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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCE
In French (6FR02) Paper 01

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The GCE French Unit 2 6FR02 is available in the June session only. It was set as per the GCE 2008 Specification, and is consistent with the format of all previous 6FR02 papers. Two hours 30 minutes were available for the completion of the paper, with the recording being taken away after 45 minutes. Students must attempt all questions, there is no optionality, and a broad range of marks were awarded.

As the end of the Specification is reached, teachers and students are clearly well attuned in many cases to the demands of the paper, and reference the many Examiner's Reports. There is a decent number of very good and excellent performances.

This paper is marked following principles consistent with all other sessions. All passages are taken from the published General Topic Areas. The first four passages are recorded, the next three are reading passages, and the last passage is a stimulus for the written response. The paper is worth 70 marks in total.

In this paper, Passage 1 of Section A (listening comprehension) was a multiple choice question worth four marks, about how to cook better. In response to Passage 2, about environmentally friendly modes of transport, four correct statements from a possible eight had to be selected. Passage 3, about fishing in the waters of French Guyana, was a cloze question worth 4 marks, where students selected from eight items. Q4, where 8 marks were on offer, required answers in French, and involved discussion of changes in Belgians' eating and lifestyle habits.

Section B (reading comprehension) for Q5, relating to tablet technology, each of five statements had to be correctly paired with one of four people, giving a total of 5 marks. Q6 was online social networks, and required no inference, but transfer of meaning into English. Five questions worth a mark each were answered in English. Q7 was about plastic bags in shops. Question parts were all in French, and required short responses in French (worth 10 marks overall).

In Section C (written response), Q8 provided the opportunity for students to express their views on voluntary work. Up to 15 marks each were available for Content and Language, so that Q8 was worth 30 marks.

In Q2, almost all students indicated their answers using four crosses. One mark was deducted for every cross in excess of four. There was a good performance in this question, as in 2015 and 2016. B and H were the least successful parts, and C was sometimes chosen in error. The international angle of the initiative was overlooked. This non-verbal type of question is accessible to a broad range of students.

Q3(a)

Unambiguous mis-spellings were accepted throughout Q3. The question explored the Francophone world, and involved a Brazilian captain in the waters of French Guyana. It was quite frequently understood that he was

'*accusé*'. Even in incorrect responses, grammatical knowledge guided many students to select one of the past participles.

Q3(b)

This part was the most challenging in the question, and significant number of students were not successful. There were four grammatically possible responses here, so a past participle being used as an adjective would be likely. '*expérimenté*' seemed not to be well-known lexically.

Q3(c)

This was a very successful part, and the most likely to be gained on account of logical deduction from the passage. If the passage concerned a Brazilian fishing in French waters, then 'absence' is likely to fit. This demonstrated that many had understood the general sense of fishing regulations being breached.

Q3(d)

This part was, like (b), challenging, and the erroneous cognate in English for '*privé*' made this a part which discriminated effectively.

Q4

Examiners are aware of the fact that this is the most demanding of the listening comprehension questions, and there is acceptance of lifted responses which are targeted and communicate. However, many students try to transcribe what they hear, without paying attention to grammatical accuracy or overall sense, and phonetic renditions are not always successful. As with Q7, there is often information in the passage which needs manipulation for it to be part of an acceptable and direct response. The mean score on this question remained strong, suggesting that students of all abilities were able to access some credit, and that teachers had given wide exposure to this question type. As in previous sessions, the order of elements rule was applied, so in a one mark part, only the first piece of information was considered, and in a two mark part, the first two elements were assessed. This rule favours students whose responses are succinct and targeted.

Q4(a) seeks two main concepts: the fact that there is less home cooking and there are more ready meals. Americanisation of diet was acceptable information too, but general Americanisation was too vague, for it did not target greater calorie intake.

Q4(b)

The first mark earned was accessible to many students, namely the fact that less well-off people in developed countries were affected. However, the notion that all people in developing countries were affected eluded most students. Groups of people were targeted, not countries or groups of countries.

Q4(c)

This part was successfully attempted by a range of students, and substantially lifted responses could score, naming the roles of an unbalanced diet and a sedentary lifestyle. A fat laden diet was accepted for an unbalanced diet which helped a good number of students to score.

Q4(d)

This one mark part was quite demanding, as it could not be answered correctly with a direct lift, and the angle needed was from thirty years ago, not from the current situation. Logically, and this is where checking responses could assist, for no vending machines at all might be quite unlikely three decades ago.

Q4(e)

This one mark part required care with parts of speech and their spelling. 'coût' for 'côte' and vice versa were not inter-changeable and this confusion caused credit to be lost on occasion: '*le côte d'un club de sport est cher*'. There could again be checking to ensure the likelihood of responses. Sports or running per se are not expensive, so the suggestion that they are had to be rejected, but club memberships can be.

Q6

There is no need to write in full English sentences, but students should remember that this is the transfer of meaning question, and should write in natural and unambiguous English. The order of elements rule rewards targeted responses in this question, as in Q4 and Q7. Each part is worth one mark. The mean mark was over 3 as in 2016.

Q6(a)

Meeting new people and keeping up with friendships are precluded by the question part but had to be counted as elements if offered. The rewardable response involved keeping up to date with news of areas of interest.

Q6(b)

The notion of invincibility as well as doing what one wishes unchecked needed to be conveyed, and sometimes students wrote too much: 'you can do what you want because you can hide online', was not really enough to get both notions across.

Q6(c)

This was the most challenging part of Q6, through lack of care with the English 'follow'. This is a positive activity, and needed to be explicitly negative coupled with the idea of identifying people online, to score: 'to

identify and to follow in order to harass' scored 1 mark, but unqualified, 'to follow' could not form part of a correct response.

Q6(d)

This part needed to focus on a social media presence. It was insufficient to offer simply 'a profile' for this does not convey the fact that it is open to all.

Q6(e) became a little confused, and examiners tried to award credit as much as possible, provided that the key idea was communicated that social media users are less careful online than face to face or with a neighbour. The response was often the wrong way round, and suggested greater openness face to face, and this is not borne out by the passage overall.

Q7

There was a spread of attainment consistent with previous series, but as with Q4, fewer students each session scoring very low marks, and more around the upper end of the spectrum. Common sense could have assisted students in some parts: it is quite likely that given the low cost of single use plastic bags, that these bags are often forgotten, or that the nominal charge is not proving effective in reducing consumption of such bags. While it is not intended that external knowledge is brought to bear, current topics which are not deliberately perverse will often be helped by contextual knowledge.

Q7(a)

There needed to be care with this question, and this part targets potential initiatives. There are two marks on offer, and banning and taxing plastic bags were offered by a considerable number of students. '*les sac plastique risqué d'être interdits*' was considered to be an untargeted lift.

Q7(b)

This part was gained by many students, since there were two potential routes to the mark: that plastic bags could be used as a bin, or to wrap food of some description.

Q7(c)

The succinct '*rien*' was rejected in this part, for there was some change, albeit slight, or '*presque rien*'. This rewards a careful reading of the passage, and students needed to convey that there is a negligible impact of the low price charged.

Q7(d)

This part provided quite straightforward credit where a manipulated lift was managed with comprehensible success, and the key notions were that payment is required for plastic bags in supermarkets, which would probably be known to many students, but that they are free in bakeries which might not have been known, and is sometimes untrue in bakeries outside of

France. Vague responses which did not clarify what was or was not sold, where, did not score. Credit was sometimes lost where it was suggested that the bags, not the charge, are absent from bakeries.

Q7(e)

This part provided credit for a large number of students, for forgetting plastic bags was quite well retrieved. It was less common, but equally acceptable, to see responses regarding those rare shoppers who remembered to re-use their bags.

Q7(f)

This part required a relatively short response, stating that '*ils finissent dans la mer*'. Some responses mentioned pollution, which is not a targeted response to what happens to the bags, not what do the bags do. There needed to be a verbal notion, so '*dans la mer*' is too vague for the question part set.

Q7(g)

This part was not successfully answered with a lift, and there was two parts to the 2 mark part, predictably. The idea that the policy was not effective was less frequently attested, but the first mark for the very limited success of the current law was more often gained. Some students sought unsuccessfully to respond with the same information as in Q7(a), so not only was '*pourquoi*' not addressed, but the potential blanket ban in all shops, eluded.

Q8

This question attested a high level of attainment, and a high mean mark was evidenced once again. Many students addressed all four bullet points with clear development to at least three bullets, thus accessing C13-14. Almost all students addressed three or more, so C7 or more was assured. The topic area seemed comfortably within the experience of nearly all students, and work experience, Duke of Edinburgh, out of school volunteering, humanitarian work in the developing world to community service near home are all examples of potentially valid content which could earn full credit. Paid employment was the only area explicitly precluded in this task. It was envisaged that employability could move beyond reference to volunteering, but if it did not, full credit was available.

Excessively long introductions were rarer than in earlier sessions. Some students answered the bullet points in a different order from that presented. This was entirely acceptable, but could lead to omission. Where there was development which could have been attributed to more than one bullet point, it was treated on its merit, and was credited to best advantage the student.

Bullet 1: For full credit, a personalised response was needed, followed up with some development. It could be that no voluntary work has been

undertaken, and this could score fully with development. A relevant response without development gained partial credit. A generous view of voluntary work was taken, so that all but explicitly paid work was fully accepted.

Bullet 2: A conditional notion required with some justification was necessary for full bullet. Opinions in favour or against the suggestion are equally valid, and there is no need to explore both for the full bullet point. Partial credit was given where there was no personal opinion, and/or no development.

Bullet 3: References to university qualifications were not accepted. Personal qualities or experiences undertaken are all fully valid, and if the response continued to discuss the role of voluntary work, it could receive full credit.

Bullet 4: Yes or no, plus justification of a personal opinion was needed. There was no need to discuss both sides, and the ambition need not be stated. However, the full bullet point necessitated some development, and not all responses were very logical or likely. For example, students sometimes suggested implausibly that work experience would be a suitable alternative to medical school for aspiring doctors.

Grammar, for which 15 marks are available in Q8, requires care for students hoping to gain marks in the highest box of the markgrid. As advised in previous Examiners' Reports, all students, but especially those targeting the higher grades, should ensure that they have a solid grasp of grammatical concepts, notably those in the Programme of Study. Fundamental grammar, such as present tense formation, and adjectival and verb agreement, remain important reasons for the failure to reach the highest marks for many students. Q8 has 15 marks for Quality and Range of Language. Advanced grammatical constructions in Q8 are impressive if used accurately and in the context of a sound overall response. Similarly, the gender, part of speech and spelling of quite basic words could be usefully revised: *une stage, un université, un médecine*. The stimulus and bullet points can include clues for some of the words which are likely to be relevant. Excessive ambition may lead to unclear information, and natural linking enhances Q8 responses greatly. All students gain marks in Q8 by fully addressing each bullet point. Examiners read only to the end of the sense group, not necessarily the sentence after 220 words, and students are generally respecting this limit.

For Q8, the following guidance holds good for the Content (C) mark from all previous series. This article task required no title, salutation or valediction, though the presence of any of these was accepted and excluded from the word count. In terms of content, students need to personalise or generalise their responses to the various bullet points, according to the demands of the given bullet point. With regard to language, many responses contained examples of the subjunctive and conditional, but in a substantial minority of responses, more basic verbs and tenses including auxiliaries were flawed and errors referred to in previous reports, persisted. There were some non-canonical constructions as well as more familiar ones. Both have their place,

if suitably integrated into the response, and if they improve rather than obfuscate the message being communicated.

Paper Summary

Based on the performance in this paper, students are offered the following advice:

- Care needs to be taken over precise English expression in Q6.
- Handwriting remains problematic in some students' work, whereas the presentation of others' is excellent. Spellings and accents becoming unclear or ambiguous. There is no need to write on alternate lines.
- Students should pay particular attention when 'lifting' text. Inference and manipulation are sometimes needed, and lifted responses are sometimes not targeted.
- It is worth using some of the 2 hours 30 minutes to check.
- Successful students seem often to write an essay plan. Q8 requires a continuous response with a development of all four bullets which should be addressed explicitly, not as four comprehension questions. The detail and tense of the bullet points are important.
- It is useful to consult the Programme of Grammar study, to avoid overly complex and contrived constructions.

