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# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

### Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In French (5FR02)  
Paper 2A: Speaking in French.

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**GCSE French**  
**Unit 2: Speaking**  
**Examiners Report**

**Principal Moderator's Report – 5FR02/2A – June Series 2017**

**General**

Moderators listened to some imaginative, creative and interesting orals and the level of performance and achievement of many of the candidates entered was very pleasing. Teachers are to be congratulated on putting their candidates at ease during the orals.

**Tasks**

Centres had a choice of 3 tasks:

1. an open interaction
2. a picture-based discussion
3. a presentation and discussion

Each candidate must undertake at least 2 of these 3 task types but only one must be recorded and submitted. Centres are required to submit in the moderation sample recordings of at least two different task types for which they are submitting marks across the whole centre cohort. There was an increase in the number of centres who undertook an open interaction task, although most centres once again opted for the presentation and discussion and picture-based discussion, the latter being the most popular.

The stimulus may contain visual prompts in addition to the 70 words of either English or French. There is no word limit for the task itself but centres are advised to set concise tasks; some were very detailed and

The best tasks have a stimulus to support candidates – and some centres used pictures to support the 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 2 options. Whilst some centres provided their candidates with a task sheet, other centres did not, simply a title, e.g. *My Hobby*.

Since the assessment criteria require candidates to demonstrate spontaneity, an ability to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements, task sheets with a specified list of questions to prepare will not allow candidates to access the higher mark bands.

It is not a requirement for all candidates in the same teaching group to do the same task. Although there was an increase in the number of centres who differentiated their tasks to cater for the different abilities of candidates and most centres gave all candidates the same task which differentiated by outcome. This was not always a positive experience for candidates, especially at the lower end of the ability range. Teachers may start with a common task but then modify it, e.g. 2 or 3 versions to correspond to the ability level of different candidates within the group.

## Themes

Centres are free to choose their own themes for the orals: 4 themes have been identified by Edexcel but these are not prescriptive. Candidates may undertake both tasks on the same theme if they wish although there should be no direct overlap of content.

Holidays (generally as a picture based discussion or a presentation and discussion) and school (generally as a presentation and discussion) continue to be the most popular topics, although the use of media, especially mobile technology and computers, are increasingly more popular. Job interviews and situations in a tourist office were popular for open interactions. The topic of the environment was frequently well exploited and by a wide range of candidates, particularly at the top end of the ability range. This often proved beneficial in terms of the range of language as candidates used some excellent vocabulary.

In contrast, themes such as *Ma Famille* or *Ma Ville/ Ma Région* did not often allow the candidates the use of more sophisticated vocabulary and did not lend themselves to a range of structures and tenses since candidates were often restricting themselves to simple descriptions and lists of things that they had done.

## Conduct

In general, the orals were well conducted and the skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher-examiner afforded candidates the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria enabling candidates to achieve their best. Where candidates were successful, teacher examiners asked questions appropriate to the level of the candidate being examined, challenging more able candidates by asking for further explanation of a points made and tailoring their questions to the responses of candidates thus promoting more spontaneous conversations. In order for candidates to reach the higher mark bands they must be also be given the opportunities to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements (questions they had not already planned to answer). Weaker candidates should have the opportunity to respond to more modest questions using language which they are able to manipulate rather than attempt questions that they do not understand or have the capacity to answer. Less able candidates were asked some very difficult questions, often in a range of tenses, where a simpler line of questioning would have instead enabled them to access higher marks for Content and Response.

Conversely, more able candidates need to have opportunities to express a range of ideas and points of view and to demonstrate a range of more complex structures and vocabulary.

Some teacher-examiners asked repetitive questions such as: *Que fais-tu cette semaine ? Qu'est-ce que tu as fait la semaine dernière ? Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire la semaine prochaine ?* This limits the outcomes for the more able candidates.

There were occasions where teacher-examiners asked too many closed questions. Where a candidate was capable and clearly able to produce extended answers, this was extremely disappointing as the candidate, in a stressful situation, often opted for a yes/no response rather than produce responses that would allow them to reach their full potential. Similarly, on occasions candidates were not given enough thinking time before teacher-examiners rephrased questions, meaning that candidates were then judged to be reliant on teacher-examiner prompting.

## Open Interaction

Where the interactions were exploited skilfully by the teacher-examiner, there were some excellent performances by candidates of all levels of ability. Well-structured Open Interaction tasks encouraged high scores in the Content and Response grid due to the level of genuine interaction, spontaneity and the opportunity to respond to unpredictable elements. The greater support that the Open Interaction allows within the stimulus often allowed weaker candidate to achieve better marks.

Candidates were able to engage in a spontaneous role-play type situation, e.g. in a tourist office responding to a tourist asking for information on the local area, working in a leisure centre or candidates being interviewed for a job.

However, a significant number of centres conducted this task as a question and answer session – a general conversation rather than an extended unscripted role-play scenario in response to a stimulus.

*You are having a conversation with your French pen friend about your school / hobbies* did not work well at all since there was no obvious role-play situation and these turned into general discussions on healthy eating, school or hobbies. There is no 'general conversation' task type in this Specification and conducting the Open Interaction task had implications for the mark which can be awarded for Content and Response due to the lack of interaction.

The role of the candidate is important, and should the candidate fail to maintain the role throughout the task, this is an obvious omission within The Content and Response section of the assessment criteria.

There is an expectation in the Open Interaction that candidates will ask the teacher-examiner questions and the vast majority of tasks reminded candidates of the need to do so. Candidates produced more successful tasks where the candidate questions were woven into the body of the oral rather than as an add-on at the end, as the teacher examiner and candidates were both able to exploit the situation more spontaneously. It was unfortunate that some candidates forgot to ask questions and were not prompted by their teacher examiner to do so. It was acceptable for candidates to be asked, *Vous avez des questions?*

## Picture Based discussion

This continued to be a very popular choice with centres and many candidates were clearly motivated by being able to bring in their own picture which often led to very individual performances. Pictures of a holiday, a hobby or a favourite celebrity were popular and candidates frequently spoke with great enthusiasm. In many cases, a short presentation or brief discussion on the photo or picture led on to wider conversation which was interesting to listen to. Candidates may give a presentation of up to one minute but it is not mandatory and the task may start with questions from the teacher-examiner. However, it bears repeating that the picture is a 'prompt to discussion' so the oral must start from the candidate's picture whether it be by a short presentation or by questioning such as *Qu'est-ce qu'il y a dans la photo?* or *Qu'est-ce qui se passe dans la photo?* Sometimes, the picture was not referred to at all – by either candidate or the teacher-examiner. The assessment criteria for Content and Response refer specifically to *information related to the chosen visual*. This had an impact on the marks available to candidates who did not refer to the picture as it was considered to be an omission.

## **Presentation and Discussion**

Although many candidates performed well here and were a pleasure to listen to, in a minority of cases candidates who had prepared their presentation thoroughly, and were able to perform well, then had little left for the more interactive part. This was sometimes because the presentation took up the majority of the time available for the task and the candidate was unable to answer questions about the topic. 90 seconds is an adequate time for the presentation and allows more time for follow-up discussion. The presentation section only allows candidates to fulfil certain assessment criteria and the follow-up discussion section then allows them to fulfil others. It is therefore crucial to ensure that both sections are well represented and accomplished.

Where this was successful, centres used the presentation as a starting point, and the remaining time to follow-up on ideas given by the candidate, to probe further about the subject, and allow the candidate to take part in a spontaneous exchange.

Centres should note that the specification states: students can ... give a presentation and then respond to a series of linked, follow-up questions... Therefore, if the presentation was on one sub-topic and the discussion was on another i.e. there was no linking or progression/follow-up between the two parts of this task, this was deemed an omission. In some cases, there were two completely unrelated topics which had an impact on the marks awarded.

The task was often less successful where the presentation was followed by a sequence of well-rehearsed questions and answers. This did not allow candidates to access the higher mark bands as there is a need for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions within the tasks.

## **Timings**

Centres should be aware that moderators stop moderating after six minutes and any material beyond that was not considered for assessment. Similarly, at the other end of the time scale, four minutes may represent too long a time for weaker candidates and orals which lasted 3'30" were tolerated. Centres should note that short tasks incurred a penalty of two marks from the Content and Response section of the assessment criteria.

Centres are reminded that in the presentation and discussion task, candidates give a presentation which must last between one minute minimum and three minutes maximum.

In a minority of centres, presentations less than one minute long were heard and these also incur a two mark deduction from the Content and Response grid. Many centres had not deducted two marks in these cases.

In the picture based discussion task type, candidates may give a presentation but they do not have to. If they do choose to start off with a presentation, this may last a maximum of 1 minute.

## **Recordings**

It is important that centres check their recordings before sending off the samples. There were a number of cases where the candidates could not be heard clearly. Whilst 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 candidate being examined can be clearly heard. It is also important that the candidate favours the candidate rather than the examiner although both must be able to be heard.

Centres are reminded It is important to check for compatibility and details of accepted digital formats (.mp3 (at least 192 kbit/s), .wav, .wma), these are listed in the Administrative support guide.

There were a significant number of centres where CDs were incorrectly labelled and centres are kindly requested to include with the CDs or USBs a track list, giving details of the centre number, candidate name and number, language and series. It also avoids confusion if details of the candidate name and number are announced clearly at the start of each oral task.

Where orals have been recorded as music/audio files, it would be helpful to moderators if centres could write the relevant track number on the CM2 form in the appropriate space.

All recordings will be returned to centres after the deadlines for the Enquiry about Results.

## **Marking**

It is pleasing for moderators to report that an increasing number of teacher-examiners showed a good understanding of the assessment criteria and were able to differentiate performances among their candidates. In centres with more than one teacher involved in the assessments, there was often clear evidence of internal standardisation both across teachers and task types.

Unfortunately, there were centres whose marks were not in line with the nationally agreed standard and needed adjustment.

Moderators also reported that some candidates 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.

## **Content and Response**

Where marking was not in line with the agreed standards, centres tended to overvalue their candidates' performance. It is important for centres to note that the assessment criteria are applied globally on a best-fit basis. Centre marks and moderator marks often differed where there were pre-learnt 'conversations' which consist of a question and answer session but lack interaction, or did not evidence an ability to expand or take the initiative. These cannot be rewarded with top marks, and the ability to interact well with the teacher examiners and respond spontaneously to unpredictable questions is necessary to attain marks in the higher mark bands. Thus marks were incorrectly awarded in the 16 – 18 mark band in cases where the candidate gave extended, informative answers which had clearly been pre-learnt but where they did not show any spontaneity or ability to respond to unpredictable questions..

Marks were also awarded too generously in the 12 – 15 band for candidates who answered a lot of questions but tended to give short answers, who were too hesitant and showed limited initiative to drive the conversation forward.

On the other hand, some performances of the weakest candidates were often undervalued in this section. Candidates who had given a decent amount of information, albeit it in short simple sentences and were able to maintain the conversation for four minutes, were still put in the 1-3 band when they deserved to be in the 4-7 band.

## **Range of Language and Accuracy:**

The Range of Language grid rewards candidates for the breadth or range of language used. The marks awarded are dependent on the amount of French conveyed by the candidate. It is unusual for a candidate 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. In a number of centres where the marking was too generous, it was apparent that the use of tenses was given priority over the use of a variety of structures and vocabulary: candidates were able to speak in three tenses, but only used short sentences and simple vocabulary. The demonstration of a good grasp of the tenses alone does not mean candidates will automatically score a mark of 5 – they do need to demonstrate wide range of structures and good and varied vocabulary as well.

Similarly centres were often also too generous when awarding the mark for Accuracy. It is important to note that the mere lack of error does not mean the candidate will score highly. The candidate must attempt to use more complex structures to reach 5 and there must be generally good pronunciation and intonation.

A number of centres who marked too generously for Range of Language and Accuracy, based their marks for all three areas on the information given and level of language used by a candidate in the Presentation without acknowledging that this was not sustained in the ensuing discussion, therefore as the mark is awarded globally, gave 5 marks when the mark was more suited to 4.

Similarly, some teacher-examiners based their marks for Content and Response on information given and level of language used by a candidate in the presentation alone, without acknowledging that this was not sustained in the discussion.

Centres should note that in order to decide whether a candidate should score 3 or 4 marks, teacher-examiners should look at the mark bands above and below and decide to which band the candidate is closer. In some centres, teacher examiners were harsh in not taking into account the attempts to use more complex language and different forms of subordination and candidates were awarded 3 and not 4, although the performance was closer to the 5 mark band than the 2 mark band. This was also the case with the Accuracy mark where too much emphasis was put on the poor pronunciation of some candidates where there were elements of the 5 box communicated, more than half was accurate and communication was rarely affected.

Centres are reminded that marks awarded for all 3 grids are awarded globally across the whole performance.

## **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 detail exactly which materials should be sent to the moderator.

## **CM2 forms**

Centres are reminded that the Code of Practice requires that assessment evidence provided by candidates has been authenticated. The CM2 is also the authenticity form and **must** be signed by both candidates and teacher. The CM2 form is the updated Candidate mark sheet and replaces all previous mark sheets.



## CA2 forms

CA2 forms were not always used to their best effect, especially by weaker candidates who often wrote more complex vocabulary items; however, it was apparent that they did not know how to pronounce them, and consequently communication was impaired.

## Task sheets

A number of centres failed to send any task sheets or stimulus materials to moderators. Moderators are only able to moderate a candidate'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.

## 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

- Candidate asks only one question – deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response (where two or more questions are clearly required)
- Candidate 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 candidate 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 candidates 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 candidate 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.