

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in French
(5FR01)
Paper 1H: Listening

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GCSE French
Paper 1H: Listening
Examiner Report

Candidates 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 candidates understood enough, and felt confident enough, to attempt the whole paper and there were very few blank answers, even on Q4 requiring answers in English.

There was evidence of some good listening and exam skills. Many candidates had used the five minutes reading time well (underlining key words in the title, rubric and questions, and annotating questions). As such they used the time to anticipate what they were about to hear.

The performance of weaker candidates was characterised by lack of vocabulary, 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 candidates who were unable to cope with the demands of the Higher paper, and for whom the experience must have been demoralising. 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.

The performance on the overlap questions (Q1, Q2, Q5 and Q6) was generally better than at Foundation level. However, the performance of weaker candidates was similar to that of Foundation level candidates on these questions (see Foundation level report) with the same questions and question parts proving harder for weaker candidates.

The questions that were intended to discriminate did so and weaker candidates found the questions targeted at grades B and above challenging.

Q3 parts (iii) and (iv) proved the most accessible. However, in part (i) many candidates failed to match 'on rit bien avec elle' with answer C 'makes her laugh'. And in part (ii), 'En maths c'est plus difficile mais la prof ne se fâche jamais', with answer B 'is patient with her'.

Performance in Q7 was generally better but parts (i) and (iv) proved difficult. Possibly the word 'vol' in part (iv) was not well known and weaker candidates did not recognise the use of the negative in part (i).

Q8 was challenging. Whilst parts 8a(ii) and 8b(ii) and 8b(iv) were accessible to many candidates, only the best candidates scored well on this question. Weaker candidates, again, tended to tick the answer which contained the first word they recognised in the transcript. Listening to the whole is of key importance in these questions.

As always the open-ended questions requiring answers in English were a good discriminator (Q4). There were some excellent performances from better candidates on these questions but they proved difficult for weaker candidates.

Candidates' responses indicated they had understood the gist of the extract although lack of attention to detail cost weaker candidates marks. Only the better candidates were able to supply the detail and accuracy required at this level. Weaker candidates tend to take key words and build answers around them, e.g. in part 4a (ii) 'they stay in their rooms and play video games / they stay in their rooms and go on the internet', and in part 4a (iii) 'they watch TV on their smart phone' or 'they watch a lot of TV in their bedroom', and in part 4b (i) 'they'd rather watch TV than play sport/competitions'.

There were quite a lot of instances of candidates adding information that wasn't in the extract, e.g. in part 4a(iv), references were made to boys playing sport rather than girls activities. Here references to sport were made although this topic of sport was more specific to part 4b, which is heard separately. For example, as in part 4b (i) 'sport is boring/sport at school is limited', and in part 4b(ii) 'they play sport so they can meet new people / they like to do what celebrities do' or 'they are influenced by their friends / teachers or friends / parents'. Answers which contain information which is not mentioned are not credited.

The accurate understanding of key basic items of vocabulary and structures is also important, for example in part 4a (i), weaker candidates didn't understand the numbers 14-15, and they gave answers which ranged from 4-5, 4-14, 14-16 and even 14-20 and 14-28.

Also many interpreted the word 'libre' in 'temps libre' in part 4a (ii) as 'livre' and there were lots of references to reading in their rooms. In part 4a (iii) 'troisième' was often rendered as 13th.

Some answers were too vague, for example in part 4a (ii) 'they spend time at home / in their bedroom' rather than 'most of their time'.

Sometimes answers were vague and did not answer the question e.g. in part 4b (ii) sport is a social activity, and when the question asks what influences their choice of sport, the correct answers for the question were, 'Le plaisir est la première motivation pour faire un sport' and 'le choix en sport est influencé par les amis'.

The word 'plaisir' was not well known for part 4b (ii), many candidates recognised the reference to friends/doing sport with friends in this question for one mark but gave as the second part as 'they like competitions' (again failing to recognise the negation in, 'l'esprit de compétition n'est pas important' or 'they don't like competition' which is accurate but does not answer the question.

On the whole the performance of the better candidates on the paper was characterised by:

- Careful reading of the rubric

- Listening to the whole 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.

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