

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE French (5FR01)
Paper 1H Listening and Understanding
in French

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GCSE French
Paper 1 Higher Tier
Listening and Understanding in French
Examiner Report

Students performed well across the paper as a whole and there were some excellent performances. The questions that were intended to discriminate did so but the majority of students understood enough, and felt confident enough, to attempt the whole paper and there were very few blank answers even on Q8 and 9 that require answers in English.

There was evidence of some good listening and exam skills. Many students had used the five minutes reading time well (underlining key words in the title, rubric and questions, annotating questions) generally using the time to anticipate what they were about to hear. The performance of less able students was characterised by a lack of attention to detail, poor reading of the questions, "snatched" listening based on the identification of single words, rather than listening to the extract as a whole, mishearing and imagination. There were some students who were unable to cope with the demands of the higher paper, these students 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.

The performance on the overlap questions (Q1, Q2, Q5 and Q6) was generally better than at the Foundation level. However, the performance of weaker students was similar to that of Foundation level students on these questions (see Foundation level report).

Many students scored well on Q1 and Q2 giving them a confident start to the paper. As at Foundation level Q5 and Q6 proved the most demanding and only the C grade students and above scored well on these. The questions that were intended to discriminate did so and weaker students found the questions targeted at grades B and above, to be challenging.

Q7 was one of the more accessible questions and many students scored full marks on this question.

Q3 which involved some paraphrasing was also generally well answered by more able students although Q3(ii) proved difficult for some students (matching *Beaucoup de jeunes passent trop de temps à y jouer même la nuit, ils ne peuvent pas arrêter* with answer D, *are addictive*.)

Q4(a) and Q4(b) were a new test type and unfortunately some students misunderstood the instructions and ticked more than the required number of statements for each section. This rubric infringement is penalised. Some students also ticked the same statement for both speakers. The question proved challenging for all but the stronger students as it required careful listening and the understanding of detail and paraphrasing.

Again there was evidence of snatched listening, eg in Q4(a), upon hearing (Mireille) *Les professeurs expliquent bien mais les cours ne sont pas stimulants*, some students ticked answer A, *The teachers' explanations aren't clear* rather

than the correct answer B, *Lessons aren't interesting*. Likewise weaker students ticked answer C, *My favourite lesson is IT based on presumably hearing, On fait beaucoup d'informatique mais pas beaucoup de sport; c'est dommage parce que c'est ma matière préférée*.

Again it is important to stress the need to listen to the whole sentence rather than just tick answers based on the identification of single lexical items. Q4(b) was marginally more difficult than Q4a but again incorrect answers were based on not listening to the whole phrase/section.

As always the open-ended questions requiring answers in English were a good discriminator (Q8 and Q9). There were some excellent performances from more able students on these questions but they proved difficult for weaker students. This year, however, there were fewer blanks and students' responses indicated they had understood the gist of the extract although lack of attention to detail cost weaker students marks. The stronger students were able to supply the detail and accuracy required at this level. Some students failed to recognise familiar vocabulary in an unfamiliar context.

Given that healthy lifestyle is a common topic area in the controlled speaking and writing assessment, a large number of students were unable to recognise or put unambiguously into English common phrases such as *(ne sont pas) en forme* in Q8a, this was variously rendered by weaker students as *in form, on form or even aren't informed*.

Similarly such students tended to answer using their experience rather than what was heard and there were many references to obesity. Also in this question the number 43 (in 43%) proved difficult for all but a handful of students, it was rendered as 23/40 and even 80. Of those that did recognise the number some gave answers that lacked detail ie 43% *do sport* (rather than the required 43% *do sport regularly*) and some students combined separate pieces of information to give incorrect answers e.g 43 % *des jeunes font régulièrement du sport*. 20% *ne font pas de sport du tout* became 43% *don't do any sport*.

In Q8(b) (*What does the figure 20% refer to?*) a surprisingly large number of students failed to give the correct answer of *do not do sport*. Again recognition of negation is very important. In Q8(c) and Q8(d) it was again lack of attention to detail that cost students marks, they wrote incomplete answers such as in Q8(c) *do one hour of sport*, omitting the *per day* required for the mark. Other students for this question confused *au moins* with *par mois* and incorrectly added *per month*, instead of *per day*.

In Q8(d) students had to write one from two possible answers. Many ignored the more accessible option (*because it is expensive*) and attempted to write the challenging answer (*young people go to school by car/ don't cycle to school*). Incomplete answers such as *they prefer cars/ they don't ride bikes* (no reference to *going to school*) failed to score. Here some students made reference to information not in the extract with answers such as *young people don't walk to school/ young people are lazy*. Again weaker students tended to take two separate pieces of information and combine them to give incorrect answers eg in Q8(c) (the government) *wants all young people to cycle to school*.

Q9(a) proved difficult and again many students used prior knowledge to answer the questions rather than what was actually said, with incorrect answers such as, *they become addicted and neglect their school work/ they are bad for your health/ makes them unfit/ they would rather play video games than do sport.* Again there was evidence of students combining pieces of information to form incorrect answers eg in Q9(a) *they can't sleep because they use too much technology.* Q9(b) proved generally accessible and meant that many students were able to score 1 or 2 marks on the final question.

The performance of the more able students on the paper was characterised by:

- careful reading of the rubric
- listening to the whole passage rather than honing in on individual items of vocabulary
- recognising the use of negation
- attention to detail, giving full rather than partial answers
- good knowledge of vocabulary
- 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

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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