



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In French (4FR1) Paper 01R

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Introduction

June 2023 is only the third session for 4FR1 01R, 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 main paper, 4FR1 01. This session, there were some 830 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 careers worth 4 marks, where candidates listen to fairly short utterances and match them to the appropriate image. Q2, about shopping and money, is worth 6 marks and requires candidates to indicate on what they are expending their money, 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 future plans, in this case, relating to volunteering and helping his grandmother, 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 information and communication technology are positive, negative or both, offered up to 6 marks. Q5 is a passage talking about various people's holiday plans. Candidates can earn up to six marks by identifying the six correct multiple-choice responses, with three distractors offered in each part. Q6 concerns daily routine. 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 transport. 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

This question was intended to target the vast majority of the candidature, and therefore it is no surprise that the two overwhelming majority of candidates obtained all 4 marks on offer. (a) was especially accessible with 99% success, and all parts enjoyed over 90% success. It is worth noting that even if a candidate is unsure, and this applies to all non-verbal questions, it is worth offering the correct number of responses in order that they can all be assessed. A small minority of candidates offered three or fewer responses in Question 1.

Question 2

Once again, this question attracted high scores with a mean average in excess of 80%. This meant that a pleasing number of candidates were familiar with the shopping and money for common items which were targeted. The most frequent cause for loss of credit was offering too many responses and, as is mentioned in the advice to candidates, it is useful to check the rubrics of each question type. These question types do not vary in the specification from session to session and, as ever, one image had no response relating to it. In this case, image B was not mentioned, but if this response was addressed, plus the correct six responses, unfortunately there had to be a deduction of 1 mark, and *pro rata*, if further excess responses were offered. *pantalon* is indeed mentioned in the question, but trousers have already been purchased, so this was a distractor.

Question 3

Question 3 obviously comes quite early in the examination and examiners are well aware that responding in productive French at this stage is quite challenging. Therefore note form is sufficient to gain full credit and communication responses, even when grammatical or orthographical attempts are faulty. We make a deliberate effort to require minimal productive response. From the six marks available, the mean mark was around three. In (a), *planche à voile* was not often successfully offered, but mention of learning a new language was more frequently correct. As windsurfing, sailing and surfing are all different activities, examiners had to insist on at least a comprehensible attempt of *à voile*. *langue* by itself could not score as there needs to be a verbal notion, such as to learn a language. References to *stage* could not succeed because these are too vague and did not specify the activities which Tancredi was undertaking. (b), although *bénévole* is a quite challenging item in the minimum core vocabulary, was quite successful as similar notions, such as volunteering without reference to work were accepted, and this is perhaps a quite frequently chosen speaking discussion area. The notion of voluntary rather than paid work is key to earning this mark. (c), reflecting examiners' manifest attempt to reduce the amount of written French required in this question, is

successful if *lit* alone is the response, and quite a number of candidates gained this mark. They did not have to make reference to the newspaper or out loud. (d) was also quite successful, as notions of gardening and shopping are quite frequent in topics, which candidates may have chosen for the speaking tests. The most common reason for lost credit observed was *jardin* rather than *jardinage*, and ambiguous spellings of *courses*, such as *cours* or *cour*.

Question 4

This question type is clearly becoming familiar to many teachers in contact, based on the increasing number of past papers available, and happily, the vast majority of candidates offered six responses. The question got off to a strong start for nearly all candidates, who earned the mark on offer in (a). A similar level of success was visible in (c), with more differentiated challenge in (d). In (e), the notion of the negative aspect of the internet was quite clear in the question, but perhaps was contrary to candidates' personal experience. In (e), perhaps candidates assumed that mention of a problem, led automatically to a wholly negative response, whereas the utterance is more balanced, thus is positive and negative. In the final part, some 90% of candidates gained the mark available, giving a strong finish to this question.

Question 5

Examiners are aware that a quite heavy demand on reading is required in the listening paper, especially in this question. Therefore it was not surprising that performances were around the 60% mark in many of its parts. Again, there was a strong start and finish to this question with the first and last part reflecting success at 85% and 73% respectively. In (b), many candidates thought that Khalida had paid for yesterday's excursion, whereas option D was the correct response. The negative relating to enthusiasm is key in (b) and (c): *super joli* reflects the notion of a wonderful view of the sea, and did require candidates to make a link between the two notions, which well over half of the candidates did. In (d), there was need for candidates to infer that a visit to a museum is a cultural activity, which some two-thirds of candidates succeeded in doing. A similar level of success was the case in the part where candidates had to link *tous les jours* with *toute l'année*. In this question, those who are able to spot synonyms or alternative renditions for the same notion, are well-equipped to score.

Question 6

Candidates often find that this is a challenging question and therefore it was encouraging that parts (a) and (b) yielded scores of 84% and 73% respectively. There was more moderate success in the remaining part, save for (c), where only some one third of the candidates accessed the Marc on offer. In the reading time before listening to the questions, candidates can usefully try to work out which possible answers are grammatical, as this reduces the range of possibilities. If candidates restrict themselves to only grammatically possible responses, there is a higher degree of success. For example, if candidates realise that (a) requires a feminine singular noun, the only plausible responses are C and J. In part (e), candidates sometimes struggled to understand that Noah watches television *quelquefois*, this being understood from *si j'ai le temps*. Grammatically, *rarement* and other adverbs are possible. Therefore, there was quite an adverbial choice for a grammatically correct response, but from the sense of the passage, we know that Noah, unlike his sister, did not watch television every evening. Although this part proved challenging, Question 6 is already targeting the higher grades, thus candidates showed excellent performances in some cases and a wide spread of results across the ability range.

Question 7

While this question targets the highest grades, some candidates perform better at this than Question 6, as less reading of the question sentences to complete. They are able to express themselves in comprehensible French, in response to the information in this case regarding transport. Candidates and teachers seem well used to the format of this question, where a number of advantages and disadvantages are sought. The examples given, both positive and negative, are worth considering, for they not only give insight into how to tackle this question, but show immediately the information, which candidates cannot re-offer to gain credit. The topic appeared to be well known to many candidates, and there was moderate success across the candidature as a whole, in this question. In (a), there needed to be reference either to good value fares or fares for students; or the fact that there was a larger or better bus network. Candidates who only got the idea of bus network or fares were not able to gain the mark in (a), as some qualification for either was required. In (b) and (c), there is not a general need to wait for a bus, simply that in this specific instance, Olivia had to wait half an hour for a bus. This information scored. Other possible correct responses needed to target the lack of space aboard, or the fact that passengers were noisy. There was some challenge in (d) and (e), since the notion of *co-voiturage per se* is not so much the point, rather that it was a way to amortise the expense of petrol. Another advantage of having a car is the ability to travel directly to the chosen destination and this could be rendered successfully by the lift

voyager directement. The negative notion, required in (f), related to the difficulty of parking or the expense without car sharing. It might well be correct that petrol is expensive or that having a car is costly or too small and need a seatbelt extension, but these are not borne out in the passage and are considered to be too vague. Many candidates gained some credit referring to difficulties of parking or to the positive side of direct travel to one's destination. It is useful for candidates to consider in the brief time they have, looking over their responses, and checking whether or not they have written positive or negative notions in the correct question parts. Sadly, it is not possible to credit information which is correct, but offered in the wrong column. For instance, if finding parking is difficult, is given as an advantage, as it sometimes was, unfortunately it has to be rejected. It was encouraging to notice that many candidates from a range of abilities earned some credit in this, the most demanding question in the listening paper.

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.

