

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

Speaking Unit Commentaries

Summer 2023

International A Level

In French (WFR03) Unit 3

**International A level French Unit 3 WFR03 Commentary**

C grade Summer 2023

Total mark: 26/40 (C grade boundary 2306 = 25/40)

Topic for debate (chosen by candidate): *Contre l’avortement*

**Conduct of the test**

In Section A, the teacher-examiner needs to offer a more robust challenge to the candidate in the form of appropriate questions. Too often, the opposing point of view is given in the form of a statement rather than a specific question. It is important that this section remains a debate and does not become a discussion; the candidate needs to be able to defend his point of view, not merely discuss it. In Section B, the teacher-examiner correctly introduces two further issues for discussion but take too long to ask a relevant question which means that she is speaking for too much of the test.

**Section A**

In Section A, the candidate must choose issue on which they adopt a stance. The teacher-examiner must then challenge their position and arguments in a way that allows the candidate to defend their point of view using the language of argument and debate. The candidate is invited to begin the debate by presenting their point of view for a maximum of one minute.

In preparation, the candidate is expected to complete the OR3 form with a brief statement about the chosen issue, written in the target language. In addition, the candidate must initiate and conduct their own research into the issue using target-language sources and they will be assessed on the breadth and depth of their research. Candidates should therefore mention at least two written sources. In addition, they may refer to other authentic sources, such as audio-visual material, which they have used in their research.

The total time for the WFR03 test is 11-13 minutes. Timing begins as the candidate begins to speak in Section A which should last approximately five minutes. In this example, the candidate’s initial presentation lasts for 01.23 seconds and Section A (presentation and debate) lasts for just over five minutes.

Teacher-examiners must ensure that the total test time is 11-13 minutes. If the debate in Section A lasts less than five minutes, Section B must be extended so that the total test time is 11-13 minutes.

In this example, Section A lasts 5 minutes 06 seconds and the total test time is 12 and a half minutes.

**Section B**

The teacher-examiner clearly indicates the move from Section A to Section B.

In Section B, the teacher-examiner is required to introduce at least two further issues for discussion. The issues must be drawn from the General Topic Areas and the candidate must not know in advance the issues that the teacher-examiner will choose. These must be unpredictable elements of the test. To allow the discussion to reach an appropriate level of depth, it is recommended that two topics are adequate as coverage of too many topics can lead to a superficial discussion. The questions asked must challenge the candidate at an appropriate level both linguistically and intellectually; this is no place for personal questions.

In addition, the teacher may choose to discuss an issue from any of the seven General Topic Areas. However, if the issue is taken from one of the A Level General Topic Areas (Technology/Society/Ethics in the French-speaking world), the discussion must be rooted by the candidate in the French-speaking world. Failure to do so will mean that the candidate is unable to access the full range of marks in the Critical Analysis category, as is this case in this example.

It is important that Section B should be a genuinely spontaneous conversation in which both speakers listen what the other says and respond appropriately. A question and answer format does not offer a spontaneous discourse and should be avoided. The teacher-examiner and the candidate need to listen to what each other have said and respond accordingly. In this test, for example, the teacher-examiner introduces the topic of *le terrorisme* (GTA Law and order) and *la famille traditionnelle.* The candidate is able to respond to the questions but his speech is sometimes hesitant and the content of what he says remains superficial.

Half of the marks available for this test are awarded for *Spontaneity and development*. It is therefore important that teacher-examiners give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to be spontaneous and the chance to develop their answers by asking follow-up questions.

In this test, the teacher-examiner adopts an encouraging and friendly tone towards the candidate. In Section A, she needs to ask more specific questions rather than offering statements of the opposing point of view; this inevitably leads to the teacher-examiner speaking too much. In Section B, the teacher-examiner talks for too much of the time; she offers information which could have been framed as a question for the candidate to answer and develop (e.g., alternative types of family, why people turn to terrorism). It is important for teacher-examiners to remember that their role is to facilitate the candidate’s speech and that the listener should hear much more of the candidate speaking than the teacher-examiner.

**Assessment commentary**

**Quality of language (Accuracy)**

**Mark awarded – 4/5**

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

In this candidate’s performance, there are some inaccuracies in the language but communication is rarely impeded. The candidate misuses some words *(morbididé, miserable)* and there are minor errors *(mal/mauvais, capable à)* but the language is generally accurate. The candidate’s pronunciation and intonation are both generally good with only occasional inaccuracies. This performance is awarded 4 for *Quality of language (Accuracy).*

**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 an adequate range of lexis in both the debate and the discussion of the issues in Section B. However, the range of structures used is fairly limited and there is little evidence of complexity. This performance is awarded 3 for *Quality of language (Range of lexis).*

**Spontaneity and development**

**Mark awarded – 15/20**

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

The candidate responds reasonably well to the examiner’s questions although his speech is hesitant at times. In Section A, he offers relevant arguments and does try to develop his answers. However, he is disadvantaged by the teacher-examiner’s failure to ask more challenging questions. In Section B, he is able to responds naturally to questions that are asked (although, again, there are too many instances where the teacher-examiner makes a statement rather than asking a direct question) and he does try to offer some development but much of the discussion is quite superficial in content and the candidate hesitates at times when he is formulating his answers. He does offer points of view, using phrases such as *je trouve que* and *je pense que* to express his ideas. In the discussion, the candidate responds readily to all the teacher-examiner’s questions but he does sometimes hesitate when formulating his answers . The discussion is genuinely spontaneous and the candidate does attempt to develop his answers, coping reasonably well in the conversation. However, there is not enough evidence here for a mark in the top band due to the candidate’s hesitancy at times. He is awarded a mark of 15 as his performance meets the criteria for the top half of the second band (11-15) for *Spontaneity and development*.

**Reading and research**

**Mark awarded – 2/5**

*This mark is awarded for evidence of the candidate’s reading and research only in Section A of the test.*

In this example, there is little evidence of reading and research into the chosen issue. The candidate offers two percentages but there is no evidence of sources used and much of the discussion remains superficial and generic. Marks here are awarded for AO2 (understanding and responding in speech to written language) and so evidence must be offered to show the sources of the research. The candidate should be using the evidence from his research to back up and reinforce his arguments but that does not happen here and so a mark of 2 is awarded.

**Critical analysis**

**Mark awarded – 2/5**

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

In Section A, the candidate is able to offer an explanation of key ideas and his point of view but there is little evidence of analysis. The first part of the discussion in Section B is based on the topic of *le terrorisme* (Law and order) and *la famille traditionnelle.* As the sub-topic ‘Law and order’ is taken from the General Topic Area ‘Ethics in the French-speaking world’, the candidate is expected to base the discussion around the French-speaking world but he fails to do so and so cannot access the full range of marks in this category. The second part of the discussion is based on the topic of *la famille traditionnelle* (covered in the GTA ‘Youth Matters) but here it is not necessary for the candidate to make reference to the French-speaking world in his answers.His response contains some explanation of the issues but, overall, the response is quite superficial and it cannot be said that this response attempts analysis or evaluation. For this reason, and because the candidate does not refer to the French-speaking world in the first half of the discussion, he is awarded 2 for *Critical Analysis.*

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