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# Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE AS  
in French (8FR0)  
paper 3: speaking

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## Conduct of the exam

Teacher-Examiners (TEs) largely performed their role well, and there were some excellent examples of spontaneous discussion, in which TEs probed for further information at appropriate moments (e.g. *Qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire par x?*; *Vous avez mentionné X – c'est quoi exactement?*), inviting candidates to demonstrate the requirements of the AO4 grid.

Many TEs showed an understanding of the need to remain with the French context for Task 1, and the Francophone context for Task 2, as their questioning steered candidates appropriately. Unfortunately, a number of TEs asked overly generic questions (e.g. *"Tu voudrais te marier un jour?"*) which could not elicit the type of Francophone-specific knowledge and understanding assessed in the AO4 grid.

In the majority of cases, TEs asked questions as they appeared on the stimulus cards. Some TEs added additional questions in between the compulsory questions, which is not allowed. Centres should be reminded that all compulsory questions (i.e. questions 1 - 4 for Task 1 and questions 1 and 2 for Task 2) must be asked exactly as they appear (although they may be asked in the 'tu' form), with no rephrasing and no additional questions in between. Only when these questions have been addressed may the TE begin asking more spontaneous questions. TEs who do not adhere to this guidance adversely affect candidate performance.

There were many skilled TEs who understood the importance of keeping their responses to candidates' questions to a minimum. In a minority of cases, TEs spoke at length in response to candidate questions, and this practice should be discouraged, as it takes valuable assessment time away from the candidate.

In the case of weaker candidates who struggle to articulate their ideas, TEs should avoid the temptation to answer the question on their behalf or offer them significant chunks of language, as this does not help to demonstrate the candidate's ability. It is often a better idea to either move the conversation on to a more accessible area, or try to elicit understanding of a tricky point using simple questions such as *"Pourquoi pensez-vous cela?"* or *"C'est une bonne idée, à votre avis?"*

## **Commentary on stimulus cards**

The typical centre size was fairly small for this unit, which meant that the most frequently encountered cards were FR1, 3, 5, 7 and 11, due to the nature of the sequencing grid. There are a few elements of examination technique that should be reiterated which could help candidates to perform better in this section of the examination.

### **Task 1:**

- Question 1 will always elicit a summary of Text 1, and the best performances will identify the key points, without solely relying on the language of the stimulus. There should be attempts to express the key ideas in the candidate's own words, employing synonyms as appropriate.
- Question 2 will always elicit understanding of an element of Text 1. Candidates should be reminded that there is no need to provide a personal opinion here but to look for the response in the text. It is fairly common for candidates to provide the answer to question 2 in their response to question 1, but in this instance it is important that candidates reiterate the relevant part of that answer when responding to question 2.
- Question 3 will always make reference to Text 2, or it might be a comparison of Texts 1 and 2. It will often invite candidates to state if they agree with the short statement in the second text. Candidates should be ready to explain why they agree or disagree and to justify their opinions.
- Question 4 elicits a personal response, based on an aspect of the sub-theme (i.e. candidates should ideally not make direct reference to the stimulus card at this stage of the exam). The best performances here tend to give a balanced consideration, with specific examples and evidence from the French context, and draw some sort of conclusion. It may help candidates to think of structuring their response here as they would a mini discursive essay (e.g. on the one hand.../ on the other hand .../ all things considered, I believe...). This is one example of how candidates might recycle set phrases, helping to give structure and clarity to their spontaneous response.

### **Task 2:**

Candidates should be reminded that the language of the two bullet points on the candidate card very closely mirrors the question on the TE's card. With this in mind, candidates should be able to prepare appropriately. Candidates should ensure that their answers fully address all aspects of the question (e.g. 'Jusqu'à quel point' invites a consideration of both sides of an argument).

## Task 1 cards

**FR1:** Candidates sometimes struggled to identify the key details required for the summary. The word 'maire' was commonly misunderstood, with many candidates indicating that it was the town hall rather than a mayoress. Many candidates struggled to work out the correct proportion in response to question 2.

**FR2:** Many candidates were able to offer a decent summary, including the fact that immigrant families contribute to the number of 'familles nombreuses'. There were many good responses to question 2, although not always explicitly in relation to other European countries.

**FR3:** Most candidates were able to pick out a couple of key points for the summary, but many found it difficult to identify the place of the Grandes Écoles so answers to question 2 were often incorrect. Candidate responses to questions 3 and 4 here tended to showcase very good knowledge of the French education system.

**FR4:** Many candidates understood the key implications of this text, although there was some misunderstanding of the statistics. Again, candidates tended to show very good knowledge of the French system.

**FR5:** There were some good performances here, but some candidates failed to identify that the scheme was designed to encourage women into certain male scientific preserves. Few candidates picked up on the invitation to girls to visit workplaces, which caused difficulty in answering question 2.

**FR6:** This card was generally well understood by candidates, although only the most able could give any detail about the role of 'syndicats'.

## Task 2 cards

**FR7:** Whilst candidates did well to refer to Francophone artists, few fully addressed the question which elicited reasons for their success. Almost all candidates made reference to the 'Loi Toubon', often linking this to the success of certain artists.

**FR8:** There were some good answers with details about folk music from Haiti or Quebec. However, there was a tendency for candidates to ignore the

'folklorique' aspect, particularly in the second question, where music more generally was discussed.

**FR9:** Some candidates offered interesting examples of the use of Twitter and Facebook by French presidential candidates in 2017. There was also some mention of 'débats télévisés', but not much understanding of the 'presse écrite' element. Many answers here tended to be too generic.

**FR10:** Question 1 was generally well addressed, with many candidates making reference to Charlie Hebdo or the lack of press freedom in the Ivory Coast. Some candidates struggled to remain within the Francophone context here.

**FR11:** There were some good examples of traditions given here, for example 14 juillet, St Nicolas and 6 janvier, although some candidates spoke rather too generally, for example referencing the threat of commercialisation at Christmas.

**FR12:** This card was chosen by a minority of candidates who tended to ignore the 'regionalisme/ nationalisme' issue resulting in fairly vague responses.

## **Commentary on student performance in other aspects of the assessment**

### **AO1 Interaction**

It is important to highlight that there are several elements to consider in this mark grid. The extent to which the candidate dominates in the conversation, and develops his/her ideas, is an important consideration. A performance where the TE appears to be doing the majority of the work by coming up with many varied questions to fill the time is likely to score badly here. Conversely, candidates who take a pro-active approach to develop the conversation, by answering fully with examples, offering definitions of their key terms, or perhaps employing natural pause fillers to make the conversation flow, are likely to do well here.

At times, candidates asked rather too many questions of their TEs, which sometimes made the exchange appear contrived. However, there were examples of good questions, and skilled TEs could respond to candidate questions briefly before turning the question round into a further development of the conversation, thereby making the interaction sound authentic.

### **AO3 Accuracy and range of language**

There were some examples of a wide range of lexis and structures, incorporating tenses and idioms appropriately. There were many good examples of correctly used grammatical structures, for example, negatives, (ce) qui/que, conditional tense, si clauses, past and present tenses, future tense, subjunctive, comparatives, avant de/après avoir, n'importe ..., étant donné que ..., modal verbs, conditional perfect, passive and reflexives.

Common errors are listed below, and TEs may wish to focus on improving performance in these key areas:

- Adjective agreements;
- Verb conjugations (e.g. le texte parler de);
- Use of infinitives after modal verbs (e.g. je peux choisi/ ils devraient fait)
- Use of 's'agit' (le texte s'agit de);
- Conjugation and pronunciation of different forms of 'pouvoir' and 'choisir';
- Anglicisms (e.g. il est très focusé/ il y a beaucoup de pressure/ accéder/ les issues/ promoter);
- Confusion between 'de' and 'des' (e.g. plus des femmes travaillent);

- Pronunciation difficulties (e.g. pays, jeunes, femmes, filles, choses, PACS, danger, inacceptable, particulière, gouvernement, selon, parce que, beaucoup, trop, temps, couples, amour, idée, pauvre, mœurs, juillet);
- Absence of articles (e.g. artistes comme Stromae est populaire/ France est un pays intéressant);
- Nouns used as adjectives (e.g. le festival est tradition).

#### **AO4 Knowledge and understanding of society and culture**

Performance in this grid varied considerably, with a significant number of candidates, and at times TEs, failing to understand the need to relate answers to France (Task 1) and/or the French speaking world (Task 2). Candidates who spoke very generally about issues could not score highly here.

Below is an overview of the types of evidence provided in the conversations, arranged by sub-theme:

##### **Les changements dans les structures familiales:**

There was some good knowledge demonstrated, particularly about PACS and mariage pour tous. When discussing family types, though, conversation tended to become too general. Strong candidates or attentive TEs made frequent reference to the French context, offering specific examples.

##### **L'éducation:**

Many candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of the French system and there were a wide range of matters discussed, from the different types of Bac to the competitive system of the Grandes Écoles.

##### **Le monde du travail:**

Some candidates were aware of specific French-related work issues, with many making reference to the recent strikes. Sometimes the conversation became too general. Candidates should be reminded of the need to consider the significance of the various developments in the world of work, rather than just listing events, for example.

##### **La musique:**

There were many well-prepared candidates here, although TEs should still keep in mind the need to avoid straying into generic discussions. A wide range of music, old and modern, was discussed and candidates appeared confident when commenting on the significance of festivals and radio quotas.



### **Les médias:**

Performances varied quite considerably on this sub-theme. There were some relevant ideas, e.g. the persecution of journalists in the Ivory Coast and the Charlie Hebdo attack but in some instances candidates hadn't reflected on the significance of these concerns in the Francophone context.

### **Les festivals et les traditions:**

Well-prepared candidates were able to engage in discussion and provide relevant examples, but in many instances, answers tended to lack substance.

### **Administrative matters**

**Documentation:** Most centres sent a signed copy of the CS3 candidate declaration form, but a significant number failed to include the OR3 form. This causes extra work for markers and can result in delays to marking. Centres should ensure that the OR3 form is included with documentation sent to Edexcel, and the TE should write the candidate and centre information, and also the stimulus card numbers on this form. In some cases, TEs failed to announce the stimulus card at the beginning of the recording. TEs should remember to include this information on the recording before the exam begins.

CDs and USBs should be correctly named, with candidate number and name, to ease the admin burden of the marker.

**Quality of recordings:** This was generally good, although in some instances paper shuffling, school bells and announcements in the background affected the sound quality. Centres should refer to the guidance provided in the administrative guide in this regard. Centres should also be reminded that date, centre number and TE name should be recorded at the beginning of the exam session only: there is no need to announce this information for each candidate's recording. For each individual recording, the candidate name and number and stimulus cards should be announced before the test begins. Centres should refer to the administrative guide for a reminder of the information required on the recordings.

**Timing:** As outlined in the specification, the timing starts with the candidate's first utterance in relation to Task 1. There were many examples of TEs stopping timing, paper shuffling and restarting timing between the two tasks, which often leads to an overlong test. TEs should have all of their documentation well prepared before the assessment begins to avoid wasting time in the transition between tasks.

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