

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

International GCSE French (4FR0)
Paper 1 Listening

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Publications Code UG035933

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Section A

Q1-5 Le climat au Maroc

Whereas the majority of students achieved full marks in questions 1-5, a handful struggled with the basic weather forms.

Q6 La radio

Most students secured all available marks across this question, demonstrating an excellent grasp of elementary opinion phrases. However, a small minority found it difficult to recognise verbs in the negative form.

Q7 Notre routine

Q7(i) - Most students were able to discriminate between the principles of “liking” and “obligation” and this conjugated form of *devoir* was usually dealt with correctly. Students are tending more and more to look for possible distracters when seeking a correct response and this was an excellent example of how they typically apply that skill.

Q7(ii) - Most students dealt well with this item. However, the presence of a negative and confusion relating to *tard* did lead a significant minority to misjudge the response. A good knowledge of common time phrases was required, as it was elsewhere in question 7. Less confident students also found it difficult to distinguish between verbs and nouns. This was important, as a noun was required in the response to the second item and only two nouns were available from the responses box.

Q7(iii) - Once again, a significant proportion of students were able to navigate around the negative present, but a number seemed to confuse *avant/après*. Knowing when to deploy an infinitive was central to students being able to narrow down the options for the first part of this response. Understanding of both *tôt* and *tard* plus an ability to circumvent the faux ami *journée* meant that many students could deal confidently with the second part of this item.

In summary most students realised that the overall meaning rather than just single item comprehension is essential at this level of response.

Section B

Q8 Les projets d'avenir

This question was attempted with a good degree of success, in the majority of cases.

Q8(i) - Appreciating the distinction between different modal verbs was the key to success in the first item. Equally, most were able to discriminate between a range of common verbs, including *chercher*, *aller* and *travailler*. This helped the candidate to determine “what” would happen “where” within Nadine’s career plans. The response required in 8(i) did require students to ascertain overall meaning, by listening to more than a single sentence. At this level, a broader range of tenses may be present across the recorded passage, but not always targeted in the required response.

Q8(ii) - There were a number of instances where students opted for the first response on offer, as they had heard reference to both *payer* and *études* during the recording. The ability to spot such distracters typified the performance of those students who took the time to hesitate and reflect when a potential response appeared to be relatively straightforward. This is in large measure due to the excellent range of techniques being taught, based on the principle of not being too hasty in responding. Most students seem to have an excellent awareness of how synonyms, negatives and qualifiers can impact upon choice of response.

Q8(iii) - Students who showed a certain attention to detail tended to be successful in the final item of question 8. Naturally, the key to success was the ability to discriminate between *peu de* and *beaucoup de*. It was equally important for students not to be drawn towards the option relating to *vie assez facile* whose similarity in sound to part of the recording proved too tempting.

Students’ awareness of the core vocabulary helped them to deal with synonyms, but they also needed to circumvent a set of plausible distracters. There was strong evidence indicating that teachers are training their students well in this respect.

Q9

This question required a certain depth of linguistic awareness, as there was a need to deal with more complex vocabulary, negatives, infinitives, pronouns. A well embedded understanding of the perfect tense was required. Not all of these elements were actually being tested, but students still needed to discriminate between various distracters.

Students who had a sound knowledge of synonyms were confident in discerning the link between *ennuyeux* and *monotonie*. A number of students did however misinterpret the phrases indicating how long Rachid spent in his first post. Once again, students were tempted to establish a link between *trois mois* in the recording and the same phrase which appeared on the question paper. Likewise, Rachid's interest in cars was understood by most students, but some were able to distinguish between *récemment* and *toujours*. Students who perceived the potential link between *hésiter* and *immédiatement* still needed to take account of the negative form of *hésiter* used on the question paper. Quite a number seemed to overlook this negative. In fact, quite a range of negative phrases appeared within the task, the vast majority being in the recording. Students were generally very well prepared for this challenge. This is once again evidence of excellent practice within centres. Indeed, where there are two grammatically plausible responses available for a single item, students do need to base their response on evidence from the text and should avoid the temptation of choosing a response for the sole reason that it makes grammatical sense.

Q10-11

General Remarks

Students are becoming more and more successful in the way they select language from the recording and offer very concise responses. In some instances, a single word response was adequate. The temptation to merely lift segments of language from the recording was approached with much more caution than in previous series. Responses need to be based on evidence gleaned from the recording, but there is equally a need to avoid irrelevance in responses. Students are being assessed on comprehension rather than language, but it is always a pleasure to report that responses often displayed significant breadth of expression, with impeccable accuracy. Many students possessed a depth of vocabulary normally associated with the requirements of AS level examinations. This is clearly the most challenging component of the examination. Students should nevertheless be encouraged to make at least some attempt to complete this section. Most responses were clearly legible, but centres are asked to continue the excellent practice of reminding students of the need for clear handwriting.

Q10

Q10(a) - Most students scored a mark here, even those who went on to leave blanks in subsequent questions.

Q10(b) - This proved difficult for many, who did not seem to understand that the sport provided independence, and several appeared not to know *indépendant*, writing *dependant*. A significant number of students secured a

mark for “bon pour la santé”, suggesting that it had been encountered within a range of language resources during the teaching process.

Q10(c) - Students seemed to know that ‘snow coverage’ had to be mentioned for the answer but most were unable to comprehend what that really meant. Very few students offered a grammatically correct construction for this question, and only a small proportion of students were able to use the term *épaisse*.

Q11

Q11(a) - *Lire* and *lecture* were well-known. *Romans* was not familiar to most, with a variety of spellings being proposed. Quite a few students offered *libre[s]*.

Q11(b) - The first part was better answered than the second, as the cognate ‘stress’ helped to secure a correct response. The verb *réduire* elicited a number of ambiguous spellings. The second part was more challenging because *s’échapper* was not widely known.

Q11(c) - Students who avoided the risk of amending the idea of *peu sociable* were more likely to offer an acceptable response. Some students were drawn towards comparisons between the two sisters mentioned in the recording.

Administrative Matters

Centres are to be commended, as in previous series, for the excellent standard of administration during this series.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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