



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

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Introduction

This session of the International GCSE French examination demonstrated a broad range of candidate ability and preparation levels. Overall, the paper provided an effective measure of linguistic skills across comprehension, vocabulary application, grammar, and extended writing. Many candidates engaged with the tasks effectively, demonstrating thorough preparation and a clear understanding of exam requirements. However, some recurring challenges highlighted areas where additional focus in teaching and revision could lead to improvements.

This report summarises the performance trends observed across recent examination sessions, highlighting common strengths and areas where candidates could improve.

Question 1

The performance in Question 1 was particularly strong, as candidates demonstrated excellent comprehension and the ability to locate relevant information in the text. This section required students to engage in a detailed reading of the passage to select the correct multiple-choice answers. A high number of candidates achieved full marks, and it was encouraging to see very few errors. The strong performance suggests that candidates had been well-prepared to navigate this type of question, which assesses their ability to extract and interpret key details.

Teachers are advised to continue focusing on close-reading strategies and ensuring students understand how to differentiate between distractor options and correct answers.

Question 2

Question 2 also saw positive outcomes, with most candidates displaying a good grasp of the exercise format and the type of lexical and grammatical knowledge required. This question often involves selecting appropriate words or phrases to complete sentences based on a passage. Candidates generally managed this effectively, showcasing solid preparation in matching syntax and semantics to the context.

However, some candidates found specific words, such as *imperméables*, and certain verb forms challenging. This led to errors where the correct meaning was not fully understood or applied. This highlights the need for more focused vocabulary-building exercises, particularly targeting less common but examination-relevant words. Additionally, reinforcing knowledge of verb conjugations in various contexts will benefit candidates in similar tasks.

Question 3

This question required candidates to demonstrate their understanding of vocabulary by correctly linking names to specific statements. Performance was generally strong, with most candidates displaying an excellent grasp of vocabulary and a clear understanding of the task requirements. It was pleasing to see that very few candidates exceeded the limit of eight crosses, as exceeding this limit resulted in penalties.

Question 4

Question 4 presented a range of challenges for candidates, despite some strong performances. This question tested comprehension of a more complex text, requiring candidates to extract specific information and manipulate it for their responses. A key difficulty lay in interpreting negative forms within the text, as some candidates missed these crucial elements, leading to inaccurate answers. Additionally, the use of the imperfect tense posed challenges for some, which impacted the clarity and accuracy of their responses.

Teachers are encouraged to provide targeted practice in these areas. Specifically, exercises on identifying and understanding negative constructions in context and drills on forming and using the imperfect tense will strengthen students' ability to approach similar tasks with confidence. Further, training candidates to avoid copying portions of text verbatim, a recurring issue in this section, will improve their ability to produce tailored and concise answers.

Question 5

This question proved more challenging due to its increased complexity and higher expectations for linguistic accuracy. Candidates were required to manipulate language more extensively, which often led to varied performance. A significant issue was the tendency of some candidates to lift entire passages from the text rather than tailoring their responses to the specific question. For instance, in part (c), candidates lost marks by failing to transform *ils passent trop d'heures au bureau* into *passer moins d'heures au bureau*, as required.

Another common pitfall involved misunderstanding or incorrectly applying verb tenses, such as the conditional tense in part (c) and the imperfect tense in other sections. While well-prepared candidates demonstrated proficiency and scored highly, those relying on guesswork or superficial comprehension struggled.

Teachers should focus on helping students refine their understanding of verb conjugations and reinforce the importance of precision when answering questions. Encouraging students to identify the specific demands of each question will also reduce reliance on text lifting, thereby improving accuracy and marks.

Question 6

Question 6 was well-received by most candidates, who effectively incorporated the four prescribed words into their responses. This question offered a structured opportunity for students to demonstrate creativity and linguistic ability. Many candidates used the words judiciously, producing coherent and logical responses that showcased their understanding of the task. Less confident candidates also managed to score well, as the provided structure allowed for accessible entry points.

Advanced candidates excelled by crafting extended and sophisticated essays, integrating a wide range of vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. However, some candidates failed to include all four required words or did not use them correctly in context, leading to missed marks.

Teachers should continue to emphasise the importance of fully addressing the requirements of structured writing tasks.

Question 7

This extended writing question allowed candidates to demonstrate their narrative skills, linguistic range, and ability to use different tenses. Candidates had three options to choose from, each requiring specific topical knowledge and grammatical accuracy:

7(a): Writing about sport was the most popular choice. Candidates generally performed well, producing responses rich in detail and content. However, the fourth bullet point, which involved suggesting how to encourage motivate others to adopt healthy habits, posed challenges for some candidates. Stronger responses included creative ideas expressed clearly using appropriate tenses.

7(b): This question focused on environmental topics and future scenarios. It required precise topical vocabulary and creativity in imagining future developments. While many candidates succeeded, weaker responses lacked the necessary linguistic range or failed to address all bullet points comprehensively.

7(c): This option about traditions was the second most popular. However, some candidates relied heavily on pre-learned responses, which often failed to address the specific bullet points adequately.

Candidates are reminded to carefully read and address all bullet points in their chosen task. Training students to write succinctly and within the word count while maintaining linguistic accuracy will further enhance performance.

Question 8

This final grammar exercise required candidates to apply grammatical rules accurately, with common pitfalls including omission of auxiliary verbs, spelling errors, and incorrect gender agreements. These errors, although avoidable with practice, often led to losing marks.

It is essential for teachers to emphasise the distinctions between tenses, particularly the perfect tense and the imperfect tense, as well as reinforce the correct formation and agreement of verbs.

Summary

This examination paper showcased a range of performances, with many candidates demonstrating commendable preparation and strong linguistic skills. Key areas for improvement include accurate application of verb tenses, avoidance of text lifting, and careful attention to question-specific requirements.

Continuous practice and exposure to varied grammatical and contextual exercises will help future candidates better prepare for the demands of the French International GCSE exam.

