



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In French (WFR04)

Unit 4: Research, understanding and written
response

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Most candidates were familiar with the topic areas covered and 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 for some. However, it is pleasing to see again this year that a larger number of candidates 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 *Law and Order* and Question 2 from *Food and Diet*

In question 1, (1a) appeared to be more of a challenge for the candidates, with many failing to choose C as their answer. A careful listening of *la Belgique compte plus de policiers à cheval qu'avant* should have helped the candidates decide on the correct answer *plus important qu'autrefois*.

In question 2, (2d) proved to be the most challenging for a good number of the candidates who failed to identify the answer *de proximité* from the transcript *Ils les sélectionnent selon leur taille, leur prix, en fonction de la saison et ils privilégient les producteurs locaux. Ce dernier facteur est le premier dans leur choix de produits.* A careful listening to the end of the track is essential.

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. It is also important that the listen carefully to the end of the passage.

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 topic Education and candidates listened to a text about the school uniform in France.

This question was generally well answered with (3b) providing the most challenge for candidates, failing to choose *le respect*, from *Le Président, lui, décrit l'uniforme comme un symbole de considération mutuelle*.

Candidates choosing *l'égalité* as the answer failed to identify that the answer corresponded to Brigitte Macron's opinion, not the President's: *D'après Brigitte Macron, l'épouse du Président de la République, l'uniforme supprime les différences*

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 *Role Models*.

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 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

The most challenging questions were 4d and 4f.

4d: Extract from the transcript : *Des fois, je regrette de ne pas avoir eu une vie d'ado normale mais quand je gagne une compétition, cette pensée disparaît. Je me dis que ça en valait la peine !*

Candidate who answered *ça en valait la peine* (lift from the TS) failed to specify what 'ça' referred to. When using pronouns in an answer, it is essential to ensure that the meaning of the

pronoun is clear. When answering “What does Shirine say to herself when she wins a competition? with “it was worth it”, the answer is ambiguous. The answer had to be formulated from the two sentences.

Advice to candidates:

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.

It is also important to ensure that the response given answers the question. One useful piece for advice for candidates would be to read the question and the answer together to eliminate any wrong answers, including non-identified pronouns or partial/ ambiguous answers.

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 *Music* and was generally well answered.

Question 6: Short Answer in French

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

Question **6a and 6c** appeared to be more of a challenge for many candidates who failed to be precise in their answers.

6a

Question: *Quel est le nouveau problème rencontré par certains restaurants ?*

Text : *Si vos amis vous servent à boire dans un grand verre transparent avec le logo d'un restaurant fastfood très connu, sachez qu'ils l'ont probablement volé. C'est le nouveau passe-temps de certains clients du fastfood.*

The candidates had to find the answer from the two sentences and formulate their answer, expressing that some restaurants are seeing their crockery/ glasses being stolen.

Question 7: Short Answer in French

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

Specific and detailed understanding of the text was necessary to gain the marks.

Advice to candidates:

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

Ensure that the response meets the demands of the question.

Candidates should try to be as detailed and precise as possible.

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 is to be noted that in this question, spelling mistakes are ignored as long as they do not cause ambiguity, and they do not interfere with the required grammar manipulations. Please refer to the published mark scheme to see the grammar focus of each sentence. Examiners focus on the grammar focus being tested and disregard any 'surrounding' spelling mistakes.

It is also crucial that candidates manipulate the given words. Sentences are written to test a particular grammar point and for fairness to all, only the words used in the sentence are expected to be manipulated. For instance, in **8c**, the verb *estimer* was to be manipulated into the subjunctive *estimions*; *puissions estimer* was not accepted.

When manipulating and adjective, it is important to identify the gender of the noun in the new phrase by looking at words in the phrase that might indicate whether the noun is masculine, feminine, plural or singular. For instance **8h**: *cette opinion était largement partagée ... (cet avis était largement ...)*. The phrase in bracket indicates that the manipulation of *partagée* will have to be into the masculine and singular form of the adjective with the inclusion of cet.

Advice to candidates:

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

A close examination of the phrase in brackets will help candidates to manipulate correctly.

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 about the historic period they have studied, the geographical area, the film or the book will be needed to answer the question. Evidence needs to be **relevant**.

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. Unfortunately, again this year, handful of essays 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 35 % of the candidates with **9a and 10a** being the most popular. **10a** was the most popular question in Section C.

The predominant areas of study were *la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* and *la Révolution française*. Many of the essays were full of relevant information and managed to present facts to support general ideas. 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.

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. 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

Once again, this year, the most common text studied was *Kiffe kiffe demain*, being the second most popular question in Section C and the most common film was by far *Monsieur Lazhar*.

As for the History and Geography essays, it is essential that the candidates focus on 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 that again this year that a greater number of candidates were able to produce essays with better analysis, focusing on the second part of the question, scoring very high marks.

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.

