

BOTSWANA EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

JCE FRENCH

2023

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INTRODUCTION

This marking report constitutes feedback on candidates' performance from the 2023 JCE French examination which was made up of 3 components: The Listening and Reading Comprehension (Paper 1), the Language Use (Paper 2) and the third component being the Oral examination (Paper 3).

Components 1 and 2 for the JCE French 2023 marking session were marked from the 11th December 2023 to the 22nd December 2023 at Mogoditshane Senior Secondary School. Two examining teams were constituted, for which Paper 1 and Paper 2 each had five (5) examiners, one Team Leader and one Principal Examiner.

PAPER 1

GENERAL COMMENTS

This paper had two sections, Section A and Section B.

Section A constituted a Listening comprehension whose aim was to assess candidates' ability to demonstrate their listening competencies where understanding of oral information is concerned. Five short listening extracts were recorded onto an audio CD which was played using an audio device or radio during the time of the examination. Candidates were required to listen to each short extract and respond to the related items. Another CD was provided specifically for candidates with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in an efforts to enhance inclusivity and access to the examination by the concerned learners. Candidates were required to apply their cognitive skills to deal with different items that were being tested.

Section B constituted a Reading comprehension, and candidates had to read five short extracts then respond to items based on those.

Botswana Junior Certificate Examination Principal Examiners' Report to Centres French 32/2023





The performance of most candidates in this paper was average.

Comments on the individual items are as follows:

EXTRACT 1

Item 1

The item required candidates to establish what it is that Chantal wanted. Most candidates did well on this item.

Item 2

The item was looking for a specific fact, being *nom de famille*. However it also tested candidates' ability to spell words. The item was not accessible to most candidates.

Item 3

This item was a short answer item. It required candidates to write the number *quinze*. Although most candidates managed to write the number, some of them wrote it with spelling mistakes.

Item 4

The item requested candidates to find a specific fact, (The name of the town where Chantal lived). The extract mentioned both where Chantal was born and where she lived. Some candidates gave the response as the town where Chantal was born and got it wrong.

Item 5

This was a short answer item and the response was given at the very end of the extract which raised the possibility of candidates getting the item correct.



EXTRACT 2

Item 6

The item requested candidates to give a summation of the extract. It was not accessible to most candidates.

Item 7

The item was a short answer item and requested candidates to give a month in response. Most candidates who gave the correct response also got the spelling right (*mars*).

Item 8

This item was a short answer item looking for a specific fact. It required candidates to be cognisant of the different seasons. Most candidates performed poorly in this item.

Item 9

The item requested candidates to find a specific fact. It also required candidates to analyze a given picture.

Item 10

The item requested for specific facts, and it required candidates to pick a range of temperatures. Candidates had to listen carefully to the given numbers.

EXTRACT 3

Item 11

The item requested candidates to give reason for the call. In the extract, the caller clearly stated why they made the call and the item was accessible to most candidates.





The item was looking for a specific fact, and requested for the date of the week (*samedi*). Most candidates got the item correct, but still there were some who could not correctly spell *samedi*.

Item 13

This item required candidates to find reason as to why the time for the lesson was changed. The reason for the change of time was clearly stated.

Item 14

The item required for a place *chez Malika*. However on top of finding the place, candidates had to also understand the prepositions of place as the correct response was *devant chez Malika*. The item was not accessible to most candidates.

Item 15

The item required candidates to say what one must wear. However the correct response was at the very end of the mentioning of clothes that one must bring. It was also said as more of an afterthought, thus raising the level of difficulty of the item.

EXTRACT 4

Item 16

The item required candidates to say what the passage is about and the response was clearly stated in the extract.

Item 17

The item required candidates to say when the visit starts. The response was given in the passage, however the speed of the extract was fast making it not easier to hear clearly.



For this item, candidates were required to respond by giving a reason which happened to be given in the passage. Some candidates managed to correctly respond to the item.

Item 19

The item required candidates to name the language which was spoken by most visitors. Two languages were mentioned, English and French. Most candidates managed to give at least one of the languages, however there were some who gave responses which were not related to the question at all.

Item 20

The item was not accessible to most candidates. The adjective *lentement* was not captured by most candidates. Some just picked the response *Le colleague qui parle anglais est malade* from the options for item 18.

EXTRACT 5

Item 21

The item required candidates to give specific information. They were to say what the man was looking for.

Item 22

The item was looking for a specific fact, the number 500. Candidates were to pick this number from the three options given. One of the distractors 105 is pronounced closely to the required response and candidates made it difficult to select the correct number. One had to listen to the follow-up numbers and make sense of the entire text in order to get the correct response.



For this item, candidates were to give a reason for something. The reason was not clearly stated but had to be deduced based on the whole extract.

Item 24

The item required candidates to find a specific fact. Candidates were to give the number fifth. It was accessible to a majority of the candidates.

Item 25

The item asked for a specific fact. However the vocabulary used in the extract differed from the one used in the given options. The extract used the word **ancien** while the option given was **vieux**.

SECTION B

This section was based on short reading extracts.

Item 26

The item was accessible to most candidates.

Item 27

The item required candidates to pick a reason for the call. Most candidates managed to pick the correct option which is, to invite. However some candidates chose the last option which is, to accept an invitation.

Item 28

This item was accessible to most candidates. However, some candidates just copied and pasted the sentence which carried the response.



Although this item could be deemed to be accessible to most candidates, some candidates could not find the correct response. They probably could not relate to the word *loger* which was used.

Item 30

The item required candidates to deduce the reason for the need to wear warm clothes. It proved not to be accessible to most candidates.

Item 31

The item was accessible to most candidates.

Item 32

Most candidates understood and could give the correct response which is the number *quatre*. However, some candidates could not spell *quatre* correctly, and they wrote it as *quotre* or *quarte*. Some could not understand the task, and wrote the list of films showing on the day.

Item 33

This item was accessible to most of the candidates.

Item 34

Most candidates could not access the item. They probably could not relate to the word *dernier*.

Item 35

The item was not accessible to most candidates. Some candidates gave the response as **XXXX.**



The item was easily accessible to most candidates.

Item 37

The item required candidates to judge if the statement was true or false and justify their response. Most candidates correctly stated that the statement was false, but they could not give the justification for their response.

Item 38

This item required candidates to say why the person did not want to gain weight. They just wrote the synonym *elle ne veut pas grosser* and failed to say why.

Item 39

The item required candidates to find the response through a process of elimination. They had to work out why people in the list would not order the given dishes. The item was not accessible to most candidates.

Item 40

The item was accessible to candidates. However, instead of giving the name of the town some candidates picked up a sentence from the passage. They wrote; *Comment ça va à Rennes? Pas trop fatigué?*

Item 41

The item required candidates to judge if the statement was true or false and justify their response. Most candidates did not seem to understand the statement and said it was true, but then they gave the correct justification.





The item required candidates to judge if the statement was true or false and justify their response. Candidates found the correct statements to show that Juju was enjoying herself in Paris, but they said the statement was false.

Item 43

The item required candidates to judge if the statement was true or false and justify their response. The item seems to have confused most of the candidates. Based on their responses, it seemed as if they did not understand that the word *rentrer* means to return.

Item 44

The item was accessible to most candidates. They had a lot of options to pick from. However, instead of saying what problems the people faced, some candidates just said how such problems were resolved, especially the one about the television not working. They just wrote *un technician est monte la reparer*.

Item 45

The item was accessible to most candidates. However some candidates used the English spelling **technician**, instead of writing the French **technicien**.

Item 46

The item was not accessible to candidates. Those who got a mark for it picked up the sentence, *notre vol a eu un retard de trois heures*.



PAPER 2 – COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE USE

GENERAL COMMENTS

The main aim of the paper was to test candidates on their ability to communicate through writing. After the 3 year Junior Certificate, they are expected to be able to

- write simple phrases and sentences and ask questions on familiar topics related to their immediate environment,
- Produce a variety of short simple texts describing present, past and future events
- Use a range of basic vocabulary, very simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns connected with simple linking words
- Use and respond to basic language functions using polite and informal forms of greeting and address.

Refer to Junior Certificate Examination Assessment Syllabus French 2023 Page 7

Generally, candidates did not do well in some centers while in some the performance was exceptional. It was evident that some centers were very well prepared and had exposed candidates well to the new syllabus. This was evidenced by the majority of candidates responding to all items, contextualizing the questions to create short stories or paragraphs, which communicated. However, some centers seemed to have done very little in preparing candidates in the new syllabus. Candidates did not seem to have been given enough practice on the writing skill as they mostly failed to construct simple sentences in the past, present and future or even to use appropriate vocabulary to perform tasks. Centers are advised to ensure that candidates are well prepared on the writing skill through giving them practice on writing memos, SMS, emails or short letters and notes.





COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

The paper comprised of two sections, Section A and Section B. Section A was based on short answers requiring specific answers as well as creating very short stories based on pictures given, while Section B comprised of short messages in the form of SMS and email.

SECTION A

Item 1

In this item, candidates were required to study a short text presenting the identity of another person. They had to use the information to fill in an identity card of the individual presented. The item was generally accessible to all cohorts. Those who scored high marks would lose marks at 1(d) '*lieu de naissance*', instead they would put 'date de naissance'. They would also fail to answer 1(g) 'pays de residence', instead they would put 'ville'. This showed that they lacked vocabulary on '*lieu*' and 'pays'. Most candidates also failed to respond to 1(f), s'informer sur l'adresse'. Those who tried left out the important aspect of the address, being the town. Instead of '2325, rue de l'université, Quebec', they just wrote 'rue de l'université' without indicating where the 'rue' is. Some could not even pick the address as it was introduced by 'Charlotte habite à ...' in the text without specifying that what followed was the address. Centres are therefore advised to emphasise the important aspects of an address in the French culture.

Some candidates did not read the instruction or the stimulus to make sure that they filled in the required information. Instead, they filled the card using their own information and ended up losing marks. Candidates should continually be advised to carefully read the instructions of all items so as not to lose easy marks.



In this item candidates were presented with pictures from which they had to make a *diary entry* describing how their sister Lucy spent her Saturday. For candidates to score marks, they had to describe each picture using the correct sentence structure and vocabulary. The item was accessible. Candidates were able to describe some pictures such as *'manger or prendre le petit dejeuner'*, *'faire le lit'* but struggled to describe *'balayer/nettoyer/ laver le sol, passer la serpillere'* and *'se brosser les dents'*. In most cases candidates achieved the task of communication but failed at conjugation. They mostly wrote sentences such as *'Lucie faire le lit. Elle manger'*. In some rare cases candidates were able to write very good entries using linking words such as *'puis, ensuite, finalement'* showing chronology of events, which is commendable.

Candidates from some centres however, showed lack of vocabulary in the 'activités quotidiennes' or 'les tâches ménagères'. They either wrote the other activities in English or gibberish or only managed to communicate 'manger'. Centres are therefore advised to ensure that they complete the teaching syllabus so that candidates may not end up being tested on what they did not cover.

Item 3

Candidates had to describe a picture of a family in their living room with children doing their homework. In order to score marks candidates had to describe who and where the people were, and what they were doing (*qui, où et quoi?*). To achieve this, they had to express themselves using simple sentences with good structure and appropriate vocabulary. Most candidates managed to write *'les parents regardent leurs enfants'* though mostly with wrong conjugation of the verb *'regarder'*. They also managed to write *'les enfants écrivent or les enfants font les devoirs'*, with a lot of struggle on conjugation. Centres are encouraged to give candidates ample practice on sentence construction and conjugation patterns.

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Some candidates lacked vocabulary on 'writing, doing homework, and drawing'. They ended up describing what they saw instead of what was happening. They ended up losing marks because the task was for them to describe what was happening. Instead they wrote sentences such as '*la fille porte un t-shirt blanc,'* or '*elle a les cheveux courts.*'

SECTION B

Item 4

In this item, candidates were to write an SMS of 40 to 60 words, to their cousin to tell them about the accident they had while riding bicycles with friends. They were presented with pictures to guide them to write the SMS. Candidates were expected to use all the guidelines (here represented as pictures), to write the SMS. They had to;

- Mention the *date* when he/she was on holiday and maybe even when he/she is coming back from holiday (represented by calendar).
- Mention that he/she went out to ride bicycles with friends
- Mention that he/she fell from the bicycle/ had an accident
- Mention that he/she was taken to the hospital or he/she went to the hospital
- Mention that he/she is hospitalized or that the doctor attended to him/ her.

The item was not accessible to most candidates. The nature of the question compelled them to demonstrate their knowledge of the past, present and future tenses. Many therefore lost marks for failure to use other tenses other than the present. It was evident that candidates lacked autonomy on the use of the 'Passé Composé' and the 'imparfait'. Centres are advised to ensure that candidates are conversant with different tenses as per the expectation of the syllabus. Emphasis must not only be placed on the present tense but all tenses. Again, candidates should be encouraged to always express opinions or sentiments about something in creative writing to make their work



interesting. Eg. 'Je suis très content parce que le docteur dit que je vais aller bien/ Je suis deçu car maintenant je ne peux plus faire du vélo. C'était super' etc Different formats of short notes should also be taught to candidates, here instead of just a short note, candidates were writing very long letters (with address, opening and closing salutations) without even respecting the proposed length of 40 to 60 words. Candidates mostly lacked the relevant vocabulary to use to express themselves. Example; they would use English words such as 'hospital, bicycle, fell, medicine instead of 'hôpital, vélo, tomber, médecin, médicament'. Some centers, however, did well in this task, showing knowledge of the past tense and had the vocabulary to perform the task. Centers are advised to ensure that they expose candidates to a wide range of vocabulary to allow them to draw from the vocabulary bank for them to perform different tasks.

Item 5

In this item, candidates were presented with two options, A and B; they had to choose one.

Option A

Candidates were to write an email to a friend inviting them to come to the cinema with them. Most candidates were comfortable with this option. Six guidelines were provided for the candidates to follow. Only a few candidates managed to answer all guidelines while others chose to ignore the guidelines and write about something else and they ended up losing marks.

Guidelines proposed different types of tenses to be used eg, guideline 4 '*dites-lui que vous avez déjà acheté les billets*'. Most candidates ignored the tense and wrote either in the present of near future tenses; eg '*nous allons acheter des billets ce soir*'. The 6th guideline proposed 'futur simple'- '*dites-lui que vous serez content d'y aller avec lui/elle*'. Most candidates seemed not to understand the word '*serez*', most probably because they did not know '*être*' in the 'futur simple'. Those who got it



right failed to conjugate it correctly, they wrote 'je **serez** content' instead of 'je **serai** content'.

Candidates should be encouraged to use expressions of sentiments and opinions to make their work creative. They should also be encouraged to use conjunctions and other linking words to ensure that their work flows.

Option B

For this option, candidates were asked to respond to an email from a cousin who invited them for dinner. Most candidates did not opt for this option. Candidates were given six guidelines to use in their response. Like in Option A all the guidelines proposed different types of tenses which ought to be followed. However, candidates seemed to lack skill in the use of both the Past tense and the '*Futur Simple*'.

Guideline 2 proposed Passé- 'dites lui que vous avez déjà accepté une autre invitation' and instead of responding to it thus, most candidates chose to use the present tense, a sign that they were not so comfortable with constructing the sentences in the past tense. Eg they would write 'Je vais chez ma grand-mère' instead of 'j'ai déjà accepté une invitation de ma grand-mère, or ma grand-mère m'a invité chez elle'.

For **guideline 4**, candidates were guided towards using the future tense. They seemed not to be comfortable with the *Futur simple* but most of them managed to use both the present and the near future to express themselves.

In **guideline 5**, candidates were supposed to explain why they chose the restaurant. Most candidates failed to get this one correct for lack of vocabulary.

Generally, for item 5, candidates showed knowledge of vocabulary across the two options though limited at some guidelines. Their grammatical structures were also



found to be very poor. Many candidates failed to construct simple sentences with subject and verb. Those who managed showed limitations in conjugation of the present tense and other tenses.

Most candidates also ignored the word limit for this section and chose to write very long prose with unnecessary or irrelevant information. Centers should therefore ensure that they enforce the skill of answering questions on their candidates, ensure that they fully understand the demands of the question and that they respect word limit and format.

PAPER 3: SPEAKING EXAMINATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

Paper 3 of the French Junior Certificate Examination, comprises of three tasks or questions, marked out of 40. The paper examines candidates' ability to apply French language on different situations of communication through speaking.

In task 1, candidates are expected to talk about themselves; to introduce themselves and talk about their immediate environment, for example, their names, what they do in life, their school and their hobbies (likes and dislikes) etc.

Task 2 presents a role play, where the candidate and the examiner engage in a situation of communication by playing roles, for example, the candidate playing the role of a client buying something while the examiner plays the seller.

In task 3, candidates are expected to make a presentation on a topic they would have prepared before. The presentation is followed by questions to check if the candidate understood what they were presenting about.



The syllabus was examined for the first time this year, but generally, candidates' performance was good. Candidates from different Centres were able to display good knowledge of the French Language structures and vocabulary through speaking, a good sign that Centres are on the right track in helping candidates achieve this outcome. However, a good number of candidates from different centres struggled a lot with pronunciation of words. Centres are therefore encouraged to practice phonetics with their candidates to ensure that they do not lose marks because they could not be heard or understood due to mispronunciation of French words.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

ITEM 1: Self Introduction

Candidates were expected to talk about themselves as they spoke to the examiner. The presentation was followed by a few questions that need to be answered by the candidate to show comprehension of questions. Candidates were expected to mention *their names, their age, profession, school and likes and dislikes.*

Most candidates were able to score good marks here. However, there were those who got derailed and started talking more of other people than themselves; for example, family and friends. Centres should therefore encourage candidates to ensure that they follow the guidelines of the examination as they are. The task is done in 2 minutes and therefore candidates should be discouraged from talking more about family members or friends than themselves.

It was also noted that, though the presentations were good, candidates mostly failed to answer follow up questions. These were questions which are expected to be used daily in class. Centres are therefore encouraged to ensure that they allow candidates to practice asking and answering questions orally.



Another point worth noting was that although it does not impart on the candidates' marks, centers are encouraged to teach learners to respond to questions in full sentences instead of giving one-word answers as was the case in most centers.

ITEM 2: Role Play

In this item, a candidate was given a role play card to prepare his/her role for 10 minutes, after which they had to do an exchange with the examiner. There were 10 role play cards, the cards were shuffled and the candidate had to pick the one on top. The role play task presented <u>5 tasks</u> and all the tasks had to be performed. Some candidates seemed not to understand that the roles on the card were to be performed as they were. Some ended up setting roles for themselves and ignoring to follow the role play card given to them. They ended up losing marks by so doing. Candidates should therefore be encouraged to follow the tasks as they appear on their card so as not to lose marks.

In the *first task*, candidates were expected to greet (formally or informally depending on the situation of communication). Though most candidates were able to score the marks by simply saying "Bonjour", they could not respect politeness. Centres are therefore advised to encourage candidates to observe politeness by saying "Bonjour Madame/Monsieur", so that they may know that this is important in real life situations. *In task 2*, candidates were expected to make a proposition on how they would like to be assisted. The examiner would have said, for instance, "Bonjour Madame, est-ce que je peux vous aider?" and candidates were expected to make a proposition of how they would like to be helped. Most candidates were able to score marks here by saying what they wanted. However, some candidates struggled with vocabulary of naming the item they would like to be assisted with, especially those whose tasks had to do with buying. For example, at the pharmacy, candidates could not use the word *'medicaments'* for medications, instead they used *'medicine, medecin'* which have a different connotation in French and they ended up losing marks. It was also common



for candidates not to attempt to say how they wish to be assisted, opting to keep quiet and therefore losing marks.

In task 3, candidates were expected to provide more information on the item they want by answering questions asked by the examiner. Candidates generally did well here. However, centres should provide platforms for candidates to practice as much vocabulary as possible. Candidates were struggling with words such as 'saveur de gateau, taille de vêtements, genre de roman/musique/films.' Such should be practiced at centres.

Task 4 tested candidates' ability to ask questions. Here, candidates were expected to demonstrate their ability to ask questions as part of real-life conversation. Generally, candidates could not score all the 3 marks. Some candidates even kept quiet. They were mostly expected to ask a simple question « Combien ça coute, ça coute combien, je vous dois combien, ça fait combien ? »

In almost all role plays, this task demanded candidates to ask for the price, hence the question above. But most struggled with the construction of such. Centres are encouraged to practice asking questions with candidates so that they may not lose marks on this task.

In *the last task,* candidates were supposed to respond to the proposition or question from the examiner and demonstrate their ability to take leave using expressions such as 'au revoir madame/monsieur, bonne journée madame, à bientôt etc. Generally, candidates were failing to answer the question asked by the examiner but were mostly able to take leave.

However, it was also prevalent in most centres that candidates could not take leave as the task stated, and had to be prompted, for which they lost marks.

It was evident throughout the examination that candidates were struggling with either constructing or answering questions. Centres are advised to work hard on this area as it is an important part of real life conversations. Emphasis should also be put on the



use of some expressions that show politeness in conversations, like "s'il vous plait, merci", etc

ITEM 3: Topic Presentation

In this item, candidates were presented with a topic presentation booklet containing 10 topics, weeks prior to the examination. Each candidate had to select one topic and prepare a presentation on it. Each topic had 5 guidelines which had to be followed by the candidate as they were preparing their presentation. However, it was noted that some candidates ignored the guidelines and prepared their presentations without observing the guidelines. It is therefore important that Centers encourage candidates to treat each guideline as a question in the question paper.

Though the topics were 10, candidates in certain centers clustered around one topic, especially 'Ma famille'. In some cases, candidates presented the same type of information on the topic, showing that candidates copied from each other. Centers are advised to strongly discourage such practices and to help candidates know that this is an examination, though given weeks before the examination. Centers are also encouraged to advice candidates not to cluster at the same topic so that there may be variety in the Centre.

Generally, candidates were well prepared with a few candidates from a certain Centre showing a lot of teacher influence by the type of structures they used in their presentations. Centers are therefore advised to desist from writing presentations for candidates but should rather offer guidance.

Though the topic presentation was well prepared and presented, candidates struggled a lot with answering follow-up questions. It was noticeable that candidates could not deduce meanings from question words used in the follow-up questions, such that even the yes or no questions posed a problem. This therefore shows that Centers have to work hard on teaching candidates how to ask and answer questions. Furthermore,



candidates were mostly struggling to use the future and past tenses. Centers are therefore also advised to work on this area for them to improve in the coming examinations.

CENTERS' PREPAREDNESS FOR THE FRENCH PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

Most centers were prepared for the examination and this helped in the timely commencement by the examiners. The requirement was for each center to have 3 rooms for the administration of this practical component, being:

- 1. The quarantine room
- 2. The preparation room and
- 3. The examination room

Most centers used the library as the examination room, which proved to be the most conducive because it had minimal disruptions. It's also worth commending those centers that went further to cordon the 3 rooms, especially the examination room, thus alerting people that there was an ongoing examination and they ought to stay clear of those and avoid disturbances and distractions. In some centers, the 3 rooms selected for the examination were far from the rest of the school buildings, making them very conducive because there was minimal disturbance.

However, some centers failed to make adequate arrangements, with some even failing to put up signs to alert that there is an ongoing examination. In some instances, there was a lot of disruption during school meal times. Centers are therefore advised to ensure that they select rooms that are more conducive next time, and to ensure that they put up signs to warn that there is an examination in progress.

Finally, centers are advised to ensure that they avail the candidate list and the attendance register to the examining team. Centers that were able to provide tags with candidate numbers, candidate list and the BEC attendance register, are applauded for their efforts.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Candidates ought to be given more practice on all skill areas of the subject being speaking, listening, reading and writing so that they may develop their overall communication ability of the French language
- More listening practice tests would help candidates to sharpen their skills on listening comprehension and raising their general level of understanding.
- Candidates ought to be given more practice on writing skills to ensure that they communicate easily through writing.
- More exercises on different tenses such as talking about past weekend routine can also help building their skills in the 'passé composé' and 'imparfait.'
- Taking advantage of the internet to show the candidate places such as the 'cinema', museums and other places of entertainment can help build knowledge on such places (there were instances where candidates seemed not to know what a cinema is).
- It is also very important that during learning candidates are exposed to aspects of 'socio-culturel' because some of the content used in the examination is based on the French culture.
- More innovative approaches to working with candidates during their learning of the subject ought to be implemented as a way of continuing to motivate them to learn the subject and not give up during the process of answering questions.