Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In French (4FR0) Paper 02

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General comments

This June 2018 session was the fifth and final for the (legacy) specification, International GCSE French 4FR0, thus the fourth 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 well over 7000 candidates, made up of 4FR0 and KFR0 candidates for this single tier qualification. The marking principles and rubrics are unchanged and the total time allocated to this 60 mark paper remains 1 hour 30 minutes. Questions 1 to 5 were compulsory, and in Q6, candidates selected from three tasks, each worth the same 20 marks. The vast majority of candidates attempted all questions, and, as ever, performed at all levels of attainment, though with a modest decrease in mean performance on 2016.

Teachers have clearly continued to support candidates carefully in giving some first rate responses which responded appositely to the demands of the paper. The full five sets of past papers plus the sample assessment materials are very useful preparation resources for candidates.

The questions all came from the five topic areas and their subtopic taking a variety of sources. The six questions were of increasing demand, with early questions targeting F and G grades, and Q6 seeking to elicit grades up to A and A* grades. Q1 was a visual pairing question on school subjects worth 5 marks, where candidates read short sentences and matched them to the appropriate image.

Q2 was worth 5 marks, and required candidates to indicate which activity was described by the statement, from a choice of three images. Q3(a), again worth 5 marks, was a more extended passage on the role of breakfast in school performance, and candidates had to select from a pool of words to complete sentences, which tested understanding of this passage. In Q3(b), a free response on eating and drinking 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, are simply suggestions, not requirements. Details taken from the passage might be incorporated tellingly, and wholly relevant responses which ignored some or all of the prompts could obtain full marks. Q4 was an extended passage about friendship.

Five marks could be gained by identifying the five correct sentences from the ten presented. Q5 is always the longest reading comprehension task, worth 10 marks, this session based on a substantial passage pertaining to youngsters and their hobbies. Responses were marked for communication only. Twenty marks were available for any one of the three tasks in Q6, where Q6 (a) attracted about half of the candidature, Q6 (b) was attempted by well over a third and Q6 (c) was undertaken by around a fifth of the candidates. 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.

Question 1

In Question 1, one mark was available for each of five parts where, five times, candidates had to look at the images of school subjects, and determine which was being described in the statements. This question was very well attempted by candidates of all abilities as usual, with a very high success rate and many perfect scores. Where there were difficulties, (iii) informatique and (v) EPS, were the least well-known subjects.

Question 2

Activities in Q2 did not seem pose too many difficulties for the majority of candidates, and once again faultless performances abounded. Vocabulary was apparently within the range of the majority of candidates, but 'dessiner' and 'spectacle' seemed less familiar. In (v), 'timbres' did not seem readily retrievable to a number of candidates.

Question 3

Q3 (a)
In Q3 (a), there were many good scores, and given that this question focuses on grades up to around the C grade, it is expected that there will frequent success, (iii) and (v) were the least successful parts, and this suggests that revision of conjunctions and adverbs would be gainful.

Q3(b)
In Q3b candidates can re-use and adapt material from Q3a, and if incorporated appositely, it is well rewarded; but examiners are alert to excessive lifting and wholesale copying which cannot be credited greatly. There was little evidence of such lifting this session. Many candidates legitimately ignored material in Q3a in Q3b, and gained full credit. This task was generally very well undertaken, and most candidates managed to write a good amount, pertinently. Nine or 10 marks remained the modal scores. Ten marks could be earned by work wholly in the present tense, but many candidates were inaccurate in simple tense formation and adjectival agreement or spelling. Some candidates once again displayed scant awareness of conjugation, but examiners credited as much message as possible. The most common loss of credit was for possible memorised and un-adapted responses which gave account of eating and drinking and what should and should not be consumed, without any shadow of an opinion. Better responses gave instances of the types of food and drink which are good or bad for the body and why 'raisons' were less well treated in less ambitious responses, but some exemplification was achieved by many candidates.

Question 4

In Q4, the level of demand increased, as is to be expected for B grade candidates, and there was predictably, once again, a drop in the mean score in contrast to the first three questions. 'B' was sometimes chosen, and 'G' and 'I' were less frequently selected. Candidates need to infer in some parts, and as in recent sessions, such parts proved once again the most challenging and care is required so that the exact demand of the question and precise meaning of the sentences is grasped.

Question 5

Q5 is marked for comprehension only, not language. Q5 discriminated well as the most demanding comprehension question, and the distribution of marks was wide. Some lifting from the passage assisted candidates, but lengthy oblique lifts did not score, as per the general marking principles. In a one mark part, the first element is considered, and in a two mark part, the first two elements are considered, regardless of any extra details included. This marking principle rewards careful comprehension, rather than approximate or lengthy copying from the passage. However, a targeted lift can gain full credit.

Q5 (a)
Q5a provided a generally strong start, with most candidates scoring for the notion of reading. 'lire' alone was enough for 1 mark. 'lisent' was accepted, but only with a pronoun, as it is vague otherwise. 'ils aiment la lecture' was also rejected, for it may or may not be true, but does not address the issue of school compulsion.

Q5 (b)
This question was a relatively successful part, much helped by the fact that examiners accepted the lift for 2 marks of 'les filles arrivent en tête, les garçons dévorent advantage de romans. Candidates needed to be attentive to pronoun use, as male and female youngsters had distinct reading habits. 'romans' was not always mentioned, which lead to some 1 mark responses, which in fact vitiated: 'les filles lisent plus, elles lisent moins.'

Q5 (c)
This question was, gained by main candidates of all abilities. They key feature was 'gratuit', and presented by almost all candidates, but some omitted to relate this to music or songs, so could not score. 'c'est gratuit' was therefore rejected as too vague.

Q5 (d)
This question is an example of a part which requires some thought, and many responses clearly found the correct part of the passage, but failed to convey clearly the paradox that reading is less undertaken, but is none the less enjoyed. A 2 mark lift was available. The most common source of lost credit was an enumeration of possible leisure activities such as 'ils passent huit heures devant la télévision', which exhausted the assessed two elements before the correct information could be proposed.

Q5 (e)
This question often yielded good credit, and there were a number of responses which we acceptable. Reading with children and sharing the passion for reading proved the most accessible scoring elements. Some credit was lost with reference to limiting time in front of the television, rather than on-line.

Q5 (f)
Question 5(f) required two notions, namely two items which favour reading. Preambles were tolerated: 's'il n'y a pas de télévision dans la chambre'. However, less attentive responses contained non-items such as the absence of a television. 'une carte de bibliothèque' and 'livres' were the two correct ideas.

Question 6

Some general points apply to all three Q6 tasks: il y a in any tense is taken as one word, as are proper nouns, names or titles, though this was not significant in Q6 in either this or the last session. There was no penalty for responses under 150 words, as they were simply assessed using the three mark grids, and there is no upper word limit. A word has a space either side of it, and was counted as the candidate presented it. There was no requirement to respond in a particular register, such as a blog style, email or letter format, and no credit was withheld or awarded *per se* for any register attempted. The examiner is looking chiefly to assess the response no its format. All questions attracted thousands of candidates and the questions were clearly within the range of many. There were few really ineffective or un-attempted Question 6's.

As always in Q6, the examiners are looking for candidates to respond credibly and in sound French to all four bullet points, rather than treating the four points as four atomised questions in a reading comprehension. Communication and Content (C) marks were awarded as follows. These marks are maxima rather than entitlements, and fewer could be awarded, for example, if bullet points are addressed superficially.
• C9-10 maximum requires some response to all four bullet points. More successful candidates will develop their response to these bullet points.
• C7-8 maximum is where three bullet points are addressed, directly or partially.
• C-6 is the maximum where two or three bullet points have been omitted.
• Candidates must score in each of the three mark grids.
Nought in any grid means nought overall for Q6. As in all previous sessions, all of the Q6 tasks, contained compulsory bullet points which indicated the necessary range of time frames.

Q6 (b)

In a reverse from 2017, this was the most popular choice, and attracted well over a third of candidates.
Bullet 1: Candidates needed to state at least one type of transport liked, preferably with some augmentation. Most candidates seized on public transport, and some responses were rather hidebound, but others wrote originally and much loved bicycles or yachts were referenced and sometimes name-checked successfully.
Bullet 2: A past notion was desirable, but any non-explicitly future journey, including the journey to school, could earn full credit.
Bullet 3: This bullet point required discussion from both sides of the debate on public transport, and a range of information, from the environmental, to the dislike of being hot or sardined in tube trains, was proffered.
Bullet 4: This bullet point, like the previous one, required a focus on public transport for full credit. The most effective responses developed their speculation for future directions. Even fanciful notions, such as space ships replacing school coaches, were assessed on their merits. Stating baldly that public transport is poor and unlikely to improve, or similarly superficial suggestions, did not score so highly, however.

Q6 (c)
Roughly a fifth of candidates attempted this option. The format of the response was not taken into account, though an email was once again sought. A wrong register is never penalised. There could be reference to the stimulus but this is not required. However, the response could not be specifically inconsistent with it, so advice on examination preparation in the recent session, for example, would be rather post hoc.

Bullet 1: This bullet was considered fully answered if there was one or more developed idea about plans which were not explicitly in the past. The next stage in education was accepted, and this aided many candidates.
Bullet 2: This bullet point required mention of recent work experience, or the absence of it, and was successful, provided that related to work experience and was not in reference to future arrangements.

Bullet 3: Any logical advice with some development was accepted. The manner in which the advice was given felicitously could be imperative, a suggestion, or personalised and based on the stimulus.

Bullet 4: This fourth bullet point did not require a specific tense, but some discussion on both sides of the argument, with at least one developed idea on each side. The information could be based on personal or vicarious experience, or indeed prejudice and hearsay, but if plausible, was able to be fully credited.

In some instances, as per previous sessions, there was sophisticated vocabulary and grammar usage, worthy of good A-level candidates. après avoir, passives, pronoun objects, demonstratives, il y a (ago) and si clauses were all often well-handled. There was good control of varied tenses, appropriate to the bullet points and in development, and a range of linking structures and time frames. Sadly, in other instances, though, there is need for revision of basic structures, with reference to the programme of grammar study. Genders are a perennial issue,

and examiners understand that they are challenging in the volume of learning required, but consistent application of agreement rules, and singular subjects with singular verbs, would do much to eradicate frequently attested errors. Where the past, present and future ideas were required in direct response to various bullet points, some candidates sometimes ignored or mishandled them. There was a tendency, as ever, to force in unnecessary subjunctives, complicated conditional constructions and artificially frequent or convoluted idioms which were not always successful or apposite. Candidates might better master more adaptable structures and to deploy them appositely, for the content mark suffers when the message is impeded by largely incomprehensible constructions. Revision of basic matters appears to be useful.

The following guidance is based on June 2018 performance and might be of general value:

There are twenty marks on offer for non-verbal questions, and there is a ramping up of demand. Credit can be maximised by checking these questions.

1. Q3b offers suggested prompts for candidates addressing the question, but even very able candidates should pay close attention to the requirements of the task. In this session, eating and drinking were examined, but, as in 2017, an opinion was needed, but not always furnished.

2. In Q6, candidates should take care to target and develop the bullet points. They are not mere suggestions, but are the requirements of the task.

3. Q5 is marked for communication only, but answers need to be clear and in direct response to the question part. Candidates should note the specific demands of the question, including the angle of response.

4. Some parts may require inference and therefore manipulation of the passage. Lifts are only acceptable if direct responses to the question set.

5. In Q3, sentence halves had to be matched, as in 2016. Attention to grammatical accuracy could help candidates to reduce the number of plausible pairs. C

6. Candidates should reserve checking time within the 90 minutes' examination to review grammar and spelling generally, and to ensure that responses are targeted.

7. Word counts are suggested minima, and there are no upper limits. In Q3b, a 50 word response can gain the full 10 marks, in Q6 a 150 word response can receive all 20 marks.

8. Candidates are urged again to consult the linguistic structures on pp29-30 of the Specification. This list is indicative, not exhaustive but gives useful guidance of the range and constructions which could be expected.

Grade Boundaries

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

https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html