



Pearson  
Edexcel

Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Subsidiary Level

In French (WFR01/01)

Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response

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## 2001 Examiner's report

### IAL French Unit 1 (WFR01): Spoken Expression and Response

#### International Advanced Subsidiary (IAS) compulsory unit

The candidate is rewarded for the ability to demonstrate understanding of a target language stimulus based on one of the IAS general topic areas (GTAs), and to discuss that same general topic area. Candidates need to demonstrate that they can engage in a discussion in French that relates to a chosen GTA and its subtopics. Candidates will be expected to give relevant and appropriate information, convey opinions, interact and respond to a range of questions. Further information about the preparation of candidates, the conduct and the administration of this test can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website, and the "Oral Training Guide" found under the "Teaching and Learning" tab of the same page.

Up to 40 marks are awarded positively as follows for this test:

- 10 marks for Quality of language (5 marks for Accuracy of language and 5 marks for Range of lexis)
- 16 marks for Spontaneity and development
- 4 marks for Understanding of the prescribed stimulus card
- 10 marks for Knowledge and understanding of the general topic area

The criteria for awarding these marks can be found in section 1.4 (Assessment Criteria) of the Pearson IAL French specification.

Before the test, the candidate prepares **two** of the four following general topic areas (GTAs):

- Youth matters
- Lifestyle, health and fitness
- Environment and travel
- Education and employment

The candidate is free to choose **any two** of these four areas, depending on his or her preference and/or areas of interest. The candidate informs the teacher/examiner of the two GTAs he or she has chosen in advance of the test via a completed OR1 Oral Form.

On the day of the test, the candidate will be tested on only **one** of these GTAs. The GTA on which the candidate is tested is determined according to the allocation grid in the teacher/examiner WFR01 booklet.

Unit 1 tests, in the form of a short stimulus text in the target language, are set on each of the four GTAs. Two different stimulus texts are set on each of the four GTAs. Two sets of questions are provided for each text (A and B). In total, therefore, there are 16 stimulus cards, i.e. 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B for each of the four GTAs.

15 minutes before the test the candidate is given, according to the random allocation specified in the teacher/examiner WFR01 examination booklet, the stimulus card on which he or she will be tested.

Pearson issues the teacher/examiner booklets and the stimulus cards to centres before the examining session. These materials are confidential until the end of the examining session for this unit. The dates for the examining session are published in the Pearson examination timetable.

The candidate has 15 minutes supervised preparation time before the exam to study the text on the stimulus card. He or she may not use a dictionary or any other resources during this time, but may make notes (up to one side of A4 paper). The candidate may not write on the stimulus card. The candidate takes both the stimulus card and any notes into the examination, and may refer to both during Section A of the test.

There are two sections in the WFR01 test:

### **Section A**

The teacher/examiner begins the test by asking the four questions on the stimulus card. These questions are printed only in the WFR01 teacher/examiner booklet; the candidate does not know these questions in advance of the test. The first two of these four questions ask the candidate to demonstrate factual understanding of the stimulus text and the second two ask the candidate to express opinions about or reactions to the GTA.

Candidates should be aware that **three** pieces of information are expected in response to question 1 for each card. Therefore, during the preparation time, candidates must be sure to become very familiar with the text and its content so that they can identify three pieces of information in response to the teacher/examiner's first question.

Please note that, in the interests of comparability across different languages and for the purposes of assessment, the teacher/examiner **may not rephrase** these four questions (apart from changing the "vous" form of address to "tu"), nor add to or expand them. **If the teacher/examiner rephrases a question, then the candidate's response to that question will be ignored when assessing his or her performance.** It is therefore essential that the teacher/examiner **does not rephrase** any of the four set questions. The question may be repeated if necessary. Please see below (Advice to Teacher/Examiners) for further clarification.

### **Section B**

The teacher/examiner develops a discussion about the general topic area being tested. The topic of the stimulus card may be used as a starting point for this discussion, but the teacher/examiner moves away from this topic to discussion of at least one other subtopic of this general topic area.

### **Timing of WFR01**

The WFR01 test should last between 8 and 10 minutes in total (Sections A and B combined). In theory, this time should be divided equally between Sections A and B. However, in practice, Section

A frequently does not take half of the time allowed and so the teacher/examiner should ensure that the discussion in Section B is continued until the total test time is not less than eight minutes.

### **Performance January 2021**

The most frequently tested GTA was “Youth matters”, followed by “Lifestyle, health and fitness”. Relatively few were tested on “Environment and travel” or “Education and employment”. The candidate, of course, has a free choice of the two GTAs he or she wishes to discuss in the test. The GTA to be tested and the stimulus card to be given to the candidate is determined according to the random allocation grid in the teacher/examiner booklet for WFR01.

All eight stimulus cards made similar demands of the candidates. Nearly all candidates were able to attempt the first two Section A questions, the ones based purely on the text, whereas the level of response to the second two Section A questions proved to be good discriminator between performances.

Candidates should know that it is perfectly acceptable to use vocabulary and language from the text in answer to questions 1 and 2. However, the text and the questions are written in such a way that it is not possible to “lift” correct answers directly from the text; some manipulation of the language or paraphrasing will be necessary. Targeted lifts from the text are permissible, see below for clarification of what is meant by this.

Candidates who had prepared well for this test were able to offer a wealth of ideas and opinions on the topic area, to use a varied range of lexis appropriate to the chosen GTA and to demonstrate command of a wide range of linguistic structures. However, a significant number of candidates were unable to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the GTA under discussion, relying rather on generic information gained from general knowledge.

The highest performing candidates had clearly thought about and researched their chosen topic areas, and were well-prepared, offering statistics and facts to support their ideas. In order to access the highest marks for “Knowledge and understanding (general topic area)”, candidates must show “excellent knowledge and understanding of the general topic area”. In order to do this, candidates need to offer detailed knowledge **including facts and examples** that demonstrate **research** into the chosen GTA.

Some teacher/examiners asked supplementary questions in Section A. This is not allowed. Please see below (Advice to Teacher/Examiners) for further clarification. On occasion, the teacher/examiner asked questions in Section B which did not relate to the GTA; this does not help the candidate to access the full range of marks available for “Knowledge and understanding (general topic area)”.

The test should last 8-10 minutes. A 30 second tolerance is allowed where a test is shorter than the minimum required eight minutes, so that if the test is shorter than 7 minutes 30 seconds, the candidate is unable to access the entire range of marks available for the test. The teacher/examiner should begin timing the examination from the time when he or she begins to ask the first of the prescribed questions on the stimulus. Where a test exceeds 10 minutes and the candidate is

speaking at the 10-minute mark, the examiner listens to the end of the candidate's response, or to the next sense break in what he or she is saying, and then stops marking. If the teacher/examiner is speaking as the 10 minutes elapses, the examiner stops listening at that point. In this series most tests were the correct length with only a small minority being too long or too short.

Centres should upload a **digital version** of the completed Unit 1 Oral Form (OR1) for each candidate to the Pearson secure site, along with the recording of the test. Care should be taken to ensure that the work of each candidate has been clearly recorded and that the OR1 forms are completed correctly.

## Comments on candidates' performance

### Youth matters

**Stimulus cards:** In response to question 1 on cards 1A/B and cards 2A/B, most candidates were able to identify and to include three pieces of information from the first paragraph in their answer. Answers to question 2 on both cards, similarly, were usually correct. In response to questions 3 and 4 on cards 1 and 2, candidates were usually able to give extended answers, often drawing on their own experience of the topic to give examples and more detail. Answers to question 3 on card 1A, "Est-ce qu'on devrait limiter l'accès aux réseaux sociaux ?", were sometimes not entirely successful as candidates tended to talk generally about the dangers of social networks rather than addressing the focus of the question, i.e. "... limiter l'accès aux réseaux sociaux". Similarly, in answering question 4 on card 2A, candidates often talked generally about "la pression du groupe", rather than answering the question: "Est-ce qu'il faut aider les jeunes à résister à la pression du groupe ?". It is very important that candidates listen carefully to the question and make sure that they answer it. Candidates can, of course, ask for questions to be repeated and should know how to do so, in French.

**GTA:** Candidates were generally able to talk at some length about this GTA, with many drawing on personal experience of subtopics such as music, fashion and technology. However, relatively few offered any evidence of research into the GTA. Candidates should be aware that in order to access the higher mark bands for "Knowledge and understanding (general topic area)" they need to offer facts and figures and/or other evidence of research into the chosen GTA; many offered no more than general knowledge.

### Lifestyle, health and fitness

**Stimulus cards:** Candidates generally coped well with understanding the texts on cards 1 and 2. Question 2 on cards 1A and 1B proved a little difficult on occasion; candidates did not always understand "le bienfait financier". In response to question 3 on card 1A ("Comment est-ce qu'on peut encourager les jeunes à manger sain ?"), and question 3 on card 1B ("Est-ce que le gouvernement devrait taxer les produits malsains ?") some candidates lost focus on the question and discussed more generally the issue of healthy eating.

**GTA:** Candidates coped well with discussing this GTA overall, offering many opinions and ideas but, as for the “Youth matters” GTA, there was rarely evidence of research into the topic, and of detailed knowledge of the same. The strongest performances when discussing this GTA reflected study of the topic and candidates were able to offer facts and figures about, for example, the rate of increase of childhood obesity, the amount of time dedicated to sport in school and campaigns to promote a healthy lifestyle. Some candidates discussed Covid 19 and the effects of the epidemic, reflecting study of current topics in the French-speaking world.

### Environment and travel

**Stimulus cards:** Relatively few candidates answered the stimulus cards on this GTA, but those who did generally coped well with all the cards. In answer to question 1 on both cards, candidates were nearly always able to offer three distinct pieces of information from the first paragraph of the text, making good use of the vocabulary of the passage. As mentioned previously, candidates may, of course, use vocabulary from the text in response to questions 1 and 2 but will not be able to “lift” a correct answer directly from the text; some manipulation of the language of the text will be required. The responses to questions 3 and 4 on all the cards were often wide-ranging and well-considered.

**GTA:** Many candidates who answered on this GTA had prepared the topic well. A number were able to talk about environmental issues at length, backing up what they said with facts and statistics, in addition to using an appropriate range of relevant vocabulary. This resulted in some convincing performances.

### Education and employment

**Stimulus cards:** Relatively few candidates were tested on these cards. Candidates showed clear understanding of the texts on the stimulus cards in response to questions 1 and 2, and were generally able to speak at length in response to questions 3 and 4. Issues surrounding unemployment (cards 1A and 1B), and being a university student (cards 2A and 2B) are clearly ones about which candidates have strong opinions.

**GTA:** Candidates tested on this GTA often had good knowledge of educational systems (in different Francophone countries) and were able to discuss ideas on education and employment at some length. Some candidates showed less factual knowledge of the GTA, talking about their own experience of education on a more general level. Teachers and candidates are reminded that, in order to access the higher bands for “Knowledge and understanding (general topic area)” candidates need to demonstrate evidence of research into the chosen GTA.

### **Comments on performance in Section B (all GTAs)**

The majority of candidates were able to discuss a wide range of areas relating to the GTA on which they were tested. As previously mentioned, the Section B discussion should move away from the topic of the stimulus card to cover other subtopics of the same GTA.

In order for the candidate to be able to access the full range of marks available, it is essential that Section B be a discussion, not merely a string of questions and answers. The teacher/examiner should pick up on what the candidate says, using this to inform further questions, and should encourage the candidate to develop the points made.

It is essential that teacher/examiners give candidates the opportunity to deal with questions suitable for IAS level, i.e. to show that they have moved on from GCSE level. Where all or some of the Section B discussion centres around GCSE level questions and there is little or no evidence of the level of challenge expected at IAS level, the candidate may not be able to access the full range of marks for “Spontaneity and development”.

On occasion the teacher/examiner asked questions which could not be seen to fit in any of the subtopics of the candidate’s GTA. An example might be a question about which subjects the candidate is studying at school, where the candidate’s chosen GTA is “Lifestyle, health and fitness”. On such occasions, the candidate’s ability to access the full range of marks for “Knowledge and understanding (general topic area)” may be restricted. A list of the subtopics relating to each of the four GTAs can be found on page 11 of the Pearson IAL French specification and is repeated below in the “Advice to Teacher/Examiners” section for reference.

In Section B, where the discussion widens out to other subtopics of the GTA, candidates usually wanted to offer ideas and opinions and there were some informative, lively discussions. However, candidates do need to be reminded of the advantage of developing their ideas and exemplifying the points they make. Candidates who showed evidence of wider reading or research by referring to an article they have read in a particular publication or a video that they have seen on a particular website (e.g. “Selon un article que j’ai lu récemment dans *Le Monde*, ...”) were in the minority. To achieve high marks in the “Knowledge and understanding (general topic area)” section of the mark scheme, candidates need to demonstrate that their studies have led them to research and read about topics, so that they can go beyond personal, anecdotal information and/or information gleaned through general knowledge.

Many candidates were liable to deliver stereotypical or narrow views on topics such as the older generation and new technology, drugs and alcohol, *la pression du groupe* etc.; teachers would be well-advised to encourage candidates to think more laterally and develop their own ideas. There were some centres that clearly had done so and the performance of these candidates was refreshing.

### **Language**

Many candidates spoke well, with some fluency, and using a good range of lexis and structures. On occasion a candidate’s performance was hindered by poor pronunciation, which made it difficult to understand the message he or she was trying to deliver; teachers in some centres would be advised to focus on the need for pronunciation that allows the candidate to communicate successfully.

In some centres, the use of more complex structures like the subjunctive, *en* + present participle, *si* clauses etc. was on show whereas, in others, the candidates stuck too closely to repetitive simple



language which did not allow them to reach the higher bands in the mark grids for “Quality of language (Range of lexis)”.

In addition, there were examples of basic errors that candidates would not be expected to make at IAS level, such as incorrect subject-verb accord in the present tense; this was particularly evident in irregular verbs like *vouloir*, *dire* and *faire*. Some candidates struggled with emphatic pronouns (e.g. *avec ils* in place of *avec eux*), direct and indirect object pronouns, adjectival agreements, articles (e.g. *de les parents* in place of *des parents*) and inappropriate use of tenses.

On the positive side, there were some excellent performances from candidates which were a pleasure to hear; these offered accurate and varied language which was used very successfully.

### **Advice to Teacher/Examiners on the conduct of the WFR01 examination**

It is essential that the teacher/examiner is aware of the requirements of WFR01, as incorrectly conducted tests can adversely affect the candidate’s mark. The following advice is offered in the light of this and previous examination series.

#### **Timing**

The WFR01 test should last 8-10 minutes in total. If Section A takes less than 4 minutes, then Section B should be extended so that the total test time is not less than 8 minutes. There is no need to extend Section A to last 4 minutes; once the candidate has answered the four set questions the teacher/examiner should begin Section B. It may be in the candidate’s interest to allow the full 10 minutes of test time, in order that he or she might demonstrate as wide a range as possible of ideas and opinion on the GTA being tested.

If a test is too short, (less than 7 minutes 30 seconds; a 30 second tolerance is allowed), the candidate is not able to access the full range of marks available for the test. If it is too long, the examiner stops marking as soon as is appropriate after 10 minutes, i.e. at the end of the next sense-break in what the candidate is saying, or at the end of the candidate’s answer, whichever comes first. If the teacher/examiner is speaking at the 10-minute point, the examiner stops marking immediately.

The timing of the test begins as the teacher/examiner begins to ask the first of the four questions set on the stimulus card.

#### **Conduct of Section A**

In the interests of comparability between tests, and so that the candidate is not disadvantaged, the four questions set on the stimulus must be asked **exactly** as they are written in the teacher/examiner WFR01 examination booklet. The only exception to this is that the formal form of address may be changed to the familiar where that is appropriate, that is “vous” may be changed to “tu”, and “à votre avis” to “à ton avis”, etc.

All four questions in section A must be asked, even if a candidate has already partially answered a subsequent question in a previous response. Again, this is in the interests of comparability.

Where a teacher/examiner inadvertently adds an interjection to the beginning of a question or at the end of a candidate's answer, and this addition adds nothing to the question, and does not change the body of the question in any way, then this is ignored. An example might be where the teacher/examiner says "alors" at the end of an answer before asking the next question, or "question numéro un/numéro deux" etc. before the questions.

It is very important that teacher/examiners are aware that, if the teacher/examiner changes or rephrases the question in any way, then the candidate's response to that question is ignored when assessing his or her work. It is essential, therefore, that the teacher/examiner asks the questions **exactly** as they are written in the teacher/examiner WFR01 examination booklet.

Additional questions must not be asked in Section A.

Section A questions can be repeated, but where the teacher/examiner does repeat a question in the interests of keeping the conversation going, this is taken into account when assessing the candidate's mark for "Spontaneity and development". Candidates should be taught an appropriate way to ask, in French, for a question to be repeated.

As the teacher/examiner may not rephrase or expand the four questions set by Pearson, during preparation for this part of the test candidates should be coached to give full and developed answers to the set questions. In answer to questions 3 and 4, candidates should offer opinions, giving reasons and explanations for their opinion.

Candidates and teachers should be aware that three pieces of information are expected in response to question 1 on each card (there will be at least three pieces of relevant information in the text).

As mentioned previously, candidates may use vocabulary and language from the text in answer to questions 1 and 2. However, the text and the questions are written in such a way that it is not possible to "lift" correct answers directly from the text; some manipulation of the language or paraphrasing will be necessary. Targeted lifts from the text are permissible; this is where a candidate uses material from the text in his or her answer, but demonstrates that he or she has understood the text by selecting only the material needed to answer the question. To give an example from January 2021:

### **Education and Employment 1A/1B**

Question 2: « Selon le texte, qu'est-ce qui montre que Joseph a vraiment l'intention de trouver un emploi ? »

The text reads:

« Je suis réaliste. Le taux de chômage dans ma région est élevé. Je suis donc prêt à déménager n'importe où dans l'Hexagone pour trouver un emploi. »

A candidate who replies « Je suis donc prêt à déménager n'importe où dans l'Hexagone pour trouver un emploi. » cannot be considered to have fully understood the text.

However, a candidate who replies « Joseph est prêt à déménager pour trouver un emploi. » would gain credit for having understood the question and the text and being able to extract from it the information necessary to formulate a correct and appropriate response to the question. This is a targeted lift.

### **Conduct of Section B**

The topic of the stimulus card may be used as an opening for the Section B discussion, but the teacher/examiner must move on to discussion which covers at least one more subtopic of the candidate's chosen GTA. For example, in this year's tests, the topic of the first stimulus card for Youth matters, « Pourquoi j'ai quitté les réseaux sociaux », is the "Technology and Communication", sub-topic of the Youth matters GTA. Therefore, the teacher/examiner must make sure that the Section B discussion deals predominantly with one or more of the other subtopics of this GTA, i.e. "Family relationships and friendships", "Peer pressure and role models" and/or "Music and fashion". If this is not the case, then the candidate cannot access the full range of marks available for "Knowledge and understanding (general topic area)".

A definitive list of subtopics linked to each of the general topic areas follows:

<b>Youth matters</b>	Family relationships and friendships Peer pressure and role models Music and Fashion Technology and communication
<b>Lifestyle, health and fitness</b>	Food and diet Sport and exercise Health issues Urban and rural life
<b>Environment and travel</b>	Tourism, travel and transport Natural disasters and weather Climate change and its impact Energy, pollution and recycling
<b>Education and employment</b>	Education systems and types of schooling Pupil/candidate life Volunteering and internships Jobs and unemployment

It is in the interests of the candidate that the teacher/examiner asks questions which allow him or her to demonstrate the full extent of his/her knowledge of the structures and lexis expected at IAS level. Pedestrian and GCSE-type questions often do not encourage the candidate to use IAS level language and structures. The teacher/examiner should encourage the candidate to expand his or her answers, to provide detail and clarification.

In assessing the mark for “Knowledge and understanding (general topic area)”, the candidate is awarded marks for the range of knowledge, ideas and opinions offered about the chosen GTA. In practice, concrete examples and factual knowledge about the topics being discussed add to the candidate’s ability to access the full range of marks available and candidates need to include these in order to access the upper mark bands, to show evidence of research into the GTA being discussed. Candidates have a free choice of the two GTAs they choose to prepare for the exam, but should be advised to choose topic areas which they have prepared thoroughly and which they are ready to discuss in detail.

### **Recording quality**

The quality of the recordings submitted this series was generally very good. It is the centre’s responsibility to submit the recordings in one of the formats accepted by Pearson; details of the permitted formats can be found in the “Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations” which is found under the “Forms and Administration” tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website. It is also the responsibility of the centres to ensure that the recording quality is sufficiently loud and of decent quality.

### **Administration**

Some centres uploaded scanned PDF versions of the OR1 form this series. This is not required. Centres should upload to the Pearson secure file area a digital version of the OR1 form, with the centre and candidate details, and details of the stimulus card used for the test completed. One OR1 form should be provided for each candidate. Details of how to submit material to Pearson can be found in the “Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations” booklet which is found under the “Forms and Administration” tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website. The OR1 form is found in the same place. Under the “Teaching and Learning” tab of the same page is the “Oral Training Guide” which gives further information about preparing candidates for and conducting the test, together with a commentary on a sample WFR01 test.