

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
in French(4FR0/02)  
Pearson Edexcel Certificate  
in French(KFR0/02)

Paper 2: Listening in French

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## **International GCSE French Unit 2 Reading and Writing Examiner Report**

This June 2015 session was the second for this new specification, International GCSE French 4FR0, thus the second series in which the new specification for 4FR02 and KFR02, Reading and Writing was available, set in accordance to the specification for International GCSE French 4FR0 Issue 4. There were over 8000 candidates, made up of 4FR0 and KFR0 candidates for this single tier, non-unitised qualification. This represented an increase of over 1000 candidates on June 2014. The marking principles and rubrics are unchanged. Thus the total time allocated to this 60 mark paper was 1 hour 30 minutes. Questions 1 to 5 were compulsory, and in Q6, candidates selected from three tasks, each worth the same number of marks.

The vast majority of candidates attempted all questions, with widely varying outcomes. Once again, teachers have clearly supported their candidates in achieving some excellent performances with regard to the requirements of the paper. There are of course now two past papers in addition to the sample assessment materials. The questions drew on the five topic areas and their sub-topic areas which were hopefully at least of some interest and relevance candidates, from a variety of sources. The six questions were in set on a continuum of challenge, beginning with targeting candidates likely to gain F and G grades, and culminating in tasks appropriate for A\*, A and B grade candidate profiles.

Q1 was worth 5 marks, and required candidates to indicate which jobs were denoted by each image. Q2 was a visible multiple choice question on media worth 5 marks, where candidates read short sentences and crossed one of three images offered. Q3a, again worth 5 marks, was a more extended passage on the writer's home, and candidates had to put crosses next to the sentence half which matches the ending halves proffered above, to make whole sentences which are borne out by the passage. In Q3b, a free response on home offering up to 10 marks, 5 marks for Communication and Content, and 5 marks for Language, gave candidates four prompts which, in contrast to Q6, were merely suggestions, not requirements. Details taken from the passage could be re-worked appropriately, and wholly relevant responses which ignored some or all of the prompts could obtain full marks. Q4 was a 5 mark multiple choice question based on the 14 July firework display in Paris, where candidates crossed the correct response from a choice of three. Q5 is the most extended reading comprehension task, worth 10 marks, this session based on a more substantial passage about young people and smoking. Responses were marked for communication only. Twenty marks were available for any of the three tasks in Q6, where Q6b and Q6c were more popular than Q6a. Ten marks were on offer for Content, where, ideally, each of the four bullet points was addressed; 5

marks for Knowledge and Application of Language, and 5 marks for Accuracy of Language.

In Q1, 1 mark was available for each of five parts where candidates had to read the profession, or description of it, and match it with a cross to the profession in the image. This question was excellently attempted by candidates of all abilities, and there was near 100% success, up even on June 2014. This question provided a positive start for the whole candidature, from which it may be concluded that jobs are a familiar topic area.

Equally in Q2, there was overwhelming perfect success in accessing the five available marks for the question based on media. The example was a useful guide to candidates. The error noticed by examiners was in (ii), where B was often chosen for A. The distinction between *les actualités* and *les documentaires* was being tested, but did not elude the vast majority of candidates.

Most candidates lost no more than one or two marks in Q3a, as in June 2014, and it is to be expected in this non-tiered qualification, that the early questions are accessed perfectly by almost all candidates, and that performance becomes increasingly variegated as the paper progresses. While (ii) and (iii) earned credit for some 90% of candidates, only about 80% scored in (iv) and (v) and approximately half in (i). The rubric states that five crosses are needed, yet a few candidates crossed six or more. This tendency, though, was less than last session. (i) was the most challenging part of the question, seeking tense discrimination. (iv) required understanding of *perdu*, and (v) needed the rendition of *chaud* as *n'a pas froid* to be comprehended. (ii) and (iii) were largely successful, being familiar notions of prep and internet use in the bedroom or study. Thus the question provided a fair spread of achievement, and verb forms are worthy of attention, even at this stage of the paper.

In Q3b candidates can retrieve and manipulate information from Q3a but examiners are alert to excessive lifting and wholesale copying which cannot be credited greatly. This task was generally very well undertaken, and most candidates managed to write a good amount, relevantly. The mean average was 9 marks. Indeed, some excellent pieces were seen, well exceeding the expectation, and varied in accurate vocabulary and grammatical constructions, time frames and linking. It should be noted that full credit was not infrequently gained by work wholly in the present tense in this part, so it was perhaps unfortunate that some lesser able candidates reduced the quality of their response when trying to use tenses not fully mastered. The greatest cause of irrelevance is where candidates produced home area related responses, perhaps producing pre-learnt accounts. Examiners were generous in their understanding of home activities, so included football in the garden, for example, whereas sports in the town stadium could not be credited. Relatively few candidates describe their bedrooms greatly. Time expressions appeared when stronger

candidates wrote in the past or future tense. More able candidates justified their answers with an appropriate range of vocabulary. There is no upper word limit, but there was a greater realisation than in June 2014 than excessive wordcount per se would not enhance scores.

In Q4, in (i) about 80% gained the mark. Distraction from *une fois dans sa vie* and inability to realise that *tous les ans* and *annuel* are cognate perhaps affected those who did not earn the 1 mark on offer. (ii) was successful for three-quarters of candidates, others maybe not spotting the negative relating to *l'office du tourisme*. Most candidates struggled with (iii), not seeing that the *son et lumière* had been replaced, and that *gratuit* was the synonym targeted. (iv) provided a mark for about 80% of candidates, where common sense could have helped, but in (v) only about half understood that *avoir soif* related to *des boissons*. It is useful to widen vocabulary by learning alternative ways and synonyms to express a given concept.

Q5 is marked for comprehension only, not language. The mean mark was over 5 marks, so candidates of all abilities averaged some decent scores on this question. Only the same number of elements as marks available for a given part is considered, thus lengthy answers which carpet bomb all information could be less effective than succinct, targeted responses. Thus in a one mark part, the first element is considered, and in a two mark part, the first two elements are considered, regardless of any extra details included. This marking principle rewards an accurate comprehension of the passage, rather than approximate lifting. If a lift targets the response, it can gain full credit. Candidates need to infer in some parts.

Q5a required reference to starting to smoke from a young age. *on commence jeune* could not score, as it did not explicitly refer to smoking. This may seem a rather harsh markscheme requirement, but examiners found that it was off-set by acceptance of *on y goûte tôt* which assisted a number of candidates.

Q5b The key information, requiring some inference, was that these people do not have friends who smoke, and even rather mangled versions of this were accepted: *les gens n'avec pas des copains qui fume*. Lifting was unsuccessful here, as it did not target the question: *on est parfois tenté parce qu'on a des amis qui fument*.

Q5c Some candidates wrote incomprehensible answers as they copied from the passage uncomprehendingly. *comment* was ignored by some. *chewing-gum* (tout court) could not score as it is untargeted, but a wide range of verbs, even if non-existent but recognisable was accepted: *en prenant, en prenant, en mangeant*, or similar notions: *avec du chewing-gum. le chewing-gum améliore l'odeur du tabac* is not really true, and is not a response to this question part. However the lift was sufficiently targeted to score: *les chewing-gums peuvent cacher un peu la mauvaise haleine*.

Q5d Again, a lift would gain 2 marks: *le tabac vieillit la peau et il la rend moins souple*, and this helped a number of candidates to full credit in this part. The skin smelling was a third possibility. The order of elements rule meant that first two elements of the response were considered. The focus needed to be on the skin, so *on pue* was too general to score. It is recognised that *vieillir* is a difficult verb, so if the form was within one letter of a correct verb or adjective form, it was accepted: *veilli*, for example. Wrong parts of speech can cause ambiguity and hamper communication, thus *la peau est âger* for *la peau est âgée* cannot score. *peau* and *moins* were so key that they were rejected if incorrectly spelt, though only the first time in an essential part, but this ruling affected very few candidates.

Q5e There were at least three possible routes to the 2 marks on offer, but actually even more, as negated versions of Q5d responses were acceptable: *la peau n'est pas moins souple*. Almost all candidates scored at least one mark, many mentioning the idea of saving money. Others suggested purchases now possible through not buying cigarettes, and while *un vélo* was the most common, plausible alternatives were accepted such as *un ordinateur* or *une télé*. Avoidance of a fine was a less frequent but equally valid suggestion for a scoring element. References to health improvement were not accepted, as these are matters of general knowledge, not in the passage.

Q5f Smoking in a public place was the answer sought, so *une personne qui fume* (tout court) was too vague a concept. *allumer* or *fumer* were both accepted. As mentioned above, the right part of speech was required, thus *si on fume où ce n'est pas autoriser* was unfortunately rejected as ambiguous.

Q5g This part was among the most successful, and scores were aided by the fact that *déstresser* (tout court) was accepted. There did not need to be reference to cigarettes or smoking, and a missing reflexive was tolerated. *rester en forme* was too general and not from the text, but a wide range of alternative answers enabled high scoring: *combattre le stress, (se) relaxer, relax*.

Q5h This part was less successful, and, rather like Q5b, relied on a careful reading of the question part, and often use of the negative. Faulty grammatical attempts at the negative were accepted, provided they communicated: *les personnes qui ne pas se fâchent vite*. The lift here sadly gave candidates the wrong angle, thus a rejected response: *les personnes qui se fâchent vite*. There were positive renditions, including inferences which were accepted: *les personnes calmes*. A decent number of candidates accessed the available 1 mark, and this question part discriminated between those who sought to lift, and those who targeted the part more closely.

Some general points apply to all three Q6 tasks: *il y a* in any tense is taken as one word, as are proper nouns, names or titles, though this was not significant in Q6. There was no penalty for responses under 150 words, as they were simply assessed using the three markgrids, and there is no upper word limit. A word

has a space either side of it, and was counted as the candidate presented it. There was no requirement to respond in a particular register, such as a blog style or letter format, and no credit was withheld or awarded *per se* for any register attempted. The examiner is most interested in assessing the response to the task rather than its format. The aim in Q8 is for the candidates to write a plausible, cohesive response to the four bullet points, not as four separate responses to four questions in a reading comprehension.

Communication and Content (C) marks were awarded as follows. These marks are maxima, and less could be awarded, for example, if bullet points are addressed tangentially.

- C9-10 maximum requires some response to all four bullet points. More successful candidates will develop their response to these bullet points.
- C7-8 maximum is where three bullet points are addressed, directly or partially.
- C-6 is the maximum where two or three bullet points have been omitted.
- Candidates must score in each of the three mark grids. Nought in any grid means nought overall for Q6.

As in June 2014, all of the Q6 tasks, the compulsory bullet points suggested the necessary range of time frames.

Q6a was the least popular but of the candidates who undertook it, many did it very well. Clearly, some centres had dealt with the environment extensively, and some candidates answered at a high level. There was a need to personalise the first bullet point and to develop the response, and sometimes candidates did not show unequivocally that they had acted in the past to save energy. The third and fourth bullet points were quite well handled, but they needed specific suggestions, such as putting up posters, setting up action groups, possible environmental problems or changes. General responses without ideas, exemplification and opinions were less successful.

Q6b Many candidates selected this task. As in all the three options, a personal response with some explanation was needed for the first full bullet point. There were some vague treatments of the second bullet point, and while examiners were as indulgent as possible, accepting to some degree, for example: *j'aime la nouvelle piscine en ville*, higher marks went to those who clearly showed a changes and its impact or otherwise. It was not necessary for the third bullet point to discuss both sides of the arguments in favour and against town and country, but surprisingly many candidates did not give any opinion, or more than one. The bullet point requires a plurality. There were some very effective details with nuanced or strongly argued cases, but other responses simply expressed disadvantages, for instance, disliking the isolation of the countryside or pollution of the town. The fourth bullet point was treated indulgently, where the focus was sometimes on living elsewhere, rather than in another country, or was simply a

re-working of the advantages given in the third bullet point. As will be seen regarding Q6c, candidates need to tailor their response to the bullet points, for there were many responses which seemed to be pre-learnt accounts of where candidates lived.

Q6c This option was a popular, canonical task and was attempted with all levels of success. Conventional responses could score well, but less effective were pre-learnt accounts of school life, which did not take into consideration the bullet points. The first bullet point required a personalised response with some elaboration, while the second needed not only the same personal angle, but reference to the previous day. A list of subjects on the timetable was less credited than reactions to the previous day's events. Lengthy details of timetables sometimes ran candidates out of time to very little benefit. The third bullet point was generally well handled, as it is a familiar way of eliciting a conditional notion. It needed to be stated terms of possible change, but some candidates simply expressed their dislike of certain aspects or teachers at their school. The last bullet point required more than a simple yes or no for full credit, and the intention was to extract a spread of performance. This was pleasingly evident, ranging from basic responses involving job prospects, to more developed answers relating to potential, abstract values, world peace and environmental concerns. Wherever possible, these were credited as plausible developments.

In some instances, there was excellent vocabulary and grammar, easily worthy of A level candidates. *après avoir, depuis*, pronoun objects, demonstratives and *si* clauses were all well-handled on a good number of occasions. There was good control of varied tenses and a range of linking structures and time frames, but in other instances, there is room for revision of basic structures, with reference to the programme of grammar study. Thus where the past, conditional and future tenses were sought in various bullet points, candidates sometimes ignored or mishandled them. There was a tendency for some lesser able candidates to include subjunctives and complicated conditional constructions which were not always successful. Candidates might be better advised to use structures with which they are more comfortable and showcase their mastery of these. Attention to basic matters, such as singular verbs with singular subjects, and adjectival agreement would pay dividends in many instances.

**Based on their performance this session, candidates are offered the following advice:**

1. Q3b offers suggested prompts for candidates addressing the question, but even more able candidates should heed the demands of the task. In this session, home area rather than home was sometimes the erroneous focus.



2. In Q6, candidates must address and develop the bullet points, in order to gain the highest communication and content scores. Even some apparently able candidates wrote extremely well, but on only two or three bullet points.
3. Q5 is marked for communication only, but language can impede if too ineffective. Teachers should train candidates to convey succinct and targeted information. Care is needed so that responses, including lifts, are not oblique.
4. Q5 Note the order of elements rule. Carpet bombing with excessive information is less effective than selective responses.
5. Word counts are minima, there is no maximum. In Q3b a 50 word response could gain 10 marks, in Q6 a 150 word response could earn full credit.
6. Candidates should refer to the linguistic structures on pp29-30 of the Specification. This list is not exhaustive or restrictive but gives an indication of the range and constructions expected.
7. Candidates should allow within the 90 minutes time to check grammar and spelling, and to ensure that responses are targeted and succinct.

## **Grade Boundaries**

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