

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In French (6FR01) Paper 1A
Spoken Expression (TE)

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The test is divided into two sections.

SECTION A

This requires students to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the student's chosen general topic area. The teacher/examiner will first ask two questions about the general content of the stimulus and will then follow on with two other questions that invite students to express their opinions on, or give reactions to, the stimulus (Specification September 2007, p9)

The majority of candidates chose to speak on either "Lifestyle: Health and Fitness" or "Youth Culture and Concerns", but there was increased interest in "The World Around Us" and, to a lesser extent, "Education and Employment".

Most centres ran this part of the test very effectively. Very few examiners rephrased questions, asked supplementary questions or missed out questions, although one centre asked two questions at a time, thus putting more pressure on their candidates. Centres are reminded that candidates should not have sight of the questions in the preparation phase.

Questions 1 and 2

These always relate to the direct content of the stimulus and normally require relatively short answers. A partial lift or lifts with a small amount of manipulation and/or paraphrasing are usually sufficient to provide acceptable answers. Many candidates produced accurate answers. Some candidates had obviously been told that they should develop their answers and, often after having produced an adequate answer, chose to develop this with long and at times irrelevant additions, occasionally pre-empting the next one or two questions. Others lost sight of the fact that the answers to the first two questions are to be found in the stimulus and went into long speeches expressing personal opinions. In such cases, examiners should move on swiftly to the next question, perhaps even interrupting irrelevant developments, otherwise this part of the test can go on for too long.

Questions 3 and 4

These two questions are open-ended as candidates are required to give reactions to and opinions about the general content and issues raised by the stimulus.

Candidates are expected to give developed and detailed answers, demonstrating that they have done some research and some thinking about the issues raised. Many students produced excellent answers which amounted to mini-speeches or mini-debates with themselves, during which they considered different aspects of the issues raised, comparing and contrasting viewpoints, expressing a considered opinion and justifying their standpoint. This is a demanding part of the test during which

examiners must remain silent. It requires students to have been trained in giving this kind of answer and also to anticipate, during the 15 minute preparation time, what they might be asked to express. Most candidates now realise what is required in this part of the test, although some this session still restricted their answers to information contained in the stimulus. A small number recited pre-learnt speeches vaguely related to the question asked. Some obviously able and fluent candidates produced disappointingly short answers and did not score maximum marks.

Assessment: Understanding (Stimulus Specific)

Answers to all four questions are marked globally. There is no detailed mark scheme for each question. Indeed, there are different, acceptable ways of answering these questions, even the first two. Brief but correct answers would normally be awarded a mark of 2/4. Most candidates scored at least 2/4 and many candidates were able to develop their answers sufficiently and were awarded 3 or 4 out of 4.

Topic area: YOUTH CULTURE AND CONCERNS

Stimulus card 1 (« ***Des sites pour apprendre à partager*** »)

Q1- Most candidates were able to express the idea that it was all about sharing

Q2- Not all candidates mentioned both elements, i.e. the flat sharing scheme and that it enabled her to visit places she had never been to before. Only the stronger candidates managed to change the subject of the final sentence from *je* to *elle*.

Q3A- This proved strangely difficult as candidates could not think of many ways the internet encourages sharing

Q3B- Many candidates ignored *décrite dans le texte* which meant their answer was too general.

Q4A&B- These produced many well-rehearsed answers, although not all took account of the word *essentiel* in 4B

Stimulus card 2 (« ***Génération VSD*** »)

Q1- Most candidates were able to say that young French people drink at week-ends.

Q2- Not many candidates managed to change *la réussite d'une soirée* into *pour réussir une soirée* or a similar idea.

Q3A- Usually answered in the affirmative but development or explanation were not always forthcoming

Q3B- Usually answered in the negative but, once again, explanations were often short or repetitive.

Q4A- This produced some good answers on both sides of the argument but too many fell into the trap of restricting their comments to alcohol abuse.

Q4B- Many candidates had obviously been well-prepared for such a question and produced lengthy and heart-felt answers.

Stimulus card 3 (« ***Super beaux-pères*** »)

Q1- A succinct answer proved rare and many candidates quoted extensively from the stimulus text, thus pre-empting question 2
Q2- The majority of candidates managed to convey the idea of an improved relationship between step-daughter and step-father
Q3A- A potentially sensitive topic, but this question produced some excellent, well-balanced answers, some obviously close to heart.
Q3B- Surprisingly, there were fewer well-developed answers than expected on this usually well-covered subject.
Q4A- Many good answers were heard on both sides of the argument.
Q4B- Candidates struggled to answer in broad and historical terms and often restricted their comments to the advantages and disadvantages of new forms of the family.

Topic Area: LIFESTYLE: HEALTH AND FITNESS

Stimulus card 1 (« **Du nouveau pour les amateurs de gym** »)

Q1- Once again, candidates found it hard to give a concise answer and resorted to multiple lifts from the text.
Q2- The paraphrasing and manipulations required proved difficult for many.
Q3A- Not all candidates understood *devrait être*. Affirmative answers were often a little one-sided. Good candidates often expressed the need for some change to be made.
Q3B- Usually answered in the affirmative and producing some well-rehearsed arguments in favour of the need for exercise.
Q4A- The import of *toujours bon* was not always taken into account in one-sided answers
Q4B- A productive question, sadly often answered in the negative.

Stimulus card 2 (« **Les gestes bonne humeur** »)

Q1- This question produced a lot of lifting, with some candidates reading out all four bullet points.
Q2- The word *relaxation* caused a few problems as well as the question form *aide-t-elle*. The target of the second bullet point was often missed and this produced a lot of irrelevant answers.
Q3A- Many good answers were heard from this obviously very stressed generation.
Q3B- See above.
Q4A- Answered usually in the negative but many answers were not correctly focused as candidates tended to state what is good or bad for your health
Q4B- Many did not understand the general nature of this question and talked about their own health in the future

Stimulus card 3 (« **Manger végétarien à l'école** »)

Q1- The majority of candidates provided suitable answers.
Q2- Most candidates were able to say that only a very small part of the population in France is vegetarian.
Q3A- Candidates were often able to give balanced answers.
Q3B- See above

Q4A- This question was a gift and often gratefully received by well-drilled students, although some restricted their answers to food, perhaps because they mistook the word *éléments* for *aliments*.

Q4B- There was a lack of focus as many candidates talked about what a good lifestyle is, rather than how to encourage young people to adopt one.

Topic Area: THE WORLD AROUND US

Stimulus card 1 (« **Une famille zéro déchet** »)

Q1- Some candidates managed a concise answer (*ils essaient de vivre sans créer de déchets*) but others tried to paraphrase most of the text.

Q2- Many candidates gave long and relevant answers but very few came up with the expected short one: *il faut être discipliné et bien organisé*.

Q3A- A productive question in the main giving this family's way of life total approval.

Q3B- The few candidates who were heard answering this question were able to describe at length the dangers of failing to recycle.

Q4A- This tended to be answered in general terms and not specifically linked to the young.

Q4B- A very productive question, answered at length by well-prepared candidates.

Stimulus card 2 (« **Une nouvelle conception du tourisme urbain** »)

Q1- *Tourisme urbain* proved an elusive concept for some but most managed to say what Nantes has done in order to develop it.

Q2- There were several different ways of answering this question and most candidates who attempted to do so found an acceptable and relevant one.

Q3A- Mostly answered about tourism with the urban aspect overlooked.

Q3B- Again, the focus on urban was often missed.

Q4A- Strangely, having missed the urban focus in the third question, candidates sometimes answered this as though the word *région* had been replaced by the word *ville*!

Q4B- See above.

Stimulus card 3 (« **Espaces verts en ville** »)

Q1-No specific problem reported.

Q2- Most candidates managed to combine the possible double lift from the stimulus text.

Q3A- A productive question and candidates were able to talk fluently about various possible solutions.

Q3B- As above

Q4A- Some good developed answers however, candidates did not always refer to the possible effects of climate change, but more to what we need to do to protect the environment.

Q4B- Some good developed answers to a question which encouraged candidates to talk about their approach to the problem.

Topic Area: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Stimulus card 1 (« **Un apprentissage différent** »)

Q1- The phrasing of the question (*en quoi...*) baffled a few candidates. The concept of this kind of apprenticeship scheme also seemed alien to them.

Q2- This question was often answered whilst dealing with question 1.

Q3A- Answers tended to go over the same points made in the stimulus text.

Q3B- A slightly more productive question as candidates tried to put themselves in the shoes of such apprentices.

Q4A- Candidates took a stance (mostly the one which involves carrying on at university) and often failed to mention the other. Hardly any considered the possibility of doing both.

Q4B- Again, the expected debate did not materialise.

Stimulus card 2 (« **Une femme d'exception** »)

Q1- No specific problem reported with this question

Q2- Most candidates mentioned both disadvantages.

Q3A- Most did claim to admire this lady but found it more difficult to explain why, beyond the fact that she has succeeded in a man's world.

Q3B- No comment possible as too few candidates were faced with this question.

Q4A- A few candidates found it difficult to understand the wording of the question and thus to discuss positive discrimination.

Q4B- No comment possible as too few candidates were faced with this question

Stimulus card 3 (« **Violence à l'école** »)

Q1- There were several elements that could be quoted in order to answer this question and candidates tended to try and say them all instead of summarising the problems.

Q2- Often answered in the course of dealing with question 1.

Q3A- Candidates seemed to be in favour of punishment but found it difficult to give examples and to develop the arguments for and against various forms.

Q3B- No comment possible as too few candidates were faced with this question.

Q4A- Beyond agreeing that most teachers respect pupils, development was not very forthcoming.

Q4B- No comment possible as too few candidates were faced with this question.

SECTION B

The second part requires the teacher/examiner to engage the student in a discussion that, although still relating to the same general topic area and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus.

(Specification September 2007, p 9)

It is elegant and useful if the first question in this section can be a transitional one, using something the candidate has said in Section A in order to introduce a different sub-topic to kick start the discussion in

Section B. Many good teacher/examiners used this technique very effectively this session.

The conversation does not have to cover every single listed sub-topic: one or two may be sufficient if there is depth in the discussion. A few teacher/examiners found it difficult to relinquish the topic of the stimulus and kept revisiting it. There were several tests where Section B was entirely devoted to further questions on the sub-topic of the stimulus or to sub-topics from a different GTA. Such tests are heavily penalised by the mark scheme.

It was not always obvious when Section A ended and Section B started. It is very useful if this can be made clear on the recording by saying something like: *“bon, alors maintenant on va passer à autre chose/à la deuxième partie de l'examen”*. If not, markers are not sure whether the examiner has asked an extra question in Section A (which is not allowed) or has actually started the Section B discussion.

Assessment: Understanding (General Topic Area)

This relates exclusively to Section B

Ideas and opinions are rewarded. A long list of facts embedded in a francophone context is not required, although some facts, figures and dates display understanding of the topic area and help to formulate and justify opinions. Some examiners reported that more tests this session were heard where candidates demonstrated evidence of research, including facts and figures to back up their statements. Personal questions and answers are acceptable to a certain extent but should be used very sparingly in order to avoid possible embarrassment and to make sure that the conversation goes beyond a GCSE style of discourse. There is no need to cover all the sub-topics of the chosen GTA in such a short discussion, as some teacher examiners try to. Issues should be considered from a more general point of view and involve a degree of analysis. Depth rather than breadth is what is required in order to access the higher marks in the grid.

Assessment: Quality of language (Accuracy)

This relates to the whole test.

Both pronunciation and accuracy are rewarded in this part of the assessment.

The standard in both this session was variable and at times disappointing. Conjugation remains a big challenge for many. Verbs are often used entirely in the present tense or in the infinitive. Use of the future caused difficulties this session.

Here are some of the most common errors in terms of pronunciation and intonation:

- *Alcou* instead of *alcool*

- Pérents for parents
- Tabaque instead of *tabac* and tabaguisme for *tabagisme*
- Frouz et légoumz for *fruits et légumes*
- Dangeur or dangère instead of *danger*; dangeroux for *dangereux*
- Diphthongisation of single vowel sounds (oo for *ou*, ow for *au/o*, ey for *é/ai* etc)
- Paille for *pays*, fameel for *famille*
- *Ait* or *aient* as aille, or ayente
- Nachional, alimentachion, sosailleté instead of, *national*, *alimentation*, *société*
- Govermente for *gouvernement*
- Relaxion for *relaxation*
- Confusion between French *ou* and *u* sounds
- Confusion between *la mort* and *l'amour*
- Inability to differentiate between nasals (*an*, *in*, *un*, *on*)
- Incorrect French pronunciation of Rs, particularly internal ones as in *droit*, *arrêter*, etc)
- Confusion between *jeunes* and *gens*, *ville* and *vie*, *fil*, *fille*, *file*
- Sounding of *ent* at the end of verbs in the third person plural (ils mangeante)
- Sounding final consonants (beaucoupe, les garçonz, les déchettes, le corpse)
- Recitative intonation when regurgitating pre-learnt material

Other very common errors, "en vrac":

- Ce texte s'agit de instead of *dans ce texte il s'agit de*
- C'est ça va for the English *it's OK*
- Frequent use of the un-idiomatic expression il y a beaucoup de problèmes avec, instead of *X cause beaucoup de problèmes* or, *il y a beaucoup de problèmes en ce qui concerne...*
- The gender of *problème* (une/cette problème !). Other basic gender errors (la père, mon mère, ma frère, un sœur).
- Ça dépend sur instead of *ça dépend de*
- Possiblement instead of *peut-être*
- Les célèbres instead of *célebrités*
- Le fumer, le fumage or le fumier!! instead of *fumer*
- A France, à l'Angleterre instead of *en France*, *en Angleterre*
- Confusion between *savoir* and *connaître*
- Sur la radio, la télé, le téléphone instead of *à/au*
- Increased confusion between *très* and *trop* (possibly because of modern common usage); trop beaucoup; plus beaucoup
- Si je serais instead of *si j'étais*
- Beaucoup de les/de le
- Confusion between *bon* and *bien*, *mauvais* and *mal*, *seul* and *seulement*
- Confusion between *magasin* and *magazine*, *numéro* and *nombre*, *médecin* and *médecine*

Assessment: Quality of Language (Range of Lexis)

This relates to the whole test.

The quality and variety of vocabulary is considered, as well as the range of structures used. Overall, the standard this session was variable but perhaps a little better than in previous sessions. Many candidates had learned some topic-specific lexis and were able to use a good range of structures. Others seemed to have very little lexis at their disposal and were unable to function even at a very basic level or resorted to invented words like "surprisé", "une diète", "suggester", "motivater", "provider", "includer", "constricter", "advertiser", "expérencer" etc... There were frequent appropriate (and inappropriate) uses of the subjunctive, and many attempts to use the conditional mood.

There is no definitive list of structures that need to be heard in order for candidates to have access to the higher boxes of the grid. The structures used need to be appropriate to the kind of discourse taking place between candidate and examiner. The level of complexity which involves a range of sentence structures, tenses and moods, and enables functions such as describing, agreeing, disagreeing, contrasting, conceding, questioning, explaining, exemplifying, justifying, surmising etc... was what determined the quality of the mark awarded. There was often a marked contrast between the range of language used in Sections A and B.

Assessment: Response

This relates to the whole test.

There are four elements in this section of the assessment that come into play: comprehension, fluency, spontaneity and development. Some performances were spontaneous, but not very fluent. Others were very fluent but totally lacking in spontaneity. Comprehension was much less of a problem in Section B (well rehearsed questions) than in Section A (totally unrehearsed questions). Development of discourse only took place in largely unrehearsed exchanges. Unfortunately, once again, too many centres had obviously prepared a list of questions and, in some cases, asked their students to learn answers by heart. Whilst it is understandable that areas of discussions will have been prepared, it goes totally against the spirit of the examination exclusively to recite pre-learnt answers in what is supposed to be a discussion and not a dry question and answer exercise. There is no opportunity in this case for development. In the case of totally recited answers, the maximum mark available under Response was 8 out of 20 and was often less. Fortunately, there were also many tests where a genuine discussion took place (often starting with a measure of learnt material, but going beyond) and which were reasonably fluent (but included all the hesitations and false starts that normal conversation entails). These were appreciated and suitably rewarded.

CONDUCT OF TESTS BY TEACHER EXAMINERS

Many tests were conducted correctly and in the right spirit. There were many tests where a genuine conversation took place, sometimes at a very

high level, close to Unit 3 style debates. In most cases, timings (8-10 minutes) were adhered to. There were however, a few tests that went on much beyond 10 minutes (markers are asked to stop listening, much after 10 minutes). Fortunately, this session, few were significantly short. The latter are penalised by a downgrading of marks for Quality of Language (Accuracy and Range), as well as Response. The average time taken to deal with Section A was around 3 minutes and that is acceptable. There is no need to prolong this part of the test artificially. The main problem in Section B was working through a list of prepared questions and thus jumping from sub-topic to sub-topic without any obvious link. **The key to good examining is to listen to what the candidate says and to base the next question on something they have said, by asking them to explain, justify or develop their point(s). Only in this way can a degree of spontaneity be achieved.** Many teacher examiners did this effectively.

ADMINISTRATION

Conduct: do not allow candidates to see the questions on the stimulus before the test and make sure the cards are allocated according to the sequence prescribed on page 3 of the instructions to teacher examiners. Do not mix questions from different stimulus cards.

Recording: please could each test start with candidate name and number as well as statement of GTA choice and stimulus number? Could each track be given the name and number of the candidate (e.g. John Smith 1234)? However, there is no need to record paper, centre details, dates and examiner name at the beginning of each test. This only needs to be done once in an introduction. All recordings are now on CDs or memory sticks and the increased sound quality is very much appreciated by examiners, although a few recordings on CDs seemed to cut out before the end of tests or to include blanks. There were also some problems with poor sound levels. Centres are requested to check that transfers from digital recorders or hard drives are complete and of good quality before despatch.

Paperwork: the oral forms and attendance lists must always be included with the recordings. There is a new version of the oral form available on the website and it needs to be signed by candidates and examiners. It is helpful if CDs and memory sticks can be sent along with a written list of candidates' names and numbers in the order of testing.

Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response

Marking guidance for oral examiners

Tests that are too short

A test is too short if it is less than 7 minutes 30 seconds (this includes a 30 second tolerance).

Drop down one mark band to the corresponding mark across the following assessment grids:

- Quality of Language – Accuracy
- Quality of Language - Range of lexis
- Response

e.g.

4-5	Accuracy variable but errors rarely impede communication; pronunciation and intonation inconsistent but comprehensible.
6-7	Generally accurate but some errors in more complex language; pronunciation and intonation generally good.
8	Highly accurate with perhaps some very minor errors; pronunciation and intonation authentic.

If a candidate would have scored 7 for Accuracy, they should be given 5, if they would have scored 6, they should be given 4. A similar adjustment should be made for Range and for Response. This will not affect the other assessment criteria 'Understanding – Stimulus specific' or 'Understanding – General Topic Area'.

Test that are too long

Once the 10 minute mark has passed, the examiner stops listening at the end of the next sentence/sense group.

Tests that do not move away from initial stimulus sub topic

Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score.

- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis' – limited to a maximum of 3 marks
- 'Response' – limited to a maximum of 8 marks
- 'Understanding - General topic area' – cannot score more than 0

Spontaneity/Response

If a test appears to lack spontaneity in large part to the extent that significant sections *appear to have been pre-learnt*, the mark for **Response** will be limited to a maximum of 8 marks. It may be that intonation is also impaired; however, poor intonation would not, on its own, suggest pre-learning.

Spontaneous use of language occurs when candidates use their knowledge of structures and lexis and apply it appropriately in response to unpredictable questions.

The unpredictability is created by the teacher/examiner responding to the candidates' views to elicit development. Unpredictability on the part of the teacher/examiner will facilitate a proper level of spontaneity.

Discourse

Discourse is a discussion where the candidate demonstrates the ability to interact within a subtopic. This means developing the subtopic area and exploring it in some depth.

Discourse describes the exchange of opinion and information on a subtopic between the candidate and the teacher/examiner. In practice, this means that each participant addresses the points made by the other. The candidate and the Teacher/Examiner should respond appropriately to each other's input, whether that be a question, a comment, a remark. To reach the full range of the marking criteria there will be frequent examples of this level of discourse.

Development

Development means appropriately expanding on an idea and point of view. This can be in the form of justification, illustration, exemplification, clarification, comparison of the candidates' ideas and views.

- Please note:

Understanding – Stimulus specific should only be used to mark **Section A** of the oral test.

Understanding – General topic area should only be used to mark **Section B** of the oral test. Candidates should be able to demonstrate their knowledge about the GTA and express ideas and opinions relevant to their research.

When marking the oral exam, examiners are advised to immediately allocate a mark for Section A, prior to allocating marks for the rest of the test (Section B).

It is important that the PE and team leaders can see clearly the justification for marks awarded and examiners should note briefly on the OR1 form the reason for any caps which are applied in marking an oral test.

If a score of '0' is awarded for any of the assessment grids, the oral recording should be referred to your Team Leader.

