IGCSE CIE Nov 2009: **Relationships with friends**

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**Examiners’ report:**

*This question attracted a large number of answers, particularly from girls. The description of the ‘best friend’ seemed to be a familiar task, and candidates usually offered copious details including their friends’ age and nationality, the colour of their eyes and hair, how tall they were, their interests and hobbies and their personality. Most were able to score quite heavily for language here, but some had difficulty with adjectival agreements and the spelling of such everyday words as cheveux and yeux. The gender of the friend was sometimes in doubt when candidates began Mon meilleur amie, which smacks of carelessness. The friend was described as aimable (frequently rendered as ‘amiable’), généreux, sympa and drôle. In some cases, the description occupied a disproportionately large amount of the answer to the detriment of what followed, but candidates were happy to be on familiar ground. There were relatively few verbal errors, as the required tense was the present and the usual verbs were those of everyday, such as être, avoir, s’appeler, jouer, écouter, aller, faire and aimer.*

*Credit was given for stating that friends were important. There was no penalty for those who, continuing from the previous task of describing a best friend, wrote about the importance of that particular friend and not friends in general. Friends were valued as confidants and companions.They offered help and advice in times of trouble. Many helped with homework. Grammatical limitations were evident in some attempts to render this concept, as in elle aide moi and je parle à elle. The verb comprendre (to understand) was often employed, but was not always known properly, as was evident in such attempts as elle me compris. Some candidates, possibly in boarding schools, said their friends took on the roles of absent brothers and sisters. Often friends were good for one’s morale and they made you laugh. Better candidates were able to express some interesting ideas on the importance of friends and weaker ones were usually able to say something relevant, even if in simple language.*

*Activities shared with friends varied widely but the most popular areas included sport and games*

*(mostly boys) and socialising (mostly girls). Verbs were usually well handled as the present was*

*the required tense as in the response to Que faites-vous ensemble? Most were able to acquire a*

*communication mark for nous jouons au tennis/foot/hockey, nous faisons de la natation/l’équitation/du shopping or the equivalent. The use of on for nous was accepted. Again, the verbs and the vocabulary were familiar and should have presented few difficulties.In the last task, most seemed to understand they had to say how they would like to celebrate the end of exams but not all were able to express their answers coherently. Many candidates quite properly used j’aimerais with an infinitive in response to dites ce que vous aimeriez faire but the future tense was accepted also in expressions such as après les examens nous irons en ville or nous passerons le week-end au bord de la mer. Many candidates, however, struggled to find a correct future or conditional tense.*