Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in French (4FR1/01R)
Unit 01R: Listening

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Introduction

June 2022 is only the second nearly full session for 4FR1 01R, Listening, set in accordance with the specification, International GCSE French 4FR, and is the first post-pandemic. This paper was of equal demand, as ever, as the time-zone equivalent main paper, 4FR1 01. This session, there were some 830 candidates for this single tier qualification. The marking principles and rubrics for this specification remain consistent, in the context of the pandemic, with previous sessions; and the total time allocated to this 40 mark paper is 30 minutes plus 5 minutes' reading time. There is no optionality in this paper, and most candidates attempted all seven questions. Five questions do not require productive use of French. Only Questions 3 and 7 require the productive use of French which examiners assess for communication only. Given the background to the session, and candidates' experiences, there were some excellent performances. The questions are all taken from the five specified topic areas and their sub-topics. The six questions are of increasing demand, with early questions targeting Grades 1 and 2, and Q7 seeking to elicit performances up to Grades 8 and 9. In a number of questions, an example precedes the question, so that the candidates can see how question parts are going to information and how candidates should convey it. Q1 is a visual pairing question on the weather worth 4 marks, where candidates listen to fairly short utterances and match them to the appropriate image. Q2, about health issues, is worth 6 marks and requires candidates to indicate who is suffering from which ailment, from a choice of eight images, including the example. The passage does not mention all the activities shown. Q3, again valued at 6 marks, is a more extended passage about services, in this case, the lost property services, and candidates have to produce brief target language responses, not necessarily in sentences. In Q4, a non-verbal question which requires a measure of deduction to work out whether the opinions of the six speakers on school life are positive, negative or both, offered up to 6 marks. Q5 is a passage comprising two speakers about their childhood. Candidates can earn up to six marks by identifying the six correct multiple-choice responses, with three distractors offered in each part. Q6 concerns the use of customs. Candidates select six words from a pool of thirteen to complete the sentences in the question, paying attention to both grammatical accuracy and the sense of the speakers in the passage. There are up to six marks on offer in this non-verbal question which is aimed at more able candidates. A further six marks are available in Q7 for responses in the target language regarding meals. As in Q3, examiners assess responses for communication only, not for quality of language, save in so far as the candidates' responses need to be unambiguous, in the context of this International GCSE specification.

Question 1

In Q1, 1 mark is available for each of four parts where, four times after the example, candidates have to look at the images about the weather, and determine which one each statement references. Candidates of all abilities tackled this question very well in both sessions to date, with a high success rate and many perfect scores. Where there were difficulties, (a) which targeted orage, was sometimes an unsuccessful part, while (d) was the likely to earn credit for understanding jouer dans la neige, where 88% of responses were correct. Question 1 was again within the scope of nearly all candidates.

Question 2

Health issues and ailments in question 2 seemed to be a familiar sub-topic to the majority of candidates, and as in the 2019 and 2020 sessions, they frequently accessed strong credit. The mean score was nearly 4 marks. Candidates seem to be aware of the fact that not all images are targeted, and that they must offer six responses only. However, in a minority of cases, excess crosses forfeited

one or more marks. The question targeted words or phrases such ma gorge, l'oeil, le doigt and je n'entends plus bien. Some of these items proved more elusive for some, and this emphasises the value of learning the Minimum Core Vocabulary thoroughly.

Question 3

In Q3, there were, again, many strong scores, and candidates of all abilities procured some credit. Numerous candidates accessed 2 or 3 of the 6 marks available for this question, and, given that this question targets quite modest grades, relatively little French was required in this note-taking exercise. Please see below for Q7 and marking principles, which are common to Q3 and Q7, the only two questions which require the productive use of French in 4FR1 01R. Sometimes, as in Q3(a), a single word suffices, smartphone, and examiners took a generous understanding of unambiguously communicated information. In Q3(a), candidates across the ability range accessed the 1 mark on offer. In Q3(b), correct answers needed to target bureau des objets trouvés, but in Q3(c), there were three ways to gain the two marks available. In the formulation chez la coiffeuse, responses devoid of chez had to be rejected, as this is not an answer to the question part, quand. Examiners applied the order of elements rule, and considered only the first two elements of the response. In order for candidates to access credit as far as is reasonable, examiners accepted police on its own in Q3(d). Even though this is not strictly a place, police communicated understanding of the passage sufficiently to score. Q3(e) focuses on what Théo doit faire, so a verbal notion is required: remplir ou écrire, for example, but un formulaire or un questionnaire on their own were untargeted responses which examiners had to reject. This question requires brief responses, with sometimes minimal French language response, as befits the modest grades which this question targets.

Question 4

In Q4, the level of demand increases, and 6 marks were available, preceded by an example, for deciding if the speaker averred negatively, positively or equivocally. This was a question where many candidates scored well, and the mean score exceeded 60% in all parts, rising in Q4(b) to a success rate of three-quarters. In Q4(a) and Q4(e), where the speakers had a mixed opinion, about two-thirds of candidates were successful, even though there was not necessarily a contrastive conjunction. en colère and mauvaises notes guided candidates to the most successful part, Q4(b). heureux was key in Q4(c), in Q4(d) un grand choix impressionnant offered several positive clues, and Q4(f) tested understanding of the idiom, avoir de la chance. Thus it is not automatically the case that all three opinions are equally represented at 2 marks in the markscheme. Some inference is necessary in this question type, and it is worth practising this type of question for future series.

Question 5

Q5 is a non-verbal question worth 6 marks. This question provided credit in all its parts to just under half the candidates. It is well worth spending some of the reading time before the recording begins, trying to understand the question stems and their four possible responses. Q5(a) required the association of bon repas and dîners délicieux. Q5(b) targeted the job serveur, hence the cognate servir des boissons. Q5(c) focused on the synonym of épuisé and fatigante. Q5(d) was also a cognate retrieval part, where en aidant was in the correct option C, reflecting the passage pour les aider. In the last two parts, which candidates approached with similar success to the other four parts, they had to make some deduction: in Q5(e), j'ai gagné de l'expérience is indeed utile, and in Q5(f) géniale and avec plaisir guided candidates to option B. Option D is discounted, as the experience was not unequivocally positive.

Question 6

Q6 remains a challenging question type, worthy of particular practice, as candidates must understand the passage, the items in the pool of words, and the vocabulary and grammatical constructions of the sentences in the questions. Happily, about half of the candidates gained credit in four of the parts, and the other two parts, (a) and (d) were not much less successful. Q5(a) scored for roughly half of the candidates, but where it was not correct, at least candidates often proposed K, which is grammatically and semantically plausible. It is worth practising this type of question, to narrow down through the sense of the passage, and the grammar, the possible answers from which to choose. For example, Q5(f) is A, but J is potentially the right answer, as it is the only other present tense verb. Any other responses can be discounted at once. Similarly, in Q5(b), about half of the candidates earned the mark, and of those who did not, many offered an adverb. Any other response is grammatically invalid.

Question 7

This question targeted the familiar sub-topic of food and meals, and topic which is relevant to all candidates. Unambiguous communication in Q3 and Q7 is assessed, there is no language penalty or reward. The marking principles in Q3 and Q7 are consistent, and examiners emphasise that they take as flexible an approach to ambiguity as is reasonable. The order of elements rule applies, so that in a 1 mark part, the first element only is considered. This is so that examiners do not accord undue credit to an untargeted transcription of chunks from the passage, whereas candidates whose responses are a targeted retrieval of information, profit from their selection of information. The mean score in Q7 is not high, but this need not be deflating, as this question targets the highest grades. Examiners tolerate mis-spellings, even if they stray into another language, provided that they are comprehensible, generally within one letter of the correct spelling: exotic, products. Some candidates failed to earn credit, as they repeated information which was provided in the example. The notion targeted in Q7(a) was that vegetables were either homegrown or seasonal, or, another route to the 1 mark available, was soupe délicieuse. Q7(b) and Q7(c) often yielded credit, where examiners accepted exotic, English spelling, as it communicates. Q7(d) and Q7(e) sought the idea of the use of local or organic produce, or paper not plastic packaging, or the fact that the local butcher's fast food is healthy sausage foot. There was sufficient scope that many candidates earned at least one of the marks on offer. In Q7(f), the concept of food being too salty eluded most candidates but des paquets qui menacent l'environnement was a quite widely gained element. Unfortunately, as in previous sessions, some candidates proffered correct information, but in the wrong parts. For example, la viande biologique was sometimes offered in Q7(f), or candidates suggested buying exotic fruits from Africa was characterised as an environmental positive.

Advice

The following guidance is based on June 2022 performance, the first almost full session after the pandemic. There are 28 marks on offer for non-verbal questions, and there is a gradual ramping up of demand, as the questions target performances as increasing high grades.

1. Candidates should refer to the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) and especially to the several past papers which are now available. This will give some sense of the question types and rubrics of this paper.

2. Q2 carries 6 marks. If candidates offer more than six responses, 1 mark is forfeited for every response in excess of six.

3. Q3 and Q7 require responses in French. We do not assess grammar, but responses need to communicate sufficiently in French to score.

4. Candidates should check their Q3 and Q7 responses with particular care in the limited time available, for ambiguous mis-spellings or excessively faulty phonetic attempts risk compromising communication.

5. Consolidation with a range of types of listening are very useful preparation, including in non-verbal exercises. Quite long passages appear early in the paper, and practice of notetaking under time limitation has its place in Q3 preparation.

6. It is worth reading the example. Not only does this show how to approach a given question, but particularly in Q7, it avoids candidates offering the same material in their own responses, where examiners cannot credit it.

7. We urge candidates and teachers to consult the Specification, including the programme of grammar study, specified topics and sub-topics and minimum core vocabulary, as this may help to focus preparation most usefully. Time spent on learning the minimum core vocabulary is especially useful preparation when addressed thematically, even for the purposes of the receptive skill of Listening.