Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in French (5FR03/3F)
Paper 3F: Reading and Understanding
in French

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GCSE French
Unit 3 Reading and Understanding
Examiner Report

Candidates performed well across the paper as a whole and there were some good performances. Most were well prepared for the different test types although questions with a greater choice of answers and questions which required answers in English remain a challenge for less able candidates.

Question 1
Question 1, targeted at G grade students, requiring the candidates to recognise single lexical items was answered fairly well although individual items of vocabulary did cause problems. Over half of entrants achieved the full four marks for question 1 with *beurre* most frequently an unknown item of vocabulary. A number of candidates incorrectly identified the sweets as *sucre.*

Question 2
Question 2 which was targeted at F grade students was very well done and the majority of candidates achieved full marks on this question. A good knowledge of basic vocabulary items is required together with the ability to recognise these items when presented in simple sentences.

Question 3
Most candidates performed well in parts i) and ii) of question 3 which was targeted at D grade candidates. A considerable number of candidates failed to associate the phrase *ma mère doit me conduire au college* with the English *I go to school by car* in 3iii). The phrase *il n' y a rien à faire le soir* was also a problem for many candidates who were unable to find the correct answer for 3iv). This type of task requires candidates to do more than simply find a French term and its equivalent in English, as some of the answers included references to material in more than one of the texts and candidates need to look for more precise details. Centres are advised to teach students to learn to understand full statements rather than vocabulary items in isolation in order to perform well in such tasks.

Question 4
This question was targeted at C grade candidates and a good number achieved full marks. 4ii) was answered very successfully perhaps because candidates chose the only text which contained the word *résolution.* A surprising number of candidates struggled with 4iv) failing to identify *changer* for change. In questions of this nature, candidates require the ability to understand sections of text and centres are advised to prepare candidates for this by using similar material with a degree of complexity at the learning stage in order to help them develop the necessary skills.

Question 5
In question 5, aimed at E grade candidates, the vocabulary item *chorale* presented the most difficulty and the word *timide* was also unknown by some. Tasks such as this required a good knowledge of basic vocabulary items as well as the ability to recognise cognates or near-cognates and centres should prepare candidates by undertaking exercises which develop this skill as part of the learning process.

Question 6
Many candidates scored poorly in this question targeted at F grade. Just over half of entrants knew the meaning of the word *cuir.* *Jouets* and *cabines d'essayage* also presented a problem to many students. Most candidates however were able to correctly identify *bureau de change* as a place where someone would change pounds into Euros. The skills required for this question were similar to question 2 but the vocabulary items in this question proved more problematic to candidates.

Question 7
This question, written predominantly in the perfect and imperfect tenses was targeted at C grade candidates and required them to understand a range of verbs in these tenses. 7i) was not well answered with many candidates choosing the incorrect *broke her leg.* Just over half of candidates were able to deduce that *elle s'ennuyait* meant *she was bored* in 7ii) and *on est tombés en panne* in 7iii) also presented a problem to many candidates. In 7iv) candidates had to deduce that Brigitte was on her own by understanding *papa n'était pas là,* which the more able candidates were able to do successfully. The multiple choice questions required candidates to demonstrate the ability to extract detailed information from the text and is one of the more complex tasks demanded of them at this level.

Question 8
Most parts of this question aimed at D grade candidates were tackled well. The majority of candidates were able to identify the common outdoor activities *faire un tour à vélo, jouer au basket, aller courir* and successfully answer 8i).   8ii)was not well answered however, with many candidates choosing C as their answer. Weaker candidates may have chosen this as it contained the synonym *télévision.* Many candidates answered 8iii) well but some chose the incorrect B for this question, failing to notice the negative in this sentence. 8iv) was particularly badly tackled with just over half of candidates unable to identify that the words *lire, roman* and *magazine* were all connected with reading. Questions such as this offer candidates several vocabulary items to help them to arrive at the correct answer and practice of similar exercises in the learning environment should help them to develop this skill.

Question 9
This G grade question which required candidates to match single lexical items with pictures of places around the town was very well done with many candidates gaining 3 or 4 marks. As in question 1, revision of vocabulary in themed sections helps to prepare candidates for tasks of this nature.

Question 10
This question which should have been accessible to E grade candidates, was not well done with many candidates scoring only one mark out of four. A number of candidates wrote all of their answers in French and centres should be sure to stress to students that if questions are written in English, then the responses must also be in English. It is also important that candidates give precise answers and are not misled by extraneous material which may invalidate a correct response.

10a). Many candidates answered this incorrectly with *tourist office* or similar variation, and very few answered with *town hall.* Most of those who were able to identify the word *right* also added extra incorrect details on the precise location, eg at the spectacle shop on the right hand side. A lot of the candidates who answered correctly seemed to apply common sense with a variation on *ticket office/ticket kiosk /box office.*

10b). Although many candidates identified the word *mums / mothers*, a large number of those who did invalidated their answer by incorrectly adding further details such as *yellow mums* or *June mums.* A small number guessed at *brownies and cubs.*

10c). This question was answered well in most instances.   A small number answered the question in French lifting the words directly from the text. The reference to *ici* and *cent metres* caused repeated confusion resulting in responses such as *ice rinks* and *centimetre rulers*.

10d). Many candidates answered this question successfully. Some answered too generally with *vehicles* or specified too many different forms of transport including the correct answer amongst a list of vehicles which was not acceptable. *Motors* was a common incorrect response to this question.

The performance of better candidates was characterised by:
   • careful reading of the questions
   • sound knowledge of core vocabulary
   • identifying cognates and familiar words in unfamiliar contexts
   • attention to detail
   • applying logic

Grade Boundaries

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