



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.

Higher tier role play overview

HR1

1. Some students were unsure about what information to ask for.
4. Some students simply gave a statement about the swimming pool.
5. Some students were able to ask about the price but were unable to refer to the student price.

HR2

3. A number of students failed to recognise the tense and *hier* indicated what they were going to do.
5. Less successful students indicated when they were returning rather than ask about the time

HR3

1. Students answered this successfully with a wide variety of jobs.
2. A wide range of reasons were given for wanting to work in France.
3. *Vous avez déjà fait...?* was sometimes confused with what you want to do in the future.
4. There was some confusion with students saying when they could start rather than asking when.

HR4

1. Some students were able to say what concert they wanted to go to but failed to give a reason.
2. A number of students asked about the price of the tickets rather than saying what price tickets they wanted,
4. *Rencontre - où?* was not known by less successful students.

HR5

1. Less successful students said they wanted to go to the shopping centre but ignored why.
4. Some students confused what they had already done with what they wanted to.
5. Forming a question from the prompt *Projets - après le shopping* by the most successful students.

HR6

1. Many students were able to say what the problem was.
3. *Solution - combien de temps* was not widely known.

HR7

1. A number of students were able to ask for a room, but the type of room was missing.
5. Forming a question using *recommandation* was difficult for the less successful students.

HR8

2. Some students were able to say who their favourite teacher was, but failed to give a reason.
3. Less successful students did not know *l'heure du déjeuner*.

HR9

1. Most students were able to recommend a place to visit.
3. Some students gave details about their own family rather than ask about the tourist's family.
5. Framing a question using *durée* was difficult for many students.

HR10

1. *Volé* were not widely known by less successful students at this tier.
3. *Le vol, ça s'est passé quand?* was not widely known by less successful students but a time, day or date was given by many students.
4. A number of students were unable to associate *fermeture* and *fermer* in order to ask a 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.

At Higher tier, there was a wide range of marks awarded and this was because there was an uneven level of response across the task. Some students were able to give very good descriptions of the photograph and offered very good opinions with some justification but were less forthcoming in the response when dealing with events in the past and the future. The most successful students were able to relate past events effectively and give reasons for why they took part and their opinions of the events were fully justified. In addition, they were able to give developed reasons for any future events with minimal prompting and there was little hesitancy within the responses. The most able students were able to use different time frames appropriately throughout the whole of their response. Less confident students could often use the appropriate time frame within the first part of any response but when following up with opinions and justification there were often errors in the formation of tenses and this led to some ambiguity.

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.

Higher tier picture based task overview

HP1

This proved to be accessible for most students and many were able to give a good description of the photo and clear opinions about their teachers and why they liked or disliked them and life in school. Students were able to recall a lesson that they had had but there were, at times, errors in using the past tense to say what they had done. There were successful responses to what they would like to next year as students were easily able to manipulate *tu vas* and use an infinitive to complete the sentence. Although students were able to say whether they thought PE should be obligatory in schools, only the more successful students were able to offer convincing reasons as to why. Many offered by less successful students only gave very superficial responses often using *parce que j'aime / je n'aime pas le sport*.

HP2

Most examiners found this card to be accessible for students and many were able to give opinions and justify them when talking about sport events and an event that they had seen recently. There were also those who were able to say why they had not watched sport recently, explaining why. Many students were able to talk about an event they wanted to attend in the future, but the less successful students failed to recognise *spectacle*. Students were mostly able to give an opinion about watching events on TV and more successful students explained why they preferred attending events rather than watching on TV.

HP3

The majority of students were able to respond well to the bullet points successfully giving a variety of opinions about markets, shopping centres and shopping in general. There were some excellent accounts of visits to shopping centres, what was bought and for whom and the most successful students also offered reasons why they prefer to go to these to purchase goods rather than small shops. There were some interesting reasons as to why students preferred *la qualité ou le prix* although less successful student struggled over the terminology for cheap.

HP4

Many students at this tier were able to talk confidently about the photo and why they like *les vacances en ville*. The more successful students were equally able to talk about the undesirability of too much traffic in towns.

Most students were able to talk about a visit to a town and where they would like to go in the future. There were some difficulties for less successful students who were able to say whether they thought holidays in the countryside were *reposant* but were unable to say why.

HP5

There were many excellent responses to this picture-based task and the photo was well described by the majority of students, who were able to talk about the emotions of the people in the picture and the joy of the family occasion. The more successful students were able to describe fully a party or family celebration in the past and the reasons they enjoyed it. Less successful students often just gave an account of the party. There were many good discussions over the merits of celebrations *en famille* or *avec des ami(e)s* and the reasons for the choices.

HP6

Some examiners reported that this card was less used than others due to the popularity of the theme for the chosen topic of conversation. When attempted there was a wide variety of performances. The description of the photo was sometimes limited to a description of the people in the photo rather than any reference to planting trees to save the environment. Lack of understanding of individual pieces of vocabulary such as *déchets* and, more surprisingly *utilise* did not help some students in their responses.

HP7

This proved difficult for many less successful students who did not understand the term *entretien* although it is in the minimum core vocabulary. Examiners did not report that the unpredictable question in second bullet point unduly affected the performance of students. There were some interesting discussions over the importance of *des bonnes notes* and *un bon salaire* and more successful students were able to justify their reasons for opinions very convincingly.

HP8

Students were able to access the vocabulary and respond well to most of the bullet points. More successful students were able to give detailed descriptions of their favourite days on holiday and reasons for this using a wide breadth of vocabulary and structures. Less able students found the reasons to try local food on holiday more difficult and generally did not justify their opinions.

HP9

Students were able to access the vocabulary and respond well to most of the bullet points. More successful students were able to give detailed descriptions of special days at school and reasons for this but less able students found more difficulty and *assister* was often confused with help by

some students. There were some interesting descriptions of celebrating the end of exams.

HP10

More successful students were able to complete this task more easily since they were able to offer opinions as to why they felt it was important to work as a team rather than just indicate that it is good to do so. There was the impression that it was as much a lack of ideas as much as the knowledge of French within this subject area that was a difficulty.

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.