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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
in French Reading Foundation Tier (1FR03F)

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## **Introduction**

The unit was worth 50 marks and was divided into three sections: A, B and C. The first six questions comprising Section A were set in English. Questions 7 to 9 (Section B) were set in French. Section C was a 40-word translation from French into English.

Candidates had 45 minutes in which to complete their answers.

## **Question 1**

In this question, candidates were asked to read five short statements and then decide which person had written the six statements below these statements by writing the person's name on a line.

The question, targeted at grade 1, required candidates to recognise single words/short phrases. There were no obvious distractors. The vast majority of candidates performed well on this question. Familiarity with vocabulary from the list in the specification was essential for success on this task.

## **Question 2**

This question, aimed at grade 2, required candidates to recognise single words/short phrases in an advert for a new restaurant and place them in a gap-fill sentence in English, choosing from 11 words (6 distractors) in a box.

Most candidates succeeded well with this task. However, a small number of candidates filled in multiple answers for some parts, in which instance the first answer written was the one taken. There were also some examples of candidates who filled in their own words rather than selecting from those provided. Lack of vocabulary knowledge proved to be a problem for some candidates, with many who did not recognise the word "rez de chaussée". It is important that candidates are familiar with the task type and with vocabulary in MCV to succeed at this question.

## **Question 3**

This question targeted candidates at grades 2 and 3. Candidates were required to read a report about a part-time job and answer questions in English. Full sentences were not required.

The two parts of this question targeting grade 2 were 3 (a) (i) and (ii) and 3 (b) (i). 3 (a) (i) required candidates to recognise the expression "le centre sportif" and 3 a (ii) required them to recognise 'des matchs de basket' were both well tackled. For 3 (b) (i), a surprising number of candidates failed to recognise the word 'midi' and were drawn by the distractor 'sept heures du matin'. 3 (a) iii and 3 (b) (iii) required candidates to recognise the opinion 'fatigant' and the negative 'n'est pas bien payé'. These were less well done, particularly 3 (a) (iii).

Knowledge of basic vocabulary contained in the list meant that many candidates lost marks on this question.

#### **Question 4**

In this question, candidates had to read a short extract from a literary text set in a French home and then select the correct response from four possible responses for the five questions about the text.

Some candidates performed poorly on this question. The majority were able to identify the correct responses for (i), (iii) and (iv). Part (ii) requiring students to recognise 'lève-toi' and part (v) 'triste' did not perform well.

Once again, lack of familiarity with basic nouns, verbs and adjectives lost candidates marks.

#### **Question 5**

This question was targeted at grade 4 candidates. Candidates were asked to answer three questions in English about Festivals in French Guiana. Full sentences were not required.

This question was quite poorly tackled. Few candidates correctly translated 'Amérique du Sud' in part (a). In part (b), many candidates correctly identified the word 'Christmas', but many who chose the alternative correct answer lost marks by writing 'the 4th of July', rather than 'the 14th of July'. A surprisingly large number were unable to correctly respond to part (c) of this question. Unknown vocabulary was once again a stumbling block with many candidates achieving zero on this question.

Knowledge of basic vocabulary from the list in the specification was important for success on this question.

#### **Question 6**

For this question, candidates had to read a short extract from a literary text where the author is reflecting on his past and answer four questions about it in English. Full sentences were not required.

Part (d) of this question was well done by two thirds of candidates who achieved marks here. The vocabulary item 'roman policier' was only correctly rendered by the minority of candidates, although some managed to score a point by recognising the other alternative answer 'magazines de mode' in part (a). Many candidates wrote nonsensical answers such as 'Roman police magazines'.

The necessity of recognising the correct past tenses in answers for parts (c) and (d) of this question meant that only a small number of candidates were successful in these parts.

#### **Question 7**

This question, which was targeted at grades 3-5, required candidates to read an email about voluntary work and complete five gap-fill sentences in French, selecting five words from eleven in a box.

Candidates always find this question type very difficult and many wrote answers which were simply guesses with little awareness of correct grammar. Others copied words from the text which were correct to fill the gaps in the sentences. Lack of practice of this test type may have been a factor in the very poor performance of some candidates. Many candidates achieved zero. A small number achieved full marks. These would be those who were working at grade 5. 7 (e) proved particularly difficult with only the highest achieving candidates scoring on this part of the question. It is important for candidates to be taught skills such as recognising where a plural might be needed in a gap-fill sentence to enable them to eliminate some of the possible words.

### **Question 8**

Candidates were asked to read a blog about a school trip. All five parts (i) to (v) required candidates to select the correct response from four possible answers.

This question was aimed at grade 4 and was well tackled by candidates working at the target grade. Some weaker candidates may have picked up marks on the question purely as it is multiple choice. Parts (ii) and (iv) of the question were well done by some with only the highest performing candidates picking up the two clues: the word 'la Manche' and the phrase 'la mer était très calme' in (ii) to draw the conclusion that the journey was by boat. Many candidates seemed unable to link 'l'année prochaine' with 'l'été prochain' in (v).

### **Question 9**

This question aimed at grade 5 was generally well tackled by candidates at Foundation Tier. Candidates were asked to read four short texts about holidays and complete gap-fill sentences in French with the name of the correct person.

Part (a) of the question posed the most difficulty with many candidates failing to read the more extended piece of text required to identify the correct answer and choosing instead the text which mentioned 'Le camping', which was a distractor. Many candidates who scored higher marks on the paper fared well in this question, gaining 4 or 5 marks. Success in this question relied on the ability to carefully read the text and look closely at the verbs in the gap-fill sentences.

### **Question 10**

In this question, candidates needed to translate a continuous piece of text, 40 words in length, from French into English.

Very few candidates, apart from the best performers on this paper, achieved the full 7 marks available in the translation. There were some candidates who did not attempt the translation.

Many achieved 5 or 6 marks with the last sentence offering a particular challenge. Incorrect identification of tenses throughout lost many candidates marks, with a large number achieving only 1 or 2 marks on this question. The mean mark was 2. Vocabulary which presented a problem included 'août' 'toujours', 'en plein air' and 'jeunes', which was often translated as 'yellow'. 'Anniversaire' was also often translated as 'anniversary'.

Overall, the first sentence aimed at grade 1 was accurately translated. Some candidates spelt 'music' with 'que' at the end just like in French. Translating this sentence accurately was enough for 1 mark.

In the second sentence, many candidates were unfamiliar with the word 'août'. It was sometimes translated as 'summer' or 'autumn' or some strange structures (because of this, in fact, etc.). 'I go' was often translated as 'I'm going' (which is also correct) but sometimes in the past ('I went'). 'Friend' was often correctly translated, but many candidates wrote 'brother', 'cousin' or 'companion'.

Translation of the word 'toujours' was the main issue in the third sentence. Many candidates rendered this 'every day' or 'all day'. Other translations for park were accepted (public garden). Sometimes this sentence was translated in the wrong tense (often past) and sometimes, 'park/garden' was omitted, the last word being 'public'. Some candidates translated it completely incorrectly ('it's in the public', 'I like the public').

Sentence four caused a lot of issues for candidates. 'Plein air' sometimes sent candidates on the wrong track as they assumed this meant something to do with being in the air or flying an aeroplane. 'Jeunes' was also problematic, as some candidates misunderstood the word and thought it meant 'yellow' (jaune). Often the translations were very imaginative ('I like flying in the air with yellow flowers', etc).

Many candidates realised that the final sentence was in the past tense, although some translated it in the future: 'next year I am going to go'. The word 'anniversaire' was often translated as 'anniversary' though, and different family members were introduced too (brother's birthday, father's birthday). Some candidates rephrased this sentence as 'my birthday celebration'.

Candidates should be taught to carefully check their translations, particularly looking at tenses, as many lost marks because of attention to detail. It is important for candidates to realise that each sentence of the translation introduces greater complexity and therefore a past tense in the first sentence is unlikely. Lack of knowledge of vocabulary from the Foundation Tier vocabulary list in the specification meant that many candidates lost marks.

In the Foundation paper overall, the performance of better candidates was characterised by:

- Careful reading of the rubric and questions
- Good knowledge of vocabulary from the list in the specification
- Recognising the use of negation
- A good command of English giving them the ability to recognise synonyms
- Attention to detail, giving full rather than partial answers in the questions requiring written answers in English
- Expressing themselves clearly and unambiguously when writing in English and relating their answers to facts in the text
- Drawing logical conclusions from inferred statements
- Reading over and correcting their answers