

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

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 2014 session was the first for this new specification, International GCSE French 4FR0, thus the first 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 7000 candidates, made up of 4FR0 and KFR0 candidates for this single tier, non-unitised qualification. 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. There were some excellent performances which suggest teachers' awareness of the demands of the paper, attention to the specification and good use of the sample assessment materials. The questions drew on the five topic areas and their sub-topic areas which were hopefully of interest, to the candidates as far as possible, 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 images of family members were conveyed in short sentences. Q2 was a multiple choice question on food 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 leisure activities, and candidates had to put crosses next the name of one of three young people, to indicate to whom each activity relates. In Q3b, a free response on leisure 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 suggestions. Elements of the passage could be manipulated, and wholly relevant responses which ignored some or all of the prompts could obtain full marks. Q4 was a 5 mark cloze exercise based on the environmental aspects of Christmas, where candidates completed sentences in French, selecting from a pool of words or phrases. Q5 is the most challenging reading comprehension task, worth 10 marks, this session based on a quite substantial passage about a cinema outing. Responses were marked for communication only. Twenty marks were available for any of the three tasks in Q6, where Q6a was by far the most popular. 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, only 1 mark was available for each of five multiple choice parts. These were extremely well attempted by candidates of all abilities, and even in the least successful parts, (iii) especially and to an extent, (v), there was near 100% success. This question provided a strong start for

overwhelmingly many candidates, showing that family descriptions were a familiar topic area.

Equally in Q2, there was a vast majority of perfect success in accessing the five available marks for the question based on vocabulary related to food. The example was a useful guide to candidates. (iii) was least successful, as a number of candidates, around a quarter, did not heed the 'pas de'.

Most candidates lost no more than one or two marks in Q3a. The rubric states that five crosses are needed, yet a number of candidates ticked six or seven. F was often offered for Théo, with 'bientôt' being neglected, so care was necessary with tenses. Some candidates thought erroneously that Théo actually did horse-riding.

In Q4 the mean mark was universally lower than in earlier parts, as is to be expected in a graduated paper. Q4 is targeting candidates above the C grade boundary, and the general level of success was around the two-thirds mark. (i) and (iv) were especially successful, where some 80% of candidates scored. However 'aller à pied' was not immediately seen as the opposite of 'loin', and 'plutôt que d'aller en voiture' was not well understood. Negation needed attention in this question part. In (iii), negation again needed care. Common sense could assist here: it is unlikely that extra packaging helps the environment. Grammar can also assist: in (iv), a masculine plural adjective is needed, so 'tristes' and 'méchants' are the only grammatically plausible possibilities yet other words or phrases from the pool were offered, commonly 'arbre de Noël', perhaps as an incorrect translated notion of 'At Christmas, there are lots of Christmas trees.'

Q5 rewards comprehension only. There are no marks awarded for language. Only the same number of elements as marks available for a given part are considered, thus lengthy answers which carpet bomb all information could be less effective than briefer, targeted responses. Thus in a one mark part, then first element is considered, and in a two mark part, the first two elements only are considered & c, regardless of what further information is proffered. This marking principle rewards an accurate understanding of the passage, rather than an approximate lifting from the passage. However if a lift is a targeted response, it can also gain full credit.

Candidates needed to be aware of the need to infer in some parts.

Some general points apply to all three Q6 tasks:

'il y a' in any tense is one word, as are proper nouns, names or titles, though this was not of great impact in Q6. There was no penalty for responses short of 150 words, they were simply assessed using the three markgrids, and there is no upper wordcount. A word has a space either side of it, and was counted as presented by the candidate. There was no requirement to respond in a given register, such as a blog style or letter format, those again, no credit was withheld for any register attempted. The aim in Q8 is for the candidates to write a plausible 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 very superficially.

- C9-10 requires some level of response to all four bullet points.
- C7-8 is where three bullet points are addressed, directly or partially. Less might be awarded.
- C-6 is the maximum where two or three bullet points have been omitted, but again, less might be awarded.
- Candidates must score in each of the three mark grids. Naught in any grid means naught overall for Q6.

As in all of the Q6 tasks, a range of time frames was required, as suggested in the compulsory bullet points. A reason with its justification was needed for the first full bullet point, and some account of how any parental opposition was overcome was the subject of bullet point 2. Some candidates did not distinguish clearly enough between these two bullet points, some even ran these paragraphs in with the third bullet point, for which two advantages at least were sought. Though it is not a requirement to paragraph work in accordance with the bullet points, candidates should pay careful attention to the need to deal with each bullet point fully. A number of candidates provided information which appeared to do double service, but this did not attain the highest content marks: persuasion being the advantages of television itself as a means of stimulating discussion, for example. Bullet point 4 was treated indulgently with a wide range of possible responses tolerated and fully credited, provided that television was central.

Q 6 (c) was the least popular but of the candidates who undertook it, many did it very well, and the different aspect of the task layout did not alter the fact that four bullet points needed to be addressed. Though many candidates replied in an epistolary format or as if a message in some form of electronic medium was required, the actual response rather than its register was considered.

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

1. Q3b offers suggested prompts for candidates addressing the question, in contrast Q6 where candidates are required to address the full bullet points, in order to gain the highest communication and content scores.
2. Candidates should refer to the examples as these could help with how to answer questions
3. Q5 attracts no language marks. Teachers should train candidates to convey full but succinct information.
4. Q5 Note the order of elements rule.

5. In Q6 some better responses had evidently been planned. A plan is in no way considered by examiners, but candidates may consider one, in order to better marshal their thoughts.

6. Wordcounts 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. Length in excess of these totals *per se* is not a commendation.

7. Candidates should refer to the linguistic structures on pp29-30 of the specification, as these pages indicate not only structures likely to be encountered in the receptive tasks, but those which could be among those gainfully used in productive tasks.

8. Candidates should allow within the 90 minutes time to check. This will enhance written accuracy in the free responses. In Q5, many responses were lifts from the passage which showed that the candidate had identified the correct source of information, but had not tailored it to the question. Checking may have detected this obliqueness.

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

