



Pearson

Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In French (1FR0) Paper 2F
Speaking in French

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Overview

Examiners were encouraged to hear some very good performances and listened to some imaginative and interesting orals and the level of performance. The achievement of many of the candidates entered was very pleasing and teacher-examiner-examiners are to be congratulated for putting their candidates at ease during the speaking element of the examination. There was evidence of the full range of abilities entered at each tier and performances reflected this throughout all three questions. The timings of the speaking examination are 7 – 9 minutes for the Foundation tier and 10 – 12 minutes for the Higher tier. These are approximate as candidates will take differing amounts of time to complete the role-play task and picture-based discussions. It should be noted that the timings for the role-play task and picture-based discussions are guidelines and many candidates were able to complete these tasks in a much shorter time than indicated in the specification. There is no need to extend these tasks to reach the maximum time suggested. Timings for the conversation tasks are prescribed and should be 3.5 – 4.5 minutes for the Foundation tier and 5 – 6 minutes for the Higher tier. Teacher-examiners should not extend conversation times to reach the total time of the complete examination.

Teacher-examiners should pay close attention to the sequencing grid for the examination which ensures that each candidate is tested on four of the five themes within the specification. This is based on the candidate's choice of theme for the first part of the conversation. Teacher-examiners will then select an appropriate role-play task from those given avoiding the theme of the conversation. Similarly, the choice of picture-based discussion and second conversation theme will follow the same format to avoid any theme being duplicated.

Teacher-examiners should be aware that it is necessary to keep to the scenario and the precise wording of the role-play and the picture-based discussions. Where this was not the case, marks could not be awarded for any response made by the candidate. Candidates may have the question repeated where the candidate has not answered, or has asked for a repetition, but may not be rephrased in any way. There were a number of occasions where candidates were asked supplementary questions to elicit further information and candidates could not be credited for responses to these questions. Often this was to extend the performance to fulfil the time limit in the specification which is not required.

The requirements of the conversation task were not always adhered to and centres should be aware of the necessity to keep to the instructions within the specification. Two themes are tested within the task, the first chosen by the candidate at least two weeks before the test and the other chosen from the two options, depending in the themes allotted by Pearson for the role-play and picture-based discussion. Occasionally candidates were

given a second conversation theme that had already been tested in a previous task.

Role-plays

The role-play tasks do not need to have elongated responses and best practice is to keep answers to what is required within the bullet points. Unfortunately, where candidates gave overlong responses these sometimes contained material which caused communication to be less clear and therefore not able to score full marks since there was some ambiguity.

It is important that candidates read the scenario carefully in order to understand where the role-play is situated in order to aid understanding before completing the task and providing answers that are in context. Teacher-examiners are reminded that they should adhere to the wording of the role-play including where a candidate is required to ask a question. It is not acceptable to say 'Vous avez une question?' Teachers should also keep to the register that is within the scenario and not change it to that they normally use during their teaching.

Occasionally candidates combined bullet points 1 and 2 within the role play and they were credited for both points. However, when the teacher-examiner then asked the question referring to the second bullet point, this often confused the candidate.

The unpredictable question was well done by more able candidates and less able often offered no response or one which had no relevance to the situation of the role-play.

Framing questions continues to be a differentiator and many candidates found it difficult to form questions. There were many instances of poor intonation and occasionally statements about the candidate's own uniform.

FR1

1. Many candidates were unaware of the meaning of *trajet*.
4. Although a favourite subject was given - *pourquoi ?* was often ignored by many candidates.

FR2

1. *En ville* was ignored by some candidates and *Je regarde la télé* or similar was too often a response.
2. *Pourquoi* was often not known by candidates.
4. *Rencontre* was only known by more able Foundation tier candidates and *où* sometimes used as who.
5. *Activities weekend* was often heard without any form of question intonation

FR3

2. *Quand* was not widely known by less able candidates.
4. *Durée de la visite* was only known by more able candidates at this level.

FR4

1. Despite the scenario indicating the job was for the summer holidays there were numerous instances of what the candidate wanted to do as a job eg *médecin* rather than a summer job.
2. *Raison pour le job* was only well answered by the most able.
3. *Combien de temps?* was not widely known when an unpredictable question.
4. *Détails personnels* It was expected that would include more than just a forename for a complete answer.
5. *Salaire* was often badly pronounced and *Salarie* or *Salairie* was common with even the most able candidates.

FR5

1. Many candidates had difficulty with vocabulary for a suitable present.
3. *Combien de temps?* was not widely known when an unpredictable question.
4. Many candidates were able to offer simple opinions about the region.
5. Although *recommandation* was known, only more candidates were able to successfully form an appropriate question.

FR6

1. Candidates were able to say that they wanted to reserve a table but too many ignored *Quand* so only partial communication was made.
2. *S'asseoir* was not widely known by candidates.

FR7

2. Many candidates were able to answer successfully referring to why France although some just talked about the subject which was not required.
3. *Date de naissance* proved a difficulty for many and the day and date were accepted.
4. Many candidates were able to offer *qualités personnelles* although there were many who incorrectly offered *détails personnels*.

FR8

3. Many candidates were unable to answer the unpredictable *combien d'argent?*
5. *Cabines d'essayage* was widely known by candidates.

FR9

3. *Combien de temps?* was not widely known when an unpredictable question.
4. *Rencontre* was only known by more able Foundation tier candidates and *où* sometimes used as who.

FR10

3. *Quelle date?* was not widely known.
4. *Combien de temps?* was not widely known.

Picture-based task

While this task requires responses to the bullet points to have extended responses, these should not be a series of long monologues and best practice is to keep answers to what is required within the bullet points. Unfortunately, where candidates gave overlong responses these sometimes contained material which caused communication to be less clear and therefore not able to score full marks since there was some ambiguity, leading to the clarity of communication being impaired. There is, however, the need to develop responses, adapting language to describe, narrate and inform in response to the stimulus questions. Candidates must also give opinions and for these to be justified with development of the reasons to reach the higher mark bands. Many candidates took the opportunity to go beyond a simple description of the people in the picture to talk about what they were doing and used expressions such as *il me semble/je dirais que* to enhance the task. *'Il me semble qu'ils sont contents parce qu'il fait beau et ils sont au bord de la mer'* was an indication where a candidate could use the picture to give an opinion or make a deduction.

However, some candidates were allowed to 'ramble on' when an acceptable answer had been given and the extra information did not add anything to what had already been said. Examiners are looking for the quality of the response rather than the length. There is no need to go through the supplementary prompts when a perfectly good response has been given. Indeed, the ensuing silence does not help the candidate. Some of the tasks were thus overlong, there is nothing to be gained by this and some candidate's performances deteriorated towards the end of the task and appeared to also have an impact on the performance within the conversation as they tired.

At Foundation tier, there was often straightforward predictable opinions given with little or no reasons for these opinions by candidates of lower ability and this prevented the candidate from accessing the higher mark bands of 9-12 or above. Responses from these candidates were often quite brief and some questions required considerable prompting by the teacher-examiner using the prompts given within the task or were unanswered.

Bullet points three and four proved to be good differentiators within the mark scheme. The most able candidates were able to use different time frames appropriately throughout the whole of their response. Less confident candidates could often use the appropriate time frame within the first part of any response but when following up with opinions and justification there were often errors in the formation of tenses and this led to some ambiguity.

Within both tiers there was a wide variation in the pronunciation and intonation of candidates. Successful candidates had it seemed made notes for their responses to the set questions rather than reading out sentences that they had written during the preparation period. The latter led to answers that, at times, were difficult to understand immediately due to poor pronunciation and a lack of appropriate intonation.

Centres are reminded that the questions within the Picture-based discussion are set and they should not be altered in any way. Unfortunately, there were instances where teacher-examiners reworded or reframed questions which did not allow candidates to be credited for responses to these questions. There were also occasions where supplementary questions were added in the middle of the task. No credit could be given for these responses and the practice caused confusion for these candidates who had prepared responses to the five bullet points.

FP1

This proved to be accessible for most candidates and many were able to give a good description of the photo and say whether they liked eating in restaurants. Reasons were not always given as to why they like to do so which prevented access to higher mark bands. Candidates were able to say what they ate last night but *je mange/je manger* was very common with no auxiliary verb. There were many successful responses to what the candidate was going to do *en famille* but as with the response to point five a lack of why and any justification.

FP2

Some candidates found this task difficult and beyond a simple description of the people did not expand to include they had were holding certificates or wearing a medal. Candidates had clear ideas of whether they wanted to go to university and a reason why/why not. There was confusion with some candidates who mixed up tenses for points three and four but all were able to give details of their favourite teacher and their opinion of them.

FP3

The descriptions of the photo were not as expansive as many of the others and often just focussed on a description of the people. Candidates were able to say whether they liked to eat at the school canteen although there were few reasons given other than *c'est bon*. Some candidates talked about meals that they had eaten rather than prepared but there was clear communication for points four and five and reasons why they want to study certain subjects in the future and what their favourite subject is and why.

FP4

Some examiners reported that this was the most successfully answered card, although some also indicated that was a lot of irrelevant pre-learnt material about emotions. Candidates were easily able to give a description of the picture and talk about why they like going to new places. They were able to talk about a town visit they had made and what they had done there. Candidates were able to say where they are going next week, with whom, and why. They were also able to say where they would prefer to live with reasons.

FP5

This proved to be accessible for most candidates and many were able to give a good description of the family at the beach and the fact that they seemed happy and reasons why. They were able to talk about whether they liked going on holiday with their family. *Mon père paie pour moi* was a simple reason given by some candidates. Candidates were clearly able to talk about a previous visit to the beach and what they are going to do during the summer holidays and where they prefer holidays and why.

FP6

The successful completion of this task often depended on the centre. Candidates in some centres seemed very well prepared for this topic where other seemed less so. This card provoked more prompts than many of the others as candidates gave simple responses. They had to be prompted using the prompts provided to explain why or give any supplementary information. The description was often just the number of people and what they are wearing rather than an idea of *nettoyer la plage* or *ramasser les bouteilles*. Pronunciation of *recycler* and *environnement* proved difficult for many.

FP7

The task was accessible to all and there were good descriptions of the people in the photo. Candidates were saying whether they liked to go to the cinema and often the films they like although not many gave reasons why they liked the films. Most were able to recall a film they had seen but there was often little development of this point. Candidates successfully told what they are going to do for their birthday and whether they preferred listening to music or playing sport. There was little explanation as to why, however.

FP8

Many candidates were confident talking about school activities and were able to describe the photo and describe the players. They were able to talk about the sport that they do at college and why. They were able to talk about a school trip they had been on although correct use of the past time frames was not always consistent and there were few opinions given about what they had done. Point 4 concerning *une nouvelle activité* proved more difficult for some activities.

FP9

Examiners reported that candidates found this card more challenging. This may well be the nature of the language within the topic such as *langue étrangère* and *à l'étranger*. Some candidates did not understand the idea of *étrangère*, others were able to answer but did not give a reason for the importance of other languages. Similarly, a few candidates recounted a trip they had made in this country rather than abroad. Not only did *à l'étranger* cause some difficulties but *travailler* was also confused with travelling, possibly due to earlier questions.

FP10

This card was found challenging by Foundation candidates, not due to the vocabulary used, but there was a lack of ideas and detail in the responses from candidates. Candidates found it difficult to explain how they were going to help people in the future and *Etre un(e) bon(ne) ami(e) est important. Qu'en penses-tu?* was found to be difficult for many candidates.

Conversation

In general, the conversations were well conducted and the skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher-examiner afforded candidates the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria enabling candidates to achieve their best.

Centres should be aware of the timings given within the specification. The Foundation conversation should last between 3.5 and 4.5 minutes and the Higher tier conversation should last between 5 and 6 minutes. It would appear that some centres were of the mistaken opinion that the conversation should be elongated to make up the total time of the whole examination, should the role-play and picture-based task take less time than suggested in the specification. This is not the case.

Examiners stop marking at the end of the candidate's response after 4.5 and 6 minutes of the Foundation and Higher conversations respectively. Any material beyond that was not considered for assessment.

Centres are reminded that in the conversation task, there are two themes tested, the first chosen by the candidate and the second by Pearson according to the sequencing grid. Candidates may give a presentation of up to one minute on their chosen theme and each theme should be of roughly equal length. Examiners reported that in a large number of centres there was a far greater proportion of time spent on the first chosen theme and insufficient time spent on the Pearson-chosen theme. This may affect marks awarded as the conversation is marked globally and examiners take into consideration performances across both themes.

The presentation allows candidates to be confident with presenting some information and the follow-up discussion then allows them to explore this with the teacher-examiner in more detail before moving to a second theme. It is therefore crucial to ensure that both themes are well represented and accomplished. In more than a few centres a carefully learnt topic within a theme was used for the presentation, but when it came to delivering answers in the rest of the conversation, many of the answers were not always understandable due to the errors made.

Where this was successful, centres used the presentation as a starting point, and the remaining time to follow-up on ideas given by the candidate, to probe further about the subject, and allow the candidate to take part in a spontaneous exchange.

The task was often less successful where the presentation was followed by a sequence of well-rehearsed questions and answers. This did not allow candidates to access the higher mark bands as there is a need for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions

within both themes. In these cases, teacher-examiners did not take the opportunities offered by the candidate to explore in more detail what the candidate had said. In some cases, teacher-examiners had ignored what the candidate had said in the presentation and asked a question that had already been referred to and consequently led to confusion. Best practice is to respond to the answers of the candidates rather than having a pre-set list of questions which do not allow candidates the chance to take part in a truly spontaneous interaction, thus preventing them accessing the higher mark bands for Interaction and Spontaneity.

Where candidates were successful, teacher examiners asked questions appropriate to the level of the candidate being examined, challenging more able candidates by asking for further explanation of a points made and tailoring their questions to the responses of candidates thus promoting more spontaneous conversations. In order for candidates to reach the higher mark bands they must be also be given the opportunities to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements (questions they had not already planned to answer). Weaker candidates should have the opportunity to respond to more modest questions using language which they are able to manipulate rather than attempt questions that they do not understand or have the capacity to answer. Less able candidates were asked some very difficult questions, often in a range of tenses, where a simpler line of questioning would have instead enabled them to access higher marks for Communication and Content, particularly at the Foundation tier.

Although many candidates performed well here and were a pleasure to listen to, in a minority of cases candidates, who had prepared their presentation thoroughly and were able to perform well in this part, had difficulty with the more interactive part of the conversation and were unable to answer many of the follow-up questions.

There were occasions where teacher-examiners asked too many closed questions. Where a candidate was capable and clearly able to produce extended answers, this was extremely disappointing as the candidate, in a stressful situation, often opted for a yes/no response rather than produce responses that would allow them to reach their full potential. Similarly, on occasions candidates were not given enough thinking time before teacher-examiners rephrased questions, meaning that candidates were then judged to be reliant on teacher-examiner prompting.

It should be noted that within the mark schemes there is a need for candidates to be able to produce developed responses and extended sequences of speech to reach the higher mark bands for Communication and Content. Within these there should be evidence of using the language creatively to express thoughts, ideas and opinions and these appropriately justified with a range of vocabulary.

More able candidates at each tier need to have opportunities to express a range of ideas and points of view and to demonstrate a range of more complex structures and vocabulary to reach the higher mark bands for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy. These are in the Foundation and Higher tier grammar and structures and vocabulary sections in Appendices 2 and 3 of the specification.

There may only be a limited manipulation of variety of straightforward structures and minimal use of complex structures at Foundation tier. This may include some accurate structures, some successful references to past, present and future timeframes and also errors that sometimes hinder clarity of communication and prevent meaning being conveyed. There were a number of pleasing performances where candidates attempted to use more complex language and a range of tenses to offer information in responses to skilful questioning by the teacher-examiner. However, there were also opportunities missed where the pre-set list of questions did not allow the candidate to expand upon the initial question to show what they are capable of.

Some teacher-examiners asked repetitive questions such as: *Que fais-tu cette semaine ? Qu'est-ce que tu as fait la semaine dernière ? Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire la semaine prochaine ?* This limits the outcomes for candidates.

Administration

It is important that centres check their recordings before sending off the samples. There were a number of cases where the candidates could not be heard clearly. There is a need for minimal background noise so that the candidate being examined can be clearly heard. It is also important that the candidate favours the candidate rather than the examiner although both must be able to be heard.

Centres are reminded it is important to check for compatibility and details of accepted digital formats (.mp3 (at least 192 kbit/s), .wav, .wma), these are listed in the Administrative support guide.

There were a significant number of centres where CDs were incorrectly labelled and centres are kindly reminded to include with the CDs or USBs the track list, giving details of the centre number, candidate name and number, language and series. Centres should check the labelling of the CD, especially where the software just details Track 1, Track 2 etc. These should be changed to reflect the correct labelling as indicated in The Administrative support guide.

It also avoids confusion if details of the candidate name and number are announced clearly at the start of each speaking examination and the role-play number and picture-based discussion number are announced at the beginning of each task. The teacher-examiner should also announce the start of each theme in the conversation. Details of this is given in the Administrative support guide and centres are reminded that once the examination has started these should be announced in French, and that no English should be used during the examination to indicate the start and finish of the various components.

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