



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In French (4FR1) Paper 01

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Introduction

June 2023 is only the third full session for 4FR1 01, Listening, set in accordance with the specification, International GCSE French 4FR, and is the second post-pandemic. This paper was of equal demand, as ever, as the time-zone equivalent paper, 4FR1 01R. This session, there were some 6000 candidates for this single tier qualification. The marking principles and rubrics for this specification remain consistent with previous sessions, returning to 2019 standards with protection. The total time allocated to this 40 mark paper is 30 minutes plus 5 minutes' reading time. There is no optionality in this paper, and most candidates attempted all seven questions. Five questions do not require productive use of French. Only Questions 3 and 7 require the productive use of French which examiners assess for communication only. Given the background to candidates' experiences, there were some excellent performances. The questions are all taken from the five specified topic areas and their sub-topics. The six questions are of increasing demand, with early questions targeting Grades 1 and 2, and Q7 seeking to elicit performances up to Grades 8 and 9. In a number of questions, an example precedes the question, so that the candidates can see how question parts are going to information and how candidates should convey it. Q1 is a visual pairing question on shopping and money worth 4 marks, where candidates listen to fairly short utterances and match them to the appropriate image. Q2, about information and communication technology, is worth 6 marks and requires candidates to indicate the types of technology they use, from a choice of eight images, including the example. The passage does not mention all the activities shown. Q3, again valued at 6 marks, is a more extended passage about food and drink, in this case, relating to a restaurant meal in town and candidates have to produce brief target language responses, not necessarily in sentences. In Q4, a non-verbal question to deduce whether the opinions of the six speakers on daily routine at home are positive, negative or both, offered up to 6 marks. Q5 is a passage talking about various details of a holiday. Candidates can earn up to six marks by identifying the six correct multiple-choice responses, with three distractors offered in each part. Q6 concerns future plans. Candidates select six words from a pool of thirteen to complete the sentences in the question, paying attention to both grammatical accuracy and the sense of the speakers in the passage. There are up to six marks on offer in this non-verbal question which is aimed at more able candidates. A further six marks are available in Q7 for responses in the target language pertaining to helping at home. As in Q3, examiners assess responses for communication only, not for quality of language, save that candidates' responses need to be unambiguous, in the context of this International GCSE specification.

Question 1

As might be expected in the first question of the paper, there was an extremely high level of success with the vast majority of candidates gaining all four marks on offer. As this question targets Grades 1 and 2, this is a strong start for very many candidates. Of the four parts, *charcuterie* was slightly less well identified than the other shopping locations, even though there was support from the words *pâté* and *jambon*.

Question

Once again, it was encouraging that nearly 90% of candidates gained six marks available in this question. The greatest cause for lost credit was the provision of excess responses. This question requires six responses only and excess responses, unfortunately, have to attract an automatic *pro rata* reduction. Equally, to provide fewer than six responses immediately reduces the level of success possible here. Many candidates were able to identify the technology involved and given the performance of the candidature as a whole, it would appear that there is a strong focus from many teachers and candidates on the minimum core vocabulary.

Question 3

At this relatively early stage of the paper Question 3, in this case, targeting food and drink requires the productive use of French, and therefore examiners were conscious of prioritising communication, and ensuring that succinct responses were sufficient to attain full credit. Some 70% of candidates gained all six marks on offer and examiners were generous in the comprehension of spelling words, especially such as *végétarienne* and *gauffre*. In (a) for which there were 2 marks, the notions of *délicieux* and *pas cher* were required. *delicious* spelt in the English way was not able to score, and some candidates ignored the *pourquoi* in the question, choosing to proffer either *bifteck* or *bœuf*. In (b), there was some confusion with *vin*, but many candidates offered *eau* correctly, and *minérale* was not necessary to score. In (c), masculine and faulty spellings of *végétarienne* earned the 1 mark. In (d), the most common cause of loss, was where candidates did not notice the fact that *tarte aux pommes* was no longer available, and they proposed it as a detail. Mention of *chocolat* was not needed, but waffle and ice cream were the two awardable ideas.

Question 4

Candidates and teachers seem to be increasingly accustomed to this question type and the main marks obtained over 70% in all question parts rising to over 90% in (f), would suggest that this question is accessible to a large part of the candidature. A goodly number of candidates correctly identified, key notions in (a) and (b), of disliking, getting up early, or the more inferential notion of being in a hurry, because shaving takes too much time. The parts which are sometimes least successful involve a more nuanced response where there are positive and negative aspects in the same response. This was the case in (f), where reading in the shared bedroom was a positive for Nadine, but not when Nadine's sister listens to music too loudly. There is not necessarily an equal balance for each of the types of opinion, candidates need to be on the lookout for opinions which may give views on both sides of the argument.

Question 5

Examiners encourage candidates, very strongly to use the reading time before the recording, plays, in order to read particularly this part, where there is quite a demand on reading the possible responses. Sometimes there is quite fine variegation between the correct responses, and the example shows candidates what is going to be required. Again, there were some parts of this question, namely (c), where there was a strong performance, but in other parts, between half and two-thirds of candidates responded correctly. It is worth considering the overall context of the passage, in this case holidays, so that a number of improbable responses can be discounted at once. In (a), about half of the candidates earned the mark on offer and a good number confused the fact that Laëtitia wanted to spend her holiday with a friend, for the correct response, namely that she would stay in a *bâtiment historique*, which reflected the passage *un vieux château*. In (b), candidates again had to find the best fit for the notion *expérience passionnante*, which nearly 70% of candidates succeeded in doing. The second half of the listening was testing for some candidates, and in (d), the concept of a new activity needed to match up with horse riding, which in the transcript it is stated he had never done. In (e), *nager* marries up with *piscine*, and in (f), over half of the candidates understood that fashion was referring to *vêtements de marque*. Examiners try very hard to use vocabulary, which in the main comes from the minimum core list, and therefore synonyms and antonyms are very important in helping to identify the correct responses in the listening comprehension.

Question 6

This question is targeted at the more able candidates, but this does not prevent candidates across the ability range from obtaining some credit, especially when maximising the five minutes of reading time before the listening is played, to take account of what is grammatically accurate in the options, as the questions are presented. For example, in (b), a masculine singular noun is the correct choice, limiting candidates to a restricted number of possible options. If a candidate offers anything other than such a noun, the response cannot be correct, and those who took account of grammatical accuracy, ensured that the options were far more closely drawn around the correct answer and a small number of alternatives. There was a good level of success in all of the parts of Question 6, and indeed, in (a) and (c), 97% and 82% of candidates scored respectively. In (b), some two-thirds of candidates secured the 1 mark, and incorrect answers often identified G. Although a computer is masculine singular in French, a *diplôme* is necessary, rather than an *ordinateur*, to be a teacher. The vast majority of candidates understood that Caroline particularly enjoyed meeting new people, and many understood that she did not want to sit any further exams, an attitude with which some candidates could empathise. However, in (e) and (f) candidates who listened carefully to the recording, instead perhaps of assuming what might stereotypically be expected, gained strong results, many identified that Carloline would like to work outdoors, and she wanted to stay near her family, rejecting moving elsewhere. Once again, synonymy is important, for *en plein air* matches up with *extérieur*, and *près* links with continuing to live in a home town.

Question 7

This question, although targeted at the most able candidates, yielded success to many and a good number of candidates gained at least one or two marks. The format of this question is now well known to many teachers and candidates, and for those who heed the example, there is not the danger of repeating the same information in their own answers. The topic of children, helping at home with household tasks seemed to be quite familiar, and therefore (a) and (b) reflected a reasonable level of success. It was sufficient for candidates to add a verb to the adjectives *indépendants* or *enthousiastes*: *ils sont enthousiastes*. Another route to the mark was to say that children like to do age-appropriate tasks. (c) was less successful, and it was quite widely suggested that children dislike their parents, rather than dislike the tasks which parents set, but do not define well, or which are not suitable for their age. In (d), quite a number of candidates were able to convey the notion that an improvement in family life means that children are more willing to help at home, or that discussion means that children help more willingly at home. (f) was a challenging part and

the notion of *quelquefois* was critical when saying that discussion was useless. It is not to say from the passage no discussion is useful, but at times, parents simply need to impose their wishes. It was not the case in the passage that the discussion was always useless, nor that parents are too strict, which may well have been from perceived personal experience. The negative notion, which earned the mark, is that parents being too flexible could lead to children refusing to do what is asked often. This refusal to do household chores alone, gained 1 mark.

Advice

The following guidance is based on June 2023 performance, the third full session of this Specification. There are 28 marks on offer for non-verbal questions, and there is a gradual ramping up of demand, as the questions target performances at gradually higher grades.

1. Candidates should refer to the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) and especially to the several past papers which are now available. This will give some sense of the question types and rubrics of this paper, which are consistently set to the same guidance.
2. Q2 carries 6 marks. If candidates offer more than six responses, 1 mark is forfeited for every response in excess of six. Candidates should get used to the idea that all one image will not apply to any of the three speakers.
3. Q3 and Q7 require candidates to answer in French. Examiners assess these responses for communication only, but clearly, responses where the French is too faulty to communicate, cannot earn credit.
4. Candidates should check their Q3 and Q7 responses with particular care in the limited time available, for ambiguous mis-spellings or incomprehensible phonetic attempts which compromise communication.
5. Consolidation with a range of types of listening are very useful preparation, including in non-verbal exercises. Quite long passages appear early in the paper, and practice of note-taking in French under time limitation is valuable Q3 preparation.
6. It is worth looking at the example. Not only does this show how to approach a given question, but particularly in Q7, it avoids candidates offering the same material in their own responses, where examiners cannot credit it.
7. We urge candidates and teachers to consult the Specification, including the programme of grammar study, specified topics and sub-topics and minimum core vocabulary, as this may help to focus preparation most effectively. Time spent on learning the minimum core

vocabulary is very useful preparation when addressed thematically, even for the purposes of the receptive skill of Listening.

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