**Specimen**

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**Summer 2010**

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Many candidates chose (a). There was some variation in the conception of what constitutes social exclusion but on the whole candidates had a good understanding of the issues raised in the film. It was interesting that there was criticism as well as sympathy for Vinz and the characters were all seen as individuals. The manner in which the question was approached showed much variation, some concentrating on language and the symbolic value of the setting while others placed the emphasis on the relationship with the police. Almost all seemed to have engaged well with the issues involved. Sometimes the real story used by Kassovitz to create the film was fully described but the question was not answered. The fewer essays on (b) were on the whole very well observed and some contained specialised cinematographic terminology, although this was not necessary for a successful response.

**Summer 2011**

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 (a) This was the more popular choice, with a surprising amount of sympathy being expressed for the police. It was worrying that some candidates did not understand "*anti-flic*". Those who did understand anti-flic analysed, or in the weaker answers listed, where the police feature. This led the majority to over emphasise the importance of the 2 'nice' *flics*. Only one commented on the futility of their actions. Few referred to the overall intentions of Kassovitz in the portrayal of the police. On the other hand, there were a few excellent answers (Everyone knew what a *flic* is!). Answers were well balanced and analytical, but a main observation is that the

candidates' understanding often exceeded their ability to express their views.

(b) This attracted fewer answers but these too were balanced and well-argued. It is difficult to see why so few wrote on Vinz. Perhaps it is the use of the word *compassion* and the candidates didn't fully know what it meant. (Even though *"la* *compassion"* has regularly appeared in Literature questions). The answers mostly followed the film chronologically and the parts identified where the candidate did or did not feel compassion for him. There was little analysis and none of Vinz's justification of his violent behaviour.

**Summer 2012**

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Many candidates chose (a). Hubert’s quote was well explored by many, but there was a tendency to describe where “la haine attire la haine” appeared in the film. Focus on the idea of the vicious circle and Hubert’s need to break out of it was well developed and explored by many candidates. Some essays contained good references to cinematographic techniques used by Kassovitz in this context.

In (b) there was some variation in the concept of what constitutes “family” but on the whole candidates had a good understanding of the issues raised in the film. The traditional idea of family and its evident dysfunctionality was well-explored with regard to the three main characters. Some candidates concentrated on the symbolic idea of “family” in the face of adversity (life in “la banlieue”) while others placed the emphasis on the traditional relationships, and lack of father figures. Almost all seemed to have engaged well with the issues involved.

**General points:**

• Most candidates respected the given word limit of 400. Those who went beyond or fell short of this penalised themselves according to the criteria of the mark scheme.

• This meant that the essay was no longer of the same quality as a 400 word essay (lost conclusion, too many details and not concentrating on the question asked). Some essays were too short and quality of response and knowledge of film, book or region suffered.

• There is a tendency for candidates to rely too much on narrative, story-telling and scene setting and lengthy character descriptions. Candidates should think not “What”, but “Why”?

• Not that many centres seemed to favour a strong traditional essay French fashion with a concise introduction, a clear progression with linked paragraphs. The ones that did never deviated from the question in hand.

• A good essay is a planned essay – it was most encouraging to see evidence of planning. This does help candidates to harness their thoughts and ideas before beginning to write.

• Many of the questions ask for a personal response or viewpoint. Candidates should be encouraged to do this when practising their essay writing technique.

**Accuracy:**

* Verbs and tenses were quite well handled, unlike genders and adjectives. The use of historic present tense works very well in these types of essays.
* There were a lot of problems, surprisingly, with basic grammar like *de le* or *à le*.
* Some key words were wrongly spelt like *internat* spelt *internaut.*
* The verb *~”inclure”* was badly conjugated.
* *Mieux/meilleur mal/mauvais* were often used interchangeably.
* The syntactical difference between *À cause de/parce que* was poorly understood. *Parce que* is still being used where *à cause de* is required.
* A singular noun often had a plural verb and vice versa.
* *Expecter* and *promoter* are used fairly extensively now, as are *addicté* and *passer un examen* meaning to 'pass an examination.'
* *Faire bien* and *Je suis bien en anglais* are frequently used to render 'to do well' and 'I am good at' respectively.
* *Drouges* and *ganger* are now widespread versions of *drogues and gagner.*
* Common verbs used incorrectly - *ils boissent/boirent/buvent (boire).*
* The Present Tense of *aller, faire, avoir, être* were confused and used incorrectly. Basic present tense verb forms were badly handled (3rd person not known). As most candidates use the historic present for their essays, it is essential that they strive for greater accuracy.
* Few can use any Past Tense correctly.
* Common use of subjunctive very often was not used e.g. *Les parents veulent les enfants écouter.*
* *Dire* and *parler* were used interchangeably.
* Second verb infinitive rule was not obeyed: *Les ados doivent parle avec les parents.*
* Incorrect syntax with impersonal verbs: *Les ados faut respecter...*
* Adjectival agreements were often ignored or incorrect.
* The position of the negative *ne…pas* is a mystery to many candidates. It was frequently placed around nouns or adjectives, e.g. *Hugo est ne forte pas. / Annie est nheureux pas /Meursault namoureux pas Marie / Manon namour pas Ugolin.*
* Some candidates believe that every French word ending in e must have an accent.
* Many candidates confuse *montrer* with *monter*. There was also confusion between *savoir/connaître, épouser/ se marier avec/marier,* and also *personnage/caractère.*
* Pronouns seem to be causing more problems this year, e.g. *Ugolin aime elle / il regarde elle / Hugo veut tuer le / il donne la.*