

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE

French (4FR0) Paper 1

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## Candidates' Responses to Specific Questions.

### Section A

#### Questions 1-5

There were only a few candidates who did not achieve full marks in questions 1-5. In those cases where a single mark was lost, it tended to be in question 5, as this school subject provided a slightly higher level of challenge. Comprehension of vowel sounds may have been an issue in this response. However, questions 1-4 were extremely well handled across a broad range of abilities.

#### Question 6

Maximum marks were secured by the overwhelming majority of candidates across this question. Excellent candidate knowledge of "vélo", "voiture" and "train" were nevertheless contrasted against the last two items ("avion" and "moto"), where rather more gaps in vocabulary were in evidence.

#### Question 7

In item 7(a), the majority of candidates succeeded in distinguishing between the correct adjective and the distracter. However, this proved to be the most challenging item within the question. The use of "drôle" in the recording seemed to prove too difficult for a number of candidates, as they were unable to link this with "comiques".

A significant majority of candidates secured a mark for 7(b)(i), with only a few confusing "adore" and "déteste". 7(b)(ii) was slightly less well attempted, given that a surprising number of candidates were unable to distinguish between "acteur" and "chanteur".

7(c)(i) Essentially, candidates needed to discriminate between "la télévision" and "les jeux vidéo". However, candidates who selected an incorrect response did not usually select the distracter. The very high candidate success rate in 7(c)(ii) reflected the growing trend within centres to encourage candidates to ensure that responses are grammatically secure.

The overall approach to question 7 really indicated that candidates had been well advised on how to reflect before choosing an appropriate response, thus avoiding the distracters.

### Section B

#### Question 8

Item 8(i) was successfully attempted in a clear majority of cases. Candidates had a sound appreciation of the concept of "avant" which did in fact figure in both the recording and the actual question. However, a number of candidates seemed to struggle to match the written term with

the recorded utterance. Performance in item 8(ii) proved highly impressive, as candidates were expected to take advantage of the written clues, whilst using the recorded material to endorse their initial judgement. Candidates equally had to accustom themselves to a relatively familiar type of language. Item 8(iii) elicited a correct response from a small majority of candidates, proving to be the most demanding item in question 8. Candidates needed to understand both elementary and much more complex language within the recording and did well to avoid the distracter available in the possible responses.

On the whole, candidates seem much more secure in their mastery of the core vocabulary and even coped well with the challenge of more complex vocabulary in the recording. Teachers are clearly prioritising vocabulary learning.

### **Question 9**

On this occasion, candidates were expected to adapt to language expressed directly towards them as potential healthy eaters. Whereas this approach is relatively unusual within the listening paper, a relatively high number of candidates dealt successfully with all four items. Appreciation of a significant range of structures was needed, in order to aspire to a maximum score of 4 marks. This speaks volumes in respect of the thorough preparation of candidates for this style of task, with enormous strides having been made over the past three years. In particular, candidates had an excellent understanding of the imperative form of a significant number of verbs. Candidates' appreciation of regular verbs in differing formats is very pleasing to report, at this level. Very few candidates misinterpreted the question's requirements. There was strong evidence that candidates had diligently practised similar tasks which had appeared within previous series, whilst dealing well with language conveyed in a somewhat unexpected register.

### **Questions 10-11 General remarks.**

The majority of candidates successfully circumvented the temptation to simply lift segments of language from the recording, thus paving the way for much more targeted and concise responses. Whereas the task assesses comprehension, many candidates deployed beautifully crafted responses, with outstanding accuracy. Candidates' access to a broad repertoire of vocabulary rendered the task much more straightforward. Overall, only a small percentage of candidates scored no marks on this question, a similar proportion scoring full marks. This statistic suggests that candidates from across the ability range should feel empowered to maintain their focus until the very end of the examination. The average marks awarded to question 10 were virtually identical to those awarded to question 11. The vast majority of responses were clearly legible, but a general reminder of the

need for clear handwriting is always advisable. Occasionally, responses were not written in the appropriate column of the answer grid.

### **Question 10**

In 10(a), the key requirement was the reference to "supermarché". Whereas most candidates dealt appropriately with the question, many seemed to have interpreted the response as "marché" which could not be rewarded. Many offered "centre commercial" or even "grand magasin". Nevertheless, candidates were generally able to discriminate with confidence between different types of retail premises.

In 10(b) (Avantage 1), a minority of candidates successfully conveyed the idea of "prix bas". However, many seemed to have the correct response in mind, but were impeded by spellings such as: "prie", "pris". Many other candidates who seemed to have understood the question, then proceeded to vitiate their response by introducing an element of ambiguity.

In 10(b) (Avantage 2), candidates who were concise (eg "aller à pied") had an excellent chance of securing the mark. Unfortunately, many were inclined to offer longer responses, but did not convey a clear message eg. "On peut se promener à pied". Once again, candidates had clearly been advised that they would be marked on their entire response to each item. Candidates have generally realised that the items are not awarded on the basis of "Award the best and ignore the rest". Nevertheless, harmless and unobtrusive additions to correct responses are ignored.

In 10(c), the interpretation and spelling of "queue" usually determined whether or not the candidate was successful. This item of vocabulary gave rise to a vast range of spellings, most of which could not be rewarded, due to ambiguity. Some creative candidates circumvented the whole issue of this spelling by offering perfectly acceptable alternatives, such as: "Il attend longtemps à la caisse".

### **Question 11**

In 11(a), A clear majority of candidates conveyed the idea of "boutique". Some were inclined to offer "petit magasin" which was a suitable alternative. Some spellings led to ambiguity, such as : "botique". Such responses could not be rewarded.

In 11(b), (Avantage 1), "les vendeuses ont le temps d'aider" was appropriately offered by a number of candidates. Within the context of this question, the idea of "vendeuses serviables" was accepted. Many candidates referred to "assistantes" which was not rewarded.

In 11(b) (Avantage 2), “vêtements plus originaux” was a popular and concise response. On certain occasions, the slightly incorrect spelling of “vêtements” did not impede communication. However, there were many cases wherein the spelling rendered the response ambiguous. Equally, several spellings of “originaux” were offered. Where such spellings affected communication, no mark was awarded. eg “originales”.

In 11(c), the idea of “manque de ce genre de magasin” proved too challenging for the majority of candidates. A significant minority of candidates opted to rephrase the response in more elementary French, to good effect. Couching a relatively complex idea in elementary French is a strategy that candidates have clearly been taught to utilize in such situations.

### **Administrative Matters**

Centres should to be commended, as in previous series, for the excellent standard of administration during this series.

### **Grade Boundaries**

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