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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In French (8FR0) Paper 3B

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The test consists of two tasks.

Task 1 - General

In the main, the texts in all six cards seemed to be well understood by a majority of students. However, weaker ones found the concept of a compulsory defence training day for all young people in text 1 of stimulus FR4 difficult to grasp, whilst others struggled with the topic-specific vocabulary on recruitment, employment and training in text 1 of stimulus FR6

The first three compulsory unseen questions on each card test the student's ability to respond in speech to written language and are directly based on the two texts.

Compulsory Q1: this is always the same. Students are expected to provide a summary of the first text. The quality of answers varied enormously. The best answers were concise and contained three or four main points. There was a tendency to paraphrase large chunks of the text, or simply to read aloud sentences verbatim. Often, after having produced an acceptable summary of the main points of the text, students would then go back, repeating the same points, adding details, to such an extent that their answer could no longer be considered a clear summary. The indiscriminate repetition of source material is not what is required here (please refer to the assessment grid for AO2-Response to written language).

Compulsory Q2: this always targets a point of detail to be found in text 1. A lengthy answer including opinions or facts outside the stimulus text is not required. Often, the element asked for had already been mentioned by students who produced overlong "summaries" in question 1.

Compulsory Q3: this normally requires a balanced and developed answer. Students are asked to express a personal reaction to the mildly challenging short statement in text 2. Many good answers were heard, although some lacked focus, either because the text had been misread, or because students were anxious to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of French society, thus, at times, moving away from the issue under consideration.

Compulsory Q4: this question and the subsequent discussion with the examiner are designed to assess the students' knowledge and understanding of French society (Assessment Objective 4). Every part of the answer and the main thrust of the following discussion must be embedded in the French context. Students are expected to express ideas and opinions on aspects of French society and culture, using facts, information or references based on that society. Too many students had insufficient relevant knowledge. Their answers were too general and often lost focus on the French cultural and social context. Discussions on personal plans and projects are not usually relevant in this test.

Task 1 - Indicative content

Stimulus FR1

Q1

- Increasing popularity of PACS in France may mean that it will overtake number of traditional marriages in the future
- Traditional marriage still considered the best way to celebrate love and to build a family unit
- PACS considered by some as a half-way house between cohabitation and traditional marriage

Q2

- PACS is a useful financial and legal contract but much easier to terminate than traditional marriage

Q3 Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:

- Yes, because marriage does not mean a great deal and divorce is common and too easy
- Yes, because there are other ways of living together such as cohabitation, "union libre" or PACS
- No, because marriage represents a lasting commitment and provides stability for families and children

Q4 Accept any plausible personal response/opinion, for example:

- PACS was created partly to enable same sex couples to join in a legal union
- Civil marriage between homosexual couples was legalised in 2013
- There is a lot of popular support for gay marriage in France, but there have also been frequent demonstrations against
- The French Catholic Church is against it, but the French Protestant Church agrees to bless homosexual couples in some cases.

Stimulus FR2

Q1

- Description of a large blended family
- Description of how they all get on in spite of numbers and mixed parentage
- Other people's mixed views and opinions of this kind of family

Q2

- Some wonder how they cope, some admire them and some think there is something wrong with that kind of family

Q3 Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:

- Yes, because children need both masculine and feminine influences whilst growing up
- No, better to have only one parent rather than living with constant argument and strife
- No, both fathers and mothers equally able of bringing up children on their own

Q4 Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:

- French children are highly valued by society are large
- French state supports family with children through generous family allowances and special financially advantageous status of "famille nombreuse"
- State education starts early at 3 in "écoles maternelles"
- Children have rights and special courts to protect them

Stimulus FR3

Q1

- Some students had to take their Bac exam twice in Northern France
- Some papers had been leaked on the internet by some official who has been arrested
- Students in the centre affected had to retake the papers and three students have been disqualified for life

Q2

- It is the unavoidable gateway to higher education

Q3 Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:

- Yes, there too many, virtually every year, and exams should be replaced by coursework which gives a better indication of learning
- No, exams are needed to indicate the true capacity of students for learning and coping with stress, a necessary part of preparation for working life

Q4 Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:

- Yes (or no), because French students have a broader level of education up to the last year of secondary schooling and only really specialise after the Baccalaureat. This gives a better grounding for future career
- Yes (or no), because although universities are overcrowded, further education is virtually free and open to more
- Yes, because there are professional and technical options of the Baccalaureat, good post-Bac qualifications such as BTS and some highly-rated technical colleges such as IUTs
- Yes (or no) the Grandes Ecoles are very elitist, guarantee a high-level job for most, but are extremely competitive to get into

Stimulus FR4

Q1

- All under-18 French citizens have to attend a national defence day
- This is necessary in order to sit the Bac exam, a driving test or to go onto higher education
- It includes other activities such as first aid and an introduction to voluntary service

Q2

- No, they also receive some first aid training and are told about the possibilities of volunteering in a national civilian service

Q3 Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:

- Disagree: the most important part of schooling is about academic studies and you learn about how to be a good citizen at home and outside school
- Agree: civic education should be taught at school, as well as moral education and respect for others
- Sport and the arts can also contribute to turning a young person into a good citizen

Q4 Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:

- No: the academic curriculum has always been the most important part of French school programmes

- No: French teachers do not see their job as being more than teaching their subjects
- Yes: PE and Music are part of the official curriculum
- Yes: more and more extra-curricular activities are being organised in some schools to encourage inclusion

Stimulus FR5

Q1

- Traditional paper CVs are no longer considered adequate
- Most companies expect on line applications with links to CV and social network addresses
- CVs need to be modified to fit the requirements of each job applied for

Q2

- Because each vacancy applied for may require different skill requirements

Q3 Accept any plausible answer/opinion with justification, for example:

- Yes: experience is essential, but you have to start some time
- Yes: both are preferable and even ideal
- No: qualifications are more important, particularly for highly specialised jobs
- No: personality and motivation are the most important attributes (and some would also say it's who you know...)

Q4 Accept any plausible answer/opinion, for example:

- No: there is a high level of unemployment in France (10% of active population) and competition is fierce
- No: employers are faced with high employment taxes and charges and are reluctant to take people on
- No: CDIs are very difficult to get; part-time and temporary jobs more prevalent
- Yes?: some signs of moderate improvement in job creation figures according to the INSEE recently

Stimulus FR6

Q1

- In spite of their poor reputation, hypermarkets are recruiting a lot of young people
- Training and internal promotion can lead to permanent jobs of responsibility
- E-commerce offers some attractive job possibilities

Q2

- By starting as an ordinary employee and/or taking on a training/apprenticeship based contract

Q3 **Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:**

- Yes: jobs in supermarket are often short term and low-skilled
- Yes: working at a cash-till or stacking shelves is a last resort
- No: there are opportunities in management if you are prepared to work hard and show commitment
- No: hypermarket chains offer worthwhile career paths

Q4 **Accept any plausible personal response/opinion with justification, for example:**

- Yes: some job creation is happening, particularly in health, logistics and communications industries according to the INSEE
- Yes: a lot of older workers/baby-boomers will be retiring soon and making space
- No: employers are still reluctant to recruit full time staff because of high employment taxes and charges
- No: main unions (CGT/CFDT) are strong and demanding and can put off employers
- No: economic growth in Europe is uncertain

Task 2 - General

The two unseen compulsory questions were often well answered, as the students' version of each card contains two bullet points directing their preparation for this part of the test. There were some long and interesting answers during which well-prepared students were able to answer relevantly and at length. But again, many students did not have sufficient knowledge of Francophone culture and society in order to produce relevant answers and often strayed into the general or the personal.

Examiners are required to ask appropriate follow-up questions relating to the subject matter of the stimulus. They should wait until students have completed their answers to the two compulsory questions before doing so.

The ensuing discussion in part 2 of Task 2 is meant to move on to any other aspect(s) of the sub-theme of the stimulus card. Both parts of this task are designed to allow the student to display knowledge of Francophone society (French or other French speaking countries/areas). Students enjoyed speaking about music, but did not always focus on types of music popular in Francophone areas or produced by and for French speakers. The media sub-theme revealed that few students knew very much about French speaking written press, radio or television. Students preferred to speak in general terms about the new electronic, international media. Very few tests were heard on the sub-theme of festivals and traditions which was only rarely chosen by students.

Task 2 - Indicative content

Stimulus FR7

- Rap originates from American inner-city life which fascinates young people, particularly from the "banlieues", as it is considered "hip" and in tune with their generation
- Rap is seen as anti-society, anti-authority, sometimes violent, and fits in with a desire for rebellion against older generations and institutions
- French speaking rappers such as McSolaar, Diam, NTM, Gradur and Sch have been very successful and even copied by some American artists
- Traditional singers (Brassens, Brel, Piaf) still attract a limited audience as well as ballad singers (Mylene Farmer, Celine Dion).
- There is some interest in regional folkloric music such as Zouk from Guadeloupe and Rai from Algeria

Stimulus FR8

- Free on-line music, including video-clips, via many websites such as Deezer, Spotify, exFM, YouTube, Musique Radio etc...
- They can also listen to radio on-line such as Fun Radio, NRJ and Nostalgie as well as TV on- line (TF1, BFM TV or France 24 accessible everywhere in the world)
- Large number of music festivals of all kinds in every region of France and in francophone countries, especially in the Summer around the official music festival (Fête de la Musique) in June (les Nuits de Fourvière in Lyon, le festival de Jazz in Bruxelles, Montréal etc...)
- Numerous popular concert halls (Olympia and Bataclan in Paris, Cirque Royal in Brussels, Arena in Geneva)

Stimulus FR9

- A large choice of stations. Five publicly owned (France 2,3,4,5,LCP) and many private (TF1, M6, Arte etc). Most people watch free to air

TNT channels (about 18) which include all the main ones and a few specialist stations

- Encrypted pay TV channels : Canal + and associated stations. Three companies (TPS, Canal Satellite and AB Sat) offer packages of satellite or cable based stations. Many are specialist sport stations (Eurosport) or offer films (Canal+ Cinema, Paris Premiere) news (iTele,LCI). Satellite operators are Astra, Eutelsat and France Telecom
- All main channels carry advertising. Most watched are still generalist channels such as TF1, France 3 (with a regional component) and M6. France O is a public TV network featuring programming from French overseas departments. TV5Monde and France 24 are international Francophone stations
- Young francophones will watch a lot of dubbed English language programmes such as NCIS, Grey's Anatomy, Friends. French soap is popular : *Plus Belle la Vie*, *les Mysteres de l' Amour* are the two longest running examples. So is reality TV : Star Academie, The Voice, TF1's survivor based reality game *Koh Lanta*. So are TV games like Fort Boyard, *Une Famille en Or*, *Qui veut gagner des millions*. Music and sport programmes will also be watched through on-line access to TV channels

Stimulus FR10

- Freedom of expression is one of the fundamental tenets of the French Republic
- Many respected high-quality daily newspapers (*Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*, *l'Humanité*) and weekly magazines (*Le Point*, *l'Express*) and their on-line versions
- A large number of francophone newspapers published in Africa (Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Senegal, Algeria, Tunisia etc)
- Strength and world-wide popularity of satirical press (*Le Canard Enchaîné*, *Charlie Hebdo*)
- *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attack provoked by Mohammed caricatures
- *Loi Gayssot* of 1990 forbids any racist, anti-Semitic or xenophobic comments in the press
- December 2004 law punishes material causing hatred or violence against people because of sexual orientation or handicap

Stimulus 11

- Still very much recognised as such through attendance at church services, although this is on the decline
- End of year festivities are sometimes seen as an excuse for over-indulgence, particularly during the "*Réveillon de Noël*" and the night of the Saint-Sylvestre. Christmas is also heavily commercialised and can resemble more a pagan festival than a Christian one. Easter is

dominated by chocolate consumption and egg searches. The religious link can be tenuous.

- Nationalism/patriotism: on 14th July in France, 24th June for la Saint-Jean in Quebec, the celebration of independence of Senegal on 4th April.
- Love: Valentine's day; youth on 11th February in Cameroon. Jokes and tricks: 1st April; horror/death with the increasingly popular Halloween; work: 1st May and its attendant tradition of offering bunches of lily of the valley.

Stimulus FR12

- **Example:** the *Nice Carnival* is one of the largest carnivals in the world. There are 15 days of carnival parades with decorated floats and gigantic papier-maché figurines. During the flower parade, extravagantly dressed characters throw flowers into the crowd along the *Promenade des Anglais*. Very colourful and original, also quite multi-cultural.
- **Example:** the *Cannes Film Festival* was established to rival the Venice Film Festival. Today, more than 30 000 professionals from all over the world meet at the festival. Many prizes are awarded, including the famous *Palme d'Or*. Interesting to see all the famous actors. Very international. Impressive range of films
- **Example:** *Zythos Beer Festival* in Leuven, Belgium. You can taste more than 500 types of beer in just one week-end in the city of Leuven, home to Stella Artois and also the longest bar in the world. Around the city you find restaurants offering dishes cooked with beer, beer walks and beer workshops. Great fun. Very convivial
- You can learn about the French interest in circus skills at *the Cirque de Demain Paris festival*, the lemon industry at the *Menton Lemon Festival*, French medieval history, customs and architecture at the *Festival Medieval de Sedan*, music, theatre and dance at the *Carcassonne Festival*, music at the *Fete de la Musique* on 21st June, throughout France, when thousands of musicians gather in streets and bars to play a variety of music from classic, to folkloric to electronic, music and theatre at the *Gentse Feesten* in Ghent, one of the biggest city carnivals in the world, the history and culture of French speaking Wallonia at the *Festival de Wallonia* in Namur etc...

Assessment Objectives

AO1 - Interaction:

Spontaneity, fluency and development are the main components of AO1. Engaging with the examiner by asking questions and checking understanding is also taken into consideration but is a minor element in determining the final mark. Many students achieved a mark of 3 or 4 because they were able to respond with a measure of spontaneity and

fluency, and could develop their answers to a certain degree. There were few instances of recitation of prepared answers when the lack of spontaneity would affect the assessment. Students were aware of the need to engage with the examiner but this did not become obtrusive or overdone in the main.

A02 - Response to Written Language:

This is specific to the first three questions of Task 1. Please see comments under **Task 1 - General**

A03 – Accuracy and Range of Language:

The mark awarded is a composite one which includes grammatical accuracy, range of lexis, pronunciation and intonation. The standard in this first session of the specification varied enormously. There was a significant minority of students who simply did not have the linguistic competence to deal with the test. On the other hand, some students displayed a command of the language close to native speaker standard. The majority of students achieved a mark somewhere in-between.

A04 - Knowledge and Understanding:

A third of the marks available for the test are awarded under this AO. Students need to be able to refer to facts, information and concrete examples of what is going on in France (for Task 1) and either in France or other French speaking countries/regions (for Task 2) in order to score. They must also be able to express ideas and opinions based on this information. For example, in the sub-theme of Education, students would need to know about the various options of the Baccalauréat available to French students, but also be able to express viewpoints and arguments about their relative values for higher education or employment...in France. Another example : in the sub-theme of Music, students were required to display knowledge of what kind of music French speaking people listen to and/or produce and why. On too many occasions, discussions became very general or personal. Asking students about their personal taste in music or their plans for higher education does not lead to a productive, relevant discussion in this framework. Overall, it has to be said that the standard in this session was disappointing.

Advice to centres and teacher examiners

- Please follow the order in which Stimulus cards **must** be issued to students (see page 4 of the stimulus card booklet)
- **Respect the timings:** 7 to 9 minutes for Task 1 and 5 to 6 minutes for Task 2. Markers are told to stop listening after 15 minutes.
- Read the compulsory questions exactly as they are printed.
- Do **not** ask extra questions between Q1 and Q4 of Task 1 and Q1 and Q2 of Task 2

- If asked a question by a student, answer it very briefly or, if it is in the course of one of the discussions, use their question to develop the conversation
- Make sure the discussion after Q4 of Task 1 moves away from the subject matter of the stimulus texts
- **In Task 2**, the discussion **must** be in **two parts**. The first concerns the subject matter of the stimulus, the second moves away to deal with other aspects of the same sub-theme.
- After the first three compulsory questions in Task 1, the focus for the rest of this task and the whole of Task 2 **must** be on aspects of French speaking societies. Avoid general or personal questions which tend to produce irrelevant answers.
- The sound quality of recorded tests is normally very high, particularly when USB sticks are used. Recordings on CDs are not always of the same quality. Please check before despatch.
- Along with the recordings of the tests, markers should be sent the attendance register, the Student Speaking Authentication Sheet (CS3) and a completed OR3AS form for each student. Many were missing this session.

