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Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2019

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Level in French (WFR04) Paper 1: Research,
Understanding and Written Response.

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January 2019

Publications Code WFR04_01_1901_ER

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Candidates were clearly familiar with the topic areas covered and most candidates were able to attempt all parts of the paper. Whilst many fared well with the comprehension questions in Sections A and B, Section C provided more of a challenge.

Section A – Listening

Questions 1 and 2: Multiple Choice

Students were provided with four options A, B, C, or D for each item within the question (the correct response, and three distractors). Question 1 was taken from the sub topic of Lifestyle and Question 2 from Environment and travel.

It is vital that candidates do not rush into committing themselves to an answer. At this level, they should listen for the gist of the whole passage; a word which is mentioned in the recording does not necessarily lead them to the answer in the question paper.

Question 3: Summary completion.

Students were required to complete a summary, choosing from a list of eight words. There was a mixture of word types. Question 3 was taken from the sub topic of Technology

This question was generally well answered with (3c) and (3d) providing the most challenge for candidates.

Question 4: Short Answer in French.

This required responses using a single word, a phrase or a short sentence. Each item was worth 1 or 2 marks. Question 4 was taken from the sub topic of Tourism and Travel.

Here, as in Section B, targeted lifts are sometimes possible. It is important for candidates to know that they can re-use the language they hear but at this level direct lifts will usually not enable candidates to score. Candidates need to manipulate the language they hear or read. Candidates should try to use their

own words as much as possible to render the meaning. However, while it is possible to convey the meaning by using their own words when the information is very technical or specific, candidates should manipulate the language they hear instead of writing incoherent circumlocutions.

In this section, as in section B, listening skills and reading skills are assessed, which means that sentences that contain grammatical and spelling errors can score, as long as the error does not lead to ambiguity. Responses to Questions 4, 6 and 7 are only marked on the basis of communication, rather than accuracy of language.

Performance in question 4

4a This question required the candidate to mention that Fabien had debts. Some students mentioned that was because of having recently bought a house, but that detail wasn't essential. The words *dettes* was spelt incorrectly on many occasions but students were, for the vast majority, awarded the mark as the misspelling didn't cause any ambiguity.

Some students answered that he didn't have money and that answer was also acceptable.

4b, 4c and **4e** were generally well answered

4d required the candidates give two details. When two details are required, it is important that candidates remember that the "Order of element" rule applies. The first two elements given by the students will be taken into account, so it is important that the candidates do not write too much information and focus on the two details they need to give.

4f also required the candidates to give two details. Candidates had to manipulate the language and give two answers, following the idea that in order to make the most of your holiday, one had to ignore technology and housework.

Some candidates were tempted to write far too much in their answers. Reference to the published mark scheme will show the essence of each answer. Longer answers can often miss the point or may start with a wrong detail before eventually giving the correct answer which is therefore negated by what has come first.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Question 5: Multiple Choice Questions

Students were provided with four options: A, B, C, or D for each item within the question (the correct response, and three distractors). Question 5 was taken from the topic of Music.

Question 6: Short Answer in French

Question 6 was taken from the sub topic of Equality

Answers to Question 6 were often very clearly expressed, but questions **6d** and **6e** proved to be the most challenging.

6d required the candidate to infer that there are now more women that are "*électriciennes*" with the situation "*est en train de changer*"

6e required the candidates to infer that too many professions do not have a feminine form

Question 7: Short Answer in French

Question 7 was taken from the sub topic of Transport

Specific understanding of the text was necessary to gain the marks.

Some candidates lost marks as they were tempted to copy a complete passage verbatim from the text without any attempt to process the information.

Question 8: Sentence transformations:

Question 8 proved to be a challenge, even for competent linguists.

Students were required to manipulate the sentences given to them using the information in brackets. It is essential that candidates refer to the texts from which the language has been taken as the manipulated sentences need to make sense and be grammatically correct in their original context.

The most challenging questions seemed to be:

8(b): candidates were required to use the inversion after *Peut-être voulaient-ils*. Some students scored 1 mark by using another acceptable structure *Peut-être qu'ils voulaient*

8(f): a good number of candidates changed the verb into the subjunctive. *Il est indéniable que* doesn't require the subjunctive.

8(i): many candidates failed to produce *lesquels*. A small number wrote two words *les quels*, whilst others used the wrong gender, *lesquelles*.

8(j): many candidates failed to use the correct preposition after *hésiter*. Yet, when *à* was used, it is unfortunate that some of the candidates wrote it without the accent. Grammatical accents are essential to get the mark in this section.

Remember that marks are awarded when the targeted grammatical point is produced correctly. Any other grammatical and spelling mistakes within the reformulated sentence will be ignored.

For instance

8g: *Les deux caméras sont indépendantes*

The question targeted the use of the feminine plural form of the adjective.

If a candidate wrote *indépendentes* they would be given the mark because, despite the spelling mistake *indépendentes*, the agreement is correct.

Section C

It is crucial that candidates understand the nature of what is expected in the final essay. Since marks are awarded for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical analysis, Organisation and Development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of Language (out of 5), it is crucial that some examination time is spent planning the response to the specific question asked. Many candidates who wrote fluent essays in French of a very high quality often scored low marks for the other two categories because their response lacked relevance or were simply a regurgitated version of everything they knew about the topic or work. It is essential that candidates select carefully what information they are going to use to answer the question. Not everything they know will be needed to answer the question.

Most importantly, candidates should realise that the thrust of the questions set is mostly in the second part. To access the higher mark bands they must engage in an analysis of the issues. Essays which relied too much on description and less on evaluation scored poorly.

Centres must also be reminded that the geographical area and the historic period must be in a French-speaking country.