

Moderators' Report/  
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2014

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

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**GCSE French  
Unit 2 Speaking  
Moderator Report**

**General**

Moderators listened to some imaginative, creative and interesting orals and the level of performance and achievement of many of the students entered was very pleasing. Although there were many natural conversations with evidence of interaction and spontaneity, there were similarly centres where teacher examiners used a bank of questions; many of the students were asked the same questions, resulting in similar responses.

**Tasks**

Each student must undertake at least 2 of the 3 specified task types but centres only need to record and submit one, although centres are asked 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. In a number of centres, only one task type was recorded and submitted for moderation.

There was an increase in the number of centres who undertook an open interaction task, although the majority of centres once again opted for the presentation and discussion and picture-based discussion.

The best tasks have a stimulus to support candidates. However, centres should remember that any such stimulus should not exceed 70 words. 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. These often consisted of a title with 5 or so bullet points to guide and support candidates.

Candidates tended to excel when bullet points included an element of originality. Task sheets with a defined list of questions to prepare will not allow students to access the higher mark bands. The assessment criteria require students to demonstrate spontaneity, an ability to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements.

It is not a requirement for all candidates in the same teaching group to do the same task. Very few centres differentiated their tasks to cater for the different levels of candidates and most centres gave all students the same task which differentiated by outcome. This was not always a positive experience for students.

Teachers may start with a common task but then modify perhaps 2 or 3 versions to correspond to the ability level of different students within the group.

## **Themes**

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. The topic of the environment was frequently well exploited and by a wide range of students, particularly at the top end of the ability range. This often proved beneficial in terms of the range of language as students used some excellent vocabulary very proficiently.

In contrast this year, themes such as My Family or My Town/ Local Area did not often allow the students the use of more sophisticated vocabulary and did not lend themselves to a range of structures and tenses since students were often restricting themselves to simple descriptions and lists of things that they had done.

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

## **Conduct**

In general, the orals were well conducted and the skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher-examiner afforded students the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria enabling students to achieve their best.

Where students were successful, teacher examiners asked questions appropriate to the level of the student being examined, challenging more able students by asking for further explanation of points made and tailoring their questions to the responses of candidates thus promoting more spontaneous conversations. Weaker students 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 students 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 students 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.

## **Open Interaction**

There were some truly excellent performances. Where the task was exploited correctly, students of all levels of ability were able to engage in a spontaneous role-play type situation, for example in a tourist office responding to a tourist asking for information on the local area, in a leisure

centre or students being interviewed for a job. Well-structured Open Interaction tasks encouraged high scores in the Content and Response grid due to the level of genuine interaction.

Unfortunately, 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 discussing your lifestyle with your exchange partner* or *You are having a conversation with your French friend about your holiday* did not work well at all since there was no obvious role-play situation and these turned into general discussions on lifestyle and holidays. Centres are advised that there is no 'general conversation' task type in this Specification and conducting the Open Interaction task in this way will have implications for the mark which can be awarded for Content and Response due to the lack of interaction.

There is an expectation in the Open Interaction that students will ask the teacher-examiner questions and the vast majority of tasks reminded students of the need to do so. It was unfortunate that some students forgot to ask questions and were not prompted by their teacher examiner to do so. Students produced more successful tasks where the student 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.

### **Picture Based discussion**

This was a very popular choice with centres and many students 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 students 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. Students 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 student's picture whether it be by a short presentation or by questioning. Sometimes, the picture was not referred to at all – by either student or the teacher-examiner. The assessment criteria for Content and Response refer specifically to *information related to the chosen visual*. This will have an impact on the marks available to students who do not refer to the picture.

### **Presentation and Discussion**

Although many students performed well here and were a pleasure to listen to, in a minority of cases students who had prepared their presentation thoroughly, and were able to perform well, then had little left for the more interactive part of the assessment. This was sometimes because the presentation took up the majority of the time available for the task and the student 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 students 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 student, to probe further about the subject, and allow the student to take part in a spontaneous exchange.

The task was often less successful where the presentation was followed by a sequence of well-rehearsed questions and answers. This did not allow students 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 will not be considered for assessment. Similarly at the other end of the time scale, four minutes may represent too long a time for weaker students and orals which last 3'30" will be tolerated. Centres should note that short tasks will incur 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, students 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, students 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**

Centres are reminded that 2014 was the last series where recordings could be sent on cassette tape.

It is important that centres check the recordings before sending off the samples. There were a number of cases where the students 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 student 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), which are listed in the Administrative support guide.

There were a significant number of centres where CDs were incorrectly labelled and centres are requested to include with the CDs or USBs a track list, giving details of the centre number, student name and number, language and series. It also avoids confusion if details of the student 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.

## **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 students. 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 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.

## **Content and Response**

Where marking was not in line with the agreed standards, centres tended to overvalue their students' 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 do 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 16-18 mark band.

Marks were also awarded too generously in the 12 – 15 band for students 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, in a number of centres performances of the weakest students were often under-valued in this section. Students 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 students for the breadth or range of language used. Centres are reminded that 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: students were able to speak in three tenses, but only used short sentences and simple vocabulary.

Teachers should be aware then that the demonstration of a good grasp of the tenses alone does not mean students 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 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.

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 student 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 both Content and Response and Range of Language 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 students 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 students where there were elements of the 5 mark criteria 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

[http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination \(Tiered\) 2014.pdf](http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/Instructions%20for%20the%20Conduct%20of%20the%20Examination%20(Tiered)%202014.pdf) for each examination session as this details 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 students has been authenticated. The CM2 is also the authenticity form and **must** be signed by both students 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 students 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. It is not recommended that complete sentences are written on the CA2 form as this restricts the amount of support. Students may not use coded form. E.g. jsaeF - *Je suis allé en France.*

## Task sheets

A number of centres failed to send any task sheets or stimulus materials to moderators. 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 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 or express opinions etc. Such reminders should be achieved via the bullet points, for example *mention an activity you did last week* (to encourage past tense), and *say why this was enjoyable* (to encourage opinion and reason).

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

For each candidate in the sample:	Tick
Task/stimulus	
Form CA2 (Candidate Notes Form) or section on CM2 completed if not used.	
Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 2: Speaking (CM2) - signed by both candidate and centre-assessor. Any candidate 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 candidate and lowest scoring candidate, if not already included in the sample. For any asterisked candidates which are absent or scored zero, replacement candidates must be supplied to meet the required number of candidates	
A mixture of task types - ( Open Interactions / Presentations /Picture Based Discussions)	

The GCSE12 French webpage

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/french/Pages/default.aspx> offers a wealth of support to teachers on the CA in speaking and teachers should check for any updates on a regular basis: it is possible to sign up for email alerts (see bottom of web page for details). E.g. under Teacher Support Materials, there is a Summary of useful support for GCSE Modern Foreign Languages - French, German and Spanish Controlled Assessment Unit

The Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book – speaking is an invaluable resource with many FAQs

[http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/GCSE-Controlled-Assessment-TSB%20MFL%20\\_Speaking\\_%20finalised.pdf](http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/GCSE-Controlled-Assessment-TSB%20MFL%20_Speaking_%20finalised.pdf) as is the Supplementary Frequently Asked Questions – GCSE Controlled Assessments (Speaking and Writing)  
<http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/FAQs-Supplement.pdf>

The *Controlled Assessment Exemplar Materials* include exemplar orals, tasks and moderator commentaries.

For those wanting a brief overview, there is a Podcast (<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/podcast-mfl.aspx> ) and you can ask and answer queries and exchange ideas via the MFL Online community (<http://community.edexcel.com/forums/22.aspx> ).

Any teacher with a specific query about any aspect of the CA process should send an email to one of the Senior Examiners for French at *Ask the Expert* [gcsefrench@edexcelexperts.co.uk](mailto:gcsefrench@edexcelexperts.co.uk). A reply will be received within 48 hours (often sooner). Alternatively, teachers may like to send their query to [LanguagesSubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk](mailto:LanguagesSubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk)

In addition to the GCSE French page, there is a generic languages web page and it is possible to subscribe to regular newsletters with updates and advice via this web page

<http://www.edexcel.com/Subjects/Languages/Pages/Default.aspx>

Finally, Edexcel offers a programme of trainings events – both face-to-face and online. Please refer to

<http://www.edexcel.com/resources/training/Pages/default.aspx>

## 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.

## **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>

