

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE French (6FR01)
Paper 1A

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The test is divided into two sections.

SECTION A

This requires students to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the student's chosen general topic area. The teacher/examiner will first ask two questions about the general content of the stimulus and will then follow on with two other questions that invite students to express their opinions on, or give reactions to, the stimulus (Specification September 2007, p 9)

Once again, the majority of candidates chose to speak on either "Lifestyle: Health and Fitness" or "Youth Culture and Concerns", but there was increased interest in "The World Around Us" and, to a lesser extent, "Education and Employment".

Most centres ran this part of the test very effectively. Only a small number of examiners rephrased questions, asked supplementary questions or missed out questions. Centres are reminded that candidates should not have sight of the questions in the preparation phase.

The first two questions

These always relate to the direct content of the stimulus and normally require relatively short answers. A partial lift or lifts with a small amount of manipulation and/or paraphrasing are usually sufficient to provide acceptable answers. Many candidates produced accurate answers. Some candidates had obviously been told that they should develop their answers and, often after having produced an adequate answer, chose to develop this with long and at times irrelevant additions, occasionally pre-empting the next one or two questions. Others lost sight of the fact that the answers to the first two questions are to be found in the stimulus and went into long speeches expressing personal opinions. In such cases, examiners should move on swiftly to the next question, perhaps even interrupting irrelevant developments, otherwise this part of the test can go on for too long.

Questions 3 and 4

These two questions are open-ended as candidates are required to give reactions to and opinions about the general content and issues raised by the stimulus. Candidates are expected to give developed and detailed answers, demonstrating that they have done some research and some thinking about the issues raised. Many students produced excellent answers which amounted to mini-speeches or mini-debates with themselves, during which they considered different aspects of the issues raised, comparing and contrasting viewpoints, expressing a considered opinion and justifying their standpoint. This is a demanding part of the test during which examiners must remain silent. It requires students to have been trained in giving this kind of answer and also to anticipate, during the 15 minute preparation time, what they might be asked to express. Most candidates now realise what is required in this part of the test, although some this session restricted their answers to information contained in the stimulus. A small number recited pre-learnt speeches vaguely related to the question asked. Some obviously able and fluent candidates produced disappointingly short answers and did not score maximum marks.

Assessment: Understanding (Stimulus Specific)

Answers to all four questions are marked globally. There is no detailed mark scheme for

each question. Indeed, there are different, acceptable ways of answering these questions, even the first two. Brief but correct answers would normally be awarded a mark of 2/4. Many candidates were able to develop their answers sufficiently (particularly to questions 3 and 4) to be awarded 3/4 or 4/4

Here is a review of this session's set questions which includes examples of correct answers to the first two questions for each card, consistent with the award of marks between 2 and 4 out of 4 overall (although there were many other ways of producing good, even more detailed answers to the set questions).

Topic area: YOUTH CULTURE AND CONCERNS

Stimulus card 1 (**Les ados : filles et garçons**)

Q1- *Les attitudes des filles et des garçons en ce qui concerne le langage, le sexe et la compétition.*

Q2- *Les filles aiment s'exprimer. Pour elles, ce qui compte c'est le look et la personnalité. Les garçons préfèrent l'action, le sexe et la compétition*

Q3A & B- Reasonably productive. The better candidates produced good, often indignant answers when they disagreed with one or two of the points made in the stimulus text or criticised the fact that the text was presenting stereotypes.

Q4A- A very open question, often answered by the mention of stress or peer pressure.

Q4B- This produced many well-rehearsed answers.

Stimulus card 2 (**Le « Phishing »**)

Q1- *Pour alerter les clients d'Orange au sujet des dangers présentés par le phishing.*

Q2- *Il ne faut jamais fournir ses coordonnées bancaires, identifiants ou mots de passe en réponse à un e-mail. Il faut supprimer ces mails sans y répondre et signaler les messages suspects.*

Q3A- Some candidates found it difficult not to repeat points made in the text and ignored or failed to understand "à part le phishing". There were also many excellent and developed answers that went into all the possible dangers of internet use.

Q3B- Answers often lacked focus as candidates tended to restate the problems caused by phishing rather than identifying users most at risk.

Q4A- An opportunity for a balanced answer which was not always taken up.

Q4B- The word "cyber-intimidation" was not always understood. When it was, candidates tended to agree that this was a problem, but had difficulty developing their answers.

Stimulus card 3 (**Tal : la nouvelle chanteuse française**)

Q1- *Il s'agit de Tal, une nouvelle chanteuse française qui a beaucoup de succès .*

Q2- *Parce qu'elle a une voix fraîche, puissante et vibrante aux accents orientaux irrésistibles.*

Q3A- Given the interest in music, answers were often limited.

Q3B- Only the better candidates addressed both elements in the question.

Q4A- This produced many well prepared answers.

Q4B- Some candidates were taken by surprise and seemed unable to believe that music could be a source of conflict.

Topic Area: LIFESTYLE: HEALTH AND FITNESS

Stimulus card 1 (**A vélo : jamais sans mon casque!**)

Q1- *Il s'agit des avantages de porter un casque quand on fait du vélo.*

Q2- *Il est léger, confortable, résistant et de couleur vive pour être plus visible.*

Q3A- Answers often lacked focus, as many candidates missed the import of the verb "forcer".

Q3B- Many candidates answered this question as if it read "est-ce que vous portez toujours un casque" rather than "est-ce que vous aimeriez toujours porter un casque"

Q4A- The focus on health was not always respected .

Q4B- "sans risques" was often not understood.

Stimulus card 2 (**Souriez ! Vous vivrez plus longtemps**)

Q1- *Il faut sourire et être de bonne humeur plus souvent.*

Q2- *Ils ont étudié des photos de sportifs de haut niveau et ont remarqué que ceux qui souriaient semblaient vivre plus longtemps.*

Q3A- Many candidates had difficulty in developing their answers.

Q3B- This proved to be a difficult question, particularly as "même si on n'est pas en forme" was often not understood.

Q4A- Many candidates appeared to struggle with this way of approaching the topic of health in the long term

Q4B- Slightly more productive, although, once again, the long term perspective was often ignored.

Stimulus card 3 (**Comment mangent les Français ?**)

Q1- *L'objectif était de savoir si les Français mangent de façon équilibrée ou non.*

Q2- *Le coût des aliments et le plaisir de faire la cuisine.*

Q3A- Most candidates felt able to respond, mostly in the negative.

Q3B- Many good comparisons were made between the French and the British diet!

Q4A- This proved fairly difficult to develop appropriately

Q4B- Many well prepared answers were heard, although when "un régime sain" was not understood this led to many irrelevancies.

Topic Area: THE WORLD AROUND US

Stimulus card 1 (**Du pétrole en Guyane française**)

Q1- *De nouvelles réserves de pétrole dans l'océan au large de la Guyane.*

Q2- *Non, parce que ces réserves se trouvent à 4 000 mètres de profondeur sous 2 000 mètres d'eau et cela sera donc très difficile et dangereux .*

Q3A- Answers were mixed, but occasionally encroached on Q4

Q3B- As for Q3A.

Q4A- This produced many well-prepared answers, although the difference between "pétrole" and "essence" was not always appreciated

Q4B- A very productive question, often answered at length by well-prepared candidates

Stimulus card 2 (**Les Français agissent de plus en plus écolo**)

Q1- *Beaucoup de Français économisent l'eau, utilisent des sacs réutilisables, font attention aux déchets et achètent des produits bio.*

Q2- *Ils ont tendance à utiliser moins leur voiture mais peut-être plutôt pour des raisons économiques que par souci de préservation de l'environnement.*

Q3A- Many good, developed answers were heard.

Q3B- Usually answered effectively in the affirmative.

Q4A- The candidates who attempted to answer this question had been well prepared in the main.

Q4B- Some very comprehensive and also passionate answers were heard.

Stimulus card 3 (**Les prévisions météo**)

Q1- *Ils s'intéressent de plus en plus à la météo.*

Q2- *Pour savoir si le temps va affecter leur activité. Par exemple...(one would be sufficient)*

Q3A- This question was easily understood but answers were not always very developed beyond "I like sunshine but not rain or cold temperatures"

Q3B- This produced a certain amount of repetition of points made in the stimulus text.

Q4A- Most of the candidates who chose this topic had plenty to say and gave balanced and developed answers.

Q4B- Most said they did and explained why. An opportunity to explain the opposite view was not always taken up.

Topic Area: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Stimulus card 1 (**Jobs d'été**)

Q1- *Ils obtiennent un emploi temporaire comme serveur ou vendeur.*

Q2- *Parce que le logement peut coûter cher, le travail est quelquefois dur et ennuyeux et on peut être exploité par l'employeur.*

Q3A- Some candidates found it difficult to develop their answers beyond what was in the stimulus (experience and money)

Q3B- Several candidates struggled to think of an interesting Summer job. A few (successfully) deflected their answer by describing how boring and repetitive many of these jobs can be.

Q4A- Some heartfelt answers here, but the reasons for youth employment were not always clearly defined.

Q4B- It is obvious that many candidates had been well prepared to answer this question.

Stimulus card 2 (**Fraudes aux examens**)

Q1- *Pour lutter contre les fraudes aux examens causées par les smartphones.*

Q2- *On va interdire tous ces gadgets dans les salles d'examen et peut-être appliquer les sanctions sévères qui existent déjà.*

Q3A- It was perhaps difficult to develop an answer beyond saying that it was wrong and unfair.

Q3B- A few answers proved very imaginative and depressingly always in the negative.

Q4A- Surprisingly, most candidates felt that exams were necessary and were able to explain why in some detail and with some telling examples.

Q4B- This question obviously touched a nerve with some and produced many fine answers.

Stimulus card 3 (**La robotisation – les robots ouvriers**)

Q1- *Les robots vont remplacer les humains dans beaucoup d'emplois.*

Q2- *Il y aura des robots infirmiers, des robots femmes de ménage et des robots pour aider les personnes âgées.*

Q3A- Mostly answered in the negative because of the impact on employment.

Q3B- Candidates struggled with this question and were unsure how to develop their answer fully

Q4A- This often produced repetitions of points made in the answer to Q3A.

Q4B- Mostly well answered by candidates who had prepared themselves adequately for this topic.

SECTION B

The second part requires the teacher/examiner to engage the student in a discussion that,

although still relating to the same general topic area and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus. (Specification September 2007, p 9)

It is elegant and useful if the first question in this section can be a transitional one, using something the candidate has said in Section A in order to introduce a different sub-topic to kick start the discussion in Section B. Many good teacher/examiners used this technique very effectively this session.

The conversation does not have to cover every single listed sub-topic: one or two may be sufficient if there is depth in the discussion. A few teacher/examiners found it difficult to relinquish the topic of the stimulus and kept revisiting it. There were several tests where Section B was entirely devoted to further questions on the sub-topic of the stimulus or to sub-topics from a different GTA. Such tests are heavily penalised by the mark scheme.

It was not always obvious when Section A ended and Section B started. It is very useful if this can be made clear on the recording by saying something like: *"bon, alors maintenant on va passer à autre chose/à la deuxième partie de l'examen"*. If not, markers are not sure whether the examiner has asked an extra question in Section A (which is not allowed) or has actually started the Section B discussion.

Assessment: Understanding (General Topic Area)

This relates exclusively to Section B

Ideas and opinions are rewarded. A long list of facts embedded in a francophone context is not required, although some facts, figures and dates display understanding of the topic area and help to formulate and justify opinions. Personal questions and answers are acceptable to a certain extent but should be used very sparingly in order to avoid possible embarrassment and to make sure that the conversation goes beyond a GCSE style of discourse. Issues should be considered from a more general point of view and involve a degree of analysis. Depth rather than breadth is what is required in order to access the higher marks in the grid.

Assessment: Quality of language (Accuracy)

This relates to the whole test.

Both pronunciation and accuracy are rewarded in this part of the assessment. The standard in both this session was variable and at times disappointing. Conjugation remains a big challenge for many.

Here are some of the most common errors in terms of pronunciation and intonation :

- *Alcoui* instead of *alcool*
- *Pérents* for *parents*
- *Tabaque* instead of *tabac* and *tabaguisme* for *tabagisme*
- *Froutz et légoumz* for *fruits et légumes*
- *Dangeur* or *dangère* instead of *danger*; *dangeroux* for *dangereux*
- Diphthongisation of single vowel sounds (oo for *ou*, ow for *au/o*, ey for *é/ai* etc)
- *Paille* for *pays*
- *Ait* or *aient* as *aille*, or *ayente*

- Nachional, alimentachion, sosailleté instead of, *national, alimentation, société*
- Confusion between French *ou* and *u* sounds
- Confusion between *la mort* and *l'amour*
- Inability to differentiate between nasals (*an, in, un, on*)
- Incorrect French pronunciation of Rs, particularly internal ones as in *droit, arrêter*, etc)
- Confusion between *jeunes* and *gens, ville* and *vie, fils, fille, file*
- Sounding of *ent* at the end of verbs in the third person plural (*ils mangeante*)
- Sounding final consonants (*beaucoup, les garçons, les déchettes, le corpse*)
- Rising intonation at the end of statements (American/Australian influence ?)
- Recitative intonation when regurgitating pre-learned material

Other very common errors, "en vrac" :

- Ce texte s'agit de instead of *dans ce texte il s'agit de*
- The conjugation of the verb « sourire »
- C'est ça va for the English *it's OK*
- Frequent use of the un-idiomatic expression il y a beaucoup de problèmes avec, instead of *X cause beaucoup de problèmes* or, *il y a beaucoup de problèmes en ce qui concerne...*
- The gender of *problème* (une/cette problème !). Other basic gender errors (la père, mon mère, ma frère, un sœur).
- Ça dépend sur instead of *ça dépend de*
- Possiblement instead of *peut-être*
- Les célèbres instead of *célebrités*
- Le fumer, le fumage or le fumier!! instead of *fumer*
- A France, à l'Angleterre instead of *en France, en Angleterre*
- Les langues étrangères, instead of *étrangères*
- Sur la radio, la télé, le téléphone instead of *à/au*
- Increased confusion between *très* and *trop* (possibly because of modern common usage); trop beaucoup; plus beaucoup
- Si je serais instead of *si j'étais*
- Beaucoup de les/de le
- Confusion between *bon* and *bien, mauvais* and *mal, seul* and *seulement*
- Confusion between *magasin* and *magazine, numéro* and *nombre, médecin* and *médecine*

Assessment: Quality of Language (Range of Lexis)

This relates to the whole test.

The quality and variety of vocabulary is considered, as well as the range of structures used. Overall, the standard this session was extremely variable. Many candidates had learned some topic-specific lexis and were able to use a good range of structures. Others seemed to have very little lexis at their disposal and were unable to function even at a very basic level or resorted to invented words like "surprisé", "une diète", "suggester", "motivater", "provider", "includer", "constricter", "advertiser", "expérencer" etc... There were frequent appropriate (and inappropriate) uses of the subjunctive, and many attempts to use the conditional mood. There is no definitive list of structures that need to be heard in order for candidates to have access to the higher boxes of the grid. The structures used need to be

appropriate to the kind of discourse taking place between candidate and examiner. The level of complexity which involves a range of sentence structures, tenses and moods, and enables functions such as describing, agreeing, disagreeing, contrasting, conceding, questioning, explaining, exemplifying, justifying, surmising etc... was what determined the quality of the mark awarded. There was often a marked contrast between the range of language used in Sections A and B.

Assessment: Response

This relates to the whole test.

There are four elements in this section of the assessment that come into play: comprehension, fluency, spontaneity and development. Some performances were spontaneous, but not very fluent. Others were very fluent but totally lacking in spontaneity. Comprehension was much less of a problem in Section B (well rehearsed questions) than in Section A (totally unrehearsed questions). Development of discourse only took place in largely unrehearsed exchanges. Unfortunately, once again, too many centres had obviously prepared a list of questions and, in some cases, asked their students to learn answers by heart. Whilst it is understandable that areas of discussions will have been prepared, it goes totally against the spirit of the examination exclusively to recite pre-learnt answers in what is supposed to be a discussion and not a dry question and answer exercise. There is no opportunity in this case for development. In the case of totally recited answers, the maximum mark available under Response was 8 out of 20 and was often less. Fortunately, there were also many tests where a genuine discussion took place (often starting with a measure of learnt material, but going beyond) and which were reasonably fluent (but included all the hesitations and false starts that normal conversation entails) . These were appreciated and suitably rewarded.

CONDUCT OF TESTS BY TEACHER EXAMINERS

Many tests were conducted correctly and in the right spirit. There were many tests where a genuine conversation took place, sometimes at a very high level, close to Unit 3 style debates. In most cases, timings (8-10 minutes) were adhered to. There were however, a few tests that went on much beyond 10 minutes (markers are asked to stop listening, much after 10 minutes). Fortunately this session, few were significantly short. The latter are penalised by a downgrading of marks for Quality of Language (Accuracy and Range), as well as Response. The average time taken to deal with Section A was around 3 minutes and that is acceptable. There is no need to prolong this part of the test artificially. The main problem in Section B was working through a list of prepared questions and thus jumping from sub-topic to sub-topic without any obvious link. **The key to good examining is to listen to what the candidate says and to base the next question on something they have said, by asking them to explain, justify or expand their point(s). Only in this way can a degree of spontaneity be achieved.** Many teacher examiners did this effectively.

ADMINISTRATION

Conduct: do not allow candidates to see the questions on the stimulus before the test and make sure the cards are allocated according to the sequence prescribed on page 3 of the instructions to teacher examiners. Do not mix questions from different stimulus cards.

Recording: please could each test start with candidate name and number as well as statement of GTA choice and stimulus number? Could each track be given the name and number of the candidate (e.g. John Smith 1234)? Most recordings are now on CDs or memory sticks and the increased sound quality is very much appreciated by examiners, although a few recordings on CDs seemed to cut out before the end of tests or to include blanks. There were also some problems with poor sound levels. Centres are requested to check that transfers from digital recorders or hard drives are complete and of good quality before despatch. Some centres still used cassette tapes whose quality is increasingly poor.

Paperwork: the oral forms and attendance lists must always be included with the recordings. There is a new version of the oral form available on the website and it needs to be signed by candidates and examiners. It is helpful if CDs and memory sticks can be sent along with a written list of candidates' names and numbers in the order of testing.

Centres are reminded of the Edexcel Notice to Centres on the website to inform them that **audio cassettes will no longer be accepted for assessment** after September 2014.

Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response

Marking guidance for oral examiners

Tests that are too short

A test is too short if it is less than 7 minutes 30 seconds. Candidates are allowed a 30 second tolerance.

Drop down one mark band to the corresponding mark across the following assessment grids:

- 'Quality of Language – Accuracy'
- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis'
- 'Response'

e.g.

4-5	Accuracy variable but errors rarely impede communication; pronunciation and intonation inconsistent but comprehensible.
6-7	Generally accurate but some errors in more complex language; pronunciation and intonation generally good.
8	Highly accurate with perhaps some very minor errors; pronunciation and intonation authentic.

If a candidate would have scored 7, they should be given 5, if they would have scored 6, they should be given 4. This will not affect the other assessment criteria 'Understanding – Stimulus specific' or 'Understanding – General Topic Area'.

Test that are too long

Once the 10 minute mark has passed, the examiner stops listening at the end of the next sentence.

Tests that do not move away from initial stimulus sub topic

Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score.

- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis' – limited to a maximum of 3 marks
- 'Response' – limited to a maximum of 8 marks
- 'Understanding - General topic area' – cannot score more than 0

Tests that are pre-learnt

Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score.

- 'Response' - limited to a maximum of 8 marks

Please note:

Understanding – Stimulus specific should only be used to mark **Section A** of the oral test.

Understanding – General topic area should only be used to mark **Section B** of the oral test

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
<http://www.edexcel.com/iwant to/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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