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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In French (4FR1) Paper 01R: Listening

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## **Introduction**

The June 2019 session was the first 4FR1 01R paper set in accordance with this specification, International GCSE French 4FR. In June 2019, this time-zone paper was set, called 4FR1 01R, whose demand was comparable with that of 4FR1 01. There were over 700 students for this single tier qualification. The marking principles and rubrics are largely unchanged from the legacy specification and the total time allocated to this 40 mark paper is 30 minutes plus five minutes' reading time. There is no optionality in this paper, and the vast majority of students attempted all seven questions. Most questions do not require productive use of French. Questions 3 and 7 seek responses in French.

Many teachers have clearly grasped the requirements of the new specification very well and have assisted their students in excellent preparation.

The questions all come from the five topic areas and their sub-topics. The six questions are of increasing demand, with early questions targeting 1 and 2 grades, and Q7 seeking to elicit grades up to 8 and 9 grades. In a number of questions, an example precedes the question, so that the students are aware of the manner in which information will be sought.

Q1 is a visual pairing question on modes of transport worth 4 marks, where students listen to quite short sentences and match them to the appropriate image. Q2 is worth 6 marks, and requires students to indicate who refers to which places and services in the town of Porrentruy, from a choice of eight images, including the example. It is worth noting that not all places shown are mentioned. Q3, again valued at 6 marks, is a more extended passage about a road traffic accident in Walloon Belgium, and students have to produce target language responses, not necessarily in sentences. In Q4, a non-verbal question which requires some deduction to work out whether the opinions of the six speakers on information and communication technology are positive, negative or both offered up to 6 marks. Q5 is a passage comprising three speakers about future plans. Six marks can be gained by identifying the six correct multiple choice responses, with three distractors offered in each part. Q6 concerns two speakers who discuss their role models. Students select six words from a pool of thirteen to complete the sentences in the question, paying attention to both grammatical accuracy and the sense of the speakers in the passage. Up to six marks can be earned in this non-verbal question which is aimed at the more able students. A further six marks are available in Q7 for responses in the target language regarding two pupils' school life. As in Q3, communication only is assessed, and the quality of language is not taken into account, save in so far as the response proffered needs to be unambiguous, at least in the context of this International GCSE specification.

## Feedback on student performance

In Q1, 1 mark is available for each of four parts where, four times after the example, students have to look at the images of modes of transport, and determine which was being described in the statements. This question is very well attempted by students of all abilities, with a very high success rate and many perfect scores. Where there were difficulties, (c) bateau seemed to be the least well-known mode of transport.

Services and places in a Swiss town in Q2 did not seem pose too many difficulties for the majority of students, and once again faultless performances abounded. The mean score was over 4 marks of the 6 available, and about a third of students scored 5 and 6 marks respectively, showing that this question type, despite (E) not being attributed to any speaker, was readily accessible to many. The negative context of (E) was overlooked by some students and (A) *bibliothèque* and (F) *station-service* were perhaps more demanding lexical items. Reference to the minimum core vocabulary is useful preparation, perhaps especially when addressed thematically.

In Q3, there were many good scores, and students of all abilities gained some credit. Please see below for Q7 and marking principles, which are common to Q3 and Q7, the two verbal questions. Where students attempted this question, fortunately few scored nothing, and perfect scores were quite frequent. Attempts to transcribe without attention to grammar and spelling did not tend to lead to responses which communicated felicitously. Care with short responses and key words was often rewarded with high scores.

In (a), either the rain or fog earned the 1 mark on offer, but *la voiture a quitté la route* was often written. However, it is not a cause of the accident, it is the accident. In (b), *malodo* and similar phonetic attempts could not gain credit, and *dos* and *main* without qualification were too vague. About half of the candidature scored in (b). However, (c) was a more demanding part, and while the notion of providing a coat was largely understood, spellings of *manteau* were sometimes too wide of the mark and rejected. *ambulance* on its own was also proffered in many responses, but was unsuccessful and vague, because calling for it was the key idea: *téléphoner une ambulance*. About two-thirds of the students scored in (d), which required deduction but was successfully rendered simply by *bon, bien, mieux* or similar. Lifts of *aucune blessure permanente* were credited, too.

In Q4, the level of demand increased, and 6 marks were available for deciding if the speaker opined negatively, positively or equivocally. There was some inference, which eluded some lesser able students: in Pierre *...peut créer du stress* needed to be interpreted as a negative. *me donner mal aux yeux* was similarly an inference of disapprobation. Daniel gave a longer response, and students tended to assume that this must mean that the speaker's view is mixed. However, his attitude is not otherwise vitiated, and while containing a grammatical negative, is wholly positive.

Q5 is a non-verbal question worth 6 marks. The role played by chance is reduced in contrast to the legacy specification, as an extra distractor is provided in each part. In (a), (C) was often assumed, perhaps from general knowledge, but was not borne out by the passage. In (b), students needed to work out that *chez mes grands-parents* equated to *rendre visite à sa famille*. The concept or words of the passage may be paraphrased in the statements offered. In (c), again, assumptions about student debt may have made (A) a popular, yet incorrect choice.

Q5 discriminated well as a relatively demanding comprehension question, and in (d), *matinal* was a cognate spotted by more able students. Similarly, in (e), *nouvelles* and *innovatrice* needed to be associated for the correct statement to be selected. Those who understood *comptabilité* as money-related in (f) seemed able to score well.

Q6 proved to be a testing question type, for students had to understand the passage, the items in the pool of words, and the vocabulary and grammatical content of the sentences in the questions. However, (a), (d) and (e) were correctly answered by most students. Only about a quarter of students scored in (b) and successful ones managed to associate having time to listen with avoiding being *impatiente*. (c) had a similar level of performance, with inference being needed, that fair criticism and admonition amount to opinions being *justes*. (f) was correct for about a third of the candidature, with better relations inferred from *fortifié*.

Some of Q6 parts were quite exacting, but as the highest grades were targeted, the higher order skills required in some parts are as set out in the specification.

As is the case in Q3, communication in Q7 is assessed and not the quality of language. The marking principles set out here are the same as for Q3. Vitiating responses are not able to score, as they do not evidence comprehension. For example: *avantage : pas d'uniforme scolaire, avoir un uniforme scolaire* does not show understanding. Mis-spellings are tolerated, even if they stray into another language, provided that they are comprehensible, generally within one letter of the correct spelling. Verb endings need to be existent to communicate.

In a one mark part, the first element of the response only is assessed, and in a two mark part, only the first two elements are assessed. Unless further elements invalidate the elements offered, those elements are disregarded. However, in a one mark part, where two elements are offered and only the second is correct, the response does not score. This is so that an indiscriminate transcription of chunks of passage does not gain credit, whereas a targeted retrieval of information is rewarded.

Students could well take a little time to consider the demands of the question parts. Sometimes, correct information was given but unfortunately in an incorrect part. For instance, *les professeurs discutent avec les élèves* is clearly presented as an advantage in the passage, but was not infrequently written as a response to (c). In (a) and (b), scores were

reduced by partial responses. *choix de sports* and *plats à la cantine* ignored the key concept that the choice would be *plus grand* and dishes *meilleurs*. (c) was a challenging part, as might be expected in the grade 7-9 range, but there was some leniency, and if either the notion of too much prep, or prep when ill, was conveyed, the mark was earned. *les devoirs en ligne* was too vague, though, as this is not *per se* negative. (d), (e) and (f) all provided marks for roughly half to two-thirds of students with tolerance of English spelling helping a number of students: *programme trop general*, *excessive matières*. *excessif de matières* was a partial but ambiguous lift. *beaucoup de matières* did not score, as this is a positive unless further explained. *métiers* and *matières* were confused in some responses. In (d), *uniforme scolaire* needed to be seen as clearly a negative, and some students implied erroneously that it was liked.

### **Tips and guidance**

The following guidance is based on June 2019 performance and might be of general value:

There are 28 marks on offer for non-verbal questions, and there is a ramping up of demand.

1. Students should refer to the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs). This will give some idea of the question types of this paper. For example, multiple choice questions have an extra distractor in contrast to the legacy specification.
2. Q2 carries 6 marks. This means that only six responses should be offered.
3. Q3 and Q7 require responses in French. While grammar is not assessed, unambiguous communication needs to be achieved for credit to be awarded.
4. Students should check their verbal responses in the limited time available. Unchecked and phonetic attempts at transcription are unlikely to be successful.
5. Practice with a range of types of listening are invaluable preparation, including in non-verbal exercises. In contrast to the legacy specification, longer passages appear earlier in the paper, and practice of note-taking under time limitation has its place.
6. Students and teachers are urged to consult the specification, including the programme of grammar study and minimum core vocabulary, as this will afford helpful insight into the scope of the specification.