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Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In French (4FR1) Paper 02R
Reading and Writing

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Introduction

The IGCSE French examination for the Summer 2024 series demonstrated a wide range of candidate performance, with some strong responses but also several areas where improvement is needed. Candidates have generally demonstrated a solid understanding of the French language, with many showcasing excellent linguistic skills. However, recurring issues such as misuse of tenses, confusion with vocabulary, and challenges in grammar exercises have been noted. Teachers have clearly supported their students, and the overall performance indicates effective preparation.

This report summarises the performance trends observed across recent examination sessions, highlighting common strengths and areas where candidates could improve.

Question 1

The majority of candidates performed exceptionally well, often scoring full marks. This reflected a strong understanding of the core vocabulary and the ability to identify key messages and details.

Recommendations: Candidates should be reminded to read the text thoroughly before selecting their answers, as errors often arise from misinterpretation of the finer details.

Question 2

Most candidates managed to score well, demonstrating familiarity with the format and confidence in selecting appropriate words. Errors typically occurred when candidates chose words that, while grammatically correct, did not align with the text's meaning.

Recommendations: Emphasis should be placed on understanding the content of the text fully before attempting to fill in the gaps. Practice in identifying the correct type of word (noun, verb, adjective) that fits contextually will benefit candidates.

Question 3

This question was generally well-handled, with most candidates scoring high marks. However, there were instances where candidates either placed too few or too many crosses, resulting in unnecessary loss of marks.

Recommendations: Candidates should be reminded to place exactly the required number of marks and to ensure clarity when crossing out errors. Precision is key in this exercise.

Question 4

Most candidates performed well on Question 4 (except parts 4c and 4h), showing a good understanding of the required responses. Candidates managed to extract the required information, though some struggled with the nuances of personal pronouns or providing complete responses.

Recommendations: To score higher, candidates should focus on providing distinct and complete answers, avoiding ambiguous 'lifts' from the text. Attention to detail and careful reading of the text are crucial. Teachers should place a stronger emphasis on helping students to carefully read and interpret the instructions in each question. This is particularly crucial for questions requiring inferential skills, where the correct answer cannot be directly lifted from the text.

Question 5

Success varied significantly. While many candidates correctly identified the information, others lose marks by misunderstanding the questions or failing to manipulate the text effectively. Specific instructions were also a challenge, particularly in Question 5a, where candidates were asked to provide the country rather than the nationality.

In Question 5, parts (d) and (f) proved difficult for many, as these questions required candidates to infer information rather than lift it directly from the text. This indicates a need for better training in inferential reading skills.

Recommendations: More practice in handling complex sentences and manipulating text to provide precise answers is recommended. Candidates should be trained to identify the specific requirements of each question and respond accordingly. Students should also be trained to write concise, relevant responses that adhere to the word count. Practicing how to answer questions without including unnecessary details can help improve clarity and coherence in their writing.

Question 6

Candidates generally performed well, with stronger responses featuring complex structures and accurate grammar. For Question 6, most candidates successfully used the four given words in a coherent piece of writing, demonstrating creativity and individuality in their answers. However, some candidates lose marks by failing to adhere strictly to the instructions or misusing stimulus words. Candidates struggled with using the verb "payer" in its infinitive form, with many opting incorrectly for a conjugated form.

Recommendations: Teachers should emphasize the importance of following instructions closely and using the stimulus words accurately. Additionally, candidates should be encouraged to practice concise writing that remains relevant to the given topic.

Question 7

In Question 7, the majority of candidates were able to address the bullet points clearly, particularly in the first three bullet points of 7a and across the bullet points in 7b and 7c. Responses to this question were often well-developed, particularly when candidates covered all bullet points effectively. Many candidates made an effort to incorporate a variety of tenses and grammatical structures into their responses. Although accuracy varied, the attempt itself reflects a good understanding of the range of language skills required at this level. However, confusion between tenses and more complex grammatical structures were common. This question also saw challenges, particularly the final bullet point, where candidates were expected to express ways to encourage others. Many candidates misunderstood this and failed to use the future or conditional tense, which was required. Question 7c, specifically the first bullet point, was often misinterpreted, with candidates confusing "métier" (career) with "matière" (subject), leading to irrelevant answers.

Recommendations: Candidates should practice using a range of tenses correctly and ensure that all bullet points are addressed fully. Effective planning and time management will help candidates stay on topic. More rigorous practice on grammatical structures, especially with direct and indirect object pronouns, agreement rules, and correct verb conjugation, is necessary. Teachers should also focus on ensuring students understand the importance of correct tense usage. Finally, encourage students to carefully choose the option in Question 7 where they can confidently address all four bullet points. This strategic approach can help ensure that they do not misinterpret the requirements and can maximise their score potential.

Question 8

This question proved to be challenging for some candidates who struggled with tense formation, gender agreements, and irregular verbs. It involved the manipulation of complex grammatical structures, revealed weaknesses in handling feminine and plural agreements, as well as correct verb conjugation in the past tense. For example, many candidates missed the feminine agreement or the plural forms and failed to correctly conjugate verbs, leading to errors like "j'ai aller" instead of "je suis allé."

Recommendations: More rigorous grammar practice is needed, particularly in areas such as tense differentiation, verb conjugations, and agreement rules.

Summary

Overall, candidates have shown a commendable level of proficiency in the French language, with many demonstrating strong reading comprehension and writing skills. However, consistent areas for improvement include grammatical accuracy, attention to detail in reading comprehension, and the effective use of tenses in writing tasks.

Continued emphasis on grammar, concise writing, and careful interpretation of instructions will be crucial for improving overall performance in future series.

