



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In French (1FR0)

Paper 3F: Reading and Understanding in French

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Publications Code 1FR0_3F_2506_ER

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Introduction

This Foundation Tier Reading Unit carried a total of 50 marks and was divided into three sections: A, B, and C. Section A (Questions 1–6) was set in English and required candidates to demonstrate comprehension of French texts by responding in English. Section B (Questions 7–9) was set in French and involved tasks such as multiple-choice questions and gap-fill activities, requiring responses in French. Section C (Question 10) consisted of a 40-word translation from French into English.

Candidates were given 45 minutes to complete the paper.

The tasks were designed to assess a range of reading skills, including the recognition of high-frequency vocabulary, the understanding of short and extended texts, and the ability to draw inferences. Each question was aligned with specific grade targets, gradually increasing in demand from grade 1 through to grade 5. A strong grasp of vocabulary from the Foundation Tier list in the specification was essential for success throughout the paper.

Question 1

Candidates were presented with five short personal statements and asked to identify which individual had written each of the six sentences that followed by writing the correct name on a line. This question was targeted at grade 1 and required candidates to recognise familiar single words or short phrases. There were no significant distractors. Most candidates performed well. Success relied heavily on familiarity with core vocabulary from the specification.

Question 2

This grade 2 question asked candidates to read a blog post about sports competitions and complete English sentences using words from a box. There were 11 options, including six distractors. Most candidates approached this question successfully. However, a minority wrote multiple answers per gap, in which case only the first was marked. Some attempted to fill in their own words or responded in French instead of choosing from the box. Parts (a), (b), and (c) were generally well handled. However, words such as “aujourd’hui” and “début” were frequently misunderstood, with many opting instead for distractors such as “tomorrow” and “end.” This highlights the importance of both vocabulary knowledge and familiarity with task types.

Question 3

Targeting grades 2–3, this question required candidates to read a short report about language learning and answer comprehension questions in English. Full sentence responses were not required. Parts 3(a)(i) and 3(b)(ii) were designed to assess grade 2 performance. Most candidates identified “l’anglais” or “l’espagnol” correctly in 3(a)(i). In 3(a)(ii), many recognised “Il adore voyager,” although a few wrote “I love voyages,” which was not accepted. Few candidates successfully interpreted “il va faire un stage d’allemand en Autriche.” “Stage” was often misread as “going on stage” or “work experience” — the latter would have been acceptable if followed by “in German.” Some were able to deduce the meaning, offering acceptable alternatives such as “speak lots of German.” Confusion arose in responses about Jean’s summer plans, with frequent incorrect references to both Germany and Austria, which could not be credited. Question 3(b)(i) was poorly answered, with “rester deux mois chez une famille” often misinterpreted as “rest with his family for two months.” In 3(b)(ii), many failed to recognise the phrase “à l’étranger,” with common incorrect

answers including “in a travel agent” or “with strangers.” Overall, weak vocabulary knowledge led to lost marks on this question.

Question 4

This question involved reading a short literary extract set in a French home and selecting the correct response from four options for each of five questions. Candidates performed well on parts (i), (iii), and (iv). In part (ii), “plus tôt” was often confused with “plus tard,” leading many to choose option C rather than the correct answer, B. In part (v), option A (“they want to be near Paris”) was a common incorrect choice, instead of the correct response, C. Basic vocabulary such as numbers, times of day, and common nouns and verbs continues to be an area where many candidates lose marks.

Question 5

Targeted at grade 4, this question asked candidates to respond in English to three questions about school rules. Full sentences were not required. Part (a) was generally well answered, with many writing “respect teachers.” Responses such as “homework” were not sufficient on their own; the verb “do” or “complete” was required. Part (b) was more successful, requiring recognition of either “bijoux” or “maquillage.” Candidates who wrote specific items (e.g., “earrings,” “mascara”) could not be credited. A number of responses reflected candidates’ own school experiences, with incorrect answers such as “hoodies,” “headphones,” or “short skirts.” Part (c) was often answered too briefly, with “uniform” alone being insufficient. A correct response required a verb (e.g., “wear uniform”). The adjective “moche” was frequently misunderstood, costing candidates marks. Again, secure vocabulary knowledge was key to success.

Question 6

Candidates read a short literary passage and answered four comprehension questions in English. Full sentences were not required. This was one of the least successfully answered questions on the paper, with many candidates scoring zero. Even when candidates correctly understood that “Mahmed protected Tahar from a group of horrible boys,” they often invalidated their answer by adding incorrect details such as “in school.” Part (b) was frequently misunderstood; candidates often confused Tahar’s location with Mahmed’s, giving responses like “in the north of the town” or “near the sea.” The term “goûter” was unfamiliar to most candidates, who failed to provide acceptable answers such as “tea” or “snack.” Part (d) required past-tense understanding. Valid responses included “The bread came from a Spanish bakery” or “His mother’s bread was not as good.” Many candidates failed to use the correct tense, resulting in lost marks.

Question 7

This grade 3–5 question required candidates to read an article on saving the planet and complete five gap-fill sentences in French using words from a list of eleven. As in previous series, this question type proved challenging. Many candidates resorted to guessing or copied words from the text instead of selecting from the word bank. Insufficient practice with this format may have contributed to weaker performance. Teaching students to identify grammatical cues—such as recognising when a verb or noun is needed—could improve outcomes. Part (a) was generally answered correctly, but performance across the remaining items was inconsistent.

Question 8

Candidates read a blog about a birthday and answered five multiple-choice questions. Targeted at grade 4, this question proved difficult for many. Only part (v) was widely

accessible. Success required the ability to identify synonyms (e.g., “chez moi” and “à sa maison”), understand time frames, and eliminate distractors through careful reading. Part (iv) was particularly challenging, as many candidates failed to link “bijoux” with “une bague” or “un collier.”

Question 9

This grade 5 task required candidates to read four short texts about ambitions and complete French gap-fill sentences using the name of the appropriate person.

This question was among the most demanding on the paper. Successful responses demonstrated an ability to draw inferences and identify synonymous expressions (e.g., linking “aime les vacances d’hiver” with “adore faire du ski”). Candidates who performed well overall tended to gain at least some marks on this question.

Question 10

In this translation task, candidates were required to render a 40-word passage from French into English. Only the strongest candidates scored the full 7 marks, and a significant number either omitted this question or attempted only partial translations. The opening sentence, targeted at grade 1, was usually translated accurately, although many wrote “village” instead of “town” for “ville.” In the second sentence, “stade” was often mistranslated as “place.” “Fermée” was commonly rendered as “broken,” and “malheureusement” was often omitted. The third sentence (grade 3) was rarely fully accurate. Many candidates confused “nous avons” with “nous allons” and translated it as “we go” or “we are going.” The final sentence (grade 4) caused difficulty due to confusion over “dimanche dernier.” Some candidates misidentified the tense and translated it as a future event. Attention to verb tense and accuracy was crucial. Many candidates lost marks through avoidable errors or omission of details. Vocabulary from the Foundation Tier list—particularly relating to family, days of the week, and places in town—was frequently not known, further impacting candidate performance.

Stronger candidate performance was characterised by:

- Careful reading of rubrics and questions
- Secure knowledge of vocabulary from the specification
- Awareness of negation and common grammatical structures
- A strong command of English, aiding interpretation and synonym recognition
- Attention to detail, particularly when writing in English
- Accurate and unambiguous answers closely related to the text
- Logical conclusions based on inference
- Proofreading responses to check for accuracy

