

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in French (6FR01/01) Paper 1

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Summer 2014

Publications Code US038850*

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EXAMINER'S REPORT ON 6FRO1-UNITS 1A and 1B: SPOKEN EXPRESSION AND RESPONSE IN FRENCH JUNE 2014

The test is divided into two sections – Section A and Section B.

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)

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 conducted 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 and that the order of the cards should be followed as per the sequence of oral tests in the Invigilator booklet. Centres should also enclose a list indicating the order in which candidates were examined to confirm that the correct card sequencing has been followed.

Questions 1 and 2

These always relate directly to the 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 developed 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 appeared to lose 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, to avoid this part of the examination overrunning.

In preparation for the examination candidates should also be reminded that the title of the stimulus card often gives a valuable pointer to the content of the stimulus.

Questions 3 and 4

These two questions are open-ended, and candidates are required to give their reactions and opinions about the general issues raised by the stimulus.

Candidates are expected to give developed and detailed answers, demonstrating that they have done some research about the issues raised.

Many students produced excellent answers, during which they considered different aspects of the issues raised, compared and contrasted viewpoints, expressed a considered opinion and justified their standpoint. This is a demanding part of the test, during which examiners should allow candidates to develop their points. 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 were well prepared for this part of the examination, although some restricted their answers to information contained in the stimulus. A small number related information only loosely related to the question(s) asked. For this section of the examination, it is important that candidates listen carefully to the question asked. Candidates should be encouraged to practise giving a focused answer, avoiding a general statement on the chosen General Topic Area.

Some more able and fluent candidates produced short answers and so were not able to score the maximum marks available for this section.

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), and therefore be awarded 3/4 or 4/4

Topic area: YOUTH CULTURE AND CONCERNS

Stimulus card 1 (*Mots de passe*)

Q1&2- Fairly well answered although with some overlap between the two questions.

Q3A&Q3B- Reasonably productive if candidates recognised "*conseils*".

Q4A- Some well-developed answers, usually listing several dangers.

Q4B- "*le plus utile*" was often ignored and general answers on technology were often given.

Stimulus card 2 (**La famille en France**)

Q1- Normally answered satisfactorily.

Q2- Generally answered well; some candidates only mentioned "*la famille traditionnelle*", leaving out composite and single-parent families.

Q3A- Some good answers were produced, with the wider implications of the concept of family often well explored by candidates.

Q3B- "*plutôt synonyme de bonheur ou de conflit*" caused problems for some candidates.

Q4A- Some mixed answers, with candidates often not able to discuss the type of help families are given.

Q4B- The best answers mentioned both advantages and disadvantages of living in a certain type of families.

Stimulus card 3 (**La musique Rai**)

Q1&2 - Were accessible to most candidates.

Q3A- Many excellent answers were heard from candidates who were able to recognise the conditional tense in the question. Some candidates instead chose to detail the music they liked.

Q3B- This was rarely well answered, with perhaps a difficult link to be made with the influence of the Algerian culture in France.

Q4A- Produced some good, developed and well-prepared answers.

Q4B- This stimulated a range of responses with the best candidates giving examples of "*une mauvaise influence*" as well e.g. *le rap*.

Topic Area: LIFESTYLE: HEALTH AND FITNESS

Stimulus card 1 (**Euro 2016**)

Q1- Was generally answered accurately.

Q2- Many candidates missed the full range of advantages of staging the tournament (construction/renovation of facilities and the improved chance of winning for the hosts).

Q3A- Most answers focused solely on personal interest in the game, ignoring the possibilities for development in discussing professional football.

Q3B- Answers often lacked development once the candidates had mentioned their feelings about football.

Q4A- Candidates gave balanced answers on competitive sport, and were divided in their preferences.

Q4B- The question was accessible to all candidates.

Stimulus card 2 (Le prix du tabac augmente)

Q1- Was well answered in parts, but few candidates noted that the price rise was the result of taxation.

Q2- Many candidates noted that smokers would buy contraband cigarettes; but surprisingly few noted that smoking might decrease.

Q3A- Overall produced some good answers.

Q3B- 'efficace' was largely ignored, even by more able candidates.

Q4A- "rendre illégal" proved to be largely ignored, with many candidates giving a "for and against smoking" answer.

Q4B - Answers relating to the dangers of smoking appeared here, occasionally repeating part of the response to Q3.

Stimulus card 3 (Obésité chez les enfants)

Q1&Q2- Were answered in detail, often by judicious 'lifts' from the text.

Q3A- Less able candidates described their breakfast food without mentioning why it was important.

Q3B- Candidates were generally well prepared to answer the first half of the question; the second part was frequently ignored.

Q4A- Many well-prepared answers were heard with excellent development.

Q4B- Many candidates failed to give a relevant answer, instead enumerating what could be done to avoid being unhealthy.

Topic Area: THE WORLD AROUND US

Stimulus card 1 (Deux poubelles)

Q1- Was well answered if candidates had taken the title of the text into account.

Q2- Mostly answered adequately.

Q3A- A reasonably productive question; many appropriate reasons were heard.

Q3B- Most candidates thought it was useful, but failed to expand.

Q4A- Little development was provided for this question.

Q4B- Some candidates mentioned green gestures but little development was heard.

Stimulus card 2 (*Énergie dans l'espace*)

Q1- Mostly answered adequately, though some candidates found the concept of solar energy and space hard to handle leading to partial answers.

Q2- Mostly answered adequately.

Q3A&Q3B - Produced some good answers.

Q4A- Led to good development, enabling candidates to mention alternative forms of energy and comment on them.

Q4B- Answers did not comment in detail on how to reduce demand for energy, often only focusing on the need to reuse and recycle.

Stimulus card 3 (*Poissons en péril*)

Q1&2- Were mostly answered correctly.

Q3A- Very few candidates were able to develop beyond the information contained in the text.

Q3B- Few candidates were able to comment on the measures towards overfishing.

Q4A- Was productive with some good development heard.

Q4B- Was often poorly dealt with, often leading to a general answer.

Topic Area: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Stimulus card 1 (*Faire ses courses le dimanche?*)

Q1- Some candidates struggled to understand «*manifestations*» but most understood "against Sunday opening".

Q2- The fact that "*les accords locaux*" went against the law itself was not always understood, meaning that this question was often poorly answered.

Q3A- This question related to question 1 and was therefore not always well answered.

Q3B- Gave scope for good development and personal opinions.

Q4A- Candidates often gave little development other than mentioning what they intend to do in life.

Q4B- Allowed candidates to weigh the pros and cons of working whilst studying and expand accordingly.

Stimulus card 2 (*Les devoirs à la maison*)

Q1&Q2- Mostly answered adequately.

Q3A- Was tackled mostly adequately though answers were not always well developed.

Q3B- Was mostly answered well; some short answers.

Q4A- Gave rise to plenty of detailed arguments.

Q4B- Led to examples of help received, but the reasons for inequality were not always fully determined.

Stimulus card 3 (*Les hommes au foyer*)

Q1&Q2- Were mostly understood adequately and led to correct answers.

Q3A- Was understood but often not fully developed, with few managing to give their view on Marc himself, therefore not focusing their answer.

Q3B- Was not often well developed.

Q4A&Q4B- Led to good development on equality and most aspects were covered by the most able candidates: salaries; government roles; domestic chores etc.

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 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 examiners used this technique very effectively this session.

The conversation does not have to cover every listed sub-topic: one or two can be sufficient, if there is sufficient depth in the discussion. A few examiners found it difficult to relinquish the topic of the stimulus and kept revisiting it. There were several tests in which 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 and therefore disadvantage the candidate.

It was not always obvious when Section A ended and Section B started. It is very useful if this can be made clear for the candidate (and the examiner) by a transitional statement such as: *“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)

The following 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, helping to formulate and justify opinions. Personal questions and answers are acceptable to a certain extent but should be used very sparingly - to ensure 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.

Assessment: Quality of language (Accuracy)

This relates to the whole test.

Both pronunciation and accuracy are rewarded in this part of the mark scheme.

The standard in *both* this session was variable. Conjugation remains a challenge for many.

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

- Alcou instead of *alcool*
- Pérents for *parents*
- Tabaque instead of *tabac* and tabagisme for *tabagisme*
- Frouz 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, sosaillété instead of, *national*, *alimentation*, *société*
- Confusion between French *ou* and *u* sounds
- Confusion between *la mort* and *l'amour*
- No differentiation 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
- Candidates are reminded that the examination should be a spontaneous discourse.

Other common errors included:

- *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 *célébrités*
- *Le fumer*, *le fumage* or *le fumier* instead of *fumer*
- *A France*, *à l'Angleterre* instead of *en France*, *en Angleterre*
- *Les langues étranges*, 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); e.g. *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 variable. Many candidates had learned some topic-specific lexis and were able to use a good range of structures.

Less able candidates had limited lexis at their disposal and relied on Anglicised words like "*surprisé*", "*une diète*", "*suggester*", "*motivater*", "*provider*", "*include*", "*constricter*", "*advertiser*", "*expérier*" etc.

There were frequent appropriate uses of the subjunctive, and many attempts to use the conditional mood. Centres should be reminded that the subjunctive mood needs to be used appropriately to be rewarded.

There is no definitive list of structures that need to be heard in order for candidates to have access to the higher marks. Structures used need to be appropriate to the kind of discourse taking place between the candidate and examiner. Complexity is demonstrated by involving a range of sentence structures, tenses and moods, and enabling functions such as describing, agreeing, disagreeing, contrasting, conceding, questioning, explaining, exemplifying, justifying, surmising etc. This is then used to credit the quality of the language demonstrated. There was often a marked contrast between the range of language used in Sections A and B.

Assessment: Response

The following 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 seemingly lacking in spontaneity. Comprehension was much less of a problem in Section B than in Section A. Development of discourse only took place in largely unrehearsed exchanges. While it is understandable that areas of discussions will have been prepared, it goes against the spirit of the examination to recite pre-learnt answers in what is supposed to be a discussion – rather than a question and answer exercise. There is limited opportunity in this case for development. Centres are reminded that it is poor practice to provide completely pre-learnt material, and to do so will disadvantage the candidate.

There were many tests in which a genuine discussion took place, and which were reasonably fluent – including all the hesitations and false starts that normal conversation entails. These were 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 in content to Unit 3 style debates.

In most cases, timings (8-10 minutes) were adhered to. There were however, a few tests that went on beyond 10 minutes (markers are asked to stop listening, much after 10 minutes). This session, only a few were significantly short. The latter are penalised by capping 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, which 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 an 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: Centres are reminded to not allow candidates to see the questions on the stimulus before the test, and to 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. Read questions carefully and do not rephrase any of the questions. Centres are reminded that a list of the candidates' order of examination used on the day of the examination should be included with all recordings.

Recording: please start each test with candidate name and number as well as statement of GTA choice and stimulus number. It is good practice to ensure that each track is given the name and number of the candidate (e.g. John Smith 1234). Note that a few recordings on CDs seemed to cut off before the end of tests or to include blanks. There were also some problems with poor sound levels. Centres are reminded that the recording device should be close enough to the candidate to allow for a clear recording. Candidates must be heard clearly, at the risk of being disadvantaged. Centres are requested to check that transfers from digital recorders or hard drives are complete and of good quality before despatch. There were several instances of loud background noise interfering with the examination - it is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that candidates are allowed to prepare and carry out their examination in the best possible conditions.

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 Pearson Edexcel website, and it needs to be signed by candidates and examiners. CDs and memory sticks must be sent along with a written list of candidates' names and numbers in the order of testing.

NB: Please note that following notification on the qualification page of the Pearson/Edexcel website, and via the updates from the Subject Advisor, Mr Alistair Drewery, we will no longer be accepting audio cassettes for assessment from September 2014 onwards.

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 (this includes 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 for Accuracy, they should be given 5, if they would have scored 6, they should be given 4. A similar adjustment should be made for Range and for Response. 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/sense group.

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

Spontaneity/Response

If a test appears to lack spontaneity in large part to the extent that significant sections *appear to have been pre-learnt*, the mark for **Response** will be limited to a maximum of 8 marks. It may be that intonation is also impaired; however, poor intonation would not, on its own, suggest pre-learning.

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

When marking the oral exam, examiners are advised to immediately allocate a mark for Section A, prior to allocating marks for the rest of the test (Section B).

It is important that the PE and team leaders can see clearly the justification for marks awarded and examiners should note briefly on the OR1 form the reason for any caps which are applied in marking an oral test.

If a score of '0' is awarded for any of the assessment grids, the oral recording should be referred to your Team Leader.

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>

