



Pearson

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In French (6FR01) Paper 1A and 1B

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The test is divided into two sections.

SECTION A

This requires students to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the student's chosen general topic area. The teacher/examiner will first ask two questions about the general content of the stimulus and will then follow on with two other questions that invite students to express their opinions on, or give reactions to, the stimulus (Specification September 2007, p 9)

As usual, the majority of students chose to speak on either "Lifestyle: Health and Fitness" or "Youth Culture and Concerns". A few opted for "The World Around Us" and a very small number answered questions on "Education and Employment".

Most centres ran this part of the test very effectively. Only a very few examiners rephrased questions, asked supplementary questions or missed out set questions.

The first two questions

These always relate to the direct content of the stimulus and normally require relatively short answers. A partial lift or lifts with a small amount of manipulation and/or paraphrasing are usually sufficient to provide acceptable answers. Many students produced accurate answers. Some produced partial answers. Only a small number of students developed their answers too much by expressing personal opinions which are not required at this stage. When Q1 was "*De quoi s'agit-il dans ce texte*" this could cause problems. The impersonal construction was misused in the answer or/and students struggled to give a short summary of the text.

Questions 3 and 4

These two questions are open-ended as students are required to give reactions to and opinions about the general content and issues raised by the stimulus.

Students are expected to give developed and detailed answers, demonstrating that they have done some research and some thinking about the issues raised. Many students produced excellent answers which amounted to mini-speeches or mini-debates with themselves, during which they considered different aspects of the issues raised, comparing and contrasting viewpoints, expressing a considered opinion and justifying their standpoint. This is a demanding part of the test during which examiners must remain silent. It requires students to have been trained in giving this kind of answer and also to anticipate, during the 15 minute preparation time, what they might be asked to express. Most students now realise what is required in this part of the test, although a few this session still restricted their answers to information contained in the stimulus. Some obviously able and fluent students produced disappointingly short answers and did not score maximum marks.

Assessment: Understanding (Stimulus Specific)

Answers to all four questions are marked globally. There is no detailed mark scheme for each question. Indeed, there are different, acceptable ways of answering these questions, even the first two. Brief but correct answers would normally be awarded a mark of 2/4. Most students scored at least 2/4 and many students were able to develop their answers sufficiently to be awarded 3 or 4 out of 4.

Topic area: YOUTH CULTURE AND CONCERNS

Stimulus card 1 (« **La famille change** »)

Q1 - Most students were able to give a satisfactory answer, although it could be lengthy and repetitive at times

Q2 - Usually well answered, sometimes in the course of answering Q1

Q3(a) - Students often repeated elements contained in the stimulus text. Few mentioned any disadvantages of living with grandparents

Q3(b) - Some students found it difficult to move away from the relationship with grandparents

Q4(a) - Many good answers were heard

Q4(b) - A productive question in the main. Students were obviously well-prepared to talk about single parent and reconstituted families.

Stimulus card 2 (« **Le tatouage, la mode et les ados** »)

Q1 - Most students were able to produce a satisfactory answer

Q2 - Not all students understood "*arrivent-ils à se faire tatouer*". A partial answer was often produced.

Q3(a) - This produced many good often well-balanced answers.

Q3(b) - Usually answered in the negative with a degree of indignation.

Q4(a) - Some students found it difficult to move away from the topic of tattoos

Q4(b) - Many students had obviously been well-prepared for such a question and produced lengthy and heart-felt answers.

Stimulus card 3 (« **La drogue chez les jeunes** »)

Q1 - A concise summary such as "*Il s'agit des raisons pour lesquelles les adolescents se droguent*" was rare.

Q2 - Most students answered this question satisfactorily

Q3(a) - A difficult question, often misunderstood

Q3(b) - Many good answers heard from well prepared students

Q4(a) - A very productive question for stressed adolescents

Q4(b) - There was often a lack of focus in answers when students did not understand "*préoccupe*"

Topic Area: LIFESTYLE: HEALTH AND FITNESS

Stimulus card 1 (« **Le sport – Pourquoi ?** »)

Q1 - Once again, students found it hard to give a concise answer and resorted to multiple lifts from the text.

Q2 - Some students found the phrasing of this question difficult. Again, there was a lot of lifting from the text.
Q3(a) - Many good answers heard from well-prepared students
Q3(b) - See above comments
Q4(a) - Answers were often restricted to footballers. "*trop bien*" was not always understood
Q4(b) - Many good answers heard.

Stimulus card 2 (« **Pour un meilleurs sommeil...** »)

Q1 - Many students simply paraphrased the whole text.
Q2 - Not all students heard the negative. This question produced a lot of repetition and also lifting from the text.
Q3(a) - Some good answers were heard but many students found it hard to develop their answers.
Q3(b) - Beyond agreeing with the advice, students again struggled to develop
Q4(a) - "*Élémentaires*" was often confused with "*alimentaires*", giving too narrow a focus to answers
Q4(b) - The few students who had to answer this question did not understand "*empêche de s'occuper*" and therefore struggled.

Stimulus card 3 (« **Les ados se nourrissent mieux** »)

Q1 - Most students failed to produce a concise summary such as "*Il s'agit des changements dans le régime adopté par les jeunes*"
Q2 - Some students missed the negative or gave a partial answer only.
Q3(a) - This idea obviously came as a surprise to some who struggled to justify their answer
Q3(b) - This tended to produce descriptions of a bad diet rather than reasons for it.
Q4(a) - A productive question. Students had been well prepared for such.
Q4(b) - See above

Topic Area: THE WORLD AROUND US

Stimulus card 1 (« **La voiture électrique** »)

Q1 - A few struggled to produce a concise answer such as « *parce que la plupart des gens veulent utiliser un moyen de transport qui ne pollue pas* »
Q2 - The few who answered this question were able to say why.
Q3(a) - Students struggled to develop their answer
Q3(b) - Most students were able to mention the pros and cons of electric cars.
Q4(a) - Normally answered in the negative and producing well-developed answers
Q4(b) - A reasonably productive question for the few students who were faced with it

Stimulus card 2 (« **La planète en péril !** »)

Q1 - This required a difficult summary such as "*Il s'agit des différences entre les pays riches et les pays pauvres en ce qui concerne l'accès aux informations sur le changement climatique*" Few managed it.

- Q2 - The second part of the answer relied on understanding "*personnes illettrées*" which caused some difficulty
- Q3(a) - A standard question which produced acceptable answers
- Q3(b) - See above
- Q4(a) - See above
- Q4(b) - Not all students took account of the use of the future in « *sera* »

Stimulus card 3 (« ***Vacances éthiques*** »)

Sadly, hardly any students were tested on this card. No comments were received from examiners.

Topic Area: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Stimulus card 1 (« ***L'égalité des sexes dans le travail ?*** »)

- Q1 - The expression "*la culture du présentisme*" was not understood by all.
- Q2 - A question which required some difficult manipulation in order to be answered correctly ("*montrer que l'on est très attaché à son travail en passant de longues heures au bureau*") Few managed it
- Q3(a) - A difficult question. One or two brave attempts at an answer were heard.
- Q3(b) - Students had difficulty understanding "*comme étant moins disponibles*" and struggled
- Q4(a) - Students understood the question but found it hard to justify their answer.
- Q4(b) - See above

Stimulus card 2 (« ***L'aide aux victimes d'intimidation*** »)

- Q1 - A concise summary such as "*Il s'agit des effets sur les enfants de la violence à l'école et comment aider à résoudre la situation* » proved beyond students' ability.
- Q2 - The required phrasing "*en impliquant...en organisant...*" was not heard
- Q3(a) - Students who attempted this card were able to produce an acceptable answer
- Q3(b) - Thoughts on these measures were hard to come by.
- Q4(a) - Not all students understood the concept of "*l'échec scolaire*" and struggled
- Q4(b) - Students found it difficult to develop their answer to this question

Stimulus card 3 (« ***Paroles dures pour les syndicats au Québec*** »)

- Q1 - Again, an answer such as "*Il s'agit de l'influence négative des syndicats sur la productivité et la compétitivité des entreprises au Québec* » was beyond the few students who attempted to deal with this card
- Q2 - Students were not able to answer this difficult question
- Q3(a) - The word "*syndicats*" was not understood by most.
- Q3(b) - See above
- Q4(a) - Only the most mature and able students were able to give this a satisfactory answer
- Q4(b) - Few students understood the concept of "*mondialisation*".

SECTION B

The second part requires the teacher/examiner to engage the student in a discussion that, although still relating to the same general topic area and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus.
(Specification September 2007, p 9)

The conversation does not have to cover every single listed sub-topic: one or two may be sufficient if there is depth in the discussion. A few teacher/examiners found it difficult to relinquish the topic of the stimulus and kept revisiting it. There were several tests where Section B was entirely devoted to further questions on the sub-topic of the stimulus or to sub-topics from a different GTA. Such tests are heavily penalised by the mark scheme.

It was not always obvious when Section A ended and Section B started. It is very useful if this can be made clear on the recording by saying something like: "*bon, alors maintenant on va passer à autre chose/à la deuxième partie de l'examen*". If not, markers are not sure whether the examiner has asked an extra question in Section A (which is not allowed) or has actually started the Section B discussion.

Assessment: Understanding (General Topic Area)

This relates exclusively to Section B

Ideas and opinions are rewarded. A long list of facts embedded in a francophone context is not required, although some facts, figures and dates display understanding of the topic area and help to formulate and justify opinions. Some examiners reported that more tests this session were heard where students demonstrated evidence of research, including facts and figures to back up their statements. Personal questions and answers are acceptable to a certain extent but should be used very sparingly in order to avoid possible embarrassment and to make sure that the conversation goes beyond a GCSE style of discourse. There is no need to cover all the sub-topics of the chosen GTA in such a short discussion, as some teacher examiners try to. Issues should be considered from a more general point of view and involve a degree of analysis. Depth rather than breadth is what is required in order to access the higher marks in the grid.

Assessment: Quality of Language (Accuracy)

This relates to the whole test.

Both pronunciation and accuracy are rewarded in this part of the assessment.

The standard in both this session was variable and at times disappointing. Conjugation remains a big challenge for many. Verbs are often used entirely in the present tense or in the infinitive. Use of the future caused difficulties this session.

Here are some of the most common errors in terms of pronunciation and intonation :

- **Alcoul** instead of *alcool*
- **Pérents** for *parents*
- **Tabaque** instead of *tabac* and **tabaguisme** for *tabagisme*
- **Frouz et légoumz** for *fruits et légumes*
- **Dangeur** or **dangère** instead of *danger*; **dangeroux** for *dangereux*
- Diphthongisation of single vowel sounds (**oo** for *ou*, **ow** for *au/o*, **ey** for *é/ai* etc)
- **Paille** for *pays*, **fameel** for *famille*
- *Ait* or *aient* as **aille**, or **ayente**
- **Nachional, alimentachion, sosailleté** instead of, *national, alimentation, société*
- **Govermente** for *gouvernement*
- **Relaxion** for *relaxation*
- Confusion between French *ou* and *u* sounds
- Confusion between *la mort* and *l'amour*
- Inability to differentiate between nasals (*an, in, un, on*)
- Incorrect French pronunciation of Rs, particularly internal ones as in *droit, arrêter*, etc)
- Confusion between *jeunes* and *gens*, *ville* and *vie*, *filz*, *fille*, *file*
- Sounding of *ent* at the end of verbs in the third person plural (**ils mangeante**)
- Sounding final consonants (**beaucoup, les garçonz, les déchettes, le corpse**)
- Recitative intonation when regurgitating pre-learnt material

Other very common errors, "en vrac" :

- **Ce texte s'agit de** instead of *dans ce texte il s'agit de*
- **C'est ça va** for the English *it's OK*
- Frequent use of the un-idiomatic expression **il y a beaucoup de problèmes avec**, instead of *X cause beaucoup de problèmes* or, *il y a beaucoup de problèmes en ce qui concerne...*
- The gender of *problème* (**une/cette problème !**). Other basic gender errors (**la père, mon mère, ma frère, un sœur**).
- **Ça dépend sur** instead of *ça dépend de*
- **Possiblement** instead of *peut-être*
- **Les célèbres** instead of *célébrités*
- **Le fumer, le fumage** or **le fumier!!** instead of *fumer*
- **A France, à l'Angleterre** instead of *en France, en Angleterre*
- Confusion between *savoir* and *connaître*
- **Sur la radio, la télé, le téléphone** instead of *à/au*
- Increased confusion between *très* and *trop* (possibly because of modern common usage); **trop beaucoup; plus beaucoup**
- **Si je serais** instead of *si j'étais*
- **Beaucoup de les/de le**
- Confusion between *bon* and *bien*, *mauvais* and *mal*, *seul* and *seulement*
- Confusion between *magasin* and *magazine*, *numéro* and *nombre*, *médecin* and *médecine*

Assessment: Quality of Language (Range of Lexis)

This relates to the whole test.

The quality and variety of vocabulary is considered, as well as the range of structures used. Overall, the standard this session was better than in previous sessions. Many students had learned some topic-specific lexis and were able to use a good range of structures and idioms.

Assessment: Response

This relates to the whole test.

There are four elements in this section of the assessment that come into play: comprehension, fluency, spontaneity and development. Some performances were spontaneous, but not very fluent. Others were very fluent but lacking in spontaneity. Comprehension was much less of a problem in Section B (well rehearsed questions) than in Section A (mostly unrehearsed questions). Development of discourse only took place in largely unrehearsed exchanges. Unfortunately, once again, a small number of centres had obviously prepared a list of questions and, in some cases, asked their students to learn answers by heart. Whilst it is understandable that areas of discussions will have been prepared, it goes totally against the spirit of the examination exclusively to recite pre-learnt answers in what is supposed to be a discussion and not a dry question and answer exercise. There is no opportunity in this case for development. Fortunately, there were also many tests where a genuine discussion took place (often starting with a measure of learnt material, but going beyond) and which were reasonably fluent (but included all the hesitations and false starts that normal conversation entails). These were appreciated and suitably rewarded.

CONDUCT OF TESTS BY TEACHER EXAMINERS

Many tests were conducted correctly and in the right spirit. There were many tests where a genuine conversation took place, sometimes at a very high level, close to Unit 3 style debates. In most cases, timings (8-10 minutes) were adhered to. There were however, a few tests that went on much beyond 10 minutes (markers are asked to stop listening, much after 10 minutes). Fortunately, this session, none were significantly short. The average time taken to deal with Section A was around 3 minutes and that is acceptable. There is no need to prolong this part of the test artificially. The main problem in Section B was working through a list of prepared questions and thus jumping from sub-topic to sub-topic without any obvious link. **The key to good examining is to listen to what the candidate says and to base the next question on something they have said, by asking them to explain, justify or develop their point(s). Only in this way can a degree of spontaneity be achieved.** Most teacher examiners did this effectively.

ADMINISTRATION

Conduct : students should not be allowed to see the questions on the stimulus card before the test. Cards must be allocated according to the sequence prescribed on page 3 of the instructions to teacher examiners. The set questions from the two versions of the same card should not be mixed.

Recording : please could each test start with candidate name and number as well as statement of GTA choice and stimulus number ? Could each track be given the name and number of the candidate (eg John Smith 1234)? However, there is no need to record paper, centre details, dates and examiner name at the beginning of each test. This only needs to be done once in an introduction. All recordings are now on CDs or memory sticks and the increased sound quality is very much appreciated by examiners, although a few recordings on CDs seemed to cut out before the end of tests or to include blanks. There were also some problems with poor sound levels. Centres are requested to check that transfers from digital recorders or hard drives are complete and of good quality before despatch.

Paperwork: the oral forms and attendance lists must always be included with the recordings.

