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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level in
French (WFR01) Paper 01

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IAL French Unit 1 (WFR01): Spoken Expression and Response

IAS compulsory unit

The candidate is rewarded for the ability to demonstrate understanding of a target language stimulus based on one of the General Topic Areas (GTAs) of the Pearson IAS French specification, and to discuss that same General Topic Area. Candidates need to demonstrate that they can engage in a discussion in French that relates to a chosen GTA and allied subtopics. Candidates are expected to give relevant and appropriate information, convey opinions, interact and respond to a range of questions. Further information about the preparation of candidates, 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 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 1.3 (Unit 1 Assessment Criteria) on pp.16-19 of the Pearson IAL French specification.

Before the test, the candidate prepares **two** of the four following General Topic Areas (GTAs):

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

The candidate is free to choose **any two** of these four areas, depending on their preference and/or areas of interest. Candidates inform the teacher/examiner of the two GTAs they have chosen on a completed OR1 Oral Topic Form, no more than three weeks in advance of the assessment.

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

Unit 1 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 for each of the four GTAs.

15 minutes before the test the candidate is given, according to the allocation grid in the teacher/examiner WFR01 examination booklet, one of the stimulus cards for the GTA on which they 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 the Pearson examination timetable.

The candidate has 15 minutes of supervised preparation time to study the stimulus text on the WFR01 card before the exam. Candidates may not use a dictionary or any other resources during this time, but may make notes (up to one side of A4 paper). The candidate must not write on the stimulus card. The candidate 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 prepared by the candidate. These questions are printed only in the teacher/examiner WFR01 examination booklet; the candidate is not aware of the questions in advance of the test. The first two of these four questions ask the candidate to demonstrate factual understanding of the stimulus text and the second two ask the candidate to express opinions about or reactions to subject matter related to the topic on which the stimulus card is based.

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

Please note that, in the interests of comparability across different languages and for the purposes of assessment, the teacher/examiner **may not rephrase** these four questions (apart from changing the « vous » form of address to « tu »), nor add to or expand them. **If the teacher/examiner rephrases a question, then the candidate's response to that question will be ignored when assessing their performance.** It is therefore essential that the teacher/examiner **does not rephrase** any of the four set questions. The question may be repeated, if necessary, but if repetition of a question is needed more than once, then this may be reflected in the mark awarded for "Spontaneity and development".

Section B

The teacher/examiner develops a discussion about the General Topic Area of the stimulus card. 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). Timing begins when the teacher/examiner begins to ask the first question in Section A. Please see below (Advice to Teacher/Examiners) for further guidance about the timing of the exam.

Performance January 2024

Since the beginning of this specification, the number of candidates entered for the January series has always been significantly lower than the number of entries for the summer session, and this was true for the January 2024 series, when there were fewer than 90 entries in total.

The most popular GTAs prepared by candidates were “Youth matters” and “Lifestyle, health and fitness”. A significantly lower number of candidates had prepared to speak on “Environment and travel” or “Education and employment”. Candidates, of course, have a free choice of the two GTAs they wish to discuss in the test. The GTA to be tested and the stimulus card to be given to the candidate is determined according to the allocation grid in the teacher/examiner booklet.

All eight stimulus card texts made similar demands of the candidates. Nearly all candidates 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.

Candidates should know that it is perfectly acceptable to use vocabulary and language from the text in answer to questions 1 and 2, and many candidates this series could successfully transpose verb forms, for example, the « je » form of verbs to « il/elle », in order to provide answers to the first two questions. 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.

Candidates who had clearly prepared well for this test 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. Unfortunately, such candidates were in the minority; the majority of candidates were unable to demonstrate, in Section B, detailed knowledge of the GTA under discussion, relying rather on generic information gained from general knowledge. This was particularly true of candidates discussing “Youth matters” and “Lifestyle, health and fitness”.

The highest performing candidates had clearly thought about and researched 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)”, candidates must show “excellent knowledge and understanding of the general topic area”. In order to do this, candidates need to offer detailed knowledge, **including facts and examples**, that demonstrate research of the chosen GTA.

Some teacher/examiners asked supplementary questions in Section A. This is not allowed. 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 candidate. In these cases, the marks awarded to the candidate 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 (General topic area)”.

The test should last 8-10 minutes. A 30 second tolerance is allowed where a test is shorter than the minimum required eight minutes, but if the test is shorter than 7 minutes 30 seconds the candidate is unable to access the entire range of marks available for the test. Fortunately, there were no short tests this series. The teacher/examiner should begin timing the examination from the time when they begin to ask the first of the prescribed questions on the stimulus.

Where a test exceeds 10 minutes and the candidate is speaking as 10 minutes elapses, the examiner listens to the end of the candidate’s response, or to the next sense break in what they are saying, and then stops marking. If the teacher/examiner is speaking as the 10 minutes elapses, the examiner stops listening at that point. There were very few long tests this series, the majority of teacher/examiners respected the timing requirement.

Comments on candidates’ performance in Section A

Most candidates were well-prepared for question 1 and offered at least three pieces of information from the first paragraph of the text in answer to this question. Many candidates were able to manipulate the language of the text successfully in order to communicate their ideas. Candidates should know that in response to question 1 any three facts will be credited and these need not necessarily be complicated. For example, for Youth Matters Cards 2A and 2B, a full response to question 1, « Selon le premier paragraphe, qu’est-ce que nous savons

sur Omar Sy ? » could be « Il est acteur, il est numéro 1 du classement des célébrités préférées des jeunes Français, il se sent honoré par la reconnaissance du public ». Any three relevant pieces of information from the first paragraph can be used in answer to question 1.

In response to question 2, candidates need not offer more than one piece of information.

Many candidates were able to offer extended answers to questions 3 and 4 on all the cards. In response to questions 3 and 4, candidates should be prepared to offer their opinion and to justify it so as to address the « Expliquez votre réponse » or « Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas ? » aspect of these questions.

Candidates should know that they may, of course, ask for a question to be repeated if necessary.

Comments on candidates' performance in Section B

The majority of candidates 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.

Youth matters

GTA: Candidates generally coped well with questions on this GTA, with technology being an area where many candidates have good knowledge and family/friends a topic about which they have strong views. Candidates were also usually able to respond to questions related to music, but with a varying amount of detail. Candidates should be aware that in order to access the higher marks for "Knowledge and understanding (General topic area)" they need to offer facts and figures and/or other evidence of research into the chosen GTA; many offered no more than general knowledge.

Lifestyle, health and fitness

GTA: Candidates coped well with discussing this GTA overall, offering opinions and ideas but, as for the "Youth matters" GTA, there was rarely evidence of research into the topic, or of detailed knowledge of the same. The majority of candidates, while not at a loss for things to say, offered only shallow knowledge of this GTA based on general knowledge and therefore were not able to access the full range of marks available for "Knowledge and understanding (General topic area)".

Environment and travel

GTA: The majority of candidates who were tested on this GTA had prepared it and did well. Most were able to talk about issues related to the environment and travel at length, backing up what they said with concrete examples, facts and statistics, in addition to using an appropriate range of relevant vocabulary. This often resulted in a convincing performance.

Education and employment

GTA: Many candidates tested on this GTA had a good knowledge of education systems (in different Francophone countries) and were able to discuss ideas on education and employment at some length. Some candidates showed less detailed knowledge of the GTA, merely talking about their own experience on a more general level.

Conduct of Section B

In order for the candidate 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. The teacher/examiner should pick up on what the candidate says, using this to inform further questions, and should encourage the candidate to develop the points they have made.

It is essential that teacher/examiners give candidates the opportunity to deal with questions suitable for IAS level, i.e. to show that they have moved on from (I)GCSE level. Where all or some of the Section B discussion centres around (I)GCSE level questions and there is insufficient evidence of the level of challenge expected at IAS level, the candidate may not be able to access the full range of marks for "Spontaneity and development".

On occasion the teacher/examiner asked questions which could not be seen to fit in any of the subtopics of the candidate's GTA. An example might be a question about which subjects the candidate is studying at school, where the candidate's chosen GTA is "Lifestyle, health and fitness". On such occasions, the candidate's ability to access the full range of marks for "Knowledge and understanding (General topic area)" 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 Area, candidates usually wanted to offer ideas and opinions and there were some informative, lively discussions. However, candidates need to be reminded of the advantage of developing their ideas and exemplifying their points. In particular, it was noticeable that candidates who showed evidence of wider reading or research by referring to an article they have read or a video that they 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 (General topic area)" section of the mark scheme, candidates need to demonstrate that their studies have led them to research and read about topics, so that they can go beyond personal, anecdotal information and/or information gleaned through general knowledge. The teacher/examiner has an important role to play here; teacher/examiners should encourage candidates to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the GTA e.g. by using prompts such as « Tu peux me donner un exemple ? ».

Language

Many candidates spoke well and with some fluency, using a good range of lexis and structures. On occasion a candidate's performance was hindered by poor pronunciation which made it difficult to understand the message they were trying to deliver; teachers in some centres would be advised to focus on the need for pronunciation that allows the candidate to communicate successfully. Recurring errors in pronunciation included pronouncing 3rd person plural endings (-ent) or a silent « s » at the end of a word, and pronunciation of words including « fille » / « fils », « pays » and « bénévolat ».

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 candidates stuck too closely to repetitive simple language which did not allow them to reach the higher bands in the mark grids for "Quality of language (Range of lexis)".

In addition, there were examples of basic errors that candidates might not be expected to make at IAS level, such as incorrect subject-verb accord in the present tense. This was particularly evident in irregular verbs like *vouloir*, *dire* and *faire*. Some candidates 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 excellent performances from candidates 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 be aware of the requirements of WFR01, as incorrectly conducted tests can adversely affect the candidate's mark. The following advice is offered in the light of this and previous examination series.

Timing

The WFR01 test should last 8-10 minutes in total. Timing begins when the teacher/examiner begins to ask the first question in Section A.

Candidates should be aware that, in order to score 4 out of the 4 marks available for "Understanding (stimulus specific)", they need to give "Full and detailed answers to prescribed questions". Therefore, Section A will probably last 3.5 – 4 minutes, but as soon as the candidate has finished answering the four set questions in Section A, the teacher/examiner should begin section B. If, for example, the candidate finishes Section A in 2 minutes, then the teacher/examiner should make sure that Section B lasts at least 6 minutes, so that the total test time is at least 8 minutes.

There is no need to extend Section A artificially, and extra questions should not be asked in this section; once the candidate has answered the four set questions, the teacher/examiner should begin Section B. It is in the candidate's interest to allow the full 10 minutes of test time, in order that they might demonstrate as wide a range as possible of ideas and opinion on the GTA being tested.

If a test is too short (less than 7 minutes 30 seconds, a 30 second tolerance is allowed), the candidate is not able to access the full range of marks available for the test. If the test 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 candidate is saying, or at the end of the candidate's answer, whichever comes first. If the teacher/examiner is speaking at the 10-minute point, the examiner stops marking immediately.

Conduct of Section A

In the interests of comparability between tests, and so that the candidate 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 informal where that is appropriate, that is « vous » may be changed to « tu », and « à votre avis » to « à ton avis », etc.

All four questions in section A must be asked, even if a candidate has already partially answered a 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 candidate'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 candidate'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 / question numéro deux » etc. before the questions.

It is very important that teacher/examiners are aware that, if the teacher/examiner changes or rephrases the body of the question in any way, then the candidate's response to that question is ignored when assessing their 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.

Section A questions can be repeated and candidates should know an appropriate way to ask, in French, for a 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 candidates should be coached to give full and developed answers to the set questions, giving reasons and explanations for their opinion.

Candidates 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, candidates 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 candidate uses material from the text in their answer, but demonstrates that they have understood the text by selecting the material needed to answer the question. To give an example from the January 2024 exam:

Environment and travel Card 1A/B

Question 2: « Selon le texte, quelle a été une des conséquences de l'éruption du volcan ? »

The text is :

« Nos champs étaient totalement couverts de poussières volcaniques et nos fruits et légumes ont disparu sous une épaisse couche de cendres. »

A candidate who replies « Nos champs étaient totalement couverts de poussières volcaniques » cannot be considered to have fully understood the question and the text. The use of « nos » renders the answer ambiguous.

However, a candidate who replies « Les champs du Vanuatu étaient couverts de poussières volcaniques » would gain credit for having understood the question and 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 GTA on which the candidate is being tested. For example, in the January 2024 tests, the topic of the first stimulus card for Lifestyle, health and fitness, « Le menu végétarien dans les cantines scolaires » is “Food and diet”. Therefore, the teacher/examiner must make sure that the Section B discussion deals predominantly 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 candidate cannot access the full range of marks available for “Knowledge and understanding (General topic area)”.

It is not necessary to cover all the subtopics of the GTA being tested. The only requirement is that the Section B discussion moves away from the subtopic of the stimulus card to cover at least one other subtopic of the same GTA.

A definitive list of subtopics linked to each of the General Topic Areas (GTAs) 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 candidate that the teacher/examiner asks questions which allow them to demonstrate the full extent of their knowledge of the structures and lexis expected at IAS level. Pedestrian and (I)GCSE-type questions often do not encourage the candidate to use IAS level language and structures. The teacher/examiner should encourage the candidate to expand on answers, to provide detail and clarification.

In assessing the mark for “Knowledge and understanding (General topic area)”, the candidate 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 candidate’s ability to access the full range of marks available and candidates should be encouraged to include these. Candidates 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 series was on the whole 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.

Centres must ensure that both the candidate and the teacher/examiner are clearly audible on the recording. The tests must be recorded in a quiet environment with suitable acoustics and there should be no interference such as noise from building work, traffic or noise from other pupils in the school. This can make it difficult for the examiner to hear what the candidate is saying. A sound test is essential before recording begins.

Administration

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. Under the “Teaching and Learning” tab of the same page is the “Oral Training Guide” which gives further information about preparing candidates for and conducting the test, together with a commentary on a sample WFR01 test.

