



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In French (1FR0) Paper 2F: Speaking

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Overview

Examiners reported that they heard many very good performances and listened to some imaginative and interesting orals. The achievement of many of the students entered was very pleasing and teacher-examiner-examiners are to be congratulated for putting students at ease during the speaking element of the examination. There was evidence of the full range of abilities entered at each tier and performances reflected this throughout all three elements of the speaking examination.

The timings of the speaking examination are 7 – 9 minutes for the Foundation tier and 10 – 12 minutes for the Higher tier. Centres are reminded that these are approximate as students will take differing amounts of time to complete the role-play task and picture-based discussions. The timings for the role-play task and picture-based discussions are guidelines and many students were able to complete these tasks in a much shorter time than indicated in the specification. There is no need to extend these tasks to reach the maximum time suggested. However, it should be noted that the timings for the conversation tasks are prescribed. These are 3.5 – 4.5 minutes for the Foundation tier and 5 – 6 minutes for the Higher tier. If a student has used less time for the role-play and picture-based task, teacher-examiners should not extend conversation times to reach the total time of the complete examination.

Teacher-examiners should pay close attention to the sequencing grid for the examination, which ensures that each student is tested on four of the five themes within the specification. This is based on the student's choice of theme for the first part of the conversation. Teacher-examiners will then select an appropriate role-play task from those given avoiding the theme of the conversation. Similarly, the choice of picture-based discussion and second conversation theme will follow the same format to avoid any theme being duplicated.

Teacher-examiners should be aware that it is necessary to keep to the scenario and the precise wording of the role-play and the picture-based discussions. Where this was not the case, marks could not be awarded for any response made by the student. Students may have the question repeated where the student has not answered, or has asked for a repetition, but may not be rephrased in any way. In addition, there were occasions where students were asked supplementary questions to elicit further information and students could not be credited for responses to these questions. Often, this was to extend the performance to fulfil the time limit in the specification which is not required.

The requirements of the conversation task were not always adhered to and centres should be aware of the necessity to keep to the instructions within the specification. Two themes are tested within the task, the first chosen by the student at least two weeks before the test and the other chosen from the two options, allocated by Pearson. Occasionally, students were given a second conversation theme that had already been tested in a previous task.

Role-plays

Student responses within the role-play do not need to be elaborate and best practice is to keep answers to what is required within the bullet points. Unfortunately, where students gave overlong responses these sometimes contained material which caused communication to be less clear and therefore not able to score full marks since there was some ambiguity.

It is important that students read the scenario carefully in order to understand where the role-play is situated in order to aid understanding before completing the task and providing answers that are in context.

Teacher-examiners are reminded that they should adhere to the wording of the role-play including where a student is required to ask a question. It is not acceptable to say, '*Tu as*' or '*Vous avez une question?*' Teachers should also keep to the register that is within the scenario and not change it to what they normally use during their teaching.

Occasionally students combined bullet points 1 and 2 within the role play and where this occurred, they were credited for both points. However, when the teacher-examiner then asked the question referring to the second bullet point, this often confused the student.

The unpredictable question was well done by more successful students; however, less successful students often offered no response or one which had no relevance to the situation of the role-play.

Framing questions continues to be difficult for many students, and many students found it difficult to form questions. There were many instances of poor intonation and occasionally statements as an answer to the question rather than a question asked.

Foundation

FR1

1. Despite the topic title '*Work*', some students understood *travail* as travel.
3. *Date de naissance* was unknown by many students.
5. Some students offered what they were going to wear rather than asking about a uniform.

FR2

1. *Combien* was interpreted by some students as How much? And thus asked a question
3. *Choix* and *raison* was not known by some students who were also not helped by *Pourquoi* in the teacher-examiner prompts
4. Many students were unable to say how often convincingly and *par semaine* or *par mois* was often missing, thus causing ambiguity.

FR3

3. *Où voulez-vous vous asseoir?* was only known by the most successful students.

4. Despite *occasion spéciale* being a cognate, many were unable to offer details of such.

FR4

1. A number of students confused *où* for who and said who wanted the table.
3. *D'où venez-vous* was not widely known by students.
5. *Prix* was not widely known by the less successful students, and many more successful students were not always able to frame the question without some ambiguity.

FR5

1. Some students had difficulty with vocabulary for a suitable activity.
3. *D'où venez-vous* was not widely known by students.
4. Many students were able to offer simple opinions about the centre.
5. *Prix* was not widely known by the less successful students, and many more successful students were not always able to frame the question without some ambiguity.

FR6

3. *On se rencontre où?* was only known by the most successful students.
4. A wide variety of lengths for the trip were given by students and all were credited.
5. Many students gave their opinion of the trip rather than ask a question.

FR7

2. Many students were able to say what they wanted to do using *je voudrais*. Other more successful students even offered suggestions such as *On va en ville ce soir?*
5. Many students offered what they would wear rather than ask a question.

FR8

2. Some students gave reasons why they wanted to travel to France misunderstanding *travail*.
4. *Qualités personnelles* was much more widely known by students this year.
5. Many students found it difficult to frame a question using *Logement* or ask about accommodation using other commonly known vocabulary.

FR9

1. Although students understood the need for a time – there were some occasions when trying to use *et quart, moins le quart* etc was ambiguous.
2. Students were able to say what their favourite lesson was but omitted to say why which was in the student prompt.

FR10

1. Some students confused *où* with who and therefore failed to say where they wanted to go.
3. Comment on *va voyager?* was not widely known as the unpredictable question

Picture- based task

While this task requires responses to the bullet points to have extended responses, these should not be a series of long monologues. Best practice is to keep answers to what is required within the bullet points. Unfortunately, where students gave overlong responses these sometimes contained material which caused communication to be ambiguous, leading to the clarity of communication being impaired and, therefore, not able to score full marks.

There is, however, the need to develop responses, adapting language to describe, narrate and inform in response to the stimulus questions.

Students must also give opinions and for these to be fully justified to reach the higher mark bands. Many students took the opportunity to go beyond a simple description of the people in the picture to talk about what they were doing and used expressions such as *il me semble/je dirais que* to enhance

the task - *'Il me semble qu'ils sont contents parce qu'il fait beau et ils font du ski à la montagne* - was an indication where a student could use the picture to give an opinion or make a deduction.

However, some students gave elaborate responses after a suitable answer had been given and the extra information did not add anything to what had already been said. Examiners are looking for the quality of the response rather than the length. There is no need to go through the supplementary prompts when a perfectly good response has been given. Indeed, the ensuing silence as the student is unable to give further information does not help the student.

Some of the tasks were thus overlong, there is nothing to be gained by this and some student's performances deteriorated towards the end of the task and appeared to also have an impact on the performance within the conversation as they tired.

At Foundation tier, less successful students often gave straightforward predictable opinions given with little or no reasons for these opinions and this prevented the student from accessing the higher mark bands of 9-12 or above. Responses from these students were often quite brief and some questions required considerable prompting by the teacher-examiner, using the prompts given within the task, or were unanswered.

Within both tiers there was a wide variation in the pronunciation and intonation of students. Successful students had it seemed made notes for their responses to the set questions rather than reading out sentences that they had written during the preparation period. The latter led to answers that, at times, were difficult to understand immediately due to poor pronunciation and a lack of appropriate intonation.

Centres are reminded that the questions within the Picture-based discussion are set and they should not be altered in any way. Unfortunately, there were instances where teacher-examiners reworded or reframed questions which did not allow students to be credited for responses to these questions. There were also occasions where supplementary questions were added in the middle of the task. No credit could be given for these responses and the practice caused confusion for these students who had prepared responses to the five bullet points.

Foundation tier picture based task

FP1

This proved to be accessible for most students and many were able to give a good description of the photo and say what was going on in the classroom. Reasons were not always given as to why they liked English, which prevented access to higher mark bands. Students were able to talk about a previous lesson, but many failed to go beyond a simple lesson or a description of it and many responses lapsed into the present tense. There were many successful responses to what the student was going to do *during break* but as with the response to point five about uniform a lack of why and any justification.

FP2

Some students found this task more difficult and beyond a simple description of the people did not expand to include why they thought the people were celebrating. Students had clear ideas and opinions about watching football, positive or not, but there was often a lack expansion when talking about past and future activities and many less successful students just mentioning the activities. The most successful students were able to say with whom they had gone, or were going to go with, and reasons for their choice of activity.

FP3

The descriptions of the photo were not as expansive as many of the others and often just focussed on a description of the people and the immediate vicinity of the stall. Students were able to say whether they liked shopping although there were few reasons given other than *c'est bon* from less successful students. Many students were able to talk at length on what they had done at the weekend in town but there was generally a lack of imagination within the task. There were few expansive ideas about shops where the students lived.

FP4

Some examiners reported that this was the most successfully answered card, Students were easily able to give a description of the picture and talk about why they like going in to town. They were able to talk visit to the countryside they had made and what they had done there. More successful students were also able to compare the country and the town and their preference for either. Students were able to say what they were going next weekend, with whom, and why. They were also able to talk about their favourite restaurants in town, albeit often well-known fast food chains!

FP5

This proved to be accessible for most students and many were able to give a good description of the family eating Christmas dinner. They were less able to talk about *fêtes en famille* and even more successful students were only able to give short responses and simple opinions. Students were clearly

able to talk about a previous birthday although the use of tenses was often mixed and led to confusion over which birthday the student was talking about. There many excellent responses as to why students preferred *anniversaire ou Noël* and some lovely opinions about times *en famille*.

FP6

The successful completion of this task often depended on the centre. Students in some centres seemed very well prepared for this topic where other seemed less so. This card provoked more prompts than many of the others as students gave simple responses. They had to be prompted provided to explain why or give any supplementary information. The description was often just the number of people and what they are wearing rather than an idea of *planter des arbres* or *travailler en famille / en groupe*. Pronunciation of *recycler* and *environnement* proved difficult for many although there were some very good responses about how to help the environment in the future and opinions on the amount of cars in towns. Some more successful students were quite articulate about *les embouteillages* and *trop de bruit en ville*.

FP7

Many students were confident talking about the photo and working with technology and able to give opinions. Less successful students found it difficult to talk about *un stage que tu as fait* and even more successful students rarely offered more than simple opinions about what they had done. Point 4 concerning plans for the future was all too often interpreted by the immediate future in terms of spare time rather than in education or employment but the reference to future events was still credited.

FP8

Many students were confident talking about the photo and holidays. There were some excellent descriptions of the photo and many students were able to reflect on the emotions of some people in the photo. Even if students had not been on a winter holiday, many were able to give their opinions. Most students were able to talk about past holidays and this is clearly a well-known topic for many students. Some students had difficulty with *pays* but were able to talk about a future holiday.

FP9

Examiners reported that some students found this card more challenging. Some students did not have many opinions on school trips and much of the response was quite unimaginative. Similarly, a few students recounted a school trip they had made rather than an activity at school, but this was accepted.

FP10

This card was found challenging by Foundation students, not due to the vocabulary used, but there was a lack of ideas and detail in the responses from students. Students found it difficult to explain opinions about working

in a restaurant, although many would have had experience of visiting a restaurant at some time. Students had more success talking about where they would like to work in the future and what job they like to do although the opinions given were somewhat brief as to why. It probably wasn't surprising that most candidates thought that a good salary is important. The more successful students gave some thoughtful responses as to why including *pour ma famille* and *pour aide les autres* and *les sans-abri*.

Conversation

In general, the conversations were well conducted and the skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher-examiner afforded students the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria enabling students to achieve their best.

Centres should be aware of the timings given within the specification. The Foundation conversation should last between 3.5 and 4.5 minutes and the Higher tier conversation should last between 5 and 6 minutes. Some centres elongated the conversation to make up the total time of the whole examination when the role-play and picture-based task took less time than suggested in the specification. This should not be done; the conversation has discrete timings.

Examiners stop marking at the end of the student's response after 4.5 and 6 minutes of the Foundation and Higher conversations respectively. Any material beyond that was not considered for assessment.

Centres are reminded that in the conversation task, there are two themes tested, the first chosen by the student and the second by Pearson according to the sequencing grid. Students may give a presentation of up to one minute on their chosen theme and each theme should be of roughly equal length. Examiners reported that there was a far greater proportion of time spent on the first chosen theme and insufficient time spent on the Pearson-chosen theme in some centres. This may affect marks awarded as the conversation is marked globally and examiners take into consideration performances across both themes.

The presentation allows students to be confident with presenting some information and the follow-up discussion then allows them to explore this with the teacher-examiner in more detail before moving to a second theme. It is therefore crucial to ensure that both themes are well represented and accomplished. In more than a few centres a carefully learnt topic within a theme was used for the presentation, but when it came to delivering answers in the rest of the conversation, some answers were not always understandable due to the errors made or questions were not understood, particularly with less successful students.

Where this was successful, centres used the presentation as a starting point, and the remaining time to follow-up on ideas given by the student, to

probe further about the subject, and allow the student to take part in a spontaneous exchange.

The task was often less successful where the presentation was followed by a sequence of well-rehearsed questions and answers. This did not allow students to access the higher mark bands as there is a need for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions within both themes. In these cases, teacher-examiners did not take the opportunities offered by the student to explore in more detail what the student had said. In some cases, teacher-examiners had ignored what the student had said in the presentation and asked a question that had already been referred to and consequently led to confusion. Best practice is to respond to the answers of the students rather than having a pre-set list of questions which do not allow students the chance to take part in a truly spontaneous interaction, thus preventing them accessing the higher mark bands for Interaction and Spontaneity, particularly at the Higher tier.

Where students were successful, teacher examiners asked questions appropriate to the level of the student being examined, challenging students by asking for further explanation of a points made and tailoring their questions to the responses of students thus promoting more spontaneous conversations. For students to reach the higher mark bands they must be also be given the opportunities to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements. Weaker students should have the opportunity to respond to more modest questions using language which they are able to manipulate rather than attempt questions that they do not understand or have the capacity to answer. Less successful students were asked some very difficult questions, often in a range of tenses, whereas a simpler line of questioning would have instead enabled them to access higher marks for Communication and Content, particularly at the Foundation tier.

There were occasions where teacher-examiners asked too many closed questions. Where a student was capable and clearly able to produce extended answers, this was extremely disappointing as the student, in a stressful situation, sometimes opted for a *oui / non* response rather than produce responses that would allow them to reach their full potential. Similarly, on occasions students were not given enough thinking time before teacher-examiners rephrased questions or moved on to another question.

Within the mark schemes there is a need for students to be able to produce developed responses and extended sequences of speech to reach the higher mark bands for Communication and Content. There should be evidence of using the language creatively to express thoughts, ideas and opinions and these appropriately justified with a range of vocabulary.

More successful students at each tier took opportunities to express a range of ideas and points of view and to demonstrate a range of more complex structures and vocabulary to reach the higher mark bands for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy. These are in the Foundation and Higher tier

grammar and structures and vocabulary sections in Appendices 2 and 3 of the specification.

There may only be a limited manipulation of variety of straightforward structures and minimal use of complex structures at Foundation tier. This may include some accurate structures, some successful references to past, present and future timeframes and also errors that sometimes hinder clarity of communication and prevent meaning being conveyed. There were pleasing performances where students attempted to use more complex language and a range of tenses to offer information in responses to skillful questioning by the teacher-examiner. However, there were missed opportunities where a pre-set list of questions did not allow the student to expand upon the initial question to show what they are capable of.

Some teacher-examiners asked repetitive questions such as: *Que fais-tu cette semaine? Qu'est-ce que tu as fait la semaine dernière? Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire la semaine prochaine?* This limits the outcomes for students.

To reach the higher mark bands at Higher tier, it is necessary for students to have the opportunity to use and manipulate a variety of grammatical and complex structures. These should be predominantly accurate with a mostly successful reference to past, present and future events. To reach the 10-12 mark band these should be consistently accurate, and errors should not hinder the clarity of communication. There were many instances of this, and teacher-examiners are to be congratulated in the way that they challenged students with sufficiently complex questioning often responding to the initial responses of the student to elicit further information. On the other hand, there were also occasions where students, entered for the Higher tier were unable to manipulate the language successfully, often using straightforward grammatical structures, and who had limited success in referring to past, present and future events. This consequently led to only attaining the lower mark bands.

Administration

It is important that centres check their recordings before sending off the samples. There were cases where the students could not be heard clearly. There is a need for minimal background noise so that the student being examined can be clearly heard. It is also important that the recording favours the student rather than the examiner although both must be able to be heard.

Unfortunately, there were many cases where there were difficulties in accessing recordings following the encryption of the USB. Some centres failed to send the examiner under separate cover the password and there were also incorrect passwords or problems with unlocking the USB due to the software used in the encryption.

Centres are reminded that recordings should only sent using USB sticks. It is important to check for compatibility and details of accepted digital

formats (.mp3 (at least 192 kbit/s), .wav, .wma), these are listed in the Administrative support guide.

There were a significant number of centres where USBs were incorrectly labelled and centres are kindly reminded to include with the USBs the track list, giving details of the centre number, student name and number, language and series. Centres should check the labelling of the USB, especially where the software just details Track 1, Track 2 etc. These should be changed to reflect the correct labelling as indicated in The Administrative support guide.

It also avoids confusion if details of the student name and number are announced clearly at the start of each speaking examination and the role-play number and picture-based discussion number are announced at the beginning of each task. The teacher-examiner should also announce the start of each theme in the conversation. It is not necessary to announce the specification, centre number and centre name before each student. Centres are reminded that once the examination has started no English should be used during the examination to indicate the start and finish of the various components and this should be done in the target language.

The Administrative support guide give details of all requirements for the successful administration of the examination and centres are encouraged to read this well in advance of the examination.