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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In French (WFR04/01)

Unit 4: Research, Understanding and Written  
Response

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## International A Level French

### WFR04 Paper 4

### Research, Understanding and Written Response

January 2021

### Principal Examiner's Report

Candidates were familiar with the topic areas covered and most candidates were able to attempt all parts of the paper. Whilst many fared well with the comprehension questions in Sections A and B especially the multiple-choice questions, open responses, question 8 and Section C provided more of a challenge.

#### Section A – Listening

##### Questions 1 and 2: Multiple Choice

Candidates were provided with four options A, B, C, or D for each item within the question (the correct response, and three distractors).

It is vital that candidates do not rush into committing themselves to an answer. At this level, they should listen for the gist of the whole passage; a word which is mentioned in the recording does not necessarily lead them to the answer in the question paper.

In question 1, **1d** seems to have been the most challenging for candidates. D was the answer *le plus fréquenté*, referring to *il attire le plus grand nombre de visiteurs*.

In question 2, **2a** seems to have been the most challenging for candidates. C was the answer *existe dans certains pays francophones*, referring to *comme sur les bords de routes de la métropole et des régions d'outre-mer*.

##### Question 3: Summary completion.

Candidates were required to complete a summary, choosing from a list of eight words. There was a mixture of word types.

This question was generally well answered, with **3c** providing the most challenge for candidates. It is vital that candidates do not rush into committing themselves to an answer but listen out for clues. *Elle en sort perdante* referred to *mais n'en remporte aucun*.

##### Question 4: Short Answer in French.

This required responses using a single word, a phrase or a short sentence. Each item was worth 1 or 2 marks.

Here, as in Section B, targeted lifts are sometimes possible. It is important for candidates to know that they can re-use the language they hear but at this level direct lifts will usually not enable candidates to score. Candidates need to manipulate the language they hear or read. Candidates should try to use their own words as much as possible to render the meaning. However, while it is possible to convey the meaning by using their own words when the information is very technical or specific, candidates should manipulate the language they hear instead of writing incoherent circumlocutions.

In this section, as in section B, listening skills and reading skills are assessed, which means that sentences that contain grammatical and spelling errors can score, as long as the error does not lead to ambiguity. Responses to Questions 4, 6 and 7 are only marked on the basis of communication, rather than accuracy of language. There were many instances however where candidates were not awarded the marks as the inaccuracy of their written French hindered communication, for instance *ouffrer/ oufrire/* for *offrir*, *naveger* for *naviguer*.

Some candidates were tempted to transcribe what they heard which on all occasions proved to be unsuccessful for two main reasons: (1) the candidates were not able to render the correct words (for instance *des vêtements* instead of *d'évènements*) (2) the candidates tended to write everything and did not select the important information, sometimes offering contradictory information.

Reference to the published mark scheme will show the essence of each answer. Longer answers can often miss the point or may start with a wrong detail before eventually giving the correct answer which is therefore negated by what has come first.

## **Section B – Reading and Grammar**

### **Question 5: Multiple Choice Questions**

Candidates were provided with four options: A, B, C, or D for each item within the question (the correct response, and three distractors).

### **Question 6: Short Answer in French**

Question 6 was taken from the sub topic of student life.

**6a and 6b** were often well-answered.

**6c** appeared to be the question that presented the most challenge to the candidates. Candidates were able to locate the information in the text but failed to answer the question correctly. The question concentrated on what was possible from 2000, but candidates

provided information about what happened before 2000. It is important to read the question carefully and to check that the answer meets the demand of the question.

**6d** also appeared to challenge to some candidates. The information in the text was given in the affirmative form (what students are currently paying for: *continuent de payer la taxe sur le logement et ils doivent acheter leurs tickets restaurant à plein tarif*) and the question required the candidates to state what the association is hoping to achieve for the students. Candidates had to manipulate the information in the text to a negative form: not to pay the tax on their accommodation and not to pay full price for their tickets.

### **Question 7: Short Answer in French**

Specific understanding of the text was necessary to gain the marks.

Some candidates lost marks as they were tempted to copy a complete passage verbatim from the text without any attempt to process the information or failed to infer meaning to answer some of the questions.

**7a, 7c, 7e** and **7f** seemed to be the better answered questions.

**7b** – many candidates failed to understand the importance of *les vraies raisons* in the question and provided reasons that were not the real reasons. Careful reading of the question is essential at this level.

**7d**- answers varied a lot in this question and not many candidates were able to provide the correct answer. The answer to the question was to be formed from inferring meaning from *n'approuve pas sa transformation* and *que toute reconversion est acceptable*.

**7g** – whilst most candidates were able to locate the information in the text, few candidates were able to give the appropriate answer. The answer was to be formed from the information in the last sentence and by manipulating the information. It seems that candidates failed to recognise the importance of the words *contrairement* and *en aucun cas* and focused their attention to the latter part of the sentence.

### **Question 8: Sentence transformations:**

Question 8 proved to be a challenge, even for competent linguists.

Candidates were required to manipulate the sentences given to them using the information in brackets. **It is essential that candidates refer to the texts from which the language has been taken as the manipulated sentences need to make sense and be grammatically correct in their original context.**

The most challenging questions seemed to be:

**8e:** candidates were required to use the future tense after *quand*.

**8f:** a good number of candidates failed to use the subjunctive after *il faut que* or forgot the reflexive pronoun *nous*. Please note that where candidates provided the correct form of the verb but failed to provide the correct spelling for it, the mark was still awarded as they had performed the correct manipulation *e.g il faut que nous nous rapellions* was accepted.

**8g:** many candidates failed to produce *lesquels* in one word; *les quels* in two words was not accepted. Complex subordinate pronouns seem to be a challenge to candidates each year. It is essential that candidates are confident and familiar with the grammar points in the specification.

Remember that marks are awarded when the targeted grammatical point is produced correctly. Any other grammatical and spelling mistakes within the reformulated sentence will be ignored.

### Section C

It is crucial that candidates understand the nature of what is expected in the final essay. Since marks are awarded for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical analysis, Organisation and Development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of Language (out of 5), it is crucial that some examination time is spent planning the response to the specific question asked.

It is essential that candidates select carefully what information they are going to use to answer the question. Not everything they know will be needed to answer the question.

Most importantly, candidates should realise that **the thrust of the questions set is mostly in the second part**. To access the higher mark bands, they must engage in an analysis of the issues. Essays which relied too much on description and less on evaluation scored poorly.

This series, the most popular titles were by far *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* and *Monsieur Lazhar*.