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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

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 Grandfathers' day. Full sentences were not required.

Many candidates were able to answer part (a) successfully, providing the full answer of "the first Sunday in October". Others gave answers which were less specific (e.g. Sunday in October) and failed to gain the mark. Candidates fared less well on (b) with the word fête often mistranslated in this context as party or fair. Part (c) was generally well done with candidates often giving both possible correct answers (to advertise the event/to show the importance of family). There was, however, some misinterpretation with answers such as "his family is important to him" scoring zero.

At Higher Tier did slightly better on this question than Foundation candidates with a greater number correctly able to answer all part 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.

Part (a) of this question was well done with most candidates able to provide the correct answer "beach". For part (b) there was sometimes confusion about who spoke which language and answers such as "the children spoke her language" or "they spoke the same language" were given zero. Part (c) required candidates to provide the answer "Orianne is/was shy" Alternative pronouns accepted were she/he. "They were too shy" was not accepted because of potential ambiguity (this answer could mean that the children were too shy). For part (d), the required answer was "twins", targeting the word "jumelles". This was not widely known and was very often mistranslated "cousins"

## **Question 3**

Candidates were asked to read a text about working for an airline 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.

"Tout de suite" was widely misunderstood with some candidates rendering an otherwise correct answer for (a) incorrect with an answer such as "they have to replace the whole suite".

For part (b), misunderstanding of the word "boisson" led to incorrect responses such as "serving the fish".

Mistranslation of "place" as "seats" led some candidates to lose a mark for part (c).

Part (d) was very poorly tackled, with few candidates familiar with the word "formation", many writing nonsensical answers such as "a clean formation" or trying to interpret the word and writing "a clean uniform".

A precise answer requiring understanding of "une bonne connaissance" and containing the word "good" or "well" meant that some candidates lost marks for part (e). Answers such as "speak English" or "speak other languages" were given zero.

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 was targeting grades 6 and 7 was well done by over three quarters of candidates. Part (ii) presented the most difficulty with candidates needing to read a more extended sentence to arrive at the correct answer with around 75% failing to do so.

#### **Question 5**

Candidates were asked to read an article set in the context of helping others. 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.

Many candidates achieved well on this question which was targeting grades 7 & 8. Candidates did well on the multiple-choice questions with many achieving full marks. Part (e), however, was not well done, with a third of candidates failing to include the word "homeless/homelessness" in their answer. The importance of familiarity with all vocabulary on the Higher Tier list cannot be over-emphasised as questions frequently target this vocabulary.

#### **Question 6**

This question which was targeting grade 9 was adapted from an authentic text about Bad Weather in the Caribbean Islands. 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.

Well over half of candidates succeeded in identifying all three statements correctly in the multiple-choice section of the question and many wrote acceptable answers to the questions in English. The word "bâtiments", required to answer part (iii) successfully was unknown by around 60% of candidates however.

#### **Question 7**

Candidates were asked to read an article about a young footballer. 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 well tackled by candidates entered at Higher Tier. The skills required in this question included the ability to recognise synonyms (eg "une région agricole/à la campagne) and time frames as well as to infer meaning. Candidates found part (i) the most challenging, with over a third unable to spot the synonyms mentioned above.

### **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 ambitions and complete gapfill sentences in French with the name of the correct person.

Part (b) of the question was unknown by many as it involved candidates reading and understanding two consecutive sentences to draw the conclusion that Claudine "..... a change d'avis sur son futur emploi". Most candidates who scored higher marks on the paper fared well in the other four parts of the question.

### **Question 9**

This text about "Un genre d'enseignement différent » 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) Around 80% of candidates were successful with this question, many lifting and whole of the final sentence of the first paragraph to gain the mark.

(b) Very few candidates were able to answer this one correctly, writing answers like "ils veulent les fermer" which did not make it clear what "les" was referring to.

(c) This was well done with around 65% of candidates gaining the full two marks for this question. Again, targeted lifts from the text were often successful in answering this question.

(d) This was also well answered by the majority of candidates. Where candidates were unsuccessful, it was because they answered in English or provided an answer to the previous question for this one.

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 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 "j'espère" often translated as "I aspire" and "parmi", often misinterpreted as the name of a band. The final sentence of the translation posed the most difficulty for candidates. Many were able to correctly translate "Malheureusement" but the remainder of the sentence was very problematic for some. "Annulé" was very frequently mistranslated and in the final sentence some thought that the health of the attendees had caused problems (the audience all had a high fever).

Candidates should be taught to carefully check their translations, particularly looking at tenses as many lost marks because of attention to detail.

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