

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

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

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GCSE French

Unit 3H: Reading and Understanding in French Examiner Report

Candidates performed well across the paper as a whole.

Question 1

This overlap question was targeted at C grade candidates and a number achieved full marks. Most candidates fared well with parts ii) and iii) and iv) of this question. Part i) presented the most difficulty for candidates with many unable to pick out the correct mode of transport for the journey into town, as all three possibilities appeared within one sentence in the text.

In questions of this nature, candidates require the ability to understand sections of text and pick out detailed information. 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

The majority of candidates answered this question, which was targeted at D grade candidates, very well. Part i) required candidates to identify a past tense *I bought* and also the idea of a *cheap* item.

A common incorrect response to this part of the question was B where candidates misunderstood *il va y avoir de grandes réductions*.

The weakest candidates incorrectly identified E as the correct answer for 2(ii), presumably by spotting *ma soeur* in the sentence but failing to recognise the past tense. The very weakest also struggled with 2 (iv), choosing statement D *je n'ai pas trouvé des baskets en solde* for *There will soon be a sale* rather than the correct answer, B *La semaine prochaine, il va y avoir de grandes réductions*.

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 tenses and time frames.

Question 3

Many candidates scored 2 out of 4 on this question which was targeted at B grade candidates. Parts i) and ii) of this question proved to be the most challenging with some candidates potentially guessing the answers to these or identifying distractor phrases incorrectly such as *Mon prof m'a conseillé de faire un plan de revision* in A as the answer to (i) *I work out a daily revision plan*, rather than the correct *Je décide ce que je vais réviser chaque jour*, failing to interpret the meaning of the sentence correctly.

In a similar way, weaker candidates appeared to identify the word *difficiles* in B and, without reading the sentence, chose it as the answer for ii) *I find it difficult to get started with revision*.

The correct answer requires some interpretation of meaning of the phrase in A *je n'arrive pas à me mettre au travail*. Access to similar texts in the learning phase

should help candidates to acquire the skills needed to answer questions like this one which require careful reading and interpretation of meaning.

Question 4

This question was targeted at Grade A candidates and candidates of a lower ability found most parts of this question quite challenging. Comprehension of a text containing a range of tenses and structures was tested by questions in English. Very few candidates made the mistake of answering this question in French, although some wrote the odd French expression, e.g. *la planche à voile* where they were unsure of the English. No marks are awarded for this.

The importance of expressing oneself clearly in English 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 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, provided that sufficient attention was paid to the tenses used in the text, with many candidates understanding that Lydia now does the cooking. Common incorrect answers included *her grandparents* with a few under the impression that Bretagne or *Brittany* was a person who did the cooking.

Some candidates appeared confused over the word *gastronomie* which led them to think that the family ate out at a gastro-pub or similar, and *cuisine* was sometimes misread as *cousine* which led some to think that a cousin did the cooking.

4b) For those who understood that Brittany is an area and not a person, this part of the question again proved accessible. However, a fundamental lack of geographical awareness was noted: many candidates decided that it was in the South and variously too hot, too cloudy, too snowy or too crowded. Unnecessary and not mentioned additions to the constant rain such as "compared to the south of France" rendered some answers incorrect and the misunderstanding that Brittany was in the south resulted in incorrect responses such as *constant rain in the south*. *Moins de monde* was understood as lack of fashion.

Those who understood *pluie* were able to answer appropriately thanks to *constamment* being almost a cognate. Much misunderstanding in this question could have been avoided by revision of weather vocabulary.

4c) Candidates frequently understood the content of the passage and were able to identify the requirements to take part in the course, but in some cases did not correctly read the question, ignoring the **not** part, despite this being in bold. As a result answers such as "you have to be 14 or over" were given instead of "if you are under 14".

A very common error was linking the two answers with and/who without repeating the subject *people younger than 14 and who can't swim*. Candidates who did this lost marks as a result. Another common mistake was the misconception that Lydia or her brother would not be able to participate, giving their ages and swimming abilities.

4d) All but the most able struggled to provide the correct answer to this part of the question. The most common answer given was *he's an expert* which was incomplete. The mention of *surfer* earlier on in the text resulted in many candidates jumping to conclusions and reporting that *he is a surfing expert*. Frequent incorrect responses given by candidates who attempted to recall *la planche à voile* but failed to, was to refer to her dad as a *sailing, volleyball or violin expert* due to the similarities in the words.

Fewer candidates chose to respond with the detail about lessons, but some of these pupils did not recognise the future tense, or possibly were not aware they needed to show their understanding of it in their answer, as they made reference to *gives her lessons* or *gave her lessons*.

4e) Candidates who responded with brief answers which were to the point scored better on this part of the question. Some candidates lost marks by including a list of activities which invalidated correct information. The first point of hoping to be more independent was successfully recognised by many of the candidates. A small number interpreted it as *to go alone* and *to go without her family*, implying that her family would not be going to France at all which was incorrect.

There was confusion in the second point that candidates attempted to make and *less time with family* was most commonly incorrectly reported as *more time with family*. In addition to making or attempting to make the 2 points above a number of candidates added extra information e.g. and visit monuments alone, or for a change, showing they had misunderstood part of the text.

Candidates should make sure they avoid including extra details (e.g. writing three details when the question clearly states to include two).

4f) Candidates recognising *nouveaux* were able to answer this one readily, although some candidates provided extended answers which included explanations not in the text. A very common mistake was made by candidates who misunderstood *Quand on est jeune, c'est ça qu'on aime* as *she liked it when she was younger*.

Question 5

The vast majority of candidates did well on this question aimed at D grade candidates. A small number of candidates failed to recognise the word *magasin*. 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 the majority were able to do successfully. The question was well done by candidates across the ability range. Part iii) of this question was the part with which candidates experienced the most difficulty; some spotting the word *détesté* in a sentence which referred to the lake and incorrectly assuming that he did not enjoy going to the lake. As such, they had not read the word in the full context in order to draw the conclusion that the

museum was what he did not like visiting. The question required candidates to demonstrate the ability to extract detailed information from the text and to eliminate distractors, all of which also appear in the text.

Question 7

A number of candidates managed to gain at least 3 out of 4 marks in this question, an authentic text, adapted for the purpose and aimed at B grade candidates, involving the identification of 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. Some candidates also failed to identify four points, instead simply putting two or three crosses. 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. 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.

Many candidates found 8v), 8vii) and 8viii) the most difficult and 8iii) and 8vi) 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 but not adding too much additional information.
- 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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