

# Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE French (5FR01) Paper 1H

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## **Unit: 5FR01/1H**

### **Summary**

Overall, candidates performed well across the paper and there were some excellent performances. The questions that intended to differentiate candidate ability were suitably challenging. The majority of candidates were well prepared and were confident to attempt the whole paper as there were very few unanswered questions.

There was evidence of good comprehension and exam skills. Many candidates had used the five minutes reading time productively by underlining key words in the title, rubric, questions and annotating questions. The performance of less able candidates was characterised by a lack of attention to detail. There were some candidates who were unable to cope with the demands of the higher paper. These candidates would have possibly benefited from taking the Foundation rather than the Higher paper or from having greater practice of the various test types, particularly those used for questions targeted at grade B and above.

A small number of queries were received about the duration of the recorded material. Edexcel will be offering guidance for this on the front cover of the examination paper and on the recording to provide more clarity.

### **Overlap Questions: Q1, Q2, Q5 and Q8**

The performance on the overlap questions was generally better than at Foundation level. However, the performance of less able candidates was similar to that of Foundation level candidates on these questions. Many candidates scored well on Q1 giving them a confident start to the paper. As at Foundation level, Q2 and Q5 proved more demanding and only C + candidates scored well.

The questions that were intended to differentiate were suitable challenging and less able candidates found the questions targeted at grade B and above very demanding.

### **Question 3**

Q3 proved challenging for most candidates. It required careful listening and the ability to distinguish between choices and opinions. Many candidates failed to identify the correct answer A in item (i). The question required

candidates to remember which film was playing at which cinema which proved quite challenging for most candidates. The level of difficulty was discussed at the Award meeting and has been reflected in the grade boundaries for higher tier.

Many candidates scored well in item (ii), although some candidates lost marks by selecting too many options. This highlights the need for candidates to read the questions and rubrics carefully.

#### **Question 4**

Q4 was generally well done with many candidates scoring favourably on this question. Item (iii) was the most commonly correct answer with candidates successfully identifying, *'ils limitent le temps que je peux passer à tchatter'* (Soraya). Item (iv) proved the most demanding with candidates having to distinguish between, Soraya, *'seulement mes amis peuvent la voir'*; Léo, *'je leur ai montré ma page et mes photos'* and the correct answer, Didier, *'je ne mets jamais de photos'*.

#### **Question 6**

Q6 was targeted at A\* and only the more able candidates were successful. It required the ability of candidates to distinguish between the various choices and to understand detail as in the use of qualifiers, negation and tenses. Items (i), (ii) and (iv) were generally more accessible to most candidates, although item (iii) proved the most challenging. This item required candidates to match the response A with, *'la ville est assez propre, on trouve très peu de déchets et de graffiti, il y a des fleurs partout mais on devrait installer des bancs'*. The aim of the French in this question provided the necessary stretch and challenge that is expected at this targeted level of assessment.

#### **Question 7**

Many candidates found Q7 relatively straightforward. Item (iii) proved the most challenging with many candidates unable to match the correct response C with, *'J'aimerais bien faire ça mais je n'ai pas de carte de crédit donc ce n'est pas possible'*.

Many candidates incorrectly gave A as the answer to this part of the question, possibly linking the word *'cher'* in *'parfois on paie un peu plus*

*cher'* with a reference to money. Option A was also the most commonly incorrect answer for item (i), even though the extract says, '*il n'y a pas de risques*'. In this respect, the importance of candidates recognising negation must be stressed. In item (ii), the word '*compagnies*' often confused less able candidates who identified incorrectly option F.

### **Question 9 and 10**

The open-ended questions requiring answers in English differentiated suitably and Q9 and Q10 proved very demanding for less able candidates. However, there was evidence that, generally, candidates were better prepared for this question type and tended to score better than in previous years.

There were some excellent performances from more able candidates who were able to supply the detail and accuracy required at this level of assessment. Many candidates understood the gist of the extract but were often unsuccessful due to a lack of attention to detail. The performance of less able candidates was characterised by a misinterpretation of the extract, a lack of attention to detail, an inability to write clearly and unambiguously in English and an overuse of imagination.

There was some evidence that, despite the fact that the recording made reference to Question 9 and Question 10, some candidates completed both sets of questions after the extract for Q9 only.

A small number of queries were received about the pre-pauses of the recorded material for these questions. The issue was discussed at the Award meeting and Edexcel has reviewed the procedure for applying pre-pauses to recorded material to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged.

### **Question 9**

In Q9 (a), the number of candidates who failed to recognise the numbers '18-25' was disappointing. Answers ranged from '5-18', '18-21', '18-50', '18-15' to '18-80'. The second part of this question was intended to test reference to the people at which the school was aimed. Unfortunately, the use of '*sans*' was challenging for a number of candidates with some imaginative response, such as, '*they haven't got 5 A-Cs*'.

Some candidates had interpreted '*chance*' as '*danse*', (despite the fact that it was in the title) and thought that the extract referred to a dance school. Other more imaginative incorrect answers referred to a school for, '*criminals*', '*advanced scholarship*', '*autistic children*' and '*children with disabilities*.'

In Q9b, many candidates understood the reference to accepting the rules and behaving well but fewer recognised the need to make an effort to succeed, '*il faut faire des efforts pour réussir*.' Candidates who found the extract challenging tended to focus on individual items of vocabulary and created their own answers, for example, '*ils doivent se présenter en entrevue*' became, '*they have to do a presentation*'. Similarly, other incorrect responses were based on their own experience of school, such as '*good attendance*', '*punctuality*', and '*attend regularly*' (taken from *règle*).

### **Question 10**

In Q10a, candidates were reasonably successful interpreting a correct response to the other skills that students at the school have to learn. However, there were some imaginative incorrect responses, such as *ICT, Music, PE, Maths, English*.

Some candidates struggled with the comprehension of the extract and were not awarded marks for misinterpretation of language, such as '*des compétences sociales*' which was translated as '*social work*'. In addition, some candidates interpreted '*sociales*' as socialising.

In Q10b, many candidates understood the basic idea of time in school and time in work or work experience but added incorrect information, such as '*school in the morning*', '*work in the afternoon*'. Many candidates misinterpreted '*moitié*' as '*mois*' which led to incorrect responses, such as '*a month in school and then a month in work*'.

In Q10c, the majority of candidates were able to respond accurately but some candidates struggled to either understand or express their ideas unambiguously in English. More surprisingly, there were several answers referring to opera.

Candidates were not awarded marks for confusing separate elements of the extract in one answer. For example, the extract '*leur donner des*

*compétences professionnelles et la confiance de trouver un emploi* was often interpreted as, 'to give people confidence to become a professional'.

## **Conclusion**

The performance of the more successful candidates was characterised by:

- careful reading of the rubric;
- listening to the whole rather than honing in on individual items of vocabulary;
- attention to detail; giving full rather than partial answers;
- expressing themselves clearly and unambiguously when writing in English and relating their answers to facts in the extract;
- applying logic;
- reading over and correcting their answers.

## **Grade Boundaries**

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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>

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