

GCE

French

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Oral training guide

Edexcel Advanced Subsidiary GCE in French (8FR01)

First examination 2009

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First examination 2010

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Part 1 General guidelines

Introduction

This guide is for teachers who are preparing candidates for, and conducting, the Edexcel GCE French oral examinations. This guide relates to the requirements of the Edexcel Advanced Subsidiary GCE and Advanced GCE in French specification (for teaching from September 2008).

The Advanced Subsidiary GCE (AS Level) oral examination will be assessed for the first time in January 2009 and the Advanced GCE (A2 Level) oral examination in June 2010. All the tests will be externally assessed by Edexcel.

The AS Level oral examination is *Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response in French*.

The unit code is:

6FR01 French

The A2 Level oral examination is *Unit 3: Understanding and Spoken Response in French*.

The unit code is:

6FR03 French

Essential preparation

Teachers should familiarise themselves with the details of the AS oral examination (Unit 1) in the Edexcel GCE French specification (page 4), the assessment requirements (page 9), the unit description (pages 19-23) and the assessment criteria (pages 24-25). The details of the A2 oral examination (Unit 3) can be found on page 6, the assessment requirements on page 11, the unit description on pages 33-35 and the assessment criteria on pages 36-37 of the Edexcel GCE French specification.

Teachers should also refer to the Oral Training Guide section in the *Getting Started* (Edexcel GCE in French) booklet.

Related documents can be downloaded from the Edexcel website at www.edexcel.com. The assessment criteria for Units 1 and 3 can also be found on page 9 of this guide.

It is essential that teachers are aware of the requirements of each unit, as incorrectly conducted tests can adversely affect candidates' marks.

AS Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response in French

Students will be rewarded for their ability to demonstrate understanding of a short French-language text (linked to one of the general topic areas of the AS specification) and to engage in general discussion on the same general topic area. Understanding of the text will be tested by questions posed by the teacher/examiner, who will then develop the conversation into a more general discussion of the topic area.

Before the test, students will choose one of the four following general topic areas:

Youth culture and concerns

Lifestyle: health and fitness

The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the French-speaking world

Education and employment.

A definitive list of the subtopics linked to each of these general topic areas is provided below:

- Youth culture and concerns
 - Music and fashion
 - Technology (eg MP3/blogs/mobile phones/internet/games)
 - Relationships (family/friendships and peer pressure)
 - Drink, drugs, sex
- Lifestyle: health and fitness
 - Sport and exercise
 - Food and diet
 - Health issues (eg smoking, skin cancer, health services)
- The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the French-speaking world
 - Tourist information, travel and transport
 - Weather (eg natural disasters, climate change)
 - Pollution and recycling
- Education and employment
 - Education (schooling and higher education)
 - Education policy and student issues
 - The world of work (eg the changing work scene, job opportunities and unemployment).

Students are free to choose any of the four general topic areas, depending on their preference and interests. Students should be advised to choose a topic area with which they are familiar and which they are prepared to discuss in detail.

Unit 1 tests will be set on each of the four topic areas. The tests will be in the form of a short stimulus text in the target language. 15 minutes before the test, students will be given, at random, one of the stimuli for the topic area they have chosen. Examples of these stimuli can be found in the specimen assessment material published by Edexcel and can be downloaded from the Edexcel website at www.edexcel.com.

Each stimulus must be exploited in accordance with the sequence stipulated by Edexcel for each examination session.

This sequence must be applied to all candidates except where a particular instruction might cause distress (for example reference to relative who is ill or similar situation); in this case the next suitable stimulus must be used. The sequence must be continued after breaks in examining in any one day, for example after lunch.

Students will have 15 minutes preparation time to study the stimulus allocated to them. During this time, they should study the text with a view to answering questions about it, and to discussing the subject of the text in more detail.

Students should be encouraged to use this time effectively. Further guidance on preparing students for the test can be found later in this handbook.

It is important that students know that, in the first part of the test (Section A), they will be asked to offer opinions about the subject of the text and the related subtopic, and to discuss it in some detail, in addition to demonstrating comprehension of the text. In the second part of the test (Section B) students will need to talk about other aspects of the general topic area they have chosen.

Students may not use a dictionary or any other resources during the preparation time. They may make notes (up to one side of A4 paper if they wish) but must not write on the stimulus provided.

Students must take both the stimulus and any notes into the examination and may refer to both at any point during the test. Both the stimulus and the notes must be handed to the teacher/examiner at the end of the test, and must be retained by the centre until 20th September in the year of the test.

The Unit 1 test comprises two sections.

Section A

The teacher/examiner will begin the test by asking the four questions set by Edexcel and printed in the teacher/examiner's material. These questions do not appear on the test card given to the students.

The first two of these four questions ask students to demonstrate factual understanding of the stimulus text. The second two ask students to express their opinions about, or give their reactions to, the subject matter of the stimulus text.

In the interests of comparability and for the purposes of fair assessment across all centres, **the teacher/examiner must not rephrase or expand on these questions.** It is very important that teacher/examiners do not rephrase or expand on these questions, as to do so will adversely affect the students' marks for *Response* and *Understanding (Stimulus specific)*.

However, although the questions provided by Edexcel will use the formal 'you' to address the candidate, the teacher/examiner may use the informal 'you' to address the candidate if more appropriate and undertake any necessary change as a result of this to the linked verbs and adjectives etc. No other unnecessary changes must be made.

As teacher/examiners may not rephrase or expand the four questions set by Edexcel, during preparation for this part of the test students should be coached to give full and/or extended answers to the set questions.

If a student provides a particularly full answer to the third question that pre-empts the fourth question, the teacher/examiner should still ask the fourth question. This is done to ensure that all candidates have the same assessment experience, but students need to be advised that this could occur.

Section B

In this section, the teacher/examiner must initiate a discussion about the general topic area chosen by each student. The specific topic of the stimulus may be used as a starting point for this discussion, but the teacher/examiner must move away from this topic to more general discussion of the topic area and its linked subtopics. Failure to move away to different subtopics could have an adverse impact on final marks.

A list of questions that relate to each of the subtopics identified for all of the general topic areas can be found on page 21 of this guide. The questions are not in sequence, nor are they mandatory. They may be rephrased or substituted by others related to the same subtopic. Teachers should also devise additional questions of their own related to each of the subtopics.

There is no requirement in the AS Unit 1 oral test for students to demonstrate knowledge of countries and contexts in which French is spoken¹, though of course they are free to do so.

Although this unit relates to a chosen general topic area, it is essentially designed to assess manipulation and understanding of the French spoken language. The general topic areas should be considered as different contexts in which students can develop, use and understand spoken French language. *Detailed, specialist* French vocabulary or *detailed and specialist* knowledge of the chosen general topic area are not required.

Timing of the AS Unit 1 test

The AS Unit 1 test should last between eight and 10 minutes.

The test time should be divided equally between Sections A and B. However, if students complete 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 at least eight minutes**. Excess candidate material will not be assessed.

Choice of AS Unit 1 general topic area

Students must consider their free choice of general topic area for the AS Level Unit 1 test very carefully. They should be advised to choose a general topic area which they have prepared and which they are ready to discuss in detail.

It is anticipated that students from the same centre will choose to prepare different general topic areas, in order to reflect the range of their individual interests. Some overlap of topic choice is, however, expected.

Students may use this assessment as an opportunity to compare and contrast different topics both from a UK perspective and from knowledge of a French-speaking country or countries.

Students must inform the teacher/examiner which general topic area they have chosen before the test via an Oral Topic Form, one copy of which must be given to the teacher/examiner (or visiting examiner, if applicable) in advance of the examination.

¹ With the exception of *The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the French-speaking world*.

A2 Unit 3: Understanding and Spoken Response in French

In this test, students will be rewarded for demonstrating the ability to understand spoken French and to use French to explain, to clarify, to justify a point of view, to express opinions and to defend an argument. They will have to demonstrate knowledge of the issue they have chosen to discuss and will need to show evidence of wide-ranging reading and research into this issue.

Students will introduce the issue they have chosen for up to one minute, after which the teacher/examiner will facilitate debate on this issue for up to a further four minutes.

After debate on this first chosen issue, the teacher/examiner must introduce at least **two further issues** for discussion. Students must not know in advance of the test which further issues the teacher/examiner will choose for discussion: these must be unpredictable elements of the test.

It is in the students' interest for teacher/examiners to cover a range of issues for discussion, in order that students can demonstrate both the breadth and depth of their knowledge and linguistic competence.

As students will be rewarded for the ability to understand and respond to the spoken language, it is important that the teacher/examiner's questions are sufficiently challenging to allow the candidate to access the full range of marks for *Comprehension and Development* (see mark grid on page 12 of this guide). If the teacher/examiner's questions are not sufficiently complex and challenging, students' opportunities to score high marks in this area of assessment will be constrained.

Timing of the A2 Unit 3 test

The A2 Unit 3 test should last between 11 and 13 minutes.

The initial issue (chosen by students before the test) should be debated for up to five minutes in total. Students should introduce the issue for about one minute before debate begins, and the teacher/examiner should interrupt students if this introduction exceeds about one minute. This introduction is followed by up to four minutes debate on this issue.

The rest of the test (six to eight minutes) is for discussion of at least two further issues, chosen by the teacher/examiner. Students will not know in advance of the test which issues the teacher/examiner will introduce for discussion. This time does not have to be divided precisely between these further issues, but care should be taken to ensure that students have the opportunity to discuss at least two further issues in detail. Excess material will not be assessed.

Teacher/examiners must ensure that the unpredictable issues in this unit are linked to the general topic areas described in the specification. All students at A2 will be expected to have covered most of the seven general topic areas to some degree, and students who are able to demonstrate good knowledge of any of these areas should be rewarded accordingly. Teacher/examiners should not require the candidate to produce any very detailed or specialised knowledge in the follow-on unpredictable discussions.

Choice of A2 Unit 3 issue

Students should choose an issue which they are prepared to research in depth and which is suitable for debate. Students must take a definite stance on the issue and maintain this during their assessment.

There is no requirement in the A2 Unit 3 oral test for students to demonstrate knowledge of countries and contexts in which French is spoken, though of course they are free to do so.

Students have a completely free choice of the issue they wish to debate; **it does not have to relate to any of the AS or A2 general topic areas.**

As students have to indicate a stance on the issue they have chosen, they would be well advised to consider carefully the way in which the issue for discussion is phrased. It is often useful to use a statement beginning 'I think that ...' or 'In my opinion ...' in order that the stance taken is clear.

Examples of suitable issues, making the stance clear, are ‘I think that university education should be free to all students’, or ‘In my opinion, the ban on smoking in public places is wrong’. Please note that these are given only as an indication of the sort of possible issues and stances that students might consider.

Students must complete an Oral Chosen Issue form in advance of the test, on which they must write a brief statement about the chosen issue. One copy of this form must be given to the teacher/examiner before the test. Students must take a copy of this form into the examination and may refer to this at any point during the test. One copy of the Oral Chosen Issue form must be sent, with the recording, to the examiner.

Preparing students for the oral tests

The AS Unit 1 test

For AS Unit 1, students must choose one of these general topic areas:

- Youth culture and concerns
- Lifestyle: health and fitness
- The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the French-speaking world
- Education and employment.

Students have a free choice of these areas.

These areas are the four AS general topic areas which will have been studied in class, but in preparation for the Unit 1 test, students should be encouraged to undertake additional, independent research. They have the opportunity to investigate the general topic area of their choice in greater depth and the freedom to introduce aspects of the topic in which they are interested.

In preparation for this test, teachers can build on their students’ natural curiosity, creativity and individual interests. Possible activities might include the following:

- Students work in small groups to identify which of the general topic areas interests them most, and aspects of that area which they might explore.
- Individual students research a particular aspect of the general topic area they have chosen and present it to the rest of the group. Students might prepare a PowerPoint presentation, a worksheet or vocabulary list for their classmates, or an activity for their classmates to do.
- Students interview each other and/or their teacher to canvass opinion and ideas about a particular topic.
- Students write mind maps to identify links between aspects of the topic and to expand and order their ideas.
- Students consider questions for each other about the general topic area they have chosen, and practise answering these questions in as much detail as possible.
- Students time themselves (or each other) talking about a particular subtopic of the general topic area they have chosen, trying to increase each time the amount of time they can talk without needing to be prompted (from 10 seconds, to 15, to 20, etc).

When researching the general topic area they have chosen, students may use internet-derived sources, but should also be encouraged to refer to books, newspapers, magazines, television and radio programmes. They might also use examples from their own life to illustrate a point, or they might ask their classmates, teachers or the foreign language assistant for help and ideas. Students might consider comparing, for example, reactions to a specific issue in the UK and in other countries.

Teachers should share the content of the assessment grids for this unit with their students, so that students are fully aware of the assessment demands and can bear these in mind when preparing for the test.

Students must be aware that teacher/examiners are not allowed to rephrase or expand on the initial **four** questions on the stimulus text for this unit, and that students should answer these questions as fully as possible.

If a student provides a particularly full answer to the third question that pre-empts the fourth question, the teacher/examiner should still ask the fourth question. This is done to ensure that all candidates have the same assessment experience, but students need to be advised that this could occur.

The 15 minutes preparation time

Before the Unit 1 test, students will have 15 minutes to study a stimulus text linked to the general topic area they have chosen. Students must not write on this stimulus, but can make notes on a separate piece of paper. Both the stimulus and any notes must be taken into the exam room, and students can refer to these at any point during the test. However, students must not refer to dictionaries or any other resources during the preparation time.

Teachers may wish to advise their students of the following to ensure that they make good use of their time:

- Begin by reading the entire text through (possibly two or three times).
- Make bullet point notes of the main points of the text.
- Make a note of any vocabulary from the text which might be useful in discussion of this topic.
- Do not waste time writing out complete sentences; you will not be allowed to read out long prepared statements anyway (remember that marks are awarded for spontaneity in this unit).
- Consider the types of questions which might be asked about the text, and your answers to these questions.
- Identify any vocabulary you already know that might be useful when answering questions on this topic.

The A2 Unit 3 oral test

For A2 Unit 3, students choose an issue they wish to debate and must take a stance on this issue. They do not have to choose an issue related to the country/culture whose language they are studying, but they can do so if they wish. The issue does not have to relate to one of the general topic areas in the Edexcel specification.

Much of the preparation for this unit will be similar to that for Unit 1 (see above). Teachers should share the assessment grids for this unit with the students, and make sure that students are aware of the need to defend the stance that they have adopted on their chosen initial issue.

When choosing the issue they wish to debate for the first part of this test, students would be well-advised to choose an issue about which they have a strong opinion. As mentioned previously, they should phrase the title of the issue so that their stance is clear, for example 'I think that ...' or 'In my opinion ...'. They must be sure that the issue can provide them with sufficient material for a one-minute presentation followed by four minutes of debate (they should have four or five different arguments in support of their point of view) and can include facts and figures to support their argument.

Examining technique

Teacher/examiners should take every care to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the oral tests, as tests which are conducted incorrectly can adversely affect the students' marks.

Teacher/examiners conducting the tests need to put the students at ease, to be friendly and approachable and to ensure that the questions asked encourage the students to achieve the highest standard of which they are capable. They must balance this with the responsibility to conduct the test to comply with the conditions of the Edexcel specification. Students will also expect that the test will be conducted with due seriousness and formality.

In order to put students at ease, the teacher/examiner should ensure that the examination room is prepared well in advance, providing sufficient space (including table space on which students may put the AS Unit 1 allocated stimulus and any notes, or the A2 Unit 3 oral form) for both the teacher/examiner and each student to feel comfortable.

The teacher/examiner should ask a range of questions which will push the students to reach their linguistic 'ceiling'. With the exception of the four prescribed questions on the AS Unit 1 stimulus, which must not be rephrased, the teacher/examiner should encourage students to expand on answers and to provide detail and clarification.

In the A2 Unit 3 test, the teacher/examiner should challenge the students' point of view, allowing students to defend their opinion and to demonstrate the ability to debate. In the A2 Unit 3 test, the teacher/examiner must also ensure that the questions are sufficiently complex and challenging to allow students to access the full range of marks available for *Comprehension*. General conversation should be avoided, as it is not appropriate in this test. Students should continue to demonstrate their ability to debate and discuss issues throughout the test and the teacher/examiner should give them every opportunity to do so. In-depth, specialist and/or factual knowledge is not expected in the Unit 3 test.

The teacher/examiner should establish eye contact with the students, make the students feel that the teacher/examiner is listening intently to the responses and should refrain from interrupting or from talking too much. It is the teacher/examiner's role to keep the discussion going, to encourage the students and to ensure that the test is correctly conducted, but their contribution should be kept to a minimum. The teacher/examiner must not correct students' language, nor express disapproval. The test should conclude on a positive note and students should leave the exam room feeling that they have given the best performance they possibly could.

Examining technique checklist for AS Unit 1 and A2 Unit 3

- The teacher/examiner should put the candidate at ease and remain friendly and encouraging throughout.
- The teacher/examiner should ask open questions and offer encouragement.
- The teacher/examiner should not proffer anecdotes, opinions, advice or information.
- The conversation/discussion should flow naturally.
- The teacher/examiner should elicit from the candidate a range of functions, for example narrate, explain, clarify, hypothesise, justify, speculate, describe.
- The teacher/examiner must not allow the candidate to recite large amounts of pre-learned material.
- The teacher/examiner should encourage students to reach their linguistic ceiling.
- The test should end on a positive note.
- The teacher/examiner must keep to the time allocated to the test.

Assessment criteria

Students will be rewarded for their performances according to the following assessment criteria, which will be applied on a 'best fit' basis.

Unit 1

Mark	Quality of language (Accuracy) (AO3)
0	No rewardable language.
1	Isolated examples of correct language; pronunciation and intonation often impede communication.
2-3	Many basic errors, impeding communication at times; pronunciation and intonation erratic, not always comprehensible.
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.

Mark	Quality of language (Range of Lexis) (AO3)
0	No rewardable language.
1	Very basic lexis; minimal command of structure.
2-3	Lexis restricted; operates generally in simple sentences.
4-5	Adequate range of lexis; limited range of structures.
6-7	Good range of lexis with some examples of more complex structures.
8	Wide range of lexis and good variety of structures with only occasional limitation.

Mark	Response (AO1)
0	No rewardable language.
1-4	Little spontaneity; cannot develop responses; very reliant on examiner's language.
5-8	Few examples of spontaneous discourse; limited development of responses; often fails to respond appropriately to questions; needs prompting.
9-12	Some examples of fluent discourse but not always spontaneous or well developed; some hesitation in more complex areas; difficulty with some questions.
13-16	Frequent examples of spontaneous discourse ably developed; responds usually without undue hesitation; deals adequately with most questions.
17-20	High incidence of spontaneous, fluent discourse; able to respond readily to all questions; develops and sustains discourse well.

Mark	Understanding (Stimulus specific) (AO1)
0	No understanding of stimulus.
1	Limited answers to prescribed questions, demonstrating poor understanding of stimulus.
2	Satisfactory answers to prescribed questions, demonstrating adequate understanding of stimulus.
3	Detailed answers to prescribed questions, demonstrating good understanding of stimulus.
4	Full and detailed answers to prescribed questions, demonstrating excellent understanding of stimulus.

Mark	Understanding (General topic area) (AO1)
0	No rewardable language.
1-2	Hardly any relevant ideas and opinions, demonstrating poor understanding of general topic area.
3-4	Few relevant ideas and opinions, demonstrating limited understanding of general topic area.
5-6	Some relevant ideas and opinions, demonstrating satisfactory understanding of general topic area.
7-8	Many relevant ideas and opinions, demonstrating good understanding of general topic area.
9-10	Wealth of relevant ideas and opinions, demonstrating excellent understanding of general topic area.

Unit 3

Mark	Response (AO1)
0	No rewardable material.
1-4	Minimal incidence of spontaneous discourse; very limited range of structures; no use of abstract language.
5-8	Limited incidence of spontaneous discourse; limited range of lexis and structures; very little evidence of abstract language.
9-12	Satisfactory incidence of spontaneous discourse; range of lexis and structures adequate with some ability to handle language of abstract concepts.
13-16	Frequent examples of spontaneous discourse; good range of lexis and structures; good use of abstract concepts.
17-20	Very high incidence of spontaneous discourse; impressive range of lexis and structures.

Mark	Quality of language (AO3)
0	No rewardable material.
1-2	Very flawed language, often impeding comprehension; pronunciation and intonation very inauthentic.
3	Basic errors, impeding comprehension at times; pronunciation and intonation erratic.
4	Accuracy variable with some basic errors; pronunciation and intonation generally good with some lapses.
5	Good level of accuracy with occasional, usually minor, errors; good pronunciation and intonation.
6-7	Highly accurate; excellent pronunciation and intonation.

Mark	Reading and research (AO2)
0	No rewardable material.
1	Scant evidence of any reading and research into the chosen issue and other topics discussed; very superficial.
2-3	Little evidence of reading and research into the chosen issue and other topics discussed; obvious gaps and very little detail.
4	Adequate evidence of reading and research into the chosen issue and other topics discussed but overall lacks breadth and detail; somewhat inconsistent.
5-6	Good to very good evidence of wide reading and research into the chosen issue and other topics discussed with occasional gaps; some pertinent detail at times.
7	Excellent evidence of in-depth and very wide reading and research into the chosen issue and other topics discussed; excellent detail.

Mark	Comprehension and development (AO1)
0	No rewardable material.
1-4	Minimal comprehension; many basic question forms unknown; minimal development.
5-7	Limited comprehension; basic question forms generally known but little beyond; limited development of resources.
8-10	Adequate level of comprehension; responds appropriately to basic question forms but experiences problems with more complex question forms and structures; adequate development.
11-13	Copes with a variety or wide variety of question forms although more complex forms pose problems at times; generally good to very good development of responses.
14-16	Excellent level of comprehension; responds at a consistently high level to a wide range of complex and challenging question forms; excellent development.

Part 2 Exemplar material

AS Unit 1 specimen tests and commentaries

Candidate 1

Lifestyle: health and fitness – sample stimulus 2



Comments on the oral assessment

Section A: the teacher/examiner correctly asks all four compulsory questions without rephrasing or adding subsidiary questions, allowing time for the candidate to develop answers as much as possible.

[Time: 2 minutes 40 seconds]

Section B: when the candidate has obviously finished her answer to the last question of Section A, the teacher/examiner clearly indicates that this phase of the examination is over (*bon, alors, on va passer à autre chose...*) and asks what can be described as a transitional question about whether the drinking of alcohol should also be banned in public places. Although the subtopic of alcohol can be linked to a different general topic area (Youth culture and concerns), it is also appropriate here as a health and fitness issue. It was perhaps unwise, however, to ask another question based on the banning of alcohol on the London Underground. He then steers the conversation onto the subject of obesity in society which clearly comes under the subtopic of Food and diet; this leads to a discussion about the choices people make in terms of nutrition. Anorexia is then mentioned. A relevant personal question is asked (*est-ce que vous personnellement, vous faites attention à votre santé?*) followed by a discussion on the importance of sport and exercise (another related subtopic) in schools. The final question goes back to diet in schools and was perhaps not necessary at this stage.

[Total time: 10 minutes 15 seconds]

Assessment feedback

Quality of language (Accuracy)

Pronunciation and intonation are generally good. Errors are fairly rare (*bénéficié; ce sont très hauts; papier; on poit; on le doit interdire; diminuire*) and often corrected by the candidate herself.

Mark band: 6-7

Quality of language (Range of Lexis)

There is a good range of lexis and plenty of examples of more complex structures (*buraliste; leurs ventes en baisse; c'est le problème le plus grave; seront; auront; je sais qu'il y a des écoles qui n'encouragent pas...; leur préoccupation la plus importante; on n'a pas assez de temps pour...*)

Mark band: 6-7

Response

All language used by the candidate is spontaneous. She is able to respond readily to all questions and although she could have developed some answers further, she is able to sustain discourse very well throughout the examination.

Mark band: 17-20

Understanding (Stimulus specific)

All prescribed questions are answered and the stimulus is obviously well understood.

Mark: 4

Understanding (General topic area)

The candidate is at ease discussing most of the issues raised. Quite a few relevant ideas and opinions are expressed.

Mark band: 7-8

Candidate 2

Education and employment – sample stimulus 2



Comments on the oral assessment

Section A: all four compulsory questions are asked. The teacher/examiner introduces minor changes to the phrasing (adding ‘*est-ce que*’ in question 2 and ‘*à votre avis*’ in question 3) which **must be avoided**.

[Time: 4 minutes 15 seconds]

Section B: the teacher/examiner makes it clear that Section is A over by saying ‘*bon, on va passer à autre chose maintenant*’. A personal question is asked about university choices, followed by a discussion on the financing of further education, student debt and the British government’s target of sending 50 per cent of young people to university. Another personal question is asked about job opportunities, leading to a short discussion on the world of work and reasons for youth unemployment. All these subjects are subtopics of the general topic area chosen by the candidate. The total time taken is too long, but this is partly due to the fact that the teacher/examiner wanted to allow the candidate to complete his last point. Apart from two personal questions which are used to introduce new subtopics, all questions require the candidate to provide a reaction and to express his thoughts and ideas on the subjects raised.

[Total time: 11 minutes 23 seconds]

Assessment feedback

Quality of language (Accuracy)

There are quite a few errors of all kinds (*préférer de; ont obteni; ont beson; un course; les persons; bénévolement; un chose très bon; je ne pas penser; travail difficile de trouver; les mieux persons; beaucoup des gens; à le seize*) but these errors do not impede communication.

Mark band: 4-5

Quality of language (Range of Lexis)

The candidate really tries (not always successfully) to build complex sentences and uses a good range of lexis (*cibler; je crois fermement que...; c’est la raison pour laquelle; la vie urbaine; l’apathie; qui n’ont guère; il est nécessaire que nous allions*).

Mark band: 6-7

Response

The candidate’s language is often quite hesitant (probably as he is trying very hard to use complex language which is a little beyond his competence at times). It is all spontaneous but lacking in fluency. The development of answers is adequate but often laborious or lacking in focus.

Mark band: 9-12

Understanding (Stimulus specific)

The candidate has obviously understood the stimulus and he deals very well with the first two questions. However, his answers to questions 3 and 4 are somewhat wordy and lacking in focus at times.

Mark: 3

Understanding (General topic area)

A number of ideas are expressed, but these remain fairly limited.

Mark band: 5-6

Candidate 3

Youth culture and concerns – sample stimulus 2



Comments on the oral assessment

Section A: all four compulsory questions are, as required, asked without any rephrasing. The teacher/examiner allows ample time for the candidate to provide fully developed answers.

[Time: 2 minutes 30 seconds]

Section B: the teacher/examiner challenges the candidate about young people's freedom which produces a series of questions about the relationship between parents and their children. This leads to many questions about friends, friendship, peer groups, trust, and the opposite sex. All these are subtopics of the general topic area chosen by the candidate. The teacher/examiner has to work fairly hard to draw reactions from the candidate and to encourage her to develop her answers. Whilst all questions follow on naturally from what the candidate says, there are one or two closed questions which should be avoided.

[Total time: 9 minutes 20 seconds]

Assessment feedback

Quality of language (Accuracy)

There are relatively few errors (*ils ne peut pas; ils ne jamais dit; il n'a pas rien à dire; énergétique*) and accent and intonation are of a good standard.

Mark band: 6-7

Quality of language (Range of Lexis)

There are some examples of more complex structures (*ça ne stimule pas; à eux-mêmes*) and there is an awareness of the correct use of some tenses (for example the imperfect tense), but the range of lexis remains fairly limited.

Mark band: 4-5

Response

A difficult performance to assess. There are instances of very fluent discourse, the candidate has no difficulty in understanding any of the questions asked, but on many occasions the development of responses is disappointing.

Mark band: in between 9-12 and 13-16

Understanding (Stimulus specific)

The candidate provides good answers to the first two questions. Her answers to questions 3 and 4 are acceptable but could have been developed further (question 3 in particular). She shows good understanding of the stimulus, but the shortness of her answers to questions 3 and 4 prevents her from being awarded the top mark in this section of the assessment.

Mark: 3

Understanding (General topic area)

One cannot escape the feeling that this candidate could have expressed many more ideas and opinions because, when she does (for example when replying to the question about the possibility of friendship with members of the opposite sex), it can be quite convincing.

Mark band: 5-6

Candidate 4

The world around us – sample stimulus 1



Comments on the oral assessment

Section A: the four compulsory questions are asked. The teacher/examiner quickly goes on to question 2 as the candidate seems to be about to answer it as part of his answer to question 1. This section comes to an end very quickly as the candidate's answers are very short. Students should be trained to provide detailed and full answers whenever possible.

[Time: 1 minute 54 seconds]

Section B: this section begins with a question about the possible impact of climate change on tourism and whether it will still be possible to travel as much. The candidate struggles to understand and to respond. Other subtopics raised by the teacher/examiner are transport (taxes on flights, the congestion charge), pollution (possible ways of alleviating it, recycling, actions by individuals). When the candidate misunderstands a question it is rephrased in a simpler way or the teacher/examiner swiftly moves on to another topic.

[Total time: 9 minutes 45 seconds]

Assessment feedback

Quality of language (Accuracy)

There are many errors of all kinds (*passage* for *paysage*; *un bon chose*; *cet pays*; *le Norde*; *plus bien*; *de le chose*; *si ils mettrent*; *chose qui aider*; *tu ne pas dois*, etc).

There are occasions when the errors impede communication.

Mark band: 2-3

Quality of language (Range of Lexis)

Lexis is restricted and the candidate operates generally in simple sentences.

Mark band: 2-3

Response

The candidate has some problems of comprehension, he does not always answer the questions which are asked and only provides limited development.

Mark band: 5-8

Understanding (Stimulus specific)

There is some understanding of the stimulus and the candidate just about provides acceptable basic answers to the first two questions. However, the answer to question 3 is very short, and he does not really answer question 4.

Mark: 1

Understanding (General topic area)

The candidate's first reaction is often to say '*Je ne sais pas...*'. He does eventually manage to express a few relevant ideas and the beginnings of some opinions, but it remains very sketchy and superficial.

Mark band: 3-4

List of suggested questions for use in the AS Unit 1 Oral Test Section B

Listed below are indications of the type of questions teacher/examiners might use in Section B of the AS Unit 1 speaking test.

In Section B of the AS Unit 1 test, the teacher/examiner should develop a discussion about the general topic area chosen by the student. This discussion should move away from the focus of the stimulus used in Section A to the general topic area and its linked subtopics. There is no requirement to cover all of the subtopics. The teacher/examiner may choose one or more of these subtopics for discussion. The number of subtopics covered will depend on the student's response and the student may have more opportunity to demonstrate the extent of his or her knowledge and linguistic ability through a thorough discussion on one or two subtopics than a superficial discussion of several.

Section B will last for not less than 4 minutes, as part of the overall test which lasts 8-10 minutes.

These questions are not prescriptive, but indicate the type of question that a teacher/examiner might ask. An example is given for each of the prescribed subtopics. Open questions should be used where possible in order to elicit a full response from the candidate.

The general principle of the discussion should always be to start by asking more straightforward, accessible questions and then to move on to questions that can progressively take students towards their 'linguistic ceiling'. The teacher/examiner should encourage the student to expand his or her answers and to give reasons for his or her opinions.

Students will have chosen to be tested on one of the following general topic areas and their subtopics, as listed on page 22 of the specification.

- **Youth culture and concerns**
 - Music and fashion
 - Technology (eg MP3/blogs/mobile phones/internet/games)
 - Relationships (family/friendships and peer pressure)
 - Drink, drugs, sex
- **Lifestyle: health and fitness**
 - Sport and exercise
 - Food and diet
 - Health issues (eg smoking, skin cancer, health services)
- **The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the French-speaking world**
 - Tourist information, travel and transport
 - Weather (eg natural disasters, climate change)
 - Pollution and recycling
- **Education and employment**
 - Education (schooling and higher education)
 - Education policy and student issues
 - The world of work (eg the changing work scene, job opportunities and unemployment)

Youth culture and concerns

Music and fashion

Do you think that young people spend too much money on music/fashion?

Pensez-vous que les jeunes dépensent trop d'argent en produits de la mode et de la musique?

Technology (eg MP3/blogs/mobile phones/internet/games)

What are the advantages and disadvantages of technology?

Quels sont les avantages et les désavantages de la technologie électronique?

Relationships (family/friendships and peer pressure)

Who has more influence on young people, family or friends?

Qui a plus d'influence sur les jeunes, la famille ou les amis?

Drink, drugs, sex

Why do young people smoke/take drugs/drink alcohol?

Pourquoi est-ce que les jeunes fument/se droguent/boivent de l'alcool?

Lifestyle: health and fitness

Sport and exercise

What role does sport play in society today?

Quel rôle est-ce que le sport joue dans la société actuelle?

Food and diet

Do you think that it is important to eat a healthy diet?

Pensez-vous qu'il soit important de manger sain?

Health issues (eg smoking, skin cancer, health services)

Are you for or against the smoking ban in public places in the UK?

Êtes-vous pour ou contre l'interdiction du tabac dans les lieux publics au Royaume-Uni?

The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the French-speaking world

Tourist information, travel and transport

Do you often travel abroad?

Voyagez-vous souvent à l'étranger?

Weather (eg natural disasters, climate change)

People often travel these days. Do you think that this affects the climate?

On voyage beaucoup de nos jours. Pensez-vous que cela altère le climat?

Pollution and recycling

Are young people interested in the environment?

Est-ce que les jeunes s'intéressent aux problèmes de l'environnement?

Education and employment

Education (schooling and higher education)

Which are the most important school subjects?

Quelles sont les matières scolaires les plus importantes?

Education policy and student issues

Do you agree that students should pay for university education?

Êtes-vous d'accord que les étudiants paient pour aller à l'université?

The world of work (eg the changing work scene, job opportunities and unemployment)

Which professions are (un)popular today?

Quels sont les métiers les plus/moins populaires de nos jours?

A2 Unit 3 specimen tests and commentaries

Candidate 5



Comments on the oral assessment

The teacher/examiner invites the candidate to present his stance on the chosen issue (*contre l'intervention des pays occidentaux dans les pays du Moyen Orient*).

After a forceful presentation of stance by the candidate (which was very slightly too long), the teacher/examiner challenged this point of view by claiming that intervention was necessary in the circumstances.

On six occasions, the teacher/examiner challenges what the candidate says in a fairly robust manner which forces the candidate to acknowledge arguments, to develop his position and to reaffirm his opinions by bringing in further evidence.

The teacher/examiner brings the discussion to a close after slightly more than the required five minutes, gently interrupting the candidate as soon as it was convenient and after allowing him to complete his last point.

The teacher/examiner then asks a transitional question about Iran and nuclear energy and weaponry. This might be considered almost too close to the initial issue, but the discussion is soon steered towards the general pros and cons of nuclear energy and its use as a means to fight against global warming. Natural links are used thereafter to consider the issues of renewable energy sources, bio-fuels, and personal responsibility in matters of ecology. Throughout this conversation, the teacher/examiner maintains a mildly challenging stance, always responding to what the candidate says.

The discussion is brought to a close after 12 minutes 30 seconds.

Assessment feedback

Response

There is a high frequency of spontaneous discourse. The range of lexis and structures is mostly very good (*nous aurions dû intervenir; gérer d'une façon plus responsable; les laisser mûrir; c'est pourquoi on ne devrait pas; aussi bien qu'ils auraient pu; quant aux...*). The candidate is at ease with abstract concepts (eg rights, justification, responsibility).

Mark band: 17-20

Quality of language

The performance is not totally free of mistakes (*avons intervenu; dans Iraq; le chauffage; tant de la...*) but errors are usual minor and fairly infrequent. Pronunciation and intonation are very good, in spite of some lapses (*ku for que, douleur for douleur*).

Mark: 5

Reading and research

There could have been more direct evidence of reading and research, but it is evident that the candidate is well informed on all or almost all of the issues raised. More detail could have been provided, but the candidate's general knowledge and awareness of world issues suggest that he is a regular reader of/listener to a variety of media.

Mark band: 5-6

Comprehension and development

The candidate had no difficulty understanding any of the teacher/examiner's questions. Although it might be argued that these were not necessarily very complex, they were often quite challenging. The development of answers was mostly good or very good, although there was a small amount of repetition in the original issue.

Mark band: 14-16

Candidate 6



Comments on the oral assessment

The teacher/examiner invites the candidate to present his stance on the issue (*pour la chasse à courre*). The candidate speaks for about 45 seconds and is subject to a fairly robust grilling during which seven questions are asked, mainly to do with the unnecessary cruelty of the sport, its inefficiency as a pest control exercise and its social aspects.

The candidate often struggles to respond to these challenges, in spite of the fact that he should have anticipated them.

After five and a half minutes, the teacher/examiner asks a question about vegetarianism, having first established a link between hunting and a love of meat. He then goes on to tackle related subjects such as obesity, diet in schools and parental responsibility for children's diet. He links this to other aspects of parental responsibility with regards to youth violence. Also considered are the role of the media, the possible need for censorship and the efficiency of the police. It might be considered that the teacher/examiner raises too many different issues, but this could be explained by the relative lack of response on most of these by the candidate. The teacher/examiner tries to give as many opportunities as possible for the candidate to produce developed answers within the time given.

The teacher/examiner closes the discussion after 13 minutes 45 seconds (slightly too long), having allowed the candidate to finish expressing his last point.

Assessment feedback

Response

There is some spontaneous discourse and a very limited amount of good lexis and structures. This was, unfortunately, often (but not always) restricted to the initial issue (*tradition séculaire; la mise à mort; je crois que oui; alimentation équilibrée, notre organisme*). There was not much evidence of use of abstract language.

Mark band: 5-8

Quality of language

There were quite a few basic errors, particularly to do with poor conjugation and pronunciation (*ils écoutant; ils croyont; qui ne pouvant; ils se sent; ça vais; qui s'augmente; point de voix*, etc).

Mark: 3

Reading and research

Apart from a limited amount of knowledge about the first issue, there was not a great deal of substance or detail offered on a number of issues raised. On two occasions the candidate admitted that he did not know or had no relevant ideas.

Mark: 4

Comprehension and development

The candidate understood most questions (although he obviously did not grasp the question about censorship of the media), but the main problem was one of lack development in his answers. Perhaps the teacher/examiner should have allowed the candidate more time to compose fuller answers, but it is debatable whether this would have produced a better quality performance.

Mark band: 8-10

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