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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In French (WFR04)  
Paper 01: Research, Understanding and  
Written Response

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Candidates were clearly familiar with the topic areas covered and most candidates were able to attempt all parts of the paper. Whilst many fared well with the comprehension questions in Sections A and B, Question 8 (Grammar manipulation) and Section C provided more of a challenge. However, it is pleasing to see that a larger number of candidates this year produced essays that were more in line with the expectations of the task.

## **Section A – Listening**

### **Questions 1 and 2: Multiple Choice**

Candidates were provided with four options A, B, C, or D for each item within the question (the correct response, and three distractors). Question 1 was taken from the sub-topic of *Tourism* and Question 2 from *Technology*.

In question 1, (1 c) appeared to be more of a challenge for the candidates, with many failing to choose D as their answer. A careful listening should have helped the candidates decide on the correct answer.

In question 2, (2d) proved to be the most challenging for a good number of the candidates.

#### **Advice to candidates:**

It is vital that candidates do not rush into committing themselves to an answer. At this level, they should listen for the gist of the whole passage; a word which is mentioned in the recording does not necessarily lead them to the answer in the question paper.

### **Question 3: Summary completion.**

Candidates were required to complete a summary, choosing from a list of eight words or phrases. There was a mixture of word types. Question 3 was taken from the sub-topic of *Recycling*.

This question was generally well answered with (3d) providing the most challenge for candidates, answering *arrêter* instead of *continuer*, from ...**Lydie a l'intention** d'acheter plus d'habits d'occasion, au lieu d'aller dans des magasins traditionnels.

### **Question 4: Short Answer in French.**

This question required responses using a single word, a phrase or a short sentence. Each item was worth 1 or 2 marks. Question 4 was taken from the topic of *Volunteering*.

In this section, as in section B, listening skills and reading skills only are assessed, which means that sentences that contain grammatical and spelling errors can score, as long as the error does not lead to ambiguity. Responses to Questions 4, 6 and 7 are only marked on the basis of communication, rather than accuracy of language.

### **Advice to candidates:**

Here, as in Section B, targeted lifts are sometimes possible. It is important for candidates to know that they can re-use the language they hear but at this level direct lifts will usually not enable candidates to score. Candidates need to manipulate the language they hear or read. Candidates should try to use their own words as much as possible to render the meaning. However, while it is possible to convey the meaning by using their own words when the information is very technical or specific, candidates should manipulate the language they hear instead of writing incoherent circumlocutions.

### **Performance in question 4**

**4a,4b, 4c** were mostly well handled by candidates. However, in **4a**, a good number of candidates failed to spell *mois* correctly, writing *moins* instead which unfortunately made the response very ambiguous.

**4d** was generally well answered, but again the spelling of *insuffisance* made some responses very ambiguous.

### **Advice to candidates:**

Some candidates were tempted to write far too much in their answers. Reference to the published mark scheme will show the essence of each answer. Longer answers can often miss the point or may start with a wrong detail before eventually giving the correct answer which is therefore negated by what has come first. It is also important that candidates check that their answers meet the requirements of the questions. Candidates need to ask themselves if the answers work with the questions or whether there is some ambiguity.

## **Section B – Reading and Grammar**

### **Question 5: Multiple Choice Questions**

Candidates were provided with four options: A, B, C, or D for each item within the question (the correct response, and three distractors). Question 5 was taken from the topic of *Jobs and Unemployment*.

**5d and 5e** proved to be the most challenging whilst **5a** and **5b** were generally well answered.

**5d** the answer was ...*le taux de chômage des jeunes et celui des seniors suivent la même tendance* from the text ... *Depuis dix ans, le taux de chômage des seniors ne cesse d'augmenter, comme celui des jeunes*

### Question 6: Short Answer in French

Question 6 was taken from the sub-topic of *Customs*.

Candidates were not penalised for using the wrong pronoun when referring to Stéphane. Question **6a** appeared to be a challenge for many candidates who didn't manipulate the text to convey the idea that Heidi didn't answer the questions in French. Again, a careful reading of the question might have helped. Some candidates clearly knew where the information was located in the text but failed to produce a response that answered the question.

**6b** proved also to be challenging. Many candidates failed to understand that unlike most people, Stéphane thought that English was more difficult than French. A careful reading to the end of the paragraph would have helped... *Cependant, il n'est pas rare de trouver des Zurichois et des Zurichoises qui sont d'avis que parler en anglais, c'est plus simple et que la grammaire de la langue de Shakespeare est bien moins compliquée. Mais, moi, je ne partage pas leur avis, loin de là !*

Candidates who wrote *il pense que l'anglais est plus difficile* didn't score as they should have finished the comparison.

### Question 7: Short Answer in French

Question 7 was taken from the sub-topic of *Migration*.

Specific understanding of the text was necessary to gain the marks. Whilst most managed (a) and (h), the other questions often caused problems because candidates were tempted to copy a complete passage verbatim from the text without any attempt to process the information. Simple language structures tended to be the most successful.

In **7b** it was important to say that they don't live far from *les bidonvilles*

In **7c** candidates were able to score answering with one word: *bien*. Candidate who used the anglicism *supporter* didn't score as *supporter* has a completely different meaning in French.

In **7d**, this question necessitated a very careful reading and inference *from ... j'ai été rassurée et contrairement à ce que je m'imaginai, nous n'avons eu aucun souci.*

In **7g** many candidates answered six months instead of a year. Again a careful reading to the end of the sentence/ paragraph is essential ... *Au début, nous nous étions engagés pour une durée de **six mois** mais on vient juste de **fêter le premier anniversaire** de son arrivée.*

### **Advice to candidates:**

When answering question 4,6 and 7, simple language structures tended to be the most successful.

Ensure that your response meet the demands of the question.

### **Question 8: Sentence transformations:**

Candidates were required to manipulate the sentences given to them using the information in brackets. It is essential that candidates refer to the texts from which the language has been taken as the manipulated sentences **need to make sense and be grammatically correct** back in their original context. Therefore, tenses are a crucial aspect to bear in mind when manipulating verbs.

It appeared that the changes made to this question to help candidates locate the phrases in the texts by boldening them had a positive impact on candidates' performance.

### **Advice to candidates:**

The manipulated sentences need to make sense and be grammatically correct if put back in the original texts.

## **Section C**

It is crucial that candidates understand the nature of what is expected in the final essay. Since marks are awarded for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical analysis, Organisation and Development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of Language (out of 5), it is vital that some examination time is spent planning the response to the **specific** question asked.

Many candidates who wrote fluent essays in French of a very high quality often scored highly for Quality of Language, but scored low marks for the other two categories because **their response lacked relevance or were simply a regurgitated version of everything they knew** about the topic or work. It is essential that candidates select carefully what information they are going to use to answer the question. Not everything they know will be needed to answer the question.

Most importantly, candidates should realise that the thrust of the questions is **mostly in the second part**. To access the higher mark bands, they must engage in **an analysis** of the issues. Essays which relied too much on description and less on evaluation scored poorly.

Centres must also be reminded that the geographical area and the historic period must be in a **French-speaking country**. In line with GCE and with other languages at International A Level, such essays could not be credited with any marks and unfortunately scored 0.

### **Advice to candidates:**

Candidates must carefully select the information they are going to use to answer the question. Not everything they know will be needed to answer the question.

Candidates should realise that the thrust of the questions set is mostly in the second part of the question, inviting them to produce an analytical response.

History and Geography essays must be rooted in the French-speaking world.

### **Questions 9(a), (b) and 10 (a), (b)**

The History questions were answered by about 20 % of the candidates with **10b** being the most popular. This is an increase compared from previous years.

**9b** was more popular than **9a**

**9 b** required the candidates to evaluate the reasons of the changes that have happened in the area they studied.

**10b.** The predominant areas of study were *la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, la Révolution française et Mai 68*. Many of the essays were full of relevant information and managed to present facts to support general ideas. Some essays provided good evaluation of the reasons why a particular person was victorious, giving a range of reasons. However, a number of essays tended to rely on vague generalisations rather than providing detailed evidence and candidates regurgitated all they knew about the Second World War / the French Revolution.

**10a** was the most popular question in Section C.

### **Advice to candidates:**

Candidates need to know that it is not necessary to introduce the essay with a long preamble about the period/ the area or with general information about the genesis of the work. In fact, this produced a poor start when it appeared. Better candidates provided an opening paragraph which identified the issues to be addressed in the essay with direct reference to the essay question set.

### **Literature and film- Questions 11- 20**

The most common text studied was *Kiffe kiffe demain*.

The most common film was by far *Monsieur Lazhar*, being again this year the second most popular question in Section C. *Jules et Jim* attracted a good number of candidates.

As for the History and Geography essays, it is essential that the candidates focus on the analysis and refrain from retelling the story. The least successful essays tended again to contain a great deal of irrelevant material or were simply a regurgitated version of everything

candidates knew about the book or the film. It is essential that candidates select carefully what information they are going to use to answer the question. Also, as the candidates write their answers, they must ask themselves whether the information they are providing is answering the question. It was indeed, often, impossible from reading the essays to know what the essay question was, as candidates tended to lose focus and use too much irrelevant information.

**However, it was pleasing to see this year that a greater number of candidates were able to produce essays with better analysis, focusing on the second part of the question.**

**Advice to candidates:**

The best essays were in clear paragraph form with a main sentence to introduce the paragraph, followed by several examples. A final evaluative sentence then often referred back to the essay title in some way.

