

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE French (5FR02)
Paper 2A Speaking in French

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GCSE French
Paper 2 Speaking in French
Examiner Report

The students had prepared well for the oral tests this summer and most of the teacher examiners conducted them in an encouraging and professional manner.

Each student must undertake at least two of these three task-types but only one has to be recorded and submitted. Centres are asked to submit recordings of at least two different task-types in the moderation sample.

Centres have a choice of three tasks:

- a presentation and follow-on discussion
- a picture-based discussion
- an open interaction.

As in previous sessions, the majority of centres opted for the presentation and discussion and picture-based discussion, although an increasing number of centres did undertake an open interaction task.

Centres create their own task sheets for the presentation and discussion and the picture-based discussion – there are no Edexcel set tasks for these two options. There were a number of different ways in which centres set these tasks with the majority providing students with a title followed by a number of bullet points whereas other just provided a title.

All tasks have to be refreshed every two years and centres are reminded that the best tasks will therefore be a title with 5–6 bullet points to guide and support students: the task can then be refreshed at the end of two years by changing at least one of these bullet points. Should the task only consist of a title, e.g. My Holiday, then this title may not be used after two years.

Task sheets with a defined list of questions to prepare will not allow students to access the higher mark bands, since the assessment criteria require students to demonstrate spontaneity and an ability to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements. Unpredictable elements are defined as those that do not appear on the task sheet.

Centres are reminded that the Specification states that the picture within the picture-based discussion is intended to be used as a 'prompt to discussion' and although there is no requirement for the whole task to be based on the picture, the ensuing discussion must start from the student's picture. The spirit of this task-type is that students will each bring in their own picture, rather than all being given the same one. This is similarly the case within the presentation and discussion and the most successful tasks are those where the student has had ownership of the choice of picture or presentation material.

Teacher examiners are reminded that the stimulus in the open interaction task should not exceed 70 words and may also include visual prompts. There is no word limit for the task but centres are advised to set concise tasks in the interest of students.

Most centres undertaking the open interaction – the unscripted role-play task – created their own stimuli and tasks or adapted those, which are Edexcel produced, available on the website.

Conduct

The orals were well conducted and allowed students to achieve their best in the vast majority of centres. Skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher examiners in these cases gave students the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the assessment criteria on which they were being assessed.

However, in a number of centres teacher examiners stuck rigidly to a bank of questions whereby the majority, if not all, students were asked the same questions. On occasions, these questions did not follow on logically from one another in relation to what the student has responded. More able students are disadvantaged by such an approach, since there is a need for students to speak spontaneously, to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements in order to access the higher mark bands. Teacher examiners are advised that follow-up questions should be focussed on students' responses to ensure spontaneity and genuine interaction. Thus students did best when teacher examiners' questions followed on from what the student had just said and the unpredictable questions were frequently those that elicited more information or clarification.

In addition, teacher examiners should ask questions appropriate to the level of the student being examined. Some students were asked too many closed questions. This was particularly disappointing when the student was very capable and clearly able to produce extended answers. One must offer more able students opportunities to express a range of ideas and points of view and to demonstrate a range of more complex structures and vocabulary. Similarly, weaker students should have the opportunity to respond to more modest questions using language that they are able to manipulate.

When faced with closed questions, they frequently resorted to yes/no answers. In general, closed questions should be avoided in favour of more open-ended questions as they lead to a better student performance.

Tasks

Centres and students are free to choose their own themes for the orals: four themes have been identified in the Specification but these are not prescriptive and centres may choose the Centre-devised option. Students may undertake both tasks on the same theme if they wish, although there should be no direct overlap of content. Popular themes remain Holidays, Work experience, School, Family, Cinema, Healthy living, Leisure and sports, and My town.

Centres are reminded that they may differentiate their tasks to cater for the different levels of students, and do not have to give all students the same task, differentiated by outcome and students in the same teaching group do not all have to do the same task. Teacher examiners may start with a generic task but then modify it to correspond to the ability level of different

students within the group. Centres where there were differentiated tasks did so quite easily by adapting the bullet points.

In the presentation and discussion task-type, students must give an uninterrupted presentation that lasts between 1 minute minimum and 3 minutes maximum. However, centres are once again reminded that the timing of the presentation starts when the student starts speaking and not the start of the introduction by the teacher examiner.

There were a number of centres where some teacher examiners did not allow their students to speak for at least 1 minute before interrupting them to ask a question – even when it was clear that the student had more to say; consequently, these presentations were too short. Where weaker students are likely to run out of material before they have completed one minute, teacher examiners should consider whether the other two task-types might be more appropriate for these students. Presentations that fall short of the 1 minute minimum time allocation will incur a 2 mark deduction from the Content and Response grid (please refer to the marking principles towards the end of this document). It is not necessary for any student to go to the full 3 minutes' mark for a presentation and centres are advised that just over 1 minute really is long enough for the presentation part of the task –over long presentations mean less time for the more interactive, spontaneous part of the task.

Many students performed well on this task. However, there are students who had prepared their presentation thoroughly and were able to perform well within this part of the task but then were able to offer little within the all important interaction of the latter part. The presentation section allows students to fulfil certain assessment criteria but the discussion section allows them to fulfil others. Both sections should therefore be well represented and accomplished. It is important that the second part of the tasks takes the conversation forward, expanding on detail and opinion, or moving the conversation in a new direction. Unfortunately, in some cases the follow up questions merely covered the same ground as the presentation, which led to students using the same language and repeating information already given, and, when the teacher examiner asked a question about something already produced within in the presentation, caused hesitation and confusion.

It should be noted that a presentation followed by questions that produce 'mini-presentations' will not allow students to access the higher assessment bands. There should be spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions.

Similarly, there continues to be evidence that questions and answers had been over rehearsed with many of the same questions asked to all students. While this may allow weaker students to access their potential grade, the lack of spontaneity and unpredictability limits the marks of the more able students.

Picture-based discussion

Centres are reminded that students may choose to give a presentation (maximum of 1 minute) but they do not have to. Some students find giving

a presentation boosts their confidence for the rest of the oral; others feel more comfortable going straight into the discussion. Either approach is acceptable but it bears repeating that the picture is a 'prompt to discussion' so the oral must start from the student's picture. Some students did not refer to the picture at all. Since the assessment criteria for Content and Response refer specifically to information related to the chosen visual, this will have had an impact on the marks available to such students. However, for the most part, a short presentation or brief discussion on the photo or picture led on to wider conversation. There were some more adventurous students who brought pictures to prompt their thoughts on social problems such as the environment but the family or a holiday were by far the most popular choices. There was some good imaginative and original dialogue in many picture-based task types with students clearly enjoying the opportunity to talk about issues of personal interest.

Centres, where all students were given the same picture, often produced discussions that were similar and less imaginative and lacked individuality, and the follow up discussion tended to lack spontaneity and genuine interaction as the questions asked of students, and also unfortunately the responses, tended to be similar.

The stimulus for each submitted task type needs to be included with the work despatched and the picture or a description of the picture used by each student during the oral tests should also be sent. Moderators reported that where the picture was not sent, centres often failed to provide a description of the picture.

Open interaction

Unfortunately, some teacher examiners conducted this task as a question and answer session – more of a general conversation than an unscripted role-play scenario in response to a stimulus. For example, 'You are talking with your French friend about your holiday' did not work well at all as there was no obvious role to play and it turned into a general discussion. Centres are advised that there is no 'general conversation' task-type in this specification. The tasks should be take form of a transactional task or one that involves some of negotiation.

Although this continues to be the least popular option of the three task-types, many teachers have realised the full potential of this unscripted role-play task. Where the task was exploited correctly, students of all levels were able to engage in a genuinely spontaneous role play type dialogue. There were some excellent performances, for example in a tourist office, with a tourist asking for information on the student's local area, or in a leisure centre. Many of these tasks were adapted from the Edexcel produced exemplars to suit the experience of students and well-structured open interaction tasks encouraged high scores on the Content and Response grid due to the level of genuine interaction. This task gives a real flavour of how language can be used in a way that is personal and unique to each individual student and some students were enabled to demonstrate their language ability. Indeed, many moderators indicated that the open interaction task often allowed weaker students to achieve better marks, as it could offer more support in the stimulus.

There is an expectation in the open interaction that students will ask the teacher examiner questions and many tasks reminded students of the need to do so. Unfortunately, some students forgot to ask questions and were not prompted by the teacher examiner to do so. It is acceptable for teachers to prompt students in this respect, e.g. Tu veux / vous voulez me poser des questions? Centres should refer to the guidance in the Marking section of this report for details on how to apply the marking criteria in such instances.

Interactions where the student asks questions at appropriate times and often as a result of what has been said by the teacher examiner will also aid greater interaction and spontaneity.

Timing

Each task is required to last between 4 and 6 minutes. There were many tasks that last more than 6 minutes. Centres should be aware that moderators stop moderating after 6 minutes and any material beyond that will not be considered for assessment. On the other hand, there were also a number of tests which lasted less than 3'30". Anything less than this will be considered short and in the case of a short test 2 marks should be deducted from the student's score in the Content and Response grid. The marking principles detail this. Not all centres had deducted 2 marks in those cases where the oral was too short.

An oral that lasts only 3 minutes 30 seconds will not be able to access the full mark range.

As mentioned above, in the presentation and discussion task type, students give a presentation, which must last between 1 minute minimum and 3 minutes maximum. Presentations falling short of the 1 minute minimum time allocation will incur a 2 mark deduction from the Content and Response grid. Not all centres had deducted these 2 marks in such cases.

Centres should also note that in the picture-based discussion task type, students may give a presentation but they do not have to. If they do choose to start off with a presentation, this may last up to a maximum of 1 minute.

Recordings

Just one recorded task (task 2A) per student in the moderation sample should be sent to moderators. In this session, most centres submitted their recordings on CDs and USB sticks (with orals recorded as both mp3 files and music/audio files). Only a few centres now use cassette tapes. It is recommended that all centres use digitally produced recordings as these invariably have a better quality of sound in order to assess the student performance.

Moderators would respectfully request that centres check their recordings before sending off the samples. There were some poor quality recordings where students were barely audible. It is essential that the microphone is positioned so as to favour the student. In addition, while it is not necessary to conduct the orals one on one in a dedicated room, there is a need for minimal background noise so that the student being examined can be

heard. Some students recorded were very difficult to hear due to high levels of background noise.

Centres are kindly requested to include a track list with the CDs or USBs, detailing centre number, student name and number, language and series details. It helps moderators tremendously if the task type is indicated next to the student's name. It also avoids confusion if details of both student name and number are announced clearly at the start of each oral – some orals are started without identifying the student at all, which makes it very difficult for moderators to know which student they are listening to. Where orals have been recorded as music/audio files, centres should write the relevant track number on the CM2 form.

Marking

In the majority of centres teacher examiners showed a good understanding of the assessment criteria and were able to differentiate their students' performances and it was clear that the majority of centres had standardised their marking internally when there was more than one teacher examiner involved in the assessments. Unfortunately, there were also some centres whose marks needed adjustment.

It is important that teacher examiners check carefully the addition of marks prior to submission to Edexcel. Moderators reported a number of occasions where there were errors. The centre when contacted by the moderator should report the change to Edexcel as per instructions within the Administrative Support Guidance. This is essential as the final marks received by students may be affected.

Moderators also reported that some students who scored 0 were worthy of at least one mark. It is important that centres are aware that to score 0 there must be no rewardable language throughout the test.

Similarly students who were absent during the tests should not be awarded 0 on the CM2 and the Optems should be filled in with an X denoting their absence. Full details are in the Administrative Support Guidance and on the Optems sheets.

Content and Response

Where there were differences between centres and the nationally agreed standard centres tended to overvalue their students' performance. It should be remembered that the assessment criteria are applied globally on a best fit basis and it is necessary to demonstrate an ability to interact well with the teacher examiner and respond spontaneously to unpredictable questions in order to attain marks in the higher bands. Centres are reminded that pre-learned mini-monologues or 'conversations' that consist of a question and answer session but lack interaction, or an ability to expand or take the initiative, cannot be rewarded with top marks. Marks were incorrectly awarded in the 16–18 band in cases where the student gave extended, informative answers but did not show any spontaneity or ability to respond to unpredictable questions. Moderators are looking for students to produce their own language throughout the task or manipulate the language used by

the teacher examiner to make it their own. Similarly, marks were awarded too generously in the 12–15 band for students who answered a lot of questions but tended to give a one sentence answer, i.e. they did not take the initiative and develop elaborate answers.

In contrast, the weakest students were often under-marked in this section. Students, who had given a good amount of information mostly in short simple sentences, were still put in the 1–3 band, although they were able to sustain the conversation for 4 minutes. The 4–7 band was more appropriate in these cases..

Range of Language and Accuracy

Centres are reminded that the marks awarded are dependent on the amount of French conveyed by the student. It is unusual for a student who scores in the lower mark bands for Content and Response to score highly in these grids since there is not the breadth of language required. It is important to recognise that tenses other than the present must be used in order to have the opportunity to access the 5 mark band for Range of Language. Although many students had been well trained by teachers to include different tenses, these were sometimes given too much priority over the use of a variety of structures and vocabulary: for example, students were able to speak in a number of tenses, but use only short sentences and simple vocabulary. Teacher examiners should be aware that the demonstration of a good grasp of the tenses alone does not mean students will automatically score a mark of 5 – there must be evidence of a wide range of structures and vocabulary as well.

When awarding the mark for Accuracy it is important to note that the mere lack of error does not mean the student will score highly. The student must attempt to use more complex structures to reach 5 and there must be generally good pronunciation and intonation.

For both of these sections, in order to decide whether a student should score 3 or 4 marks, teacher examiners should look at the mark bands above and below and decide to which band the student is closer.

Some teacher examiners based their marks for both Content and Response and Range of Language on information given and level of language used by a student in the presentation alone, without acknowledging that this was not sustained in the discussion. Marks awarded for all three grids are awarded globally across the whole performance.

Centres are reminded to read carefully the marking principles which are in the Administrative support guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments) available on the web site in order to help them use the assessment criteria accurately when the student has not fulfilled the requirements of the task. A copy of the marking principles can also be found at the end of this report.

Administration

Many centres completed the administration admirably. Others had omitted to include vital documents but responded quickly to moderators' requests for material.

Centres are advised to refer to the Administrative support guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments) available on the web site for each examination session as this details exactly which materials should be sent to the moderator.

The students required for moderation are identified with an asterisk by Edexcel, but centres should ensure that they send their highest performing and their lowest performing students on the 2A task (i.e. task for moderation) in addition to the requested sample. Moderators will moderate the 2A task only. They do not moderate the 2B task. Consequently, centres should not send to moderators any paperwork relating to the 2B task. However, the 2A task should not be the same task type for all students in the moderation sample. Only one oral task is needed for each student within the sample.

Centres are reminded that the Code of Practice requires that assessment evidence provided by students has been authenticated. The CM2 is also the authenticity form and **must** be signed by both student and teacher. The CM2 form is the updated Student mark sheet and replaces all previous mark sheets. It is available as an appendix in the above Administrative Support guide referred to above. In order to reduce the administration burden on centres, the revised form has a box for centres to indicate whether the students used the CA2 form.

The CA2 form is the pro forma on which students may write up to 30 words of notes and make 5 small drawings. They may take this form into the oral with them. Moderators must see this form to check exactly what support students had whilst taking their oral. If students do not use a CA2 form during their oral, this should be indicated on the CM2 form above.

CA2 forms were not always used to their best effect, especially by weaker students who often wrote more complex vocabulary items, but it was apparent that they did not know how to pronounce them, and consequently communication was impaired. A list of 30 discrete lexical items does not always represent the most helpful use of this form and centres would benefit from spending some time discussing with their students how the allowed 30 words can best support them. It is not recommended that complete sentences are written on the CA2 form as this restricts the amount of support nor is it acceptable for students to use coded form. E.g. jsaeF - *Je suis allé en France.*

Centres are reminded that a copy of each task used in the moderation sample must be sent to the moderator. Moderators are only able to moderate a student's performance if they have access to the task used in the assessment.

The task sheet should be just that, a task sheet with no reminders to use a range of tense, express opinions etc. Such reminders should be achieved via the bullet points e.g. mention an activity you did last week (to encourage past tense), say why this was enjoyable (to encourage opinion and reason) etc.

Below is a checklist of materials to send to your moderator.

For each student in the sample:	Tick
Task/stimulus	
Form CA2 (Student Notes Form) or section on CM2 completed if not used.	
Student Mark Sheet for Unit 2: Speaking (CM2)- signed by both student and centre-assessor. Any student unable to provide an authentication statement will receive zero credit for the component.	
Recording of task 2A ONLY. Please do not send any 2B recordings.	
For your centre:	Tick
The OPTEMS middle copy (yellow) or printout of marks submitted on Edexcel Online for 2A ONLY.	
The work of the highest scoring student and lowest scoring student, if not already included in the sample. For any asterisked students which are absent or scored zero, replacement students must be supplied to meet the required number of students	
A mixture of task types - (Open Interactions / Presentations /Picture Based Discussions)	

GCSE Modern Foreign Languages – Main Taught

Unit 2: Speaking Marking principles

Tests which are **too short**: < less than 3'30" - so 3'29 " is too short

- Automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid.
- There is no penalty applied to either Range or Accuracy.

Test which are **too long**: > more than 6 minutes

- Stop listening and assessing at the end of the first sentence after 6 minutes have elapsed

Test which are **a monologue** and have no interaction

- No more than 7 for Content and Response
- There is no penalty applied for either Range or Accuracy

Open interaction tasks only

- Student asks only one question – deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response (where two or more questions are clearly required)
- Student asks no questions – deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.

There are no penalties on the other two assessment grids.

There is an expectation in this task type that the student will ask the TE questions since it is a transactional task type. Although interaction is important in all three task types, there is no requirement for students to ask questions in the Presentation and discussion or in the Picture-based discussion task options.

Presentation and Discussion

- The presentation must last between 1 – 3 mins (max). If the presentation is shorter than 1 min deduct 2 marks for Content and Response.

Marks for content and language are awarded discretely – i.e. if a student scores 8-11 for content, there is no imposed ceiling on either of the other assessment boxes for range or accuracy.

These are the only penalties to be applied. Pro-rata calculations from other specifications or languages should not be used.

Grade Boundaries

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>

Ofqual
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