



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in French Reading Higher Tier (1FR03H)

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Introduction

The unit was worth 50 marks and was divided into three sections: A, B and C. The first six questions comprising Section A were set in English.

Questions 7 to 9 (Section B) were set in French. Section C was a 50-word translation from French into English.

Candidates had one hour in which to complete their answers.

Question 1

This question was targeted at grade 4 candidates. Candidates were asked to answer three questions in English about Festivals in French Guiana. Full sentences were not required.

This question was quite well tackled by candidates at Higher Tier with almost all achieving a mark on (b). Many candidates correctly identified the word 'Christmas', or the alternative correct answer, '14th July' and some even wrote 'Bastille Day'. Part (c) was less well done, with under half unable to identify the correct answer 'history of the country'.

Candidates at Higher Tier fared better on this question than Foundation candidates, with a greater number correctly able to answer all parts of the question. Knowledge of basic vocabulary from the list in the specification was important for success on this question.

Question 2

Many candidates at Higher Tier tackled this question aimed at grade 5 quite well. Candidates had to read a short extract from a literary text and answer four questions about it in English. Full sentences were not required.

Over half of Higher Tier candidates managed to answer parts (a), (b) and (d). Part (c), which required the identification of a correct past tense 'repair his bike', was less well done, with just under half of candidates able to produce a correct answer.

Question 3

Candidates were asked to read a text about paid holidays for workers in France and answer five questions about it in English. Full sentences were not required.

Many candidates scored between 2 and 4 out of a possible 5 points for this question, targeted at grades 6 and 7. There were some examples of a fully correct response to this question. Part (a) proved very difficult for candidates, with only a very small percentage able to produce the required precise answer (at least 25 days a year). Part (d) was the most accessible, with almost three quarters of entrants gaining a mark on this part. Weaker candidates often did not manage to provide the precise answers required to gain marks in this question.

Knowledge of vocabulary from the list in the specification was important for success on this question, as well as the ability to provide the detailed responses required at Higher Tier.

Question 4

Candidates were asked to read a short literary text set in the context of school and then to select the correct response from four possible responses for the five questions about the text.

This question, targeting grades 6 and 7, was well done by many candidates. Parts (i) and (iii) were not well tackled by a number of candidates, with some being fooled by the word 'clothes' to select option C in (i). The inference question (iii), which required candidates to deduce that Tibi was proud of her possessions, was also not as well tackled by weaker entrants.

Question 5

Candidates were asked to read an article set in the context of environmental issues. Parts (a) to (d) required candidates to select the correct person from four possible answers and parts (e) and (f) required them to write short answers in English. Full sentences were not required.

This question was well done, with many candidates achieving the full four marks for the MCQ parts a-d of the question. This question type (MCQ) often performs well. Parts (e) in particular, and to a lesser extent, (f), were less well done, with many candidates failing to provide the specific answers needed to achieve the marks. Part (e) was targeting the idea of writing to the town hall and (f) was targeting the idea of people without drinking water/clean water. Candidates who did not give these precise answers did not score a mark.

The importance of familiarity with all vocabulary on the Higher Tier list cannot be overemphasised as questions frequently target this vocabulary. Candidates should also be instructed to write answers which are as precise as possible in order to gain the marks on this question.

Question 6

This question, which was targeting grade 9, was a message about travelling by high-speed train. Candidates were asked to identify the three correct statements from a given list of seven. They were then required to answer two questions in English, but full sentence answers were not required.

This question was well done, with well over half of candidates achieving the full three marks for the MCQ part (i) of the question. Parts (ii) and (iii) were less accessible and only candidates at the target grade could answer these successfully, with the correct amount of detail required to gain a mark.

Question 7

Candidates were asked to read an article about a school trip. All five parts (i) to (v) required candidates to select the correct response from four possible answers.

This question, which was aimed at grade 4, was generally well tackled by candidates at higher tier. Some weaker candidates, perhaps entered for the incorrect tier, may have picked up marks on the question purely as it is multiple choice. At Higher Tier, part (iii) proved the least accessible part of the question. The ability to read longer portions of text and draw conclusions is required in this question. For example, in order to successfully answer (ii), candidates needed to read the sentence 'Nous avons traversé la Manche et la mer était calme' to draw the conclusion that they were travelling on a boat.

Candidates also needed to be able to recognise synonyms. For example, in order to answer (iv), candidates needed to link 'Chrystelle a préféré l'excursion au parc de loisirs' with the first-person account in the text 'Ce que j'ai aimé le plus, c'était la journée au parc de loisirs'.

Question 8

This question, aimed at grade 5, was generally well tackled by candidates at Higher Tier. Candidates were asked to read four short texts about holidays and complete gap-fill sentences in French with the name of the correct person.

Part (b) of the question posed the most difficulty, with many candidates failing to read the more extended piece of text required to identify the correct answer and choosing instead the text which mentioned 'Le camping', which was a distractor. Unsurprisingly, many candidates at Higher Tier fared well in this question, gaining 4 or 5 marks. Success in this question relied on the ability to carefully read the text and look closely at the verbs in the gap-fill sentences.

Question 9

This text about "Opération enfant de Noël au Canada" had been adapted from an authentic article and was aimed at grades 8 and 9. Candidates were asked to read the text and write short answers in French. It was not necessary to write in full sentences.

(a) Was not very successfully answered. Many candidates wrote irrelevant responses, lifting a phrase with the word "enfants", but not answering the question. There were also some nearly correct answers with additional words rendering the answer incorrect (aux enfants...).

(b) Only a small minority of candidates were able to provide the correct answer to this question, using the structure 'il y a'. The most common incorrect answer was a lift from the text 'depuis trente ans'.

(c) This was well done with the majority of candidates gaining a mark. Targeted lifts from the text were often successful in answering this question.

(d) Many candidates were successful in providing the correct answer to this question. Where candidates were unsuccessful, it was because they listed items which were permitted in the boxes. The ability to recognise the synonym 'interdit' and link it with 'on ne doit pas' in the question was essential for success in this question.

(e) This part of the question was not well tackled. Many candidates wrote answers which lacked the specificity required to achieve a mark (un point de collecte dans une école locale). Others lifted sections from the text, which were either too long or too short.

Some candidates were successful in lifting longer portions from the text directly to answer questions, although this approach is to be discouraged and the most successful are able to answer briefly or to reword their answers to address the question. There were still some examples of candidates responding to this question in English.

Question 10

In this question, candidates needed to translate a continuous piece of text, 50 words in length, from French into English.

Very few candidates, apart from the best performers on this paper, achieved the full 7 marks available in the translation. The first sentence was generally translated correctly, often with the omission of the word 'aîné', although there were some examples of the whole translation being in the past tense which lost these candidates many marks.

Commonly misunderstood words and phrases were "frère", often translated as "dad, father or sister" and "apprentissage de mécanicien", often mistranslated as 'apprenticeship as a doctor'. 'L'année prochaine' was mostly conveyed well, although sometimes followed by a past tense, rendering the translation incorrect. 'Réussir' was also widely misunderstood and translated as 'redo', 'revisit' or 'revise for'. 'Médecin' was often mistranslated as pharmacist or nurse. 'Dur' was also often simply omitted or mistranslated. The final sentence of the translation posed the most difficulty for candidates. Many were able to correctly translate "Si je veux avoir une carrière intéressante" but a large number failed to include the word 'si' in the sentence. The remainder of the sentence was very problematic for some, with 'j'ai besoin de...' widely unknown.

Candidates should be taught to carefully check their translations, particularly looking at tenses, as many lost marks because of attention to detail. They should also be encouraged to read their translations through to ensure that they actually make sense.

The performance of better candidates was characterised by:

- Careful reading of the rubric and questions

- Good knowledge of vocabulary including that contained in the Higher Tier section of the list.
- 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 questions requiring written answers in English or French
- Expressing themselves clearly and unambiguously when writing in English and relating their answers to facts in the text
- Drawing logical conclusions from inferred statements
- Reading over and correcting their answers