

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**

A grade Summer 2023

Total mark: 34/40 (A grade boundary 2306 = 34/40)3

Topic for debate (chosen by candidate): *Contre la peine de mort*

**Conduct of the test**

Overall, this test is conducted correctly. This teacher-examiner demonstrates some examples of good practice and there is some challenge in Section A; however, the level of challenge could be more robust as it is important that this section remains a debate and does not become a discussion.

**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 00.50 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 13 seconds and the total test time is 11 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 picks up on what the candidate says about immigrants looking for work and uses this to inform her next question.

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 conducts the test well. Throughout the test, her tone is friendly and encouraging. She asks questions which allow the candidate to develop her answers and responds to what the candidate has said but she does not speak too much; in the test, it is the candidate who speaks much more 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, in particular in the verb formations and the use of *qui,* and occasionally there is some interference from the candidate’s own language (e.g., *plataforme, ganer, estile*). However, these errors do not impede communication of the ideas *(ils se trouve beaucoup de racisme, de les gens, etc).* The candidate’s pronunciation and intonation are both very good with only occasional inaccuracies. This performance is awarded 4 for *Quality of language (Accuracy).*

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

**Mark awarded – 4/5**

*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 good range of lexis appropriate to the topic of the debate and to the issues in Section B. She uses the language confidently and there are some examples of a varied use of structures (e.g., *en laissant,* *grâce à*, use of superlative, modal verbs, range of tenses) but there is not enough evidence of the use of complex structures to be awarded a mark of 5. This performance is awarded 4 for *Quality of language (Range of lexis).*

**Spontaneity and development**

**Mark awarded – 19/20**

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

The candidate is able to respond to all the examiner’s questions and the candidate answers spontaneously in both sections. In Section A, she argues her case well and her answers are well-developed. She uses phrases such as *par contre* and *à mon avis* to put her ideas forward. In Section B, the teacher-examiner introduces two further topic areas. The candidate is able to develop her ideas and she sustains the discourse well and there is little or no hesitation in responding to the questions asked. The first part of the discussion is based on *l'immigration* and the second part of the discussion is centred the issue of *les progrès technologiques*. The candidate responds readily to all the teacher-examiner’s questions and she offers detailed development in her responses. She is able to develop and sustain the discourse well and the errors that she makes do not affect the successful communication of her ideas. She is awarded a mark of 19 as her a performance meets the criteria for the top half of the top band for *Spontaneity and development*.

**Reading and research**

**Mark awarded – 3/5**

*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 adequate evidence of reading and research as the candidate offers facts about the use of the death penalty in several French-speaking countries (*la France, l’Algérie, le Canada)* together with relevant dates. However, the candidate does not offer any evidence of sources used and so cannot score more than 3/5 marks in this category. 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.

**Critical analysis**

**Mark awarded – 4/5**

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

In Section A, the candidate offers justified links between ideas and there is evidence of analysis. The first part of the discussion in Section B is based on *l'immigration* which is covered in the General Topic Area ‘Society in the French-speaking world’; the candidate does not base the discussion around the French-speaking world and her ideas are generalised. This is also true in the second part of the discussion; the teacher introduces the issue of *les progrès technologiques* (covered in the GTA ‘Technology in the French-speaking world) and, again, the candidate does not make reference to France or any other French-speaking country in her answers.While this response does contain some critical analysis, the candidate cannot access the full range of marks here. This performance is awarded 4 for *Critical Analysis.*

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