



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In French (4FR1) Paper 01

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Introduction

June 2024 is the fifth full session for 4FR1 01, Listening, set in accordance with the specification, International GCSE French 4FR0, and is the third post-pandemic. This paper was of equal demand, as ever, as the Regional paper, 4FR1 01R. This session, in an increase from last June, there were over 6000 candidates for this single tier qualification. The marking principles and rubrics for this specification remain consistent with previous sessions, in line with 2019 standards. 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.

As in previous sessions, examiners assessed performances across the whole range of ability. 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 communicate it. Q1 is a visual pairing question on services worth 4 marks, where candidates listen to fairly short utterances and match them to the appropriate image. Q2, about school subjects, is worth 6 marks and requires candidates to indicate the subjects they like, from a choice of eight images, including the example. The passage does not mention liking all the activities referenced. Q3, again valued at 6 marks, is a more extended passage about weather, in this case, relating to the impact of climate change on skiing, farming and rainfall; and candidates have to produce brief target language responses, not necessarily in sentences. In Q4, a non-verbal question to work out whether the opinions of the six speakers on leisure activities are positive, negative or both, offered up to 6 marks. Q5 is a passage talking about life in the town and country. Candidates can earn up to six marks by identifying the six correct multiple-choice responses, with three distractors offered in each part. Q6 concerns helping at home. 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 future plans. 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 very many 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, candidates were slightly less successful in identifying *commissariat de police*, perhaps confusing it with *la poste* or *poste de police*. Words such *banque*, *bibliothèque*, and, to a marginally lesser extent, *plombier*, did not present comprehension difficulties.

Question 2

Once again, it was encouraging that nearly the vast majority of candidates gained six marks available in this question. The greatest cause for lost credit was candidates offering seven or more crosses, most commonly for E, where no cross was necessary. This question requires exactly six responses. Sadly, excess responses attract an automatic *pro rata* reduction. Many candidates were able to identify the school subjects involved, and the distractor of *histoire* did not wrongfoot many candidates, who realised in the main, that preferences were required. Once again, it seems that there is a strong focus from many teachers and candidates on the minimum core vocabulary, and this was of great help here.

Question 3

At this relatively early stage of the paper Question 3, in this case, focusing on the weather and climate change, requires the productive use of French, and therefore examiners were conscious of prioritising communication, and ensuring that concise responses were sufficient to attain full credit. A significant number of candidates gained all six marks on offer and examiners were generous in the comprehension of spelling words, especially where quite specific words were required, such as *sécheresse* and *inondation*. Wherever possible, examiners gave credit when the correct notion was conveyed. (a) could either focus on global warming, or less snow. The spelling of *moins* was important, since it could be confused with *mois* or *moi*. In (b), two marks were on offer, and these were often the most successful parts of the question. Examiners credited verbs or nouns, or a mixture of both, to convey the notion e.g. *bronze*, with or without its reflexive, and *promenade*. ((c)) again quite specific vocabulary, although on the MCV earned the mark. However, the notion of *sécheresse* also scores, if, for instance, *pas de pluie* or *il ne pleut pas*. (d) was the most successful part in this question. In (e), candidates quite frequently assumed that drought or lack of rain would be involved. The more accurate notion is flooding or *trop d'eau*.

Question 4

Candidates and teachers seem to be increasingly accustomed to this question type and this question is once again clearly accessible to a high proportion of the candidature. Full marks or nearly full marks abounded. (a) was successful for many candidates because they got the notion of *fascinant* contrasting with *coûtent cher*. More difficult was part (d) where *ennuyeux* suggested a negative notion, but candidates needed to take account of *ne...jamais*. Perhaps a mishearing of *me* for *ne* wrong footed candidates in (e). Once again, in (f) candidates were generally strong at identifying the two contrasting opinions. There is not automatically 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

The reading time is of particular importance in this question, where four options are testing quite attentive understanding of the passage. Very few candidates earned no credit here and quite a number gained full or nearly full scores. The first three parts seemed to be particularly successful for candidates across the ability range. However, in (d) there was quite frequent confusion over where Nadège lives now, rather than formerly. Candidates could usefully have practice with adverbs of position for (e) and similar question parts.

Examiners continue to endeavour to use cognates or 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

Once again for this question, grammatical awareness can support a careful listening and understanding of the passage to enhance scores. It is worth candidates remembering that the example, in this case E, should not be offered as a potential response to questions (a) to (f). For example, in (a), the response is *J juste* and where candidates have offered a different adjective, at least they have considered the grammatical needs of the sentence. (b) was quite successful and candidates frequently offered a verb. Sometimes the sentence reflects the passage, but using different words so B *difficile* relates to *beaucoup de pression*. In the reading time before the recording is played, candidates might try to comprehend the sentences as far as possible. A further example of matching the passage with attention to the questions is in (e) where *la semaine prochaine* guides candidates to the sentence referring to an *examen difficile* thus *étudier* is logical and indicated as being necessary. The link between cognate *jardin* and *faire du jardinage* helped to provide credit for quite a number of candidates in (f).

Question 7

As ever, while this question targets the most able candidates examiners have pleased to note that candidates across the ability range are often able to gain some credit. This topic seems to have quite a measure of immediacy for many of the candidates, and the idea of gaining experience or learning another language frequently provided some marks. Candidates often identified *collège* correctly, but was only successful if the verb was in the past tense, because the speaker is no longer at school: *il parlait le français au collège*, but the same notion in the present tense does not score. In (c), references to long hours were often successful, too. In parts (d) and (e) any two of the three answers can score, for the two marks available. The size of Belgium is clearly a positive which makes it easy to visit. These two notions were sufficient to earn the marks on offer. Candidates quite often retrieved the idea of *visiter seul*, but less frequently the link between not having enough room and being able to accommodate a friend, who then by inference, could accompany the speaker's visit to the kingdom. In this question, it is worth taking account of the positive and negative columns because correct information is sometimes offered in the incorrect column: in the context of this sausage, the speaker does not suggest that Belgium being small is in any way negative, rather it facilitates visiting, but several candidates offered this erroneously in (f). Some candidates thought that visiting alone was a good thing, and that speaking another language was a bad thing, both of which are not borne out by the context of the passage.

Advice

The following guidance is based on June 2024 performance, the fifth 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 many 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. Candidates could check their French, because communication is only possible if the language is unambiguous.
4. Consolidation using a variety of types of listening is very useful preparation, including in non-verbal exercises. Fairly long passages appear early in the paper, and practice of note-taking in French under time limitation is valuable Q3 preparation.
5. In Q7, candidates should pay attention to whether their answers are in the correct column, positive or negative. Correct information written in the incorrect column cannot score.

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 enjoiner 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.

