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# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Subsidiary in French (WFR01) Paper 1 Spoken  
Expression and Response

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The student is rewarded for the ability to demonstrate understanding of a target language stimulus based on one of the General Topic Areas (GTA) of the Pearson IAL French specification, and to discuss that same General Topic Area. Students need to demonstrate that they can engage in a discussion in French that relates to a chosen GTA and allied subtopics. Students will be expected to give relevant and appropriate information, convey opinions, interact and respond to a range of questions. Further information about the preparation of students, the conduct and the administration of this test can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website, and the "Oral Training Guide" found under the "Teaching and Learning" tab of the same page.

Up to 40 marks are awarded positively as follows for this test:

- 10 marks for Quality of language (5 marks for Accuracy of language and 5 marks for Range of lexis)
- 16 marks for Spontaneity and development
- 4 marks for Understanding of the prescribed stimulus card
- 10 marks for Knowledge and understanding of the General Topic Area (GTA)

The criteria for awarding these marks can be found in section 1.4 (Assessment Criteria) of the Pearson IAL French specification.

Before the test, the student prepares **two** of the four following General

Topic Areas:

- Youth matters
- Lifestyle, health and fitness
- Environment and travel
- Education and employment

The student is free to choose **any two** of these four areas, depending on his or her preference and/or areas of interest. The student informs the teacher/examiner of the two GTAs he or she has chosen in advance of the test via a completed OR1 Oral Topic Form, no more than three weeks in advance of the assessment.

On the day of the test, the student will be tested on only **one** of these GTAs. The GTA on which the student is tested is determined according to the allocation grid in the teacher/examiner WFR01 booklet.

Unit 1 tests, in the form of a short stimulus text in the target language, are set on each of the four topic areas. Two different stimulus texts are set on each of the four GTAs. Two sets of questions are provided for each text (A and B). In total, therefore, there are 16 stimulus cards, i.e. 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B for each of the four GTAs.

15 minutes before the test the student is given, according to the random allocation specified in the teacher/examiner WFR01 examination booklet, one of the stimulus cards for the GTA on which he or she will be tested.

Pearson issues the teacher/examiner booklets and the stimulus cards to centres before the examining session. These materials are confidential until the end of the examining session for this unit. The dates for the examining session are published in the Pearson examination timetable.

The student has 15 minutes supervised preparation time to study the stimulus text on the WFR01 card before the exam. He or she may not use a dictionary or any other resources during this time, but may make notes (up to one side of A4 paper). The student must not write on the stimulus card. The student takes both the stimulus card and any notes into the examination, and may refer to both during Section A of the test.

The WFR01 test comprises two sections:

### **Section A**

The teacher/examiner begins the test by asking the four questions on the stimulus card about the text prepared by the student. These questions are printed only in the teacher/examiner WFR01 examination booklet; the student is not aware of the questions in advance of the test. The first two of these four questions ask the student to demonstrate factual understanding of the stimulus text and the second two ask the student to express opinions about or reactions to the subject matter of the stimulus text.

Students should be aware that **three** pieces of information are expected in response to question 1 for each card. Therefore, during the preparation time, students must be sure to become very familiar with the text and all its content so that they can identify three pieces of information in response to the teacher/examiner's first question.

In the interests of comparability across different languages and for the purposes of assessment, the teacher/examiner **may not rephrase** these four questions, nor add to or expand them. **If the teacher/examiner rephrases a question, then the student's response to that question will be ignored when assessing his or her performance.** It is therefore essential that the teacher/examiner **does not rephrase** any of the four set questions. The question may be repeated if necessary, but if repetition of a question is needed, then this may be reflected in the mark awarded for "Spontaneity and development". Please see below (Advice to Teacher/Examiners) for further clarification.

### **Section B**

The teacher/examiner develops a discussion about the General Topic Area chosen by the student. The topic of the stimulus card may be used as a starting point for this discussion, but the teacher/examiner moves away from this topic to more general discussion of the topic area and to discussion of at least one other subtopic of this General Topic Area.

## **Timing of WFR01**

The WFR01 test should last between 8 and 10 minutes in total (Sections A and B combined). This time should be divided equally between Sections A and B. However, if the student completes the answers to the questions in Section A in less than four minutes, the teacher/examiner should ensure that the discussion in Section B is extended, in order that the total test time is not less than eight minutes.

The timing of the test begins as the teacher/examiner starts to ask the first question.

## **Performance January 2018**

The GTA most frequently tested was "Lifestyle, health and fitness", followed by "Youth matters". Very few students were tested on either "Education and employment" or "Environment and travel". The student, of course, has a free choice of the two GTAs he or she wishes to discuss in the test. The GTA to be tested and the stimulus card to be given to the student is determined according to the random allocation grid in the teacher/examiner booklet for WFR01.

All eight stimulus cards made similar demands of the students. Nearly all students were able to attempt the first two Section A questions, the ones based purely on the text, while the level of response to the second two Section A questions proved to be good discriminator between performances.

Students should know that it is perfectly acceptable to use vocabulary and language from the text in answer to questions 1 and 2. However, the text and the questions are devised in such a way that it is not possible to "lift" correct answers directly from the text; some manipulation of the language or some paraphrasing will be necessary. Targeted lifts from the text are permissible, see below for clarification of what is meant by this.

Students might, on occasion, answer a set question so fully as to give, or partially give, the answer to another. Where this happens, the teacher/examiner should still ask all the questions, in the interests of comparability between students. Please see below (Advice to Teacher/Examiners) for further clarification.

Some students had clearly thought about their chosen topic areas and were well-prepared, offering statistics and facts to support their ideas. In order to access the highest marks for "Knowledge and understanding – General topic area", students must show "excellent knowledge and understanding of the general topic area". In order to do this, students will offer detailed knowledge, including facts and examples. A number of students, however, had clearly not thought about or researched their chosen topics in sufficient detail and, though many could talk at length, the content of what they said tended to be rather general and superficial, lacking sufficient precise information and knowledge of the topic.

Some teacher/examiners asked supplementary questions in Section A. This is not required. Please see below (Advice to Teacher/Examiners) for further clarification. In some instances, in Section B of the test the teacher/examiner failed to move away sufficiently from the topic of the stimulus card to discuss other subtopics of the GTA chosen by the student. In these cases, the marks awarded to the student may be restricted. On occasion, the teacher/examiner asked questions in Section B which did not relate to the GTA; this can adversely affect the mark awarded for "Knowledge and understanding – GTA".

Where a test is shorter than the minimum required eight minutes, the student is unable to access the entire range of marks available for the test. The teacher/examiner should begin timing the examination from the time when he or she asks the first of the prescribed questions on the stimulus. The test should last 8 – 10 minutes. Where a test exceeds this and the student is speaking as 10 minutes elapses, the examiner listens to the end of the student's response, or to the next sense break in what he or she is saying, and then stops marking. If the teacher/examiner is speaking as the 10 minutes elapses, the examiner stops listening at that point.

The majority of centres followed the instructions for administration of the tests. A completed Unit 1 Oral Form (OR1) for each student should be uploaded to the Pearson secure site along with the recording. Care should be taken to ensure that the work of each student has been clearly recorded and that the OR1 forms are completed correctly.

## **Comments on students' performance in Section A**

### Youth matters

**Stimulus cards:** For card 1A and 1B students coped well with most questions, showing a good understanding of the text on the card. For card 2A, some students found difficulty answering question 4A. Students should know that in answer to questions 3 and 4 it is permissible to answer using ideas from one's own experience, and students should attempt to develop their answers to these questions.

**GTA:** Students cope well with questions on this GTA, with technology being an area where many students have good knowledge. Students were also able to respond to questions related to music and relationships, but with a varying amount of detail. In order to access the higher grids of the mark scheme for "Understanding – GTA", students need to offer facts, detail and evidence of research into the subtopics of the GTA.

### Lifestyle, health and fitness

**Stimulus cards:** Students generally coped well with understanding both cards 1 and 2. These were clearly topics with which they were familiar. In answer to question 3A for card 2A, some students failed to pick up the fact that they were being asked for their opinion as to the **most** important advantage of living in a town/city, and gave several advantages in

response. Students should be told that they need to listen very carefully to the questions, and answer them as precisely as possible. It is permissible for a student to ask for a question to be repeated.

**GTA:** Students coped satisfactorily with this GTA, offering many ideas about its subtopics. However, relatively few were able to show that they had researched the topic in depth, something they need to do to be able to support their ideas with fact and statistics, and without which they are unable to access the higher boxes of the mark scheme.

#### Environment and travel

Too few students were tested on these cards and GTA for general comments to be made.

#### Education and employment

Too few students were tested on these cards and GTA for general comments to be made.

### **Comments on students' performance in Section B**

The majority of students were able to discuss a range of areas relating to the GTA about which they had chosen to speak. As previously mentioned, the Section B discussion should move away from the topic of the stimulus card to cover other subtopics of the same GTA.

In order for the student to be able to access the full range of marks available, it is essential that Section B be a discussion, not merely a string of questions and answers.

On occasion the teacher/examiner asked questions which could not be seen to fit in any of the subtopics of the GTA on which the student was being tested. An example might be a question about which subjects the student is studying where the student's chosen GTA is "Lifestyle, health and fitness" and the prescribed stimulus card is Card 1A: « Tabac-stop » : aide aux fumeurs ! The subtopic of this GTA is "Health issues". Therefore, in Section B the teacher/examiner should ask questions on one or more of the other subtopics of this GTA, i.e. "Food and diet", "Sport and exercise" and/or "Urban and rural life". Where the teacher/examiner does not introduce further subtopics of the same GTA, the student's ability to access the full range of marks for "Knowledge and understanding – GTA" is restricted. A list of the subtopics relating to each of the four GTAs is to be found on page 11 of the Pearson IAL French specification and is repeated below in the "Advice to Teacher/Examiners" section for reference.

In Section B, where the discussion widens out to other related topics in the same General Topic Area, students usually wanted to offer ideas and opinions and there were some informative, lively discussions. However, students do need to be reminded of the advantage of developing their ideas and exemplifying their points. In particular, it was noticeable that students who showed evidence of wider reading or research by referring to an article

they may have read or a video that they may have seen in a particular publication or on a particular website (e.g. "Selon un article que j'ai lu récemment dans *Le Monde*, ...") were in the minority. To achieve high marks in the "Knowledge and understanding - GTA" section of the mark scheme, students should be able to demonstrate that their studies have led them to research and read about topics so that they can go beyond the material covered in lessons.

In addition, it was noticeable that many students were liable to deliver stereotypical or narrow views on topics such as the older generation and new technology, drugs and alcohol, *la pression du groupe* etc.; teachers would be well-advised to encourage students to think more laterally and develop their own ideas rather than merely offering up those presented to them in class.

## **Language**

Many students spoke well with some fluency, using a good range of lexis and structures. Some students' performance was hindered by their poor pronunciation which made it difficult to understand the message they were trying to deliver; teachers in some centres would be advised to focus more on the need for pronunciation that allows for the student to communicate successfully.

In some cases, the use of more complex structures like the subjunctive, *en* + present participle, *si* clauses etc. was on show whereas, in others, the students stuck too closely to repetitive simple language which did not therefore allow them to reach the higher bands in the mark grids for the Quality of language (Range of lexis).

In addition, there were examples of basic errors that students should not be making at AS level such as incorrect subject-verb accord in the present tense; this was particularly evident in irregular verbs like *vouloir*, *dire* and *faire*. Many weaker students struggled with direct and indirect object pronouns, adjectival agreements, articles (e.g. *de les jeunes* in place of *des jeunes*) and inappropriate use of tenses.

## **Advice to Teacher/Examiners on the conduct of the WFR01 examination**

It is essential that the teacher/examiner is aware of the requirements of WFR01, as incorrectly conducted tests can adversely affect the student's mark. The following advice is offered in the light of this examination series.

### **Timing**

The WFR01 test should last 8-10 minutes in total, with the time divided more or less equally between Section A and Section B. If Section A takes less than 4 minutes, then Section B should be extended so that the total test time is not less than 8 minutes. If the student answers the four set questions in Section A in less than four minutes, there is no need to extend this section to last 4 minutes; once the student has answered the four set



questions the teacher/examiner should begin Section B. It is in the student's interest to allow the full 10 minutes test time, in order that he or she might demonstrate as wide a range as possible of ideas and opinion on the GTA being tested. If a test is too short, the student is not able to access the full range of marks available for the test. If it is too long, the examiner stops marking as soon as is appropriate after 10 minutes, i.e. at the end of the next sense-break in what the student is saying, or at the end of the student's answer, whichever comes first. If the teacher/examiner is speaking at the 10 minute point, the examiner stops marking immediately.

The timing of the test begins as the teacher/examiner begins to ask the first of the four questions set on the stimulus card.

### **Conduct of Section A**

In the interests of comparability between tests, and so that the student is not disadvantaged, the four questions set on the stimulus must be asked **exactly** as they are written in the teacher/examiner WFR01 examination booklet. The only exception to this is that the formal form of address may be changed to the more familiar where that is appropriate, that is "vous" may be changed to "tu", and "à votre avis" to "à ton avis", etc.

Teacher/examiners should note that for the January 2018 series and subsequently, it is a requirement that the questions must not be rephrased (except for allowing change between "vous" and "tu" as mentioned above) in any way. If the teacher/examiner changes or rephrases one of the Section A questions in any way, then the student's response to that question is ignored when assessing his or her work.

All four questions must be asked, even if a student has already answered or partially answered a subsequent question in a previous response. Again, this is in the interests of comparability.

Where a teacher/examiner inadvertently adds an interjection to the beginning of a question or at the end of a student's answer, and this addition adds nothing to the question, and does not change the body of the question in any way, then this is ignored when assessing the student's work. An example might be where the teacher/examiner says "alors" at the end of an answer before asking the next question, or "question numéro un / numéro deux" etc. before the questions.

Section A questions can be repeated, but where the teacher/examiner does repeat a question in the interests of keeping the conversation going, this is taken into account when assessing the student's mark for "Spontaneity and development". Students should be taught an appropriate way to ask, in French, for the question to be repeated.

As the teacher/examiner may not rephrase or expand the four questions set by Pearson; during preparation for this part of the test students should be coached to give full and developed answers to the set questions, giving reasons and explanations for their opinion.

Students and teachers should be aware that three pieces of information are

expected in response to question 1 on each card (there will be at least three pieces of relevant information given in the text).

As mentioned previously, students may use vocabulary and language from the text in answer to questions 1 and 2. However, the text and the questions are devised in such a way that it is not possible to “lift” correct answers directly from the text; some manipulation of the language or paraphrasing will be necessary. Targeted lifts from the text are permissible; this is where a student used material from the text in his or her answer, but demonstrates that he or she has understood the text by selecting only the material needed to answer the question. To give an example from this year’s exam:

### **Youth Matters Card 2A/2B**

Question 2: Selon le texte, quelle décision est-ce que Félix et Lisa ont prise ?

The text reads:

“Félix et Lisa illustrent bien ce changement profond de la société : « Nous avons pris la décision de nous marier après dix ans de vie commune, ce qui a rassuré nos parents respectifs.”

A student who replies “Nous avons pris la décision de nous marier après dix ans de vie commune” cannot be considered to have fully understood the text and, in addition, the inclusion of “nous avons pris...” and “nous marier” means that the answer does not make sense.

However, a student who replies “Ils ont pris la décision de se marier après dix ans de vie commune” would gain credit for having understood the text and being able to extract from it the information necessary to formulate a correct and appropriate response to the question. This is a targeted lift.

### **Conduct of Section B**

The topic of the stimulus card may be used as an opening for the Section B discussion, but the teacher/examiner must move on to discuss at least one more subtopic of the student’s chosen GTA. For example, in this test for January 2018, the topic of the first stimulus card for the Youth Matters GTA, “La Fête de la Musique”, is “Music”. Therefore, the teacher/examiner must make sure that the Section B discussion predominantly deals with one or more of the other subtopics of this GTA, i.e. “Family relationships and friendships”, “Peer pressure and role models” and/or “Technology and communication”. If this is not the case, then the student cannot access the full range of marks available for “Knowledge and understanding – GTA”.

A definitive list of subtopics linked to each of the General Topic Areas follows:

**Youth matters**

Family relationships and friendships  
Peer pressure and role models  
Music and Fashion  
Technology and communication

**Lifestyle, health and fitness** Food and diet

Sport and exercise  
Health issues  
Urban and rural life

**Environment and travel**

Tourism, travel and transport  
Natural disasters and weather  
Climate change and its impact  
Energy, pollution and recycling

**Education and employment**

Education systems and types of schooling  
Pupil/student life  
Volunteering and internships  
Jobs and unemployment

It is in the interests of the student that the teacher/examiner asks questions which allow him or her to demonstrate the full extent of his/her knowledge of the structures and lexis expected at AS level. Pedestrian and GCSE-type questions often do not encourage the student to use AS level language and structures. The teacher/examiner should encourage the student to expand on answers, to provide detail and clarification.

Section B should be a **genuine discussion** between the teacher/examiner and the student. The teacher/examiner should listen to and react to what the student says, for asking him or her to develop what he/she has said and asking questions which pick up on and build on the student's responses. The following question types are suggestions that could be used to facilitate this:

- Pourquoi est-ce que vous avez dit que .....?
- Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire ..... ?
- Pourquoi pensez-vous que ..... ?

In assessing the mark for "Knowledge and understanding – GTA", the student is awarded marks for the range of ideas and opinions they offer about their chosen GTA. In practice, concrete examples and factual knowledge about the topics being discussed often add to the student's ability to access the full range of marks available and students should be encouraged to include these. Students have a free choice of the two GTAs they choose to prepare for the exam, but should be advised to choose topic areas which they have prepared thoroughly and which they are ready to discuss in detail.

## **Recording quality**

The quality of the recordings submitted this year was generally very good. It is the centre's responsibility to submit the recordings in one of the formats accepted by Pearson; details of the permitted formats can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website. It is also the responsibility of the centres to ensure that the recording quality is sufficiently loud and of decent quality.

## **Administration**

The majority of centres uploaded the recordings and completed OR1 forms for each student as required. One OR1 form should be provided for each student. Details of how to submit material to Pearson can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website. The OR1 form is found in the same place. Under the "Teaching and Learning" tab of the same page is the "Oral Training Guide" which gives further information about preparing students for and conducting the test, together with a commentary on a sample WFR01 test.

