

A-level

FRENCH

Unit 2 Speaking
Report on the Examination

FRE2T/V
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General

This report begins with a few important reminders about aspects of the conduct of the test for the benefit of teacher-examiners and their students. It is essential that this advice is adhered to in future tests.

1. Examiners listening to and marking the tests need to hear what the students are saying; in some cases the teacher's questions are clearer and louder than the students' responses.
2. There are, in some cases, excessive extraneous noises from classrooms, corridors and outside areas which must be a significant distraction to both teachers and students involved in these tests; as far as possible, breaks in testing should be scheduled to correspond to breaks in the school day so that this noise is reduced, as far as possible.
3. Well-organised documentation and paper-work makes for smoother, slicker testing; delays between introducing a topic and then tracking down the questions the examiner is going to use is off-putting for the students and the time this takes is time that cannot be productively used for speaking.
4. Examiners should not waste time asking for information that is available on the STMS (*alors, quel est votre thème choisi / votre sujet préparé?*).
5. Students should be encouraged and, where possible, "trained" to manage better the time they use to respond to the printed questions. There were some extreme examples this year such as, at the low end, 35 seconds to answer all of the questions and, at the opposite end of the scale, 4 minutes. The "target" time is between 2 and 2 and a half minutes. In a small number of cases the time taken to respond to the printed questions allowed little or no time for the more general discussion and students were thus deprived of marks in the top three bands.
6. There should be a clear transition "announced" in **French** between Part 1 and the remainder of the test, and between the different topics in the course of the Part 2 Conversation. Delivering in English announcements such as "End of Part One" or "And now the conversation" is distracting for the student and tends to disrupt the flow of the test.
7. However experienced teacher-examiners are, it is advisable that they consult the *Instructions for the conduct of the test* prior to undertaking them. Errors and oversights can cost students marks.
8. Examiners must be consistent in the use of *tu* or *vous* and in all related elements (possessive adjectives; object pronouns etc.)

Part 1: Stimulus cards

The practice of allowing or even encouraging all students in the one school/college to choose the same nominated topic is of questionable value in that it means the one (or two) stimulus card(s) on that topic-area cannot be used. All of the cards seem to have been equally effective this year in allowing interesting exchanges to be sustained and for the most part students had plenty of ideas, views and opinions to express on all of the sub-topics covered. Most teacher-examiners kept to the sub-topic identified on the card for the more general discussion but at times this discussion came dangerously close to "drifting" into another topic-area - fashion focusing too narrowly on eating-

disorder related problems and thus becoming virtually a healthy-living discussion. In terms of individual cards provided for this year's tests, the following should be noted:

Card A

Several students got off to a rather shaky start where they were heavily reliant on the text, struggling to pronounce *fanatisme* and to read the date correctly. The second question provoked a wide variety of reactions overall, though some answers were rather brief and lacked the requisite development. Most students seemed to do quite a bit of sport and exercise according to the detailed answers given for Question 3 and generally only saw positives for health when responding to Question 4. Better students picked up on the possibility of sport becoming an obsession and having a detrimental effect on school work, family and social life and health. A minority of students missed the *à part* in Question 5 and talked largely about advantages for health, but most gave well-developed answers considering a variety of factors in the social aspect of sport, as well as its role in a balanced life style.

Card B

A number of students failed to grasp the full import of the text and seemed unsure about Benjamin's concern, suggesting *Il ne voudrait pas un meilleur ami*. Where this had been the case, answers to Question 2 were a little confused, but most students were able to give plenty of reasons to suggest that it was a perfectly normal situation. All students were on familiar ground with Question 3, though Question 4 saw many struggling to mention anything other than shyness. Some saw themselves in this category and gave some thoughtful, well-illustrated personal responses. There were many excellent answers to the final question, though less able students tended to repeat some of the points they had made for Question 3.

Card C

Summarising the gist of this card proved rather a challenge to many students, resulting in much repetition of the text or, conversely, overly brief answers such as *Il s'agit des dangers de l'informatique*. A number of students appeared to have younger brothers just like those mentioned in the text according to responses to Question 2. All students were able to illustrate the importance of the internet in their daily lives and the overwhelming conclusion was that they could not live without it. The word *comment* was occasionally not noticed on reading Question 4 so some answers started with *Oui*, but most students talked at length about the various risks of social networking, though the most impressive answers also included issues linked with cybercriminals, cyberbullying and even Government monitoring of personal information. A number of positive and negative points were generally considered for Question 5, though many students ran out of time and new ideas, so some answers were disappointingly short with insufficient development of fresh points.

Card D

This was the card that had the largest number of answers that virtually repeated the text in answering Question 1 and answers to the second question showed that some students had not quite grasped its full significance, though all students were able to provide a meaningful response to Question 3. The various ways in which education and the media could help were considered in Question 4 and all students had rehearsed ideas for Question 5, which presented no problems.

Card E

The gist of this card was very brief in some cases and Question 2 provoked a variety of reactions, from total agreement to feeling winter was meant for skiing holidays and family Christmases around the fire. Apart from some slight repetition of points for Questions 3 and 4, the rest of this card produced a wide range of quite well-developed ideas, with almost all students favouring holidays in summer, with the chance to relax and spend quality time with families.

Card F

Summarising the text proved difficult for a number of students with some rather long and not totally relevant points being put forward and answers to Question 2 did not always consider the full import of the opinion. All students were able to suggest a number of relevant points for Questions 3 and 4, though these sometimes lacked the requisite development. Question 5 was not handled well in a number of cases. Some answers started with *Oui* or failed to address the question at all and there was frequently some repetition of points already put forward for Question 3.

Part 2: Conversation

It was less noticeable this year that, for their nominated topic, students were being invited, or at least encouraged, to give a mini-presentation, meticulously prepared, with teacher-examiners pretending that this was all totally spontaneous. Unfortunately this does not work. Some examiners did not offer enough opportunities to “react spontaneously in developing ideas” and so disadvantaged their students by focusing too much on purely factual information. In general the variety and depth of questions was to be applauded. Considerable thought had gone into preparing non-standard questions, and listening skills were much in evidence, too, as many examiners followed up on responses and asked for clarification, exhibiting good practice and ensuring that a high level of debate was maintained throughout. It is such an approach that will see students rewarded with marks in the top band. By and large examiners kept up a good pace and asked succinct, appropriate, sometimes hypothetical questions and showed patience and respect in allowing their students time to develop their views and opinions; but a few confused them (especially the less able ones) by asking over-involved questions and/or offering alternatives.

Knowledge of Grammar (AO3)

The list of mistakes below is probably well familiar by now but it is useful to have specific pointers as to how students can try and improve the accuracy of their language.

- Conjugation of verbs – *on acheter ils avoir il me permettre ils choisent ils va ils est nous voudraient je ne pourriez pas elle est dort*
- Verb + infinitive – *j’essaie de même il pourrait devient je préfère de faire j’aime à sortir*
- Confusion between *avoir, être, faire* – *c’est chaud ils sont 18 ans ils ont heureux*
- Impersonal verbs – *tu faut se marier la carte s’agit de...*
- Tense usage – *quand + future si + imperfect, main verb conditional depuis + present*
- Subjunctive constructions (or not) – *ils voudraient moi à avoir jusqu’ils sont avant il a 13 ans pour qu’ils peuvent je pense que ce soit*
- Passive – *ils doivent être permettre les pubs devraient interdire*
- Negatives – *ils sont ne importants pas ils n’ont pas personne je n’ai pas rien à faire*
- Reflexive pronouns - *je veux se marier nous se disputons*
- Emphatic and direct object pronouns – *avec leur ils n’aiment pas eux il aide moi*
- Relative pronouns – *les vêtements qui j’adore les choses que j’ai besoin quoi ils disent*
- Possessives – *elle routine ma père lui amis ton famille ils...son*
- Adjectives and adverbs – *les autrement personnes le seulement problème la mal santé*
- Comparisons – *plus bon plus mieux* and confusion between *de* and *que*
- Prepositions - *à + le(s) de + le(s) en le weekend sur la télé*
- Participles – *par+ infin. used instead of present participle; confusion over past and present participles – passionnant/é stressant/stressé fatigant/fatigué*
- Expressions of quantity – *très/trop beaucoup beaucoup de l’argent c’est trop moins cher*
- Confusion with - *parce que/à cause de penser à/de jouer à/de temps/fois magasins/magazines humeur/humour raconter/rencontrer chose/choix*

- savoir/ connaître avant / devant très/trop/plus/beaucoup assez/aussi*
- Faux amis - *éventuellement effectif actuellement sensiblement valide*
 - Anglicisms – *je suis toujours avoir une dispute rester dans touche avoir un bon temps elles veulent changer quoi elles regardent comme*
 - Invented words – *moniter resticter distracter impresser attirer expecter promoter résoudre especialement*

All of that said, there were very few really poor performances, with most being reasonable and many where students demonstrated an impressive grasp of a wide range of vocabulary and structures, which they used to good effect to develop their ideas and opinions in a mature and spontaneous manner. Increased yet prudent and appropriate use of subjunctive constructions was particularly noticeable this year.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.