

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE French (5FR01) Paper 1F

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## Examiner Report

In general, candidates performed well across the paper. They 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 are daunting for weaker candidates.

The questions, which require the recognition of single lexical items (Question 1 and Question 7) or short phrases (Question 2 and Question 5) were well done, although individual items of vocabulary caused problems.

The vocabulary for Question 1 was generally well known and many candidates scored full marks, giving them a confident start to the paper. Question 7 was also well done. Part (ii), *des légumes*, was the least well done and a surprising number of candidates did not recognise very common items of vocabulary such as *du jambon* in part (iii) and *du poulet* in part (iv).

Question 2 was also very well done; with part (ii) *Mon frère a les cheveux courts et noirs* proving to be the most difficult. Question 5 proved difficult for some candidates, who were not familiar with common hotel vocabulary. Part (iv), *Où est l'ascenseur?*, was the least well known, even though the word *ascenseur* comes under both accommodation and shopping. Thorough knowledge of core vocabulary is vital for success in these questions.

Question 6, targeted at grade E, was generally well done. It required careful listening to the whole extract and proved difficult for weaker candidates, who tend to tick answers based on the recognition of single lexical items, usually the first word that they hear and recognise. For example, upon hearing *Je déteste la géographie, le prof est....*, they immediately incorrectly tick option G, *The Geography teacher is funny* even though the phrase ends with the word *nul*. The most common incorrect answer was F, *He goes to school by car*, generated from *prendre le car*, even though the correct word for a car is an item of very common vocabulary. The second most incorrect answer was C, *He has to get up at 7.30 am* (generated from *je dois me lever à 6h30 pour prendre le car à 7h30*) and again is an example of random ticking rather than listening carefully to what is said.

The questions that were intended to discriminate did so and, whereas better candidates scored well in the overlap questions targeted at grades D and C, (Questions 3, 4, 8 and 9), weaker candidates found these more daunting. Much of this can be put down to not listening to the whole extract and this is something that should be practised. Question 3 was generally accessible and many scored at least half marks on this question. Again, there was some evidence of random ticking as quite a few candidates gave E, *holidays*, as a disadvantage even though there is no reference to holidays in the extract.

Question 9 was also relatively accessible; answers C, E and G were the most commonly correct with A being the least well recognised, with many candidates failing to match *Mes parents me donnent 20 € par semaine* with *pocket money*. The most common incorrect answer was H, *her best friend*, which again is a

result of snatched hearing ie choosing an answer based upon the recognition of a single word (from *J'aime chatter avec mes amis/J'aime aussi faire les magasins avec mes copines*).

Question 4 and Question 8 were accessible to all candidates. Question 4 required careful listening. The most common correct answer was part (iv) – candidates correctly matching Yannick, *J'achète souvent des stylos et du papier pour l'école* with *school equipment*. The least well know answers were parts (ii) and (iii), which required matching Gaëlle, *Je mets de l'argent sur mon portable* with answer (ii) *credit for mobile phone* and Elisa *c'est moi qui dois payer pour télécharger des chansons sur mon ipod*, with answer (iii) *music downloads*. Many candidates put Elisa as an incorrect answer to this part of the question, presumably upon hearing the word *musique* in *Ma passion c'est la musique et j'achète souvent des CD*.

In Question 8, only the better candidates were able to listen carefully and distinguish between the choices ie they recognised the main points, details and opinions as required at grade C, eg in part (ii) being able to distinguish between the three activities from *Normalement nous faisons beaucoup de vélo mais cet été on a décidé de faire des randonnées à pied, c'était fantastique* and *Ma soeur adore faire du cheval mais c'était trop cher*. Again, it is the attention to the whole and the detail which distinguishes the C candidate from weaker candidates. The most accessible answer was part (iv).

Question 10 was a good discriminator and required candidates to produce their own answers in English. Surprisingly, there were some candidates who answered this section in French and therefore, were not awarded marks for parts (a) and (d). In Part (a), many candidates did not know the days of the week and every single day was mentioned across the candidates' answers. Numbers were also a weakness – in part (c) many candidates confused 2 and 12 and in part (b), *20h15* was rendered variously as *1.30/ 3 pm/ 3.20/ even 25h*. This was disappointing as in recent years in the GCSE paper, recognition of numbers and times has improved and responses from candidates. This year indicated the need to constantly revise numbers and times. In part (d), *carte d'étudiant* was not known by the majority of candidates. There were many answers that bore no relationship to what was heard and which demonstrated imagination and personal experience rather than understanding of the extract eg *money/ mobile phone/ present/food/sweets*.

As always, the performance of better candidates was characterised by:

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

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