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Edexcel

Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
In French (8FR0) Paper 03  
Speaking

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## **Conduct of the exam**

On the whole, Teacher-Examiners (TEs) performed their role well, and there were some excellent examples of spontaneous discussion, in which TEs probed for further information at appropriate moments (e.g. Qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire par x?; Vous avez mentionné X – c'est quoi exactement?), inviting candidates to demonstrate the requirements of the AO4 grid. Many TEs showed an understanding of the need to remain with the French context for Task 1, and the Francophone context for Task 2, as their questioning steered candidates appropriately.

However there were also some examples of TEs who seemed to follow a set list of questions, which is not at all in the spirit of the exam, nor does it help to promote a 'spontaneous' exchange. TEs should ensure that they adopt an approach of listening carefully to what the student says, and probing for more information, or asking related questions until a particular area has been discussed sufficiently before moving on to a different aspect.

Most TEs asked questions as they appeared on the stimulus cards, yet some added additional questions in between the compulsory questions, which is not allowed. Centres are reminded that all compulsory questions (i.e. questions 1 - 4 for Task 1 and questions 1 and 2 for Task 2) must be asked exactly as they appear on the cards (although TEs may change from the 'vous' to the 'tu' form if preferred), with no rephrasing and no additional questions in between. Only when these compulsory questions have been addressed may the TE begin asking more spontaneous questions in line with the specification guidance. TEs who do not adhere to this guidance may adversely affect the performance of candidates.

## Commentary on stimulus cards

Centres are reminded that the Task 1 mark grid AO2 addresses the responses to questions 1-3 only. With 12 marks available, this mark grid is of great importance, and there is scope for candidates of all abilities to improve their performance in this area by focussing on a few key aspects, as described below:

### Task 1:

- Question 1 will always elicit a summary of Text 1, and the best performances will identify the key points, without solely relying on repeating the language of the stimulus. There should be attempts to express the key ideas in the candidate's own words, employing synonyms as appropriate and manipulating language.
- Question 2 will always elicit comprehension of an element of Text 1. Candidates should be reminded that there is no need to provide a personal opinion here but to look for the response in the text. It is fairly common for candidates to provide the answer to question 2 in their response to question 1, but if this happens it is important that candidates reiterate the relevant part of that answer when responding to question 2. They may wish to prefix their response with something along the lines of 'Comme je viens d'expliquer'... or 'comme j'ai déjà dit ...'.
- Question 3 will always make reference to Text 2, or it might be a comparison of Texts 1 and 2. It will often invite candidates to state if they agree with the short statement in the second text. Candidates should be ready to explain in detail why they agree or disagree and to justify their opinions. Often the best responses here provide a balanced answer, weighing up the different aspects surrounding the question. Many candidates tend to offer fairly brief or vague responses for question 3, which can limit their AO2 mark.
- Question 4 elicits a personal response, based on an aspect of the sub-theme (i.e. candidates should ideally not make direct reference to the stimulus card at this stage of the exam). The best performances here tend to give a balanced consideration, with specific examples and evidence from the French context, and draw some sort of conclusion. It may help candidates to think of structuring their response here as they would a mini discursive essay (e.g. on the one hand.../ on the other hand .../ all things considered, I believe...). This is one example of how candidates might recycle set phrases, helping to give structure and clarity to their spontaneous response.

### Task 2:

Candidates should be reminded that the language of the two bullet points on the candidate card very closely mirrors the question on the TE's card. With this in mind, candidates should be able to prepare appropriately before the beginning of the assessment. Candidates should ensure that their answers are appropriate to the question, rather than just speaking generally in response to a key word or phrase in the question.

### Task 1 cards

**FR1:** On the whole candidates summarised this card fairly well. However, some candidates struggled to correctly identify the section of the text ('les divorces à l'amiable') in response to question 2, with many making untargeted lifts which did

not answer the question.

**FR2:** Candidate performance here was mixed, with some failing to clearly communicate the difference between the marrying age of those born in the post-war period compared to that of those born between 1978 – 1982. There were many good responses to question 2.

**FR3:** Most candidates understood the key issues of the text, although some didn't clearly specify in response to question 2 that Blanquer was confident of the project's success given the existence of successful projects in other schools.

**FR4:** Many candidates understood the key implications of this text, and most correctly identified the commonalities between France and Holland.

**FR5:** There were some good performances here, but for question 2 some candidates incorrectly attributed the key factor to literacy, whereas in fact it was the participation of women in politics.

**FR6:** Most candidates were able to articulate the key ideas of the text, but some failed to give a correct response to question 2, which elicited the problem which affected workers the least.

## **Task 2 cards**

**FR7:** It was pleasing to hear candidates cite a range of artists from various genres and traditions, and from different parts of the Francophone world. The best responses offered detail and analysis about the impact of music on culture (e.g. some referenced the rabble-raising qualities of contemporary rap music), rather than simply stating the names of artists or policies, without discussion/ justification.

**FR8:** Again, many candidates were able to offer examples of artists from across the Francophone world, but with varying degrees of detail and analysis. Many candidates cited the role of English as a challenge, and the 'Loi Toubon' was mentioned in almost all responses. Some candidates included interesting details, for example mentioning the changes in the quota from 40% to 35%, or explaining the history of the law and giving a personal reaction to it.

**FR9:** Most candidates tended to argue that the future of the press was digital, and that the 'presse écrite' was in decline. Stronger candidates were able to give detail about different papers, including the regional press which seems to be bucking the trend. Many candidates cited 'les fausses nouvelles' as an issue to be tackled in the future.

**FR10:** Many candidates made reference to 'Charlie Hebdo', with varying degrees of success. Some merely stated briefly what had happened in the attack, which did not answer the question, whilst others were able to join the dots between the 2015 attack and the implications for 'la liberté d'expression'. Some candidates struggled to remain within the Francophone context here.

**FR11:** There were some at times vague descriptions of festivals in Francophone

countries. Better candidates linked the decline in religious practice in France or the influence of the US's traditions with the possible changes.

**FR12:** This card was chosen by a minority of candidates who tended to link customs and traditions with local and national identity. Weaker candidates focused on 'la bise' here which did not give them much scope to expand or develop conclusions.

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

### **AO1 Interaction**

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

At times, candidates asked rather too many questions of their TEs, which sometimes made the exchange appear contrived. On a practical note, some candidates need to practise the language required to ask questions, as there were frequently basic errors such as 'Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de ça?' and 'Est-ce que vous d'accord avec moi?'

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

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

However, there were a significant number of candidates who failed to conjugate basic verbs accurately, or to make basic adjective agreements, which severely limited their AO3 mark and in the most extreme of cases, impaired the message.

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

- Adjective agreements
- Verb conjugations (e.g. le texte parler de)
- Use of infinitives after modal verbs (e.g. je peux choisi/ ils devraient fait)
- Use of 's'agit' (le texte s'agit de/ ils inquietent s'agit l'egalite)
- Conjugation and pronunciation of 'pouvoir' and 'choisir'
- Anglicisms (e.g. il est très focusé/ accéder/ les issues)
- Confusion between 'de' and 'des' (e.g. beaucoup des femmes travaillent)
- Pronunciation difficulties (e.g. pays, jeunes, gens, femmes, PACS, danger, inacceptable, particulière, gouvernement, selon, parce que, beaucoup, trop, temps, couples, amour, idée, lycée)
- Absence of articles (e.g. artistes comme Stromae est populaire/ France est un pays interessant)
- Nouns used as adjectives (e.g. le festival est tradition)

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

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

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

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

There was some good knowledge demonstrated, particularly about PACS, the 'mariage pour tous' and different family types. Strong candidates or attentive TEs made frequent reference to the French context, offering specific examples and, where appropriate, statistics to support their views.

### **L'éducation:**

Many candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of the French system and there were a wide range of matters discussed, from the different types of Bac to the competitive system of the Grandes Écoles. Several candidates alluded to Macron's education reform and gave details of the changes to the Bac.

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

Some candidates were aware of specific French-related work issues, with many making reference to notable strikes throughout history, and almost all referenced the 'gilets jaunes' protests. Candidates should be reminded of the need to consider the significance of the various developments in the world of work, rather than just listing events.

### **La musique:**

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

### **Les médias:**

Performances varied quite considerably on this sub-theme. There were some relevant ideas, e.g. the Charlie Hebdo attack or the implications of the Loi Gayssot, but in some instances candidates hadn't reflected on the significance in the Francophone context.

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

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

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## **Administrative matters**

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

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

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

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