



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In French (4FR1) Paper 03

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Overview

This speaking assessment consists of three tasks:

Task A	Picture-based discussion
Task B and Task C	Conversations on two different topic areas

The exam is conducted in the exam centre and assessed by Pearson.

Total assessment time: between 8 and 10 minutes.

This exam is worth 25% of the International GCSE qualification.

The total maximum mark is 40.

Content overview

Candidates are assessed on their ability to convey their understanding of spoken French through three speaking tasks. Candidates must be able to:

- describe the contents of a picture
- describe possible past or future events related to the people in the picture
- respond to questions about the picture and its related topic
- take part in a spontaneous conversation on two further topics

Assessment overview

- Task A (2-3 mins/12 marks) requires candidates to answer five questions about a picture
- Tasks B and C (3-3.5 mins each/28 marks in total over tasks B and C) are conversations on two different topic areas, determined by the grid supplied by Pearson

Please see pages 23-31 of the Pearson specification for International GCSE French (first teaching 2017) for further details of this assessment, and for the mark grids used for assessment.

Please see the same document (page 14) or the end of this report for a list of the topic areas for this specification.

Task A

The candidate chooses a picture for Task A. This picture must contain the following elements:

- people (at least two people)
- objects (in the background)
- interactions (showing what people are doing)

The picture must be a photo rather than a cartoon-style picture. The picture can relate to any of the sub-topics of the International GCSE (please see the end of this report for a list of topic areas) except sub-topics A3, C3, C5, D2 and E4. These sub-topics will not be assessed in the speaking exam.

Task A should last 2-3 minutes. Timing begins as the candidate begins to answer the first question.

Where Task A is too long:

- If the teacher/examiner is speaking at 3 minutes, the examiner stops assessing the conversation at that point
- If the candidate is speaking at 3 minutes, the examiner stops assessing the conversation at the end of the sentence/the next sense break

It is important that teacher/examiners observe the timings. On occasion this year candidates were not able to access the entire range of marks available as they did not have the opportunity to answer all five questions within the three minutes allowed for Task A. On many occasions the answer to question 1 was disproportionately long, which meant that there was not sufficient time available for the candidate to give full answers to questions 2-5.

Teacher/examiners are reminded that they may not practise Task A with their candidates using the picture to be used in the final test. They may practise using other pictures on the same topic, but they may not practise or rehearse using the picture the candidate has chosen to use in the exam. A lack of spontaneity in Task A may affect the mark awarded for *Communication and content*.

The majority of candidates this series chose a suitable picture. Where they did not, this had no automatic effect on the mark awarded for Task A, but may have made it more difficult for the teacher/examiner to ask a question or questions of the required type. In all cases, examiners awarded marks positively for what they heard.

The candidate gives the teacher/examiner a copy of the picture in advance of the exam. The teacher/examiner must prepare five questions to ask each candidate about their chosen picture, but must not share these questions with the candidate before the test.

Candidates may not take any notes into the exam, but may bring in a copy of the picture they have chosen to talk about.

In Task A, the teacher/examiner asks five questions about the picture and the related sub-topic.

The pattern of these five questions must follow the examples in the SAMs and the instructions given in the specification.

Question type 1: A description of what you can see in the picture

Question type 2: Specific factual information about the picture

For example, select a person or persons in the picture and state what they are doing.

Question type 3: Past or future hypothesis

This question must ask the candidate to imagine a possible past or potential future event relating to the picture. This is the opportunity to support the candidate in using additional tenses and time frames.

Question type 4: Opinions about the picture

This question elicits the candidate's opinions on the picture and the topic.

Question type 5: Evaluation

The teacher/examiner should elicit an evaluation from the candidate. This question will move away from the content of the picture and exploit the wider topic area.

As an example, if the candidate chooses a picture of a group of boys playing in a football match (Topic E, sub-topic 2: Hobbies, interests, sports and exercise), the five questions could be:

- Question 1 Décris cette image.
- Question 2 Décris le garçon à droite.
- Question 3 À ton avis, qu'est-ce que ces garçons vont faire après le match ?
- Question 4 Et toi, est-ce que tu préfères les sports d'équipe ou les sports individuels ?
- Question 5 Pourquoi est-ce qu'il est important de pratiquer une activité sportive régulièrement ?

Teacher/examiners may ask additional questions (from the options below) in Task A, and indeed it is good practice to do so in order to encourage candidates to develop their answers. However, teacher/examiners are reminded that the **only** additional questions that may be asked are:

- Pourquoi (pas) ?
- Autre chose ?
- C'est tout ?

There must be no other supplementary questions and teacher/examiners must not deviate from these prompts.

Where a teacher/examiner asks in Task A an additional question which is not one of these prompts, the candidate's response to that prompt is ignored when assessing their performance.

Teacher/examiners may repeat a question if necessary. If a question is repeated, it should not be rephrased. Candidates should know how to ask, in French, for a question to be repeated.

In a significant number of centres this year, Task A was not conducted correctly. While examiners apply the mark grids positively, incorrect conduct of the test may prevent the candidate accessing the entire range of marks available.

On occasion, the teacher/examiner asked a question which was potentially confusing. An example would be asking a question such as « À ton avis, qu'est-ce que ces jeunes ont fait après le petit-déjeuner ? » for question 3 (which requires the candidate to use a past or future time frame in the reply). This question requires a reply using a past tense, but the use of « après » may confuse candidates.

It is important to note that, as only one question of the five prescribed types requires the candidate to use a time frame other than the present, the candidate does not have to use all three time frames (past, present and future) in order to access the entire range of marks for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy* in Task A. A candidate who uses, for example, only present and future time frames in Task A can access all four marks available for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy* in this section of the test. Candidates must use at least two time frames successfully to access a mark of two (out of four) or above for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy* in Task A.

Task A **Candidate performance 2024**

The majority of candidates were well prepared for Task A this year and coped well with this section of the test.

- Question 1 The majority of candidates, as might be expected (given that they know that the first question is always to describe the picture), had prepared well for this question and were able to give extended answers which included interesting detail. Some candidates used a time frame as they talked about their photo e.g. « Je vais décrire cette photo... » or « J'ai choisi une photo... », thus fulfilling the requirement to use at least two time frames in Task A in order to be able to access the full range of marks available for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy*. (NB: Question 3 is, of course, designed to allow candidates the opportunity to use a time frame other than the present.)
- Question 2 Performance in response to this question often depended on what the teacher/examiner asked. Whereas some teacher/examiners asked open questions, others were very specific and limited the scope of the answer, for example, while one would ask « Décris la dame à gauche », another would ask « La dame à gauche, qu'est-ce qu'elle porte ? » Teacher/examiners, of course, know their candidates and were usually well-placed to ask a question which they knew the candidate would be able to answer.
- Question 3 The majority of candidates were able to give an appropriate response to the teacher/examiner's question, using a future or past time reference.
- Question 4 Nearly all candidates could give an opinion, though not all could justify it. The prompt « Pourquoi ? » was often used to good effect here to encourage candidates to give a reason for their answer.

Question 5 Some teacher/examiners started this question off very well with « Dans quelle mesure... ? » or similar, thus encouraging the candidate to address the *evaluation* aspect of this question.

Task A Advice for teacher/examiners

- Ensure that candidates choose a suitable picture for Task A
- Prepare, in advance of the test, the five questions you will ask about the picture
- Encourage candidates, when necessary, to develop their answers (using only the allowed prompts: *Pourquoi ? Pourquoi pas ? C'est tout ? Autre chose ?*) so that the Task A lasts between 2 and 3 minutes
- Observe the timing, use a stopwatch or a timer; timing begins as the candidate begins to answer the first question
- Ensure that candidates have the opportunity to respond to all five questions within the three minutes allowed for this task
- Do not let candidates speak for too long in answer to question 1 if this means that the answers to questions 2-5 will be rushed
- Make sure that candidates know how to ask, in French, for a question to be repeated
- Make sure that candidates can pronounce accurately the vocabulary that they are likely to need to describe their picture e.g. « homme », « femme », « fille », « garçon » etc.
- Do not correct a candidate's language during the test
- Practise this type of task thoroughly with candidates in advance of the exam, so that candidates are familiar with the five different types of questions that will be asked
- Question 3 should invite a hypothesis relating to the picture, not to the candidate personally
- Question 4 should prompt the candidate to offer opinion
- Question 5 should prompt the candidate to offer evaluation.

Tasks B and C

Tasks B and C are two conversations on two different topic areas. The topic areas to be used in Tasks B and C are determined by the grid provided by Pearson. Note that the following sub-topics will not be assessed in the speaking test: A3, C3, C5, D2 and E4 (see below for a list of topic areas).

Each of the two conversations should last between 3 and 3.5 minutes. Timing begins as the candidate begins to answer the first question in each task.

Where Task B or Task C is too long:

- If the teacher/examiner is speaking at 3.5 minutes, the examiner stops assessing the conversation at that point
- If the candidate is speaking at 3.5 minutes, the examiner stops assessing the conversation at the end of the sentence/the next sense break

Both Task B and Task C are timed separately, so a short Task B is not compensated by an overlong Task C, and vice versa.

In the majority of cases this year Tasks B and C were conducted correctly, though a number of centres did not observe the requirements.

Some teacher/examiners did not encourage candidates to produce spontaneous speech. If candidates do not respond spontaneously to questions, they may not be able to access the full range of marks available for *Interaction and spontaneity*. Teacher/examiners should not use a list of pre-prepared questions but, instead, react to and build on what the candidates say. In this way a spontaneous conversation develops.

Teacher/examiners must be sure to allow candidates the time they need to think about and answer questions; on occasion this series, if a candidate did not reply immediately, teacher/examiners began to ask another question before the candidate had time to answer.

Teacher/examiners must be sure to listen to what candidates say and to make sure that questions follow on logically. In an example such as the following, the candidate will be left bewildered:

Teacher/examiner: Tu t'entends bien avec tes parents ?

Candidate: Je suis interne, mes parents habitent à l'étranger.

Teacher/examiner: Qu'est-ce que tu as fait avec tes parents le weekend dernier ?

It is very important that teacher/examiners listen carefully to a candidate's responses, so as not to cause confusion.

Tasks B and C Candidate performance 2024

The randomisation grid was adhered to in almost all cases, as were timings. The standard of candidate performance varied considerably. Some candidates could sustain a conversation at length, using a range of structures and vocabulary to express individual thoughts whereas others struggled to put thoughts together in a coherent form.

Candidates seemed to be most at ease discussing familiar topics such as holidays, school or house and home. There were, however, some interesting discussions of the more “challenging” topics such as environmental issues and communication technology.

Most candidates demonstrated use of three time frames (past, present and future), but on occasion candidates were not given much opportunity or indeed prompted to use time frames other than the present. This could limit a candidate’s opportunity to access the full range of marks available for *Linguistic knowledge and accuracy*, where the candidate’s ability to refer successfully to past, present and future events is credited.

There were many instances where candidates were able to use more complex structures such as « après avoir », « le quel », « avoir l’intention de », using the subjunctive after « il faut que », using the correct sequence of tenses after « si » etc. It was very pleasing to hear that many candidates at this level were confident using complex language.

Tasks B and C Advice for teacher/examiners

- Be sure, in advance of the exam, to note which conversation topics are to be discussed with each candidate (consult the grid provided by Pearson to determine which topic areas to discuss with each candidate)
- Observe the timings – Task B and Task C should last 3-3.5 minutes each, so a total of 6-7 minutes for this section of the test
- Use a stopwatch or timer; timing begins as the candidate begins to answer the first question in each task
- Make sure that candidates know how to ask, in French, for a question to be repeated
- Ask questions at an appropriate level for each candidate, but do not limit them; push each candidate to reach their “linguistic ceiling”
- Ask questions which prompt candidates to use past, present and future time frames in both Task B and Task C
- Listen to what candidates say and respond appropriately, but briefly
- Encourage spontaneous speech by candidates

- Encourage candidates to develop their answers, to offer opinions and reasons for these opinions
- Encourage candidates to use phrases and interjections which convey their emotions, as this can add authenticity to their speech
- Avoid questions which candidates may be reluctant or find it awkward to answer e.g. personal questions about their family
- Ask “open” questions (see below)
- Keep your interventions as short as possible
- Introduce Tasks B and C briefly in French, so that candidates know which topic will be discussed e.g. « Maintenant on va parler des vacances »
- Teach time markers e.g. « hier », « demain », « prochain », « dernier » as these can aid communication of different time frames
- Do not correct a candidate’s language during the test

Open questions

In all three tasks, it is important to ask “open” questions, i.e. questions which cannot be answered using only one or two words (“closed” questions). “Open” questions encourage candidates to answer using an extended phrase or sentence, which in turn allows them to access to the entire range of marks available.

Example:

Closed question	Est-ce que tu aimes le sport ?
Open question	Pourquoi est-ce que tu aimes le sport ?
Closed question	Est-ce que tu es allé en Espagne ?
Open question	Décris tes vacances en Espagne.

General advice

Preparing candidates for the International GCSE French speaking test: Advice for teacher/examiners

- Make sure candidates are confident using past, present and future time frames
- Practise with candidates developing answers using conjunctions, opinions and reasons
- Ensure that candidates know that they will be expected to speak spontaneously, and give them the tools to do so
- Share the mark grids with candidates, so that they are aware of what is being assessed
- Make sure that candidates know how to ask, in French, for a question to be repeated
- Make sure that candidates know the question words, so that their answer is relevant to the question
- Make sure that candidates listen out for the time frame of the question, so that they answer appropriately

Teacher/examiners should make sure they are familiar with the following documents (available on the Pearson website):

- Specification: International GCSE French (first teaching 2017)
- International GCSE MFL Oral Examination Training Guide

Administration

The majority of centres followed the guidance for the administration of these tests. On occasion, the requirements were not followed, and centres had to be contacted to provide documents and/or replacement recordings.

Extra time

Centres should note that candidates who qualify for extra time in written exams **do not** automatically qualify for extra time in the speaking test. Please see the *Speaking Extra Time Guidance* document available on the *International GCSE French* page of the Pearson website for further information.

Recording tests

- Make sure that both the candidate and the teacher/examiner can be heard clearly; where only one microphone is used, make sure that this favours the candidate
- Introduce the candidate's name and number clearly at the beginning of the test
- Do not stop or pause the recording at any time during the test

- Tasks A, B and C should be conducted in that order
- Check that the whole test has been recorded clearly

Uploading the tests to Learner Work Transfer (LWT)

- Label the recording, candidate cover sheet (CCS) and picture clearly
- Upload the recording, candidate cover sheet and picture for each candidate
- Please see the document *International GCSE guidance for oral recordings* (available on the *Forms and administration/Assessment support* tab of the International GCSE French page of the Pearson website) for instructions as to how to label these items and how to upload them to Learner Work Transfer

International GCSE French

Topic Areas

Topic

Sub-topics

A. Home and abroad

- 1 Life in the town and rural life
- 2 Holidays, tourist information and directions
- 3 Services (e.g. bank, post office)*
- 4 Customs
- 5 Everyday life, traditions and communities

B. Education and employment

- 1 School life and routine
- 2 School rules and pressures
- 3 School trips, events and exchanges
- 4 Work, careers and volunteering
- 5 Future plans

C. Personal life and relationships

- 1 House and home
- 2 Daily routines and helping at home
- 3 Role models*
- 4 Relationships with family and friends
- 5 Childhood*

D. The world around us

- 1 Environmental issues
- 2 Weather and climate*
- 3 Travel and transport
- 4 The media
- 5 Information and communication technology

E. Social activities, fitness and health

- 1 Special occasions
- 2 Hobbies, interests, sports and exercise
- 3 Shopping and money matters
- 4 Accidents, injuries, common ailments and health issues*
- 5 Food and drink

*Sub-topics A3, C3, C5, D2 and E4 will not be assessed in Paper 3: Speaking

