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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In French (WFR04) Paper 01
Research, Understanding and Written Response

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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, Question 8 (Grammar manipulation) and Section C provided more of a challenge.

Section A – Listening

Questions 1 and 2: Multiple Choice

Candidates 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 Youth matters/Fashion and Question 2 from Environment and travel/Tourism.

In question 1, (1b) appeared to be more of a challenge for the candidates, failing to choose D as their answer. A careful listening should have helped the candidates decide on '*surprenante*' from '*une surprise*'.

In question 2, (2c) proved to be the most challenging for a good number of the candidates. It appears that the word '*hebdomadaire*' was not recognised or known. [C] was the correct answer with '*quatre vols par semaine*' from the Transcript '*quatre vols hebdomadaires*'. Many candidates opted for [D] '*quatre vols par mois*', having probably heard the word '*mois*' in '*passant de deux à quatre vols hebdomadaires au mois de mars dernier*'.

Advice to candidates:

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.

Candidates 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 Genetic modifications.

This question was generally well answered with (3d) providing the most challenge for candidates, many of whom answered '*manipulé*' instead of '*traditionnel*'.

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 Lifestyle.

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

Advice to candidates:

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.

Performance in question 4

4a This question required the candidate to mention *elle habite sur l'île* and *elle travaille/ enseigne sur l'île* to score 2. Unfortunately many didn't mention that she lived there. Many candidates mentioned that 1- she works there 2- she teaches there, which in essence, means the same. A good number of candidates answered that she was there as a tourist and / or she is there to admire the views, from '*beaucoup de touristes viennent ici pour faire des randonnées et profiter de la vue*'

4b This question was overall well answered, despite some misspellings of '*à pied*'; *au pied, en pied, sur pied* were frequently encountered and accepted. *Elle marche* was also accepted. However '*a pie*' was not accepted as it was an ambiguous answer.

4c and **4d** were generally well answered. Yet, the word *livraisons* appeared to be problematic, with many candidates trying to transcribe it and producing '*des livres raisons*' or '*des livres*'. Such answers didn't score as they were highly ambiguous.

4e required the candidates to infer the meaning from what Christine does now. Unfortunately, many candidates answered with what she is like *now* whilst the question required them to infer what she used to be like *before*. A careful reading of the question might have helped.

4f was generally well answered.

Advice to candidates:

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. It is also important that candidates check that their answers meet the requirements of the questions.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Question 5: Multiple Choice Questions

Candidates 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 Lifestyle, health and fitness.

5a proved to be the most challenging whilst **5c** and **5b** were generally well answered.

5a: Many candidates chose [D] as their answer, probably from *'huit adultes sur dix'* but eight out of 10 adults doesn't represent *all* Belgian people. The answer was [B] *'de moins en moins'* from *'sa commotion est toutefois en chute'*.

Question 6: Short Answer in French

Question 6 was taken from the sub-topic of Technology in the French-speaking world.

Answers to Question 6 were often very clearly expressed, but often candidates failed to score a mark because of their omission of a crucial detail. For example, in **6a** the **past tense** was needed – *'ils ont fait une orbite'* and in **6e**, although this question was mostly well answered, some failed to convey the notion of returning to space **again** and therefore could not be awarded the mark.

Question **6c** required the candidates to infer the answer from the text. Again, a careful reading of the question might have helped. It is important that once the candidates have written their answer that they check if it answers the question. Some candidates clearly knew where the information was located in the text but failed to produce a response that answered the question.

Candidates were not penalised for using the wrong pronoun when referring to Kathleen.

Question 7: Short Answer in French

Question 7 was taken from the sub-topic of Customs.

Specific understanding of the text was necessary to gain the marks. Whilst most managed (a) and (d), the other questions often caused problems because candidates were tempted to copy a complete passage verbatim from the text without any attempt to process the information. Simple language structures tended to be the most successful.

In **7b** for example, the candidates were required to answer what the organisers of the protest had expected. A careful reading of the section *'les organisateurs ont été surpris par la présence d'un bon nombre de personnes simplement attachées aux plaisirs simples de la ruralité'* would have helped them infer that they were expecting fewer or no people who are directly linked to hunting and *'corridas'*.

In **7c**, many candidates failed to mention a crucial detail *'et d'ailleurs'*. It is essential that candidates try to be as precise as possible when answering.

In **7g**, many candidates failed to infer the answer from the last part of the last paragraph. Again, as in **6c**, many candidates clearly knew where the information was located in the text but failed to produce a response that answered the question.

Advice to candidates:

When answering question 4, 6 and 7, simple language structures tended to be the most successful.

Ensure that your response meet the demands of the question.

Question 8: Sentence transformations:

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

Candidates 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. The manipulated sentences **need to make sense and be grammatically correct** back in their original context, so tenses are a crucial aspect to bear in mind when manipulating verbs.

Advice to candidates:

The manipulated sentences need to make sense and be grammatically correct back in the original texts.

The most challenging questions seemed to be:

In 8a, candidates were required to use the infinitive form of '*ressort*' after '*laisse*'. Many candidates failed to produce the correct spelling of '*ressortir*'.

In 8d, the transfer from the active to the passive voice in the pluperfect tense was mostly incorrectly produced.

8f proved to be one of the most challenging manipulations with candidates failing to produce the subjunctive mood after a superlative.

In 8h, many candidates surprisingly didn't use the infinitive form after '*en train de*' with many using a conjugated form or the gerund.

8i proved also to be one of the most challenging manipulations with candidates not using the subjunctive mood after '*pour que*' and/or not correctly agreeing '*perdue*' with *la tradition*; '*ne soit pas perdue*' was required to get the mark. Some candidates scored 1 mark producing '*ne se perde pas*' which, here, was also 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 vital 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**. A handful of candidates wrote about countries or areas in other parts of the world. In line with GCE and with other languages at International A Level, such essays could not be credited with any marks and unfortunately scored 0.

Advice to candidates:

Candidates must carefully select the information they are going to use to answer the question. Not everything they know will be needed to answer the question.

Candidates should realise that the thrust of the questions set is mostly in the second part of the question, inviting them to produce an analytical response.

History and Geography essays must be rooted in the French-speaking world.

Questions 9(a),(b) and 10(a),(b)

The History questions were answered by about a third of the candidates with 10 (b) being the most popular. This is an increase compared to last year, where a quarter of the candidates chose the History essays.

9(a) This question required the candidates to evaluate the impact of demographic changes on local traditions.

9(b) required the candidates to evaluate the impact of tourism on the population, considering the local attractions. There were many essays on Paris and la région PACA with candidates displaying their knowledge of the areas studied but many candidates failed to evaluate the impact of tourism on the local population. When evaluating, a good number of candidates only concentrated on the increase of jobs available in the area. Less successful essays tended to be too descriptive.

9(b) was more popular than **9(a)**

10 (a) required the candidates to analyse the impact on society of a law or a treaty that had been signed. The predominant area of study was *La Deuxième Guerre mondiale* with *la signature de l'Armistice en 1940*. Many of the essays were full of relevant information and managed to present facts to support general ideas.

Some essays provided good evaluation of the impact on society. However, a number of essays tended to rely on vague generalisations rather than providing detailed evidence and candidates regurgitated all they knew about the Second World War. There was a tendency by some candidates to write a long descriptive preamble giving lengthy background to the treaty.

10(b) was the most popular question in Section C and required the candidates to reflect whether their chosen person was a hero. Most candidates considered Charles de Gaulle, Pétain and Daniel Cohn-Bendit in May 1968. As above, the most successful essays focused on the question throughout and the candidates didn't lose focus, providing detailed evidence to support their ideas whereas the less successful essays tended to be a mere biography of the person considered with

little analysis as to why they could be considered as heroes. It was clear in a lot of essays that the candidate had a sound knowledge of the period studied but lacked the skills to use their knowledge to provide a critical analysis.

Advice to candidates:

Candidates need to know that it is not necessary to introduce the essay with a long preamble about the period / the area or with general information about the genesis of the work. In fact, this produced a poor start when it appeared. Better candidates provided an opening paragraph which identified the issues to be addressed in the essay with direct reference to the essay question set.

Literature and film - Questions 11-20

The most common text studied was Kiffe Kiffe demain. Compared to last year, le Bourgeois Gentilhomme didn't attract as many candidates. The most common films were Jules et Jim and Monsieur Lazhar, with Monsieur Lazhar being the second most popular question in Section C.

As for the History and Geography essays, it is essential that the candidates focus on the analysis and refrain from retelling the story. The least successful essays tended again to contain a great deal of irrelevant material or were simply a regurgitated version of everything they knew about the book or the film. It is essential that candidates select carefully what information they are going to use to answer the question. Also, as the candidates write their answers, they must ask themselves whether the information they are providing is answering the question. It was indeed, often, impossible from reading the essays to know what the essay question was as candidates tended to lose focus and use too much irrelevant information.

Advice to candidates:

The best essays were in clear paragraph form with a main sentence to introduce the paragraph, followed by several examples. A final evaluative sentence then often referred back to the essay title in some way.

14- Kiffe Kiffe demain

14 (b) required the candidates to evaluate the novel as a roman d'apprentissage. The most successful essays presented the scope of their analysis in their introduction and used the evidence of Doria's changes to demonstrate that the novel was indeed a roman d'apprentissage.

A good number of candidates didn't address this aspect of the question and focused merely on how Doria changed, producing rather descriptive essays. Others misunderstood the term 'roman d'apprentissage'.

17- Monsieur Lazhar

Monsieur Lazhar was **17(b)** was more popular than **17 (a)**.

17(a) required the candidates to evaluate how effective the techniques they chose were on the story and how they contributed to the plot. Many candidates decided to discuss the effectiveness of the use of colours, the simple techniques and the music. A good number of candidates produced rather pleasing essays, demonstrating how, for instance Falardeau used colours throughout the films to convey particular messages. Others focused on the use of symbolism.

In **17(b)** candidates were expected to identify one or two social issues presented in the film and analyse how Falardeau presented them. Candidates selected a range of social issues such as immigration, multiculturalism, integration, education and death (how people deal with death).

Again, it was clear in a lot of essays that the candidates had a sound knowledge of the film but lacked the skills to use their knowledge to provide a critical analysis.

Advice to candidates:

Candidates need to identify several points in relation to the question that they want to demonstrate and use their knowledge as evidence.