

A-level

FRENCH

Unit 2 Speaking
Report on the Examination

FRE2T/V
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Administration of FRE2T

The recording of tests was of a high quality in most cases and the vast majority of schools and colleges are now submitting tests on either CDs or memory sticks. It should be noted that cassettes are no longer an acceptable medium for the recorded storage of tests. In a small number of cases the positioning of the microphone or recording device meant that students' responses were less clear than examiners' questions and there was also a significant number of tests conducted in areas where background noise and general disruption were a major distraction.

Overall most teacher-examiners respected the correct allocation of time to the different parts of the test and to the different topics within Part 2. Students should be reminded that their "target" time for dealing with the printed questions is between two and two and a half minutes; where this takes significantly longer – and there were some cases where the entire five minutes were taken up with the printed questions – the marks allocated to the general discussion can be adversely affected. Teacher-examiners are reminded that it is the student's utterances that are important and that as little time as possible should be taken up with the asking of questions. It is important that these are concise and clear and it is entirely inappropriate for every student response to be commented upon by the teacher-examiner e.g. "*Oui, c'est tout à fait vrai ce que vous venez de dire. Je suis tout à fait d'accord*".

Part 1: stimulus cards

A few teacher-examiners repeated and paraphrased questions or inserted extra questions in the first section, not realising that the requirement here is to cover the questions, as printed, and not to elicit any additional points. A number of students spent too long giving detailed descriptions of the pictures and repeating the text, in some cases taking almost a full minute on this question alone. For the most part, however, there were many extremely thoughtful and detailed responses, but all students need to appreciate the importance of developing a wide range of points in all answers to Questions 2-5. They should also appreciate the importance of focusing on the precise wording of the set questions to ensure their answers are totally relevant.

Card A

The first question often showed that students had either not read the text closely enough or failed to understand its meaning, thinking that the mother was advocating restrictions on children's viewing, rather than the opposite, which then resulted in some rather confused and confusing answers to Question 2. Some students just picked out programmes containing violence for Question 3, with some justification, but did not spot that the question was asking for more than one type and answers therefore lacked development of a wide range of points. Some students did not appreciate that Question 4 required a personal response and talked about the role of television in society in general terms. Others dismissed its insignificant role a little too quickly by saying they had too much homework and revision to do to watch it!. A few students gave a personal answer to the final question, mistaking *nous regardons* for *vous regardez*, but better answers looked at its impact on the social life, education and health of different age groups.

Card B

Performances were rather mixed with some excellent answers to the set questions, although responses to the first two questions occasionally showed that students had not quite grasped the full import of the text. A few students spent more time listing types of films they disliked rather than those they preferred for Question 3. Answers to Question 4 elicited a wide variety of films, although, here again, some students failed to appreciate what was being asked and just talked about the qualities of a good film, which then led to some repetition in Question 5.

Card C

A significant number of students did not study the text closely enough and just honed in on the words *l'importance de manger équilibré* which impacted on their responses to both Question 1 and Question 2. Most students appeared very health conscious when explaining their personal eating and drinking habits in Question 3, though some were very honest about their own weaknesses! A few took this as a general question about things that should form part of a healthy diet. Not all students understood Question 4 but better answers looked at a variety of pros and cons for different categories of people. All students were able to give a reasonable response to the final question.

Card D

Answers to Question 1 were frequently poor. Many students did not take account of the phrases *aura une vie d'adulte* and *problèmes plus tard*, while others tended to repeat all or part of the text and answers to the second question demonstrated that they had not really grasped the full significance of the card. Some students started talking about one-parent families rather than only children. Most students had no difficulty listing many causes for arguments between siblings, though a little more development of points would have been better at times. There were some very thoughtful answers to Question 4 but also a few responses where students did themselves no favours by being unnecessarily brief, stating that the ideal family does not exist and there will always be arguments! A few students did not quite grasp the final question and just talked about the qualities of a good parent, which often led to some repetition in the discussion element.

Card E

The majority of students coped well with the first two questions, though over-reliance on the text was sometimes noticeable in initial answers. Answers to Question 3 were generally detailed and wide-ranging in the opinions expressed, but several students just looked at how advertising influences people generally. In some cases there was insufficient focus on *techniques* in responses to Question 4, though most answers here were thoughtful and well-illustrated. All students were able to suggest some positive and negative points for the final question.

Card F

A minority of students failed to summarise the card appropriately and there were some interesting attempts to describe the picture! Most students agreed with the text, though a few made no reference to music whatsoever when answering Question 2. All students handled the remaining questions well, illustrating the importance of music in their lives.

Part 2: conversation

It was particularly noticeable this year that, for their nominated topic, a considerable number of students were still being invited to give a mini-presentation, meticulously prepared, with teacher-examiners pretending that this was all totally spontaneous. This is very easily spotted by those assessing the tests. Some teacher-examiners did not offer enough opportunities to students to “react spontaneously in developing ideas” and this adversely affected the marks because of too heavy an emphasis on purely factual information, more GCSE style than AS. In general the variety and depth of questions was to be applauded. Considerable thought had gone into preparing non-standard questions, and listening skills were much in evidence, too, as many examiners followed up on responses and asked for clarification, exhibiting good practice and ensuring that a high level of debate was maintained throughout. By and large examiners kept up a good pace and asked succinct, appropriate, sometimes hypothetical questions (even probing questions on topical issues, such as the recent vote on gay marriage in the French Parliament) and showed patience and respect in allowing their students time to develop their views and opinions, but a few confused them (especially the less able ones) by asking over-involved questions and/or offering alternatives.

Some examiners are more overtly relaxed and encouraging than others, but most remained calm and good-humoured and allowed students time to respond. There was a valid need sometimes to intervene, either to prevent pre-learnt responses or to move the discussion on.

Knowledge of Grammar (AO3)

There were very few really poor performances, with most being reasonable and many where students demonstrated an impressive grasp of a wide range of vocabulary and structures, which they used to good effect to develop their ideas and opinions in a mature and spontaneous manner. Some of the recurrent errors made are listed below:

- Conjugation of verbs – *elles avoir ils choisent il pris elle devenira il a mangerai nous sommes regardons*
- Verb + infinitive and misuse of prepositions after the verb – *on peut achète elle devrait a j'aime d'être je veux de travailler*
- Confusion between *avoir, être, il y a* and *faire* – *elle a jolie j'étais 13 ans il y a amusant il est chaud*
- Impersonal verbs – *les parents faut écouter le texte s'agit de...*
- Tense usage – *quand + future si + imperfect, main verb conditional*
- Subjunctive constructions (or not) – *je veux mes enfants d'avoir jusqu'ils sont avant il est plus âgé j'espère que je sois malgré les portables sont*
- Passive – *je suis permette de les pubs devraient interdire*
- Negatives – *il n'est cher pas ils n'ont pas personne rien des disputes aucun de temps*
- Expressions of quantity – *très/trop beaucoup beaucoup de l'argent c'est trop moins cher*
- Reflexive pronouns - *je s'entends bien nous pouvons s'amuser*
- Emphatic and direct object pronouns – *avec ils il épaulera moi je voudrais aider elle*
- Possessives - *ma père m'amis son famille ils...ses*
- Adjectives and adverbs – *un rythme vite un mal régime les seulement films ils téléchargent illégal*
- Comparisons – *plus bon plus mieux* and confusion between *de* and *que*
- Prepositions - *à + le(s) de + le(s) sur le weekend sur la télé*
- Participles – *par+ infin. used instead of present participle; confusion over past and present participles – stressant/stressé fatigant/fatigué*
- Confusion with - *parce que/à cause de penser à/de jouer à/de qui/que temps/fois magasins/magazines humeur/humour raconter/rencontrer chose/choix savoir/ connaître avant / devant très/trop/plus/beaucoup assez/aussi*
- Faux amis - *avertissement effectif actuellement prévenir*
- Invented words – *promoter advertiser impressionner provider expecter restricter*
- Influence of English - *avoir un bon temps quelqu'un à parler avec quelque chose que j'ai besoin de*

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.