



Pearson

# **Examiners' Report**

## **Principal Examiner Feedback**

**Summer 2017**

**Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In French (WFR01) Unit 1: Spoken Expression and  
Response**

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## Introduction

The student is rewarded for the ability to demonstrate understanding of a target language stimulus based on one of the General Topic Areas (GTA) of the Pearson IAL French specification, and to discuss that same General Topic Area. Students need to demonstrate that they can engage in a discussion in French that relates to a chosen GTA and allied subtopics. Students will be expected to give relevant and appropriate information, convey opinions, interact and respond to a range of questions.

Further information about the preparation of students, the conduct and the administration of this test can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website, and the "Oral Training Guide" found under the "Teaching and Learning" tab of the same page.

Up to 40 marks are awarded positively as follows for this test:

- 10 marks for Quality of language (5 marks for Accuracy of language and 5 marks for Range of lexis)
- 16 marks for Spontaneity and development
- 4 marks for Understanding of the prescribed stimulus card
- 10 marks for Knowledge and Understanding of the General Topic Area

The criteria for awarding these marks can be found in section 1.4 (Assessment Criteria) of the Pearson IAL French specification.

Before the test, the student prepares **two** of the four following General Topic Areas:

- Youth matters
- Lifestyle, health and fitness
- Environment and travel
- Education and employment

The student is free to choose **any two** of these four areas, depending on his or her preference and/or areas of interest. The student informs the teacher examiner of the two GTAs he or she has chosen in advance of the test via a completed OR1 Oral Topic Form, no more than three weeks in advance of the assessment.

On the day of the test, the student will be tested on only **one** of these GTAs. The GTA on which the student is tested is determined according to the allocation grid in the teacher examiner WFR01 booklet.

Tests, in the form of a short stimulus text in the target language, are set on each of the four topic areas. Two different stimulus texts are set on each of the four GTAs. Two sets of questions are provided for each text (A and B). In total, therefore, there are 16 stimulus cards; i.e. 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B, four for each of the four GTAs.

15 minutes before the test the student is given, according to the random allocation specified in the teacher examiner WFR01 examination booklet, one of the stimulus cards for the GTA on which he or she will be tested.

Pearson issues the teacher examiner booklets and the stimulus cards to centres before the examining session. These materials are confidential until the end of the examining session for this unit. The dates for the examining session are published in information manual.

The student has 15 minutes' supervised preparation time to study the stimulus text on the WFR01 card before the exam. He or she may not use a dictionary or any other resources during this time, but may make notes (up to one side of A4 paper). The student must not write on the stimulus card. The student takes both the stimulus card and any notes into the examination, and may refer to both during Section A of the test.

The WFR01 test comprises two sections:

### **Section A**

The teacher examiner begins the test by asking the four questions on the stimulus card about the text prepared by the student. These questions are printed only in the teacher examiner WFR01 examination booklet; the student is not aware of the questions in advance of the test. The first two of these four questions ask the student to demonstrate factual understanding of the stimulus text and the second two ask the student to express opinions about, or reactions to, the subject matter of the stimulus text.

Students should be aware that **three** pieces of information are expected in response to question 1 for each card. Therefore, during the preparation time, students must be sure to become very familiar with the text and all its content so that they can identify three pieces of information in response to the teacher examiner's first question.

Please note that, as of the January 2018 exam session, in the interests of comparability across different languages and for the purposes of assessment, the teacher examiner **may not rephrase** these four questions, nor add to or expand them. **If the teacher examiner rephrases a question, then the student's response to that question will be ignored when assessing his or her performance.** It is therefore essential that the teacher examiner **does not rephrase** any of the four set questions.

### **Section B**

The teacher examiner develops a discussion about the General Topic Area chosen by the student. The topic of the stimulus card may be used as a starting point for this discussion, but the teacher examiner moves away from this topic to more general discussion of the topic area and to discussion of at least one other subtopic of this General Topic Area.

### **Timing of WFR01**

The WFR01 test should last between 8 and 10 minutes in total (Sections A and B combined). This time should be divided equally between Sections A and B. However, if the student completes the answers to the questions in Section A in less than four minutes, the teacher examiner should ensure that the discussion in Section B is extended, in order that the total test time is not less than eight minutes.

### **Performance 2017**

The most popular GTAs were "Youth matters" and "Lifestyle, health and fitness". A significant number of students chose "Education and employment". Relatively few chose "Environment and travel". The student, of course, has a free choice of the two GTAs he or she wishes to discuss in the test. The GTA to be tested and the stimulus card to be given to the student is determined according to the random allocation grid in the teacher examiner booklet for WFR01.

All eight stimulus cards made similar demands of the students. Nearly all students were able to attempt the first two Section A questions, the ones based purely on the text, whereas the level of response to the second two Section A questions proved to be good discriminator between performances.

Students should know that it is perfectly acceptable to use vocabulary and language from the text in answer to questions 1 and 2. However, the text and the questions are devised in such a way that it is not possible to "lift" correct answers directly from the text; some manipulation of the language or paraphrasing will be necessary. Targeted lifts from the text are permissible, see below for clarification of what is meant by this.

Some students answered a set question so fully as to cover another. Where this happens, the teacher examiner should still ask all the questions, in the interests of comparability between students, and most did so. Please see below (Advice to Teacher examiners) for further clarification.

Many students had clearly prepared well for this test. They were able to offer a wealth of ideas and opinions on their chosen topic area, to use a varied range of lexis appropriate to the chosen GTA and to demonstrate command of a wide range of linguistic structures.

Most students had clearly thought about their chosen topic areas and were well-prepared, offering statistics and facts to support their ideas. In order to access the highest marks for "Knowledge and understanding – General topic area", students must show "excellent knowledge and understanding of the general topic area". In order to do this, typically students will offer detailed knowledge including facts and examples. A number, however, had clearly not thought about their chosen topics and although the performance of students on the "Youth matters" and "Lifestyle, health and fitness" topic areas was usually satisfactory, they

often showed sufficient lack of knowledge for "Environment and travel" and, to a certain extent, "Education and employment".

Some teacher examiners asked supplementary questions in Section A. This is not required. Please see below (Advice to Teacher examiners) for further clarification. In some instances, in Section B of the test the teacher examiner failed to move away from the topic of the stimulus card to discuss other subtopics of the GTA chosen by the student. In these cases, the marks awarded to the student may be restricted. On occasion, the teacher examiner asked questions in Section B which did not relate to the GTA; this can adversely affect the mark awarded for "Knowledge and understanding – GTA".

Where a test is shorter than the minimum required eight minutes, the student is unable to access the entire range of marks available for the test. The teacher examiner should begin timing the examination from the time when he or she asks the first of the prescribed questions on the stimulus. The test should last 8 – 10 minutes. Where a test exceeds this and the student is speaking as 10 minutes elapses, the examiner listens to the end of the student's response, or to the next sense break in what he or she is saying, and then stops marking. If the teacher examiner is speaking as the 10 minutes elapses, the examiner stops listening at that point.

The majority of centres followed the instructions for administration of the tests. A completed Unit 1 Oral Form (OR1) for each student should be uploaded to the Pearson secure site along with the recording. Care should be taken to ensure that the work of each student has been clearly recorded and that the OR1 forms are completed correctly.

## **Comments on students' performance in Section A**

### Youth matters

**Stimulus cards:** For card 1A and 1B students coped well with most questions, showing a good understanding of the text on the card. For card 2A, some students, in response to question 3, tended to repeat ideas from the text, though the question asks about "les autres dangers associés aux achats en ligne". With this exception, most students were able to offer considered responses to questions 3 and 4 on all cards; they had clearly thought in advance about issues relating to relationships with friends and family and technology, and gave a range of ideas and information in their responses. Their range of vocabulary when talking about this topic was generally good.

**GTA:** Students cope well with questions on the GTA, with technology being an area where many students have good knowledge. Students were also able to respond to questions related to music and relationships, but with a varying amount of detail.

### Lifestyle, health and fitness

**Stimulus cards:** Students generally coped well with understanding both cards 1 and 2. Some weaker students struggled with the pronunciation of "guadeloupéenne" in Cards 1A and 1B; while they are not expected to have knowledge of aspects of life in every Francophone country, students should be prepared to encounter texts based on any Francophone community or country in the stimulus cards. Question 4 on Card 1A caused some issues, with students struggling to find a justification for their opinion. Responses to question 4 on Card 1B were generally mature and reflective. Students seemed happy to talk about the link between school and physical education in Cards 2A and 2B, though some struggled to extract from the text a correct answer to question 2.

**GTA:** Students coped well with this GTA overall. They had many ideas and students were generally able to show that they had researched their topic in depth, backing their ideas with fact and statistics.

#### Environment and travel

**Stimulus cards:** Students seemed to cope well with both cards for this GTA and, although the content of Card 2A/2B seemed slightly more challenging for some students, the vast majority understood all the questions well. Particularly encouraging were the answers to questions which are slightly more abstract in nature such as question 4 on Card 1B; students were generally able to give thoughtful and considered answers to this question, using examples from their own experience.

**GTA:** Though this was not a very popular topic, many students who had prepared this topic generally did very well and were able to talk about environmental issues at length and show a wealth of knowledge backed with concrete fact and statistics, in addition to using an appropriate range of topic-specific vocabulary.

#### Education and employment

**Stimulus cards:** Students coped well with both cards and demonstrated good understanding. Homework (Cards 1A and 1B) is clearly a topic about which students have strong opinions and about which they were able to talk with conviction. In response to Card 2A and 2B, most students were able to formulate convincing arguments, often using examples from their own experience, when answering questions 3 and 4 on both cards.

**GTA:** Many students choosing this GTA had an excellent knowledge of educational systems (in many different Francophone countries) and were able to discuss ideas on education and employment at some length. Some students showed less knowledge of the GTA, just talking about their own experience on a more general level.

#### **Comments on students' performance in Section B**

The majority of students were able to discuss a wide range of areas relating to the GTA about which they had chosen to speak. As previously mentioned, the Section B discussion should move away from the topic of the stimulus card to cover other subtopics of the same GTA.

In order for the student to be able to access the full range of marks available, it is essential that Section B be a discussion, not merely a string of questions and answers.

On occasion the teacher examiner asked questions which could not be seen to fit in any of the subtopics of the student's GTA. An example might be a question about which subjects the student is studying where the student's chosen GTA is Lifestyle, health and fitness. On such occasions, the student's ability to access the full range of marks for "Knowledge and understanding – GTA" may be restricted. A list of the subtopics relating to each of the four GTAs is to be found on page 11 of the Pearson IAL French specification and is repeated below in the "Advice to Teacher examiners" section for reference.

In Section B, where the discussion widens out to other related topics in the same General Topic Areas, students usually wanted to offer ideas and opinions and there were some informative, lively discussions. However, students do need to be reminded of the advantage of developing their ideas and exemplifying their points. In particular, it was noticeable that students who showed evidence of wider reading or research by referring to an article they may have read or a video that they may have seen in a particular publication or on a particular website (e.g. "Selon un article que j'ai lu récemment dans *Le Monde*, ....") were in the minority. To achieve high marks in the "Knowledge and understanding" section of the mark scheme, students should be able to demonstrate that their studies have led them to research and read about topics so that they can go beyond the material covered in lessons.

In addition, it was noticeable that many students were liable to deliver stereotypical or narrow views on topics such as the older generation and new technology, drugs and alcohol, *la pression du groupe* etc.; teachers would be well-advised to encourage students to think more laterally and develop their own ideas rather than merely offering up those presented to them in class. There were some centres that clearly had done so and the performance of these students was refreshing.

## **Language**

Many students spoke well with some fluency, using a good range of lexis and structures. Some students' performance was hindered by their poor pronunciation which made it difficult to understand the message they were trying to deliver; teachers in some centres would be advised to focus more on the need for pronunciation that allows for the student to communicate successfully.

In some centres, the use of more complex structures like the subjunctive, *en* + present participle, *si* clauses etc. was on show



whereas, in others, the students stuck too closely to repetitive simple language which did not therefore allow them to reach the higher bands in the mark grids for the Quality of language (Range of lexis).

In addition, there were examples of basic errors that students should not be making at AS level such as incorrect subject-verb accord in the present tense; this was particularly evident in irregular verbs like *vouloir*, *dire* and *faire*. Many weaker students struggled with emphatic pronouns (e.g. *avec ils* in place of *avec eux*), direct and indirect object pronouns, adjectival agreements, articles (e.g. *de les parents* in place of *des parents*) and inappropriate use of tenses.

On the positive side, there were some outstanding performances from students in some centres which were a pleasure to hear; these offered accurate and varied language which was used very successfully.

### **Advice to Teacher examiners on the conduct of the WFR01 examination**

It is essential that the teacher examiner is aware of the requirements of WFR01, as incorrectly conducted tests can adversely affect the student's mark. The following advice is offered in the light of this examination series.

#### **Timing**

The WFR01 test should last 8-10 minutes in total. If Section A takes less than 4 minutes, then Section B should be extended so that the total test time is not less than 8 minutes. There is no need to extend Section A to last 4 minutes; once the student has answered the four set questions the teacher examiner should begin Section B. It is in the student's interest to allow the full 10 minutes test time, in order that he or she might demonstrate as wide a range as possible of ideas and opinion on the GTA being tested. If a test is too short, the student is not able to access the full range of marks available for the test. If it is too long, the examiner stops marking as soon as is appropriate after 10 minutes, i.e. at the end of the next sense-break in what the student is saying, or at the end of the student's answer, whichever comes first. If the teacher examiner is speaking at the 10 minute point, the examiner stops marking immediately.

The timing of the test begins as the teacher examiner begins to ask the first of the four questions set on the stimulus card.

#### **Conduct of Section A**

In the interests of comparability between tests, and so that the student is not disadvantaged, the four questions set on the stimulus must be asked **exactly** as they are written in the teacher examiner WFR01 examination booklet. The only exception to this is that the formal form of address may be changed to the more familiar where that is

appropriate, that is "vous" may be changed to "tu", and "à votre avis" to "à ton avis", etc. In the summer 2017 series, this was not strictly enforced, but teacher examiners should note that for the January 2018 series and subsequently, it is a requirement that the questions must not be rephrased (except for allowing change between "vous" and "tu" as mentioned above) in any way.

All four questions must be asked, even if a student has already partially answered a subsequent question in a previous response. Again, this is in the interests of comparability.

Where a teacher examiner inadvertently adds an interjection to the beginning of a question or at the end of a student's answer, and this addition adds nothing to the question, and does not change the body of the question in any way, then this is ignored when assessing the student's work. An example might be where the teacher examiner says "alors" at the end of an answer before asking the next question, or "question numéro un / numéro deux" etc. before the questions.

It is very important that teacher examiners are aware that, as of the January 2018 session, if the teacher examiner changes or rephrases the question in any way, then the student's response to that question is ignored when assessing his or her work. It is essential, therefore, that the teacher examiner asks the questions **exactly** as they are written in the teacher examiner WFR01 examination booklet.

Additional questions must not be asked in Section A.

Students should be taught an appropriate way to ask, in French, for the question to be repeated.

As the teacher examiner may not rephrase or expand the four questions set by Pearson, during preparation for this part of the test students should be coached to give full and developed answers to the set questions, giving reasons and explanations for their opinion.

Students and teachers should be aware that three pieces of information are expected in response to question 1 on each card (there will be at least three pieces of relevant information given in the text).

As mentioned previously, students may use vocabulary and language from the text in answer to questions 1 and 2. However, the text and the questions are devised in such a way that it is not possible to "lift" correct answers directly from the text; some manipulation of the language or paraphrasing will be necessary. Targeted lifts from the text are permissible; this is where a student used material from the text in his or her answer, but demonstrates that he or she has understood the text by selecting only the material needed to answer the question. To give an example from this year's exam:

## Education and employment Card 2A / 2B

Question 2: "Selon le texte, pourquoi est-ce que ces chantiers ne sont pas comme des vacances ordinaires ?"

The text reads :

"Attention : il ne faut pas croire que ces chantiers sont des vacances ordinaires. Les journées de nos projets, malgré une ambiance conviviale, sont bien pleines et fatigantes."

A student who replies "Les journées de nos projets, malgré une ambiance conviviale, sont bien pleines et fatigantes" cannot be considered to have fully understood the text and, in addition, the inclusion of "nos projets" means that the answer does not make sense.

However, a student who replies "Les journées sont bien pleines et fatigantes" would gain credit for having understood the text and being able to extract from it the information necessary to formulate a correct and appropriate response to the question. This is a targeted lift.

### Conduct of Section B

The topic of the stimulus card may be used as an opening for the Section B discussion, but the teacher examiner must move on to discussion which covers at least one more subtopic of the student's chosen GTA. For example, in this year's tests, the topic of the second stimulus card for Lifestyle, health and fitness, "La cuisine de la Guadeloupe", is "Food and diet". Therefore, the teacher examiner must make sure that the Section B discussion predominantly deals with one or more of the other subtopics of this GTA, i.e. "Sport and exercise", "Health issues" and/or "Urban and rural life". If this is not the case, then the student cannot access the full range of marks available for "Knowledge and understanding – GTA".

A definitive list of subtopics linked to each of the General Topic Areas follows:

**Youth matters**                      Family relationships and friendships  
Peer pressure and role models  
Music and Fashion  
Technology and communication

**Lifestyle, health and fitness**    Food and diet  
Sport and exercise  
Health issues  
Urban and rural life

**Environment and travel**                      Tourism, travel and transport  
Natural disasters and weather  
Climate change and its impact  
Energy, pollution and recycling

## **Education and employment** Education systems and types of schooling

Pupil/student life  
Volunteering and internships  
Jobs and unemployment

It is in the interests of the student that the teacher examiner asks questions which allow him or her to demonstrate the full extent of his/her knowledge of the structures and lexis expected at AS level. Pedestrian and GCSE-type questions often do not encourage the student to use AS level language and structures. The teacher examiner should encourage the student to expand on answers, to provide detail and clarification.

In assessing the mark for "Knowledge and understanding – GTA", the student is awarded marks for the range of ideas and opinions they offer about their chosen GTA. In practice, concrete examples and factual knowledge about the topics being discussed often add to the student's ability to access the full range of marks available and students should be encouraged to include these. Students have a free choice of the two GTAs they choose to prepare for the exam, but should be advised to choose topic areas which they have prepared thoroughly and which they are ready to discuss in detail.

### **Recording quality**

The quality of the recordings submitted this year was generally very good. It is the centre's responsibility to submit the recordings in one of the formats accepted by Pearson; details of the permitted formats can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website. It is also the responsibility of the centres to ensure that the recording quality is sufficiently loud and of decent quality.

### **Administration**

The majority of centres uploaded the recordings and completed OR1 forms for each student as required. One OR1 form should be provided for each student. Details of how to submit material to Pearson can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL French page on the Pearson website. The OR1 form is found in the same place. Under the "Teaching and Learning" tab of the same page is the "Oral Training Guide" which gives further information about preparing students for and conducting the test, together with a commentary on a sample WFR01 test.

