

Comparison of key skills specifications 2000/2002 with 2004 standardsX015461July 2004Issue 1

Speaking Unit Commentaries

Summer 2023

International A Level

In French (WFR01) Unit 1

**International A level French Unit 1 WFR01 Commentary**

C grade summer 2023

Total mark: 25/40 (C grade boundary 2306 = 24/40)

Stimulus: Lifestyle, health and fitness 1A

**Conduct of the test**

**Section A**

In Section A, the teacher-examiner must ask the four questions on the teacher-examiner version of the card as they are written, and this is what the teacher-examiner does here.

The total time for the WFR01 test is 8-10 minutes. Timing begins as the teacher-examiner begins to ask the first question in Section A. In theory the timing is split equally between Sections A and B. However, in practice, Section A often lasts less than four minutes, as is the case in this example (Section A of this test lasts 2 minutes 25 seconds). This is not an issue; a candidate can still access all four marks available for *Understanding (stimulus specific)* when Section A lasts less than four minutes. It is important that teacher-examiners do as this teacher-examiner does, and move on to Section B as soon as the candidate has answered all four questions in Section A. Additional questions must not be asked in Section A.

Teacher-examiners must ensure that the total test time is 8-10 minutes. Therefore, if the candidate answers all four questions in Section A in less than four minutes, Section B must be extended so that the total test time is 8-10 minutes.

In this example Section A lasts 2 minutes 25 seconds and the total test time is just over 8 minutes.

**Section B**

The GTA tested here is *Lifestyle, health and fitness*, for which the sub-topics are *Food and diet, Sport and exercise* (the topic of the stimulus card), *Health issues* and *Urban and rural life*. In Section B, after two further questions about *Sport and exercise*, the teacher-examiner asks questions which move away from this sub-topic to cover *Food and diet.* When talking about *Food and diet* the teacher-examiner’s questions follow on naturally from one to another, for example she asks a general question about healthy eating before asking a more specific question about food in the school canteen. All of the questions asked in Section B relate to a correct sub-topic, however the teacher-examiner returns to the sub-topic of *Sport and exercise* after a few questions about *Food and diet*; arguably it would have been better not to return to the sub-topic of the stimulus card, but as long as the majority of Section B focuses on sub-topics other than that of the stimulus card the candidate’s ability to access the full range of marks available will not be affected.

This teacher-examiner is careful to allow the candidate the opportunity to develop her answers and prompts her to develop her answers by asking *Pourquoi ?* The teacher-examiner does not speak too much; in the test as a whole we hear the candidate speak much more than the teacher-examiner, which is as it should be. When the teacher-examiner realises that the candidate is struggling to develop an answer to a question (in this case the question about banning junk food), she moves on to another, simpler question. It is in the candidate’s interest to do so.

**Assessment commentary**

**Quality of language (Accuracy)**

**Mark awarded – 3/5**

*This mark is awarded for the candidate’s performance across both sections of the test, A and B.*

The accuracy of the candidate’s language is variable. There are some basic errors (e.g. *je ne fais un sport pas*) but also many passages of accurate language and the correct use of some more complex structures (e.g. *commencer à + infinitive*). On occasion the candidate’s pronunciation delays comprehension (*e.g. tem* for *temps*, pronunciation of the ending of *important*) but the pronunciation and intonation does not generally prevent the candidate communicating what she wants to say. This performance, therefore, matches the descriptors for a mark of 3/5.

**Quality of language (Range of lexis)**

**Mark awarded – 3/5**

*This mark is awarded for the candidate’s performance across both sections of the test, A and B.*

The candidate is able to use a range of lexis that can be considered *adequate* for discussing this GTA at IAS level. There is some use of topic-specific vocabulary (e.g. *la malbouffe*, *les maladies cardiaques*) and the candidate is usually able to find the words she needs to communicate her ideas. On occasion (for example when she is discussing whether junk food should be banned), the candidate seems to lack the words she needs to express her ideas, and there is sometimes apparent confusion of lexis (e.g. *oublier/obliger*). The candidate’s use of basic structures is sufficiently accurate for her to be able to communicate her thoughts, but she does not habitually use the complex structures that the best candidates at this level might have been expected to master (e.g. use of *si* clauses, use of direct and indirect pronouns). Please refer to the Pearson Edexcel specification for IAL French (page 60 onwards) for a list of *straightforward* and *complex* structures at IAL.

**Spontaneity and development**

**Mark awarded – 11/16**

*This mark is awarded for the candidate’s performance across both sections of the test, A and B.*

The candidate tries extremely hard to give extended answers to all the questions and is often able to do so. On occasion she seems to lack the language she needs to finish expressing her ideas, for example, when she is talking about the value of team sports for making friends. The candidate can ask for repetition when it is needed and the impression given of the Section B conversation is one of natural interaction between the two parties. The candidate frequently gives reasons (using *parce que*) for the opinions she offers in order to give weight to her point of view. She offers examples from her own experience and from her observation of young people in general to develop her answers. There is quite a high level of hesitation, but hesitation is a natural feature of spontaneous conversation such as this; the candidate is clearly thinking on her feet and naturally needs time to organise her thoughts.

A performance such as this fits the criteria for the 9-12 band for *Spontaneity and development*, and a mark in the top half of this band, as the performance is closer to the descriptors in the 13-16 band than in the 5-8 band.

**Understanding (Stimulus specific)**

**Mark awarded – 3/4**

*This mark is awarded purely for the candidate’s response to the four questions set by Pearson Edexcel in Section A of the test.*

In answer to question 1 in Section A, candidates are expected to mention three points taken from the first paragraph of the stimulus text in their response. This candidate makes two clear points (about breakdancing being included in the Olympics in Paris 2024 and about where the event will take place). Her attempt to express a third fact (about the *vent de fraîcheur* accompanying the introduction of this new sport) is less successful. The candidate’s answer to question 2 demonstrates understanding of the text and she answers questions 3 and 4 with some development. In all, this candidate can be judged to have given *detailed answers to the prescribed questions, demonstrating good understanding of the stimulus text and its wider implications,* and so the mark awarded is 3.

**Knowledge and understanding (General topic area)**

**Mark awarded – 5/10**

*This mark is awarded purely for the knowledge and understanding of the GTA demonstrated by the candidate in Section B of the test.*

The candidate is able to answer all of the questions asked in Section B. She has opinions to offer and the content of her answers is relevant to the questions asked. On occasion she struggles to find enough to say to give a complete answer (e.g. when asked about whether fast food should be banned) but in all the candidate can be considered to demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the GTA. She does not offer any evidence of research into the GTA, however; the information she offers in her answers is based on personal experience and opinion. As mentioned in the commentary for the A grade candidate, for a mark of 7 and above, candidates need to demonstrate evidence of research of the GTA.

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