Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel International
GCSE in French (4FR1/02)
Unit 2: Reading and Writing

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Introduction

This June 2022 session was the second for this new specification, International GCSE French 4FR1 after two interrupted years of teaching. Candidate had access to the Advance Notice published in early 2022. The total time allocated to this 80-mark paper was 1 hour 45 minutes. Questions 1 to 6 were compulsory and in Q07 candidates selected from three tasks, each worth the same number of marks. Finally, Q08, a grammar exercise, was the final question of the paper. The vast majority of candidates attempted all questions drawn from the five prescribed topic areas, with varying outcomes. Candidates clearly used the information disclosed in the Advance Notice to prepare for Q06 and Q07 and teachers have clearly supported their candidates in achieving some excellent performances with regard to the requirements of the paper.

Question 1

The format of this question required candidates to read the text thoroughly in order to answer the six questions with multiple options. To be successful, candidates are required to understand the core vocabulary of the text which may contain distractors and to identify the message as well as key points, details and opinions. The very vast majority of candidates scored full marks in this questions showing a great understanding of the topical vocabulary learnt.

Question 2

Success in this question required candidates to correctly interpret the meaning of the text and the six statements to complete with one word from the box. Most candidates scored between 5 and 6 marks out of 6 for this question. These candidates were confident to select the correct, relevant type of word for each statement. However, some candidates struggled to choose a word from the list that would make sense in the statement. Whilst the words that they picked could fit in well from a grammatical point, they did not follow from the content of the passage.

Question 3

Most candidates scored the full eight marks available for this question, showing an excellent grasp of the vocabulary for the topic. Candidates clearly understood and applied the instructions throughout the exercise by only ticking the correct name(s) for each statement. Although the majority of candidates seem well prepared to tackle the format of this question, they need to be reminded of the need to only put 8 ticks and make their crossing out clear when they change their minds.

Question 4

Many candidates scored 8 marks and above out of the ten marks available for this question. In this question, candidates had to recognise and respond to key information and ideas in a more extended authentic text, deducing meaning. The importance of fully reading the question cannot be over- emphasised. A surprising number of candidates were unable to distinguish between the past and future trips to China and India respectively and identify No's age. In addition, a large number missed the significance of the word 'mais' regarding the choice of meal. Marks were regularly dropped as a result of a failure to understand, taken together, 'a laissé', 'placard' and 'a mis'. On the other hand, a good number of candidates coped confidently with the question in its entirety, avoided premature selection of the first items in the relevant sections of the text and demonstrated a strong sense of the full understanding of the text.

Question 5

For this question, candidates needed to read and understand the text in its entirety and then answer questions in French based on the passage. This question met with more varied success as it was more demanding - expectedly so given that it appears in a more demanding part of the paper. Those who were well-versed in question words did well, whereas those who used guesswork to provide answers were not consistently lucky. In addition, some candidates answered the questions by producing untargeted lifts from the text – in most cases, these responses were not successful. There was also a tendency to home in on the first recognisable words in the text, reinforced in some cases, by uncertainty about '*laissent*'. The importance of '*plus de*' to give the level of precision required was also missed by many candidates. Overall, many candidates were successful and well prepared when tackling this question.

Question 6

Topical information about Q06 was provided to candidates as part of the Advance Notice Information. Candidates coped well with this question in general using the four prescribed words verbatim in their short writing about the topic of the question. It was clear candidates had been taught well to answer this style of question. There was evidence of correct and consistent use of the present tense and future tense tenses for many candidates. There was a high level of language used in most answers with the occasional idiom, which was very pleasing. Whilst this question provided many good responses, a minority of candidates failed to understand 'équipe' and mistakenly used the latter for 'équipement'.

Question 7

Topical information about Q07 was provided to candidates as part of the Advance Notice Information. Overall, candidates understood the requirements of the task and made valiant efforts to demonstrate their knowledge of tenses and time frames. The topics captured their interest and their responses demonstrated good attempts to include some variety and a range of language. There was a strong understanding of the importance of covering all

four areas of the question as the best strategy for conveying their ability to communicate in different time frames.

One common error was to focus on the overall topic and write a prepared piece which did not always relate closely to the four points to be covered. Secondly, there appeared to be some 'thinking on one's feet' which produced enthusiastic responses, but which did not always demonstrate command of multiple tenses or clarity of communication. Accurate demonstration of the full range of the past tense remained a little elusive. The third weakness in strategy was to write lop-sided answers which focussed too much on one element of the question to the detriment of covering all four points. When some bullet points did not get addressed, it was mainly when candidates did not show understanding of the following words in the statements: 'si'; 'comment' 'ce que'.

The quality of the best answers was stunning, demonstrating confident use of the full range of tenses, including the subjunctive mood at times, accurate and varied use of complex sentences and a strong command of the implications of gender across a number of grammatical points. In the less good attempts, there were basic mistakes in tenses, and complex language was inaccurate.

Question 8

This question proved to be challenging for many candidates.
The main weaknesses were:
- the formation of tenses, particularly distinguishing between the future and the conditional.
- irregular verb forms
- plural endings
- (a) many candidates answered 'j'étude'
- (f) gender identification problem with 'mots'

It is important to note that some candidates did not answer Q08; they may not have realised that the grammar question was the last question on the paper and not the extended essay as per the last specification.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Reading Comprehension:

- Identify information which is dependent on the secure recognition of pronouns.
- Recognise the correct tense in order to distinguish with precision the information required.
- Manipulate the language in the question or text to provide unambiguous answers.
- Identify the underlying information required by the question rather than focus on the first items identified in the text.

Writing:

- Manipulate the range of tenses accurately required to convey relatively complex ideas.
- Identify the requirements of the question to cover four points on the topic rather than write a general response.

Grammatical understanding:

- Check the formation of tenses, particularly distinguishing between the future and the conditional, irregular verbs and plural endings.