

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in French (5FR03/3H)
Paper 3H: Reading and Understanding
in French

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GCSE French
Unit 3: Reading and Understanding in French
Examiner Report

Candidates performed well across the paper as a whole and there were some excellent performances.

Question 1

This overlap question was targeted at C grade candidates and a number achieved full marks. Most candidates around C grade fared well with parts i) and ii) and iii) of this question. Part iv) presented the most difficulty with many candidates, even those achieving grades above C failing to identify the phrase *on devrait y construire un grand centre sportif* as the correct answer to this part of the question. In questions of this nature, candidates require the ability to understand sections of text and centres are advised to prepare candidates for this by using similar material with a degree of complexity at the learning stage in order to help them develop the necessary skills.

Question 2

Most candidates at higher tier tackled this question, targeted at D grade candidates quite well. Part i) required candidates to identify two ideas (boring and difficult), both of which were expressed as negatives (not interesting and not very easy). Some candidates spotted the word *ennuyeux* in B and chose this as the correct answer, without considering the fact that they also needed to find the idea of difficulty. This was the aspect of the question which over one quarter of candidates answered incorrectly. Candidates also struggled with the phrase *trop de devoirs*, with almost one quarter of entrants unable to recognise that this meant too much homework. Many candidates also failed to find the negative phrase *je n'ai pas le temps*, choosing the incorrect *je fais mes devoirs en une heure* assuming that this meant that they had insufficient time. The verb *apprendre* was also not commonly known.

This type of task requires candidates to do more than simply find a French term and its equivalent in English, as some of the answers included references to material in more than one of the texts and candidates need to look for more precise details and consider negative statements. Centres are advised to teach students to learn to understand full statements rather than vocabulary items in isolation in order to perform well in such tasks.

Question 3

Many candidates scored 2 out of 4 on this question which was targeted at B grade candidates. Parts i) and iv) of this question proved to be the most challenging with candidates apparently guessing the answers to these. Access to similar texts in the learning phase should help candidates to acquire the skills

needed to answer questions like this one which require recognition of various tenses and time frames.

Question 4

This question was targeted at Grade A candidates and candidates of a lower ability found this question challenging. Comprehension of a text based on an adapted authentic original was tested by questions in English. Very few candidates made the mistake of answering this question in French. Answers for the questions could be found sequentially in the text and centres need to ensure that candidates are aware that this is usually the case. The importance of expressing oneself clearly in English also needs to be stressed to candidates as answers need to be understood clearly in order to be worthy of marks. Candidates need to have access to authentic materials containing some quite complicated structures in order to develop their ability to perform well in an exercise at this level.

4a) was tackled quite confidently on the whole, with over half of the candidates understanding that ease of use was the key factor. Some interesting interpretations arose nevertheless with a large number of students translating *facilité d'utilisation* as *a useful facility*. Others misunderstood the time saving notion and gave answers such as *more time to choose/make important choices*. A few candidates also failed to read the question carefully and did not include a reason "apart from the greater choice", responding with such answers as *unlimited choice*.

4b) Candidates had a high level of success in answering this part of the question correctly, recognising the near cognates *contact humain*. However, a misunderstanding of the phrase *rien de peut le remplacer* led some candidates to draw the conclusion that items purchased online could not easily be replaced or returned.

4c) Many candidates lost marks on this part of the question because of answers which were too vague. Candidates often wrote *it* or *groceries* are home delivered but failed to be more specific by mentioning *heavy items* or *bottles of water*. The misinterpretation of *porter* led to some interesting incorrect answers such as *having groceries delivered without having to get dressed*. Some candidates, recognising the word *voiture* were misled and included responses such as *not needing to take your car out to get shopping*. The superlative *meilleur* was not understood by many candidates and therefore while they included advantages mentioned such as not having to queue, they failed to include the biggest advantage. The most able candidates were able to translate the whole sentence.

4d) The key idea of a *present* or *gift* was often omitted by candidates. Many gained one mark for the answer that the book/it would be sent to the person directly. A large number of candidates wrote the answer *it is practical* on the first line. The majority of candidates who gave correct answers put both of the

expected responses (gift + delivered straight to the recipient) on the same line and often stated the practicality of it as well.

4e) Many candidates failed to read question 4e (i) carefully and did not note down more than one detail. A lot of candidates responded with *where you live* only and failed to mention the product/item you are looking for. In 4e (ii), many candidates achieved one mark for *people who live nearby*. Failure to recognise *chercher* however, led to many candidates incorrectly assuming that it was an advert to sell an item and included this incorrect information in their answer. Many marks were lost on this question because of misinterpretation of the word *chercher*.

4f) This question was answered very successfully by candidates who were able to recognise *encourager* and *recycler* as cognates. Some candidates were too general in their answers and talked about developing a responsible attitude to the environment. Some ignored *plus important pour l'avenir*, or did not read the question fully and deduced that Florence was only interested in saving money.

Question 5

Most parts of this question aimed at D grade candidates were tackled well by candidates at this level. The phrase *vêtements de marque* was less well known. Questions such as this require candidates to read the French and English statements very carefully to help them to arrive at the correct answer and practice of similar exercises in the learning environment should help them to develop this skill.

Question 6

This question, written predominantly in the perfect and imperfect tenses was targeted at C grade candidates and required them to understand a range of verbs in these tenses, which most were able to do successfully. Part ii of this question was the part with which candidates experienced the most difficulty with some spotting the word *erreur* in statement C and identifying this as the correct response rather than B. The question required candidates to demonstrate the ability to extract detailed information from the text.

Question 7

Well over half of the candidates managed to gain at least 3 out of 4 marks in this question, aimed at B grade candidates, identifying correct statements from eight possibilities. A small minority of candidates identified more than four statements which led to the first four marked being considered as intended answers. Practice at reading short authentic texts helps candidates to develop their ability to cope well with such tasks.

Question 8

This question was aimed at Grade A* and was adapted from an authentic text about a journalist's own experiences of children's holiday camps. The passage contained some complicated material and structures, as is appropriate for a question at this level. Candidates gaining the lower grades for which this paper is designed found this question very demanding but the majority of candidates did attempt it, perhaps guessing their responses. Candidates at C grade typically scored 3 marks in this question. Many candidates found 8ii) and 8v) the most difficult and 8iii) and 8vi) and 8iv) the most accessible.

The performance of better candidates was characterised by:

- careful reading of the rubric and questions
- good knowledge of vocabulary
- recognising the use of negation
- a good command of English giving them the ability to recognise synonyms
- attention to detail, giving full rather than partial answers in the question which required written answers in English
- expressing themselves clearly and unambiguously when writing in English and relating their answers to facts in the text
- drawing logical conclusions
- reading over and correcting their answers.

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