

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE French (5FR01) Paper 1F

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Summary

Overall, candidates performed well throughout the paper as a whole and there were some good performances. Candidates were well prepared for the different test types although questions with a greater choice of answers and open-ended questions requiring candidates to answer in English were more challenging for less able candidates.

Individual Response to Questions

Questions 1 and 8

Candidates were successful at questions which required the recognition of single lexical items, such as questions 1 and 8, although some individual items of vocabulary caused problems. The vocabulary for Q1 was generally well known and many candidates scored full marks giving them a confident start to the paper. Candidates were equally successful in Q8, although item (iv), '*mon portable*' was challenging, highlighting once again the need for practice on the pronunciation and recognition of cognates.

Questions 2 and 6

Candidates performed very well in Q2 although item (iii), '*Je voudrais habiter aux Etats Unis*' proved to be the most difficult. In Q6, recognising adjectives rather than nouns proved the most challenging for the less able candidates. In particular, items (i), '*Ma ville est jolie*' and (ii), '*Ma ville est pleine d'histoire*' were the least well known. Thorough knowledge of core vocabulary is vital for success in these questions.

Question 4

Candidates performed particularly well in the targeted grade E items of Q4. However, the test type required careful listening to a continuous short extract which proved quite challenging for less able candidates who tended to tick answers based on the recognition of single lexical items, usually the first word that they heard and recognised. For example, '*15 chambres avec balcon*', many candidates incorrectly chose answer A. In item G, less able candidates found the text more challenging, '*Le soir il y a un programme d'activités pour toute la famille*'.

Crossover Questions

The questions that were intended to differentiate candidate ability were suitably challenging. More able candidates scored well in the overlap questions targeted at grades D and C, (Q3, Q5, Q7 and Q9).

Question 3 and 7

Candidates are allowed to write at any time while the recording is playing but good practice suggests that candidates should not write when listening to the extract for the first time.

Q3 was generally more accessible to the majority of candidates, and many scored well on this question. However, recognition of reference to the weather: *'Il a fait très beau', 'pas trop froid', 'parfait pour le ski'* proved the most challenging.

Q7 was relatively accessible with many candidates scoring well on this question. The most commonly incorrect answer was C with candidates wrongly matching, *'Je passe peu de temps sur internet'* with, *'How she likes to spend her time on the internet'*. The least well known answer was D which required matching, *'J'aime aussi lire et j'adore les romans'* with answer D, *'What she likes to read'*.

Questions 5 and 9

Q5 and Q9 were accessible to all candidates but only the more able candidates scored highly. As well as the need to listen to a continuous extract, the question also required the recognition of negation. For example, Q5, *'Il ne range jamais sa chambre'* and *'le sport ne l'intéresse pas'*. For the latter utterance, the more less able candidates tended to base their response on the recognition of single lexical items and many chose incorrectly A, *'keen on sport'*. The most common correct answers were E (*lazy*) and F (*generous*) with candidates successfully linking, *'il ne fait rien à la maison / il préfère rester au lit* and *il me paie des places au cinéma*. At this level of targeted question, candidates should be able to distinguish clearly between *je* and *il/elle*. Q9 was accessible to the majority of candidates but only the more able candidates were able to distinguish carefully the main points, details and opinions. Item (a) was generally well done but in items (b) and (c), many candidates found the utterances

between the three students quite challenging. For example, in items (b) and (c), candidates were required to apply attention to detail to distinguish clearly the utterances of Roxanne in, '*la journée est trop longue*' and that of Justine in, '*la journée scolaire est longue mais on a de longues vacances et moi, je préfère ça*'. In addition, that of Hubert, '*certains de mes profs très sont gentils*' and Roxanne, '*la plupart de mes profs expliquent bien*'.

Question 10

Q10 clearly differentiated candidate ability as the task required candidates to identify the main points and produce their own answers in English. Surprisingly there were some candidates who answered this section in French and, therefore, were not awarded marks for these responses. Candidates performed well in item (a), although incorrect answers ranged from Sweden (very common), Spain and USA.

In item (b), the number '*250*' proved very challenging for most candidates, as did the reference to time in item (c). Common incorrect answers for item (b) were '*20050*' and '*251*' among others, such as '*2/20/21*' to '*2702*'. This was disappointing as, in recent years, the recognition of numbers and time in GCSE papers has improved. Many incorrect answers reflect common misconceptions/errors.

Reference to the weather proved challenging in item (d). Many candidates failed to recognise the word '*neige*' for snow. The addition of '*chutes*' as in '*chutes de neige*' led candidates to respond with, '*the shoot is not working*', '*there is water in the shoot*' and even, '*shoot the pilot*'. There were also answers that bore no relation to the utterance which demonstrated application of imagination rather than knowledge. For example, '*the plane has crashed*', '*it has ran out of fuel*', '*it's been cancelled*', and '*there is heavy fog*'.

In conclusion, the performance of the more able candidates was characterised by:

- careful reading of the questions
- sound knowledge of core vocabulary
- listening to the whole extracts rather than focusing in on single words
- identifying cognates and familiar words in unfamiliar contexts
- attention to detail
- applying logic

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