



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel International
Advanced Level in French
Advanced Subsidiary
(WFR03)

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In this unit, candidates are tested on their ability to use the spoken word.

The test is comprised of two parts, Section A (5 minutes) and Section B (6-7 minutes).

The first part of the test takes the form of a debate. Candidates are required to take a clear stance on an issue of their choice which they present for one minute, and then defend, when questioned by the teacher-examiner. The choice of subject is entirely up to the candidate and does not need to relate to the general topic areas studied. Candidates are required to conduct their own research when investigating the subject of their choice and need to refer to written sources (and may also refer to other suitable authentic sources) during the discussion. They are expected to use the language of debate and argument to discuss the issue and to defend their point of view.

In the second part of the test (6-8 minutes), the areas chosen for discussion should be unpredictable elements of the test. It is up to the teacher-examiner to choose these two further topics for discussion; the focus should be on two different areas which must be taken from within the General Topic Areas. Candidates are expected to interact effectively with the examiner and to sustain a fluent discourse. They are assessed on their ability to respond to the spoken language and should have the opportunity to show the breadth and depth of their knowledge and linguistic competence, but also the questions should challenge conceptually.

In the 2022 series, examiners reported that there were many good debates with the candidates clearly presenting their point of view in the one-minute presentation at the beginning of the test before going on to maintain their stance in the remainder of Section A. The choice of topics for Section A is becoming wider; candidates are choosing subjects in which they have a genuine, personal interest and this makes for a more authentic and spontaneous debate. However, candidates are advised that the topic must be one that can genuinely be debated, with two opposing viewpoints, and it is the Centre's responsibility to advise on the candidate's choice of topic.

Moral issues (abortion, euthanasia, death penalty) continue to be the most popular topics for the debate although these do not always produce a good result if candidates are not genuinely interested in them. Other popular topics this year included animal experimentation and *la tauromachie*.

Candidates are advised that their one-minute presentation should be clear and concise; they need to set out their stance on the topic as a starting point for the debate. Too many candidates still attempt to deliver a pre-learnt speech in this section and make the mistake of delivering the material too fast so that clarity is compromised.

The role of the teacher/examiner is a crucial one; the examiner should facilitate the debate by challenging the candidate's viewpoint and by offering opposing points of view. It is crucial that the teacher/examiner understands their role. There were some tests this year in which the teacher/examiner dominated the debate, talking too much and focusing on their own views. The teacher/examiner's role is that of a facilitator in the debate; they should challenge the candidate's viewpoint in such a way as to give the candidate the opportunity to develop and extend their ideas and points of view.

The debate should be spontaneous, with each speaker reacting and responding to the other's remarks, in order to produce a genuine discourse; only if the discussion is genuinely spontaneous can the candidate access the top mark band for spontaneity and development. A question-and-answer format does not produce a genuine discourse. Candidates should be discouraged from using pre-learnt material; the test requires a genuine debate which shows an individual response. It is the teacher/examiner's responsibility to ensure that this part of the examination is a debate rather than a discussion.

Centres are reminded that, in Section A, candidates are required to provide evidenced research to support their arguments in order to reach the higher bands of the *Reading and Research* grid. Candidates should mention their sources as well as giving facts and figures. Without referring to specific sources, candidates cannot achieve more than a mark of 3 in this part of the mark scheme. Unfortunately, this requirement is still being ignored by many Centres to the detriment of their candidates who are unable to access the highest marks for Reading and Research.

In Section A, the best candidates engaged in a spontaneous debate with the teacher/examiner, offering facts and figures to support their arguments and points of view and citing sources to show where they had researched their material.

Section B requires the introduction of *at least two further issues for discussion*; again, teacher/examiners should be aware of the importance of exploring topics in some depth rather than addressing several topics at a more superficial level. For the candidate to access the higher mark bands in the critical analysis part of the mark scheme, they need to be given the opportunity to analyse and evaluate; a candidate needs time to develop their ideas on a topic in order to offer a full evaluation of the issues.

The two further issues should be taken from the General Topic Areas. Centres are reminded that, if the theme is taken from one of the three A2 topic areas, the discussion must be firmly rooted in the context of the French-speaking world by the candidate. It is not enough for the teacher-examiner to introduce the context; if the candidate does not discuss the issue within a Francophone context, marks will be lost. Section B differs from the first section in that it requires a discussion, not a debate; there is no requirement for teacher/examiners to challenge candidates in this section.

Candidates should avoid answering by reciting large amounts of pre-learnt material as this will adversely affect the level of spontaneity in the discussion. As in Section A, both the teacher/examiner and the candidate should address the points made by the other in order to create a genuine discourse. It is the teacher/examiner's responsibility to prevent the candidate from delivering pre-rehearsed material by interrupting the flow; the examiner should respond a point that the candidate has made, thus causing the test to contain an element of unpredictability. There should also be an appropriate level of challenge, both conceptually and linguistically, to allow the candidate to reach his/her potential; it is not appropriate at this level to ask personal questions.

In Section B, the areas chosen for discussion must not be communicated to the candidate before the test begins. Moreover, within a Centre, the teacher/examiner should aim to cover a wide range of subjects taken from the General Topic Areas; it is not appropriate to focus on the same subjects for all candidates.

This year, there were many candidates who offered a good range of language. At this level, candidates are expected to offer a range of lexis and complex structures such as the use of pronouns, subordination, more complex tenses such as the future perfect and the conditional perfect and the subjunctive mood as well as idiomatic language. Accurate pronunciation and intonation also are also important; if the pronunciation is unclear, the message will not be conveyed.

Centres are reminded of the importance of clear, audible recordings; a suitable venue for the tests should be chosen (away from areas which are likely to be busy or noisy) and a sound check should be run to ensure that the candidate is clearly audible.

In 2022, examiners heard many successful tests where the candidates fulfilled all the requirements of this test and were able to access marks at the top of each one of the mark bands. These candidates had been well-prepared by their Centre and sympathetically examined by their teacher-examiner, who gave them the opportunity to showcase their spoken language.

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