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# Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2018

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

edexcel 

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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.

### **HR1**

1. Many candidates were able to say they were late, but some omitted the reason only partially communicating what was required.
2. *Détails personnels* - A minority only gave a forename.
3. Well answered by most, the past tense gave problems for some who offered a future tense.
5. Forming a question about what to do was difficult for some who simply gave a statement of what they were going to do.

### **HR2**

1. Many candidates could say what they do as an after school activity but *souvent* was rarely well done.
3. *Pourquoi as-tu choisi cette activité?* was not successfully answered by a number of candidates.

### **HR3**

1. Candidates answered this successfully with a wide variety of jobs.
2. A wide range of reasons were given for wanting to work in France.

3. *Vous avez déjà fait...?* was sometimes confused with what you want to do in the future.
4. There was some confusion with candidates using *tu commences ...*

#### HR4

3. *Tu as assisté ...* was not widely known by candidates.
4. *Rencontre – où?* was not known by many candidates.

#### HR5

1. Although *render* was given, many candidates still used *retourner*.
2. Some candidates confused *trop grand* and *très grand*, although this did not affect communication
3. *A quel moment avez-vous remarqué le problème?* was only known by the most able candidates.

#### HR6

1. Most candidates were able to say what the problem was. *J'ai mal ...* was well known.
3. *A quel moment est-ce que le problème a commencé?* was not widely known.
5. *Revenir?* proved difficult for many candidates who were unsure of what they needed to ask.

#### HR7

2. A number of candidates had not read the stimulus and therefore were unable to give a reason why they want to go on the trip.
3. This proved the most difficult of all the unpredictable questions. *Où avez-vous vu l'annonce?* was not known by many candidates.
5. *Trajet- durée?* was not known by weaker candidates at this tier.

#### HR8

This was found to be the easiest of the role plays at this tier.

4. Some candidates said where they eat lunch rather than ask a question about where to eat lunch.
5. Some candidates said what lessons they had in the afternoon than ask a question about lessons in the afternoon.

#### HR9

1. Most candidates were able give a job and *volontaire* was an acceptable alternative.
2. *Qualités personnelles* was mistaken at times for *details personnels*.

#### HR10

2. *Séjour* and *combien de temps* were not widely known by weaker candidates at this tier.
4. Some candidates were unsure about how to frame a question with *pièce d'identité*.  
*On a besoin d'une pièce d'identité?* Would have been sufficient. *Il faut* was not widely used.

## 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 Higher tier, there was a wide range of marks awarded and this was because there was an uneven level of response across the task. Some candidates were able to give very good descriptions of the photograph and offered very good opinions with some justification but were less forthcoming in the response to points three and four when dealing with events in the past and the future. The most successful candidates were able to relate past events effectively and give reasons for why they took part and their opinions of the events were fully justified. In addition, they were able to give developed reasons for any future events with minimal prompting and there was little hesitancy within the responses. 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.

#### HP1

This proved to be accessible for most candidates and many were able to give a good description of the photo and clear opinions of spending time together as a family. Candidates were able to recall an event that they had celebrated but there were, at times, errors in using the past tense to say what they had done. There were successful responses to what they would like to next year as candidates were easily able to manipulate *tu voudrais* and use an infinitive to complete the sentence. Although candidates were able to say whether they like healthy meals or fast food, there were not always opinions given as to the reason why.

#### HP2

Most examiners found this card to be accessible for candidates and many were able to give opinions and justify them when talking about finding a job or not at 18 years old. Many were able to talk about a job they have had, and some more able candidates were able to explain why they have not had a job including some talking about *le chômage*. Candidates were able to talk about what they wanted to do in the future and the most able were able to justify why it was important to earn lots of money.

#### HP3

The majority of candidates were able to respond well to the bullet points successfully giving a variety of opinions about school meals, what their ideal teacher would be like and why. There were some occasions where candidates mistook *cours* for *repas* in the unpredictable question since it followed *les repas à la cantine* in the previous bullet point. Candidates must take care when preparing to make sure they look carefully at the bullet points to avoid obvious errors.

#### HP4

Candidates performed well on this task. The vocabulary was used well to discuss reasons why they wanted to live in the town or countryside and it was clear that they were comfortable with this topic. Candidates were able to talk about a visit to the country and what they had done there and where they would like to live in the future fully justifying their reasons.

#### HP5

Many candidates at this tier were able to talk confidently about the photo and reasons for preferring *vacances en famille ou avec des amis*. They were equally able to relate where they would like to go on holiday and eating preferences on holiday. Some, however, found it more difficult to talk about Christmas holidays and there were often errors in the timeframes used and some errors when describing what they ate due to a lack of knowledge of this particular vocabulary.

#### HP6

Some examiners reported that this card was less used than others due to the popularity of the theme for the chosen topic of conversation. When attempted there was a wide variety of performances. The description of the photo was sometimes limited to a description of the people in the photo rather than any reference to *nettoyer la plage* or *ramasser les bouteilles en plastique* or similar. Lack of understanding of individual pieces of vocabulary such as *déchets* and, more surprisingly, *eau* did not help some candidates in their responses.

#### HP7

This proved accessible for the majority of candidates although *ton opinion sur la violence au cinéma* proved difficult for less able candidates. They were able to agree or disagree but found justification of their opinion difficult, similarly, whereas candidates could indicate where they liked to watch films, the reasons were usually quite brief and not developed.

#### HP8

Candidates were able to access the vocabulary and respond well to the majority of the bullet points. Less able candidates found the unpredictable question, *Le sport est obligatoire au collège. Qu'en penses-tu?* more difficult to respond with, all too often, no developed justification of a simple opinion.

#### HP9

Examiners reported that candidates found this card more challenging. The notion of *travailler à l'intérieur* was not always clear to some candidates. The nature of the language within the topic such as *langue étrangère* also challenged some candidates. Some candidates did not understand the idea of *étrangère* and were unable to answer the question. *Travailler à l'étranger* caused some difficulties for less able candidates at this tier who confused it with travelling abroad.

#### HP10

More able candidates were able to complete this task more easily since they were able to offer opinions as why it was important to help others rather than just indicate that it is good to do so. There was the impression that it was as much a lack of ideas as much as the knowledge of French within this subject area that was a difficulty.

## 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, particularly at the Higher tier.

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 point 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.

