Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In French (4FR0)
Paper 2: Listening

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International GCSE French Unit 2 Reading and Writing

This June 2017 session was the fourth for the specification, International GCSE French 4FR0, thus the third series in which the new specification for 4FR02 and KFR02, Reading and Writing was available, set in accordance to the specification for International GCSE French 4FR0 Issue 4. The marking principles and rubrics are unchanged and the total time allocated to this 60 mark paper remains 1 hour 30 minutes. Questions 1 to 5 were compulsory, and in Q6, candidates selected from three tasks, each worth the same 20 marks. The vast majority of candidates attempted all questions, and, as ever, performed at all levels of attainment.

Teachers have clearly continued to support their candidates carefully in attaining some excellent outcomes which responded admirably to the demands of the paper. Four sets of past papers plus the sample assessment materials are very useful preparation resources for candidates.

The questions came from the five topic areas and their subtopics, covering a variety of sources. The six questions were of increasing demand, with early questions targeting F and G grades, and Q6 seeking to elicit grades up to A and A* grades. Q1 was worth 5 marks, and required candidates to indicate which abode was described by the statement, from a choice of three images. Q2 was a visual pairing question on directions worth 5 marks, where candidates read short sentences and matched them to the appropriate image. Q3a, again worth 5 marks, was a more extended passage on activities in the writer's town, and candidates had to match the five pairs of sentence halves, from a choice of seven sentence endings, which tested understanding of the passage. In Q3b, a free response on home area offering up to 10 marks, 5 marks for Communication and Content, and 5 marks for Language, gave candidates four prompts which, in contrast to Q6, are simply suggestions, not requirements. Details taken from the passage might be incorporated suitably, and wholly relevant responses which ignored some or all of the prompts could obtain full marks. Q4 was an extended passage about childhood. Five marks could be gained from multiple choice sentences. Q5 is always the longest reading comprehension task, worth 10 marks, this session based on a substantial passage discussing the environment. Responses were marked for communication only. Twenty marks were available for any one of the three tasks in Q6, where Q6a attracted about half of the candidature, Q6b and Q6c were each attempted by about a quarter of the candidates. Ten marks were on offer for Content, where, ideally, each of the four bullet points was addressed; 5 marks for Knowledge and Application of Language, and 5 marks for Accuracy of Language.

Question 1

In Q1, 1 mark was available for each of five parts where, five times, candidates had to read the statement about an abode and match it to the correct one out of three images. Parts (iii) and (v) were a little more demanding than the other parts, as there was lexical demand on 'ferme', and 'près de la mer' was in a sentence, with a further short sentence added.

Question 2

Directions to places in town in Q2 did not seem to challenge the majority of candidates unreasonably, and many perfect scores were attained. Vocabulary for places in town and directions appeared well learnt. (iii) was perhaps surprisingly, the least well attempted part, focusing on 'gauche' and contrasting with 'droite'. 'tout droit' and 'à droite' were well distinguished from one another.

Question 3

Q3a(i) was very well answered by candidates. Since this question targeted grades up to around the C grade, it is expected that there will a high level of success, but there was never the less some discrimination between parts. (iii) and B, and (iv) and F are grammatically possible, but even regardless of the passage, these and other pairing makes no sense, so should not be part of any sensible guessing. Grammar was of less help this session, as so many third person singular verbs were used in the second half, so the semantics of the potentially complete sentence were helpful. (iv) and (v) were the least successful parts, and candidates were required to infer and deduce, as appropriate to the level of demand. Thus in (iv), 'la rue est interdite aux véhicules' had to be matched with 'réserve la rue aux personnes à pied' with 'la rue' as a hint of where to look in the passage and the sentence halves. 1st to 31st August in (v) implies 'dure un mois'. Practice with this kind of deductive or inferential part would be useful.

In Q3b candidates can recycle and adapt material from Q3a, and if incorporated appositely, it is well rewarded; but examiners are alert to excessive lifting and wholesale copying which cannot be credited greatly. Many candidates legitimately ignored material in Q3a in Q3b, and gained full credit. This task was generally very well undertaken, and most candidates managed to write a good amount, relevantly. Ten marks could be earned by work wholly in the present tense, but many candidates were insecure even in basic present and perfect tense formation, sometimes mangling the message to the point of concealing it. Some candidates displayed no verb morphology, but examiners retrieved as much message as possible: dans ma viler jouer au golf. Je manger un hamburger. Anglicisms also impeded communication: J'aime le restaurant, il est delicious et cheap, for especially lesser able candidates. Responses often

mentioned activities which are or are not available in the candidate's home town or region. Responses including reference to the home itself are credited as relevant information, and benefit of the doubt is given, such as playing football, unless explicitly in the back garden, could be treated as a relevant activity in the town. Some opinion would be expected, even at a basic level, and 4 marks for content was the maximum for a response, wholly devoid of opinion. When activities are undertaken and with whom, featured, but all of this information was possible but not obligatory, even in fully credited responses: the prompts are suggestions, not requirements.

Question 4

In Q4, the level of demand increased. Q4 proved to have a generally consistent performance overall. This question rewarded attentive candidates, and contained plausible distractors which seemed quite evenly chosen. (i) and (v) were most successful, but in the other three parts, again as in Q3a, some deduction was needed: in (ii), for example, 'à juste deux minutes de la mer' reflects 'sur la côte', and in (iii), 'la natation' and 'dans l'eau' are a fair matching duo.

Question 5

Q5 is marked for comprehension only, not language. (a), (b), (c) and (f) provided the most straightforward credit. Q5 differentiated well as the most demanding comprehension question, and the distribution of marks was pleasing. (c) and (e) provided one quite straightforward mark each, and also a more challenging one, so in this single tier of entry paper, candidates could either be stretched, or have a chance of gaining some credit. Some lifting overall assisted candidates, but excessive untargeted lifts did not score, as per the general marking principles, so there was discrimination in terms of correct retrieval of information for the passage. In a one mark part, the first element is considered, and in a two mark part, the first two elements are considered, regardless of any extra details included. This marking principle rewards an accurate comprehension, rather than approximate or lengthy lifting from the passage. However, a targeted lift can gain full credit. Candidates need to infer in some parts, and as in June 2016, such parts proved the most challenging. The topic of the environment is within the specification, and although more immediately challenging, it was well-handled, as evidenced by the centred spread of marks.

Q5a provided a generally positive start, with most candidates achieving marks. The lift 'de graves conséquences' was accepted, which helped a lot of candidates. Only the past tense was deemed illogical to the question part, so tense choice was not a major factor in causing lost credit.

Q5b was a relatively successful part, offering at least 1 mark to most candidates, even if only for 'malnutrition'. 'un manqué d'eau' could be

rendered by the lift: l'eau non-polluée deviendra presque impossible à trouver, so this was frequently accessed.

Q5c, as all two mark parts, was assessed discretely, so even if the first part of the response was erroneous, the second could score, thus 1 mark for: 'passer une heure par jour pour chercher de l'eau' scored 1 mark for the second part. The first element was earned if the candidate conveyed the notion that more distance or time would be involved in the future in seeking clean water.

Q5d is an example of a part which requires some thought and inference from the candidate, and many responses clearly found the correct part of the passage, and honed in on financial and infrastructural considerations. However, the information needed to be manipulated to respond to the question part, and a lift from wrong angle: 'les moyens financiers ne manquent pas non plus' OR 'pourtant l'infrastructure' was rejected.

Q5e needed to target the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and such a question part would benefit from checking, and from a moment to consider the logical situation. No greenhouse gases is a utopian impossibility, but reduction is more plausible. 'gaz' is not under discussion, but 'gaz à effet de serre' was needed to score. A manipulated lift: 'Si nous baissons la production de gaz à effet de serre', scored. 'réduire l'ozone' is a different route to the mark, borne out by the passage.

Q5f required two notions, namely that everyone must make efforts, and that these efforts must be made now. Citing politicians was common, but this forfeited the first mark, as everyone is implicated. 'nous faisons' alone seemed not to suffice for the 'agir' notion required, but a generous understanding of 'tout le monde' was accepted, as far as 'nous' or 'on'. For candidates trying to use different words, 'bientôt' and anything sooner were acceptable for 'immédiatement'.

Question 6

Some general points apply to all three Q6 tasks: il y a in any tense is taken as one word, as are proper nouns, names or titles, though this was not significant in Q6 in either this or the last session. There was no penalty for responses under 150 words, as they were simply assessed using the three mark grids, and there is no upper word limit. A word has a space either side of it, and was counted as the candidate presented it. There was no requirement to respond in a particular register, such as a blog style, email or letter format, and no credit was withheld or awarded *per se* for any register attempted. The examiner is looking chiefly to assess the response not its format. There were few really ineffective or unattempted Q6s.

As always in Q6, the examiners are looking for candidates to respond plausibly and in serviceable French to all four bullet points, rather than treating the four points as four discrete questions in a reading

comprehension. Communication and Content (C) marks were awarded as follows. These marks are maxima, and fewer could be awarded, for example, if bullet points are addressed superficially.

- C 9-10 maximum requires some response to all four bullet points. More successful candidates will develop their response to these bullet points.
- C 7-8 maximum is where three bullet points are addressed, directly or partially.
- C -6 is the maximum where two or three bullet points have been omitted.
- Candidates must score in each of the three mark grids. Nought in any grid means nought overall for Q6. As in the last three sessions, all of the Q6 tasks, contained compulsory bullet points which suggested the necessary range of time frames.

Question 6a

This was the most popular Q6, chosen by about half of the candidates. Most who attempted it managed to respond well, with plausible development. Typical answers included mention of food and drink consumed or not. There needed to be an opinion on the future health of young people, and where specific responses were given, they tended to be the most highly credited. Generally, accounts of healthy lifestyle, rather than diet, inclined to be less worthy of credit.

Bullet 1: Most candidates gave a direct and plausible response, and past tense information seemed to be direct enough. Both aspects of the bullet point needed to be addressed in a personal way, and some explanation as to why, was desirable. Mention of either food or drink only precluded full credit in this bullet point, but most made at least glancing reference to each.
Bullet 2: Any past tense attempt to get or stay fit personally was accepted, and development was welcomed. Some candidates evaluated the relative effectiveness of different strategies and activities, and examiners were tolerant of the distinction between staying fit and staying healthy. Therefore, taking sufficient sleep, reducing stress and drinking water were all positively regarded alongside, for instance, regular gym visits and playing team sports.
Bullet 3: Provided that views on tobacco were justified, for or against, the response was credited fully within the overall essay. Most provided canonical information about the detriment to health of the smoker and others, but some candidates cited tobacco as a social and relaxing benefit. Information could be, but did not have to be, equivocal and on both sides of the debate.
Bullet 4: The future notion was key to this bullet, and candidates need to pay careful attention to details of what is being asked. Some limited their responses to either not smoking, repeating activities cited in the second bullet point, or stated baldly that future youth health would be good or bad. The better responses took this bullet point as an opportunity to broaden

beyond the themes already covered and to nuance their arguments. For example, there is generally more inactivity, but some young people take their health more seriously than ever and sports teams are thriving.

Question 6b

This was the least popular choice, but still just under a quarter of candidates tackled it.

Bullet 1: Candidates needed to state at least one programme s/he liked, then offer some justification. General responses about the fact that watching television is a relaxing or informative experience were not able to reach full credit, and a particular type of programme was sought.
Bullet 2: This was most successful when based on one concert or film recently visited or watched plus some justification, although there could be an absence of use for full credit, if developed suitably. A past notion was required alongside a personalised experience.
Bullet 3: This bullet point was sometimes very well attempted with extended accounts of alternative activities, not involving technology. Others discussed the good and bad sides of technology at relative length, pertinently. Examples from personal experience were often furnished helpfully, such as being able to be picked up late at night through a social media message to a parent, or, conversely, that there is no escape from work or pressures due to keeping in touch via modern technology.
Bullet 4: This bullet point rewarded any plausible speculation, especially if developed sensibly. The suggestion that everyone would return to some technology-free utopia was only sustainable if evidenced. More common suggestions were that newspaper and book circulation would fall to almost nothing, and that further innovations are likely, but others suggested that traditional media could make a come-back.

Question 6c

This was attempted by just over a quarter of those sitting the paper. The format of the response was not taken into account, though an email was sought. A wrong register is never penalised. There could be reference to the stimulus but this is not required.
Bullet 1: A present tense statement on what the candidate's own birthday celebrations are like is required information beyond the simple and factual. Reference solely to a specific past event cannot gain full credit, given the general nature of the bullet point.
Bullet 2: This bullet point requires an opinion on having to help in the home, and recounting how children help or not did not respond fully, as the opinion was lacking. 'J'aide à la maison pour obtenir mon argent de poche' overlapped somewhat with Q6a, but did not develop relevantly enough.
Bullet 3: The third prompt needs a preference but treatment of both sides is not needed. Better responses sometimes evaluated both possibilities, but opted for one, and it was not a complete response to evaluate without concluding. Justification was ideal, often along the lines that money gives

greater freedom to the recipient to spend or save the gift as chosen, or that a gift is desirable, as it shows great care on the part of the giver.

Bullet 4: This fourth bullet point requires a future notion with some justification, as to how coming birthday celebrations will be. No celebration is acceptable and could be developed for full credit, for example, nothing because it is pointless and other activities are preferred. Fairly ineffective and low key celebrations were accepted as full responses, such as eating a meal out or putting up cards, but more elaborate plans, such as exotic trips away and driving lessons in a received birthday gift of a car. There was sometimes conflation of bullets 3 and 4, where the future plans would involve expenditure or a money gift, and credit was given in a way so as to reward the candidate wherever possible, and to avoid, if practical, a bullet point being considered to be omitted.

In some instances, as per previous sessions, there was sophisticated vocabulary and grammar usage, worthy of good A level candidates. après avoir, passives, pronoun objects, demonstratives, il y a (ago) and si clauses were all often well-handled. There was good control of varied tenses, appropriate to the bullet points and in development, and a range of linking structures and time frames. In other instances, though, there is need for revision of basic structures, with reference to the programme of grammar study. Genders are a perennial issue, and examiners understand that they are challenging in the volume of learning required, but consistent application of agreement rules, and singular subjects with singular verbs, would do much to eradicate frequently attested errors. Where the past, present and future ideas were required in direct response to various bullet points, some candidates sometimes ignored or mishandled them. There was a tendency, as ever, to force in unnecessary subjunctives, complicated conditional constructions and artificially frequent or convoluted idioms which were not always successful or apposite. Candidates might better master more adaptable structures and to deploy them appositely, as the content mark suffers when the message is impeded by largely incomprehensible constructions. Revision of basic matters appears to be useful.

The following guidance is based on June 2017 performance and might be of use in preparation for the final session:

There are twenty marks on offer for non-verbal questions, and there is a ramping up of demand. Credit can be maximised by checking these questions.

1. Q3b offers suggested prompts for candidates addressing the question, but even very able candidates should pay close attention to the requirements of the task. In this session, home area was the focus, but an opinion was needed, but not always provided.

2. In Q6, candidates should take care to target and develop the bullet points. They are not mere suggestions, but are the requirements of the task.

3. Q5 is marked for communication only, but answers need to be clear and in direct response to the question part. Candidates should note the particularities, including the tense, of the question.

4. Some parts may require inference and therefore manipulation of the passage. Lifts may be rejected if they are oblique and can only be rewarded if they target the necessary information.

5. In Q3, sentence halves had to be matched, as in 2016. Attention to grammatical accuracy could help candidates to reduce the number of plausible pairs.

6. Candidates should reserve checking time within the 90 minutes' examination to review grammar and spelling generally, and to ensure that responses are targeted.

6. Word counts are suggested minima, and there are no upper limits. In Q3b, a 50 word response can gain the full 10 marks, in Q6 a 150 word response can receive all 20 marks.

7. Candidates are referred to the linguistic structures on pp 29 and 30 of the Specification. This list is only indicative, not exhaustive but gives useful guidance of the range and constructions which could be expected.

Grade boundaries

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