to be a very popular text, with the majority of answers favouring **8(b)**.

- (a)** This was the less well answered of the two options but there were a number of creditable responses from candidates who had gathered from the text that, just as with any other race or creed, Muslims came in all shapes and sizes, and they found valid illustrations to support their judgements. Some candidates saw the novel as a commentary on racist attitudes towards the Muslim population of Belleville, but this is not the situation experienced by the young Momo. If anything, he is oblivious to negative attitudes towards race and religion (“Pendant longtemps, je n’ai pas su que j’étais arabe parce que personne ne m’insultait”). Rather, the novel is a commentary on racial and religious tolerance in a mixed population.
- (b)** There were some pleasing responses to Question **(b)** from candidates who were at pains to make constant reference to “fear” and “contagious”, as required by the question. The weaker efforts were almost entirely narrative, where candidates had lost touch with the question at a very early stage of the response. The best responses highlighted that Momo and Mme. Rosa were so close to each other that all their emotions – not just fear – were automatically transferred from one to the other.