Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS Level French Language 8028 / 04
Example Candidate Responses – Moderator comments

General comments

Cambridge AS Level is closely aligned with Levels B1 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). At Level B2, learners are expected to:

- interact with a good degree of fluency and spontaneity and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments. They can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences."
- give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.
They can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples. They can self-correct with a high degree of effectiveness.

These skills and principles are clearly reflected in the marking principles and the mark descriptors of this syllabus.

Example candidate response – high

Conduct of the test

The teacher/examiner spoke naturally, used a bit of humour to ease the tension, and her questions were always clearly formulated. This created an atmosphere in which the candidate clearly felt at ease and could perform to her best ability. The teacher/examiner followed the prescribed format of the test, including the 5-minute silence for preparation of Conversation Task Card 6. The teacher/examiner asked the questions suggested in the *Instructions for Teachers/Examiners* for the respective Conversation Task Card, adding little personal touches which were always appropriate.

Presentation and follow-up discussion

The candidate presented an extremely well researched analysis of *L'immigration en Europe*, with supporting statistics and references to the political standpoints of specific countries. The candidate articulated her own take on this multi-layered problem with appropriate, varied vocabulary and complex, sophisticated constructions. The follow-up discussion was a lively, natural and spontaneous exchange of views and opinions.

Presentation, interaction/responsiveness

In line with the mark scheme for communication in the Presentation and follow-up discussion: Presentation, interaction/responsiveness (AO4:S1 and S2), Level 5:

- **Communicates detailed information with clearly stated ideas and opinions.**

  In addition to drawing on her in-depth research, the candidate can also speak from personal experience: *Ces nombres montrent la grave situation…*; *Pour les pays de transit, ça a beaucoup d'impact…*; *j'ai fait mon stage avec une OMG…*

- **Consistently justifies, develops and explains ideas and opinions.**

  The candidate has thought through the topic in detail and is familiar with its many aspects: *Cela complique extrêmement les négotiations et la coopération dans l'Union Européenne…*; *Mais par contre je comprends aussi qu'il y a des gens qui ont des préoccupations, par exemple, de sécurité,*

même s'ils sont peut-être mal affrontés…; Il faudrait tout d'abord trouver des voies légales pour que les gens arrivent…

- **Fully engages in the conversation. Candidate has good interaction with the examiner and responds fully and confidently to all question types.**

  The candidate answers immediately and fully, and is always in control of her subject: *Sur les immigrants? Elles ferment beaucoup de routes pour les immigrants, mais ils vont pas arrêter de venir, ils vont juste prendre des routes plus dangereuses. Ils vont risquer leur vie et dans les cas les plus tragiques vont mourir. Alors, ça va pas arrêter l'immigration, ça va juste rendre l'immigration plus dangereuse.*

Mark awarded = 10 out of 10

Language range

In line with the mark scheme for Language in the Presentation and follow-up discussion (AO4:S3), Level 5:

- **Uses a wide range of linking and cohesive devices to connect a series of well-developed points.**

  The candidate uses a very wide range of linking and cohesive devices: *par contre, même si, moi, par exemple, mais, alors, tout d'abord, parce que, peut-être, aussi, quand-même, en tout cas*.

- **Uses a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the tasks. Often uses less common vocabulary.**

  The candidate employs varied and appropriate vocabulary throughout: *L'Union Européenne s'endurcit d'avantage envers l'immigration; cette politique s'avère efficace; et ils sont considérés comme anti-migratoires et eurosceptiques; ça s'avère très compliqué; ça recule dans les valeurs humanitaires qu'il devrait y avoir en Europe; pour que chaque pays puisse accueillir un nombre de personnes basé sur leur population et peut-être aussi coopérer avec les pays d'origine des immigrants.*

- **Can vary formulation to avoid repetition.**

  There is some repetition, but this is more than compensated for with the wide range of usage including conditional and relative clauses, subjunctives, a variety of tenses and unusual vocabulary.

Mark awarded = 10 out of 10

Language accuracy

In line with the mark scheme for Language accuracy in the Presentation and follow-up discussion (AO4:S4), Level 5:

- **Consistently accurate use of simple grammar.**

  The candidate is almost always accurate in her use of simple grammar.

- **Shows a good degree of control of some complex grammar.**

  The candidate's use of sophisticated language is accurate most of the time and the occasional minor error ever impedes communication.

Mark awarded = 10 out of 10

Total mark awarded for Presentation and follow-up discussion = 30 out of 30

Conversation task card (Card 6)

In line with the mark scheme for Task completion and communication in the Conversation task card (AO4:S1 and S2), Level 5:

- **Completes all tasks fully and confidently.**

  The candidate is able to complete each task with confidence and is able to draw once again on her own experience. Her responses are often strikingly original.

- **Communicates relevant information with clear and supported ideas and opinions. Develops a justified argument.**

  Although the candidate admits that she is feeling her way with the topic, what she says is clear and is supported by ideas and opinions: *peut-être c'est pas nouveau, mais on entend plus en parler; c'est un procès compliqué pour les gens; une solution serait peut-être éduquer.*

- **Fully engages in the conversation. Candidate has good interaction with the examiner and responds fully and confidently to all questions/prompts.**

  The candidate's engagement and interaction are excellent throughout.

Mark awarded = 10 out of 10

Language range

In line with the mark scheme for Language range in the Conversation task card (AO4:S3), Level 5:

- **Uses a wide range of linking and cohesive devices to connect a series of well-developed points.**

  The wide range includes *par exemple, peut-être, alors, mais, à vrai dire, même, quand-même, parfois, c'est vrai que, surtout.*

- **Uses a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the tasks. Often uses less common vocabulary.**

  The candidate's performance matches both criteria. Less common vocabulary includes: *les personnes âgées sont plus discriminées dans la société; entre guillemets; il y a maintenant plus de mesures en voie; pour qu'ils ne puissent pas virer les gens comme ça.*

- **Can vary formulation to avoid repetition.**

  Repetition, though more obvious here than in the first part of the test (*et tout, ça*), does not detract from the high level of variety of the candidate's language usage.

Mark awarded = 10 out of 10

Language accuracy

In line with the mark scheme for Language accuracy in the Conversation task card (AO4:S4), Level 5:

- **Consistently accurate use of simple grammar.**

  There are occasional slips here e.g. *connaître* instead of *savoir*: *je connaissais pas beaucoup au thème de l'âgisme, il y avait un homme âgé peut-être* [de] *soixante ans, il avait pas l'attention qu'il avait besoin*, but for the most part simple grammar is consistently accurate.

- **Shows a good degree of control of some complex grammar.**

  The candidate impresses again by her variety of usage: *il y a quelques années, il y avait un homme; ça m'a fait réfléchir; mais c'est vrai que maintenant ils se sont fait entendre beaucoup plus; on voit beaucoup de gens agées qui se font virés du travail.*

Mark awarded = 10 out of 10

Total mark awarded Conversation task card = 30 out of 30

Pronunciation and intonation for the whole speaking test

In line with the mark scheme for Pronunciation and intonation (AO4:S5): Level 3:

- **Pronunciation is intelligible and intonation is appropriate.**

    The candidate sounds like a native speaker.

- **Individual sounds are articulated clearly.**
    Consistently clear.

Mark awarded = 5 out of 5

Total mark awarded for Speaking test = 65 out of 65

How the teacher/teacher/examiner performance could improve

This was examining at the highest level. The teacher/examiner observed the prescribed format of the test, including the recommended prompts in the *Instructions for teachers/examiners* booklet, but in a totally natural way, personalising without ever obscuring or over-elaborating. A model in how to examine this syllabus.

How the candidate performance could improve

This was conversational French at its best which could be improved only by a slightly tighter grasp of grammar.

Example candidate response – middle

Conduct of the test

The examiner was encouraging and supportive of the candidate throughout. She observed the prescribed format of the test, including the 5-minute preparation time, but departed from the recommended questions in the Conversation Task Card section. The candidate's topic, *La malbouffe*, did not overlap with the topic of Conversation Task Card 3.

Presentation and follow-up discussion

Presentation, interaction/responsiveness

In line with the mark scheme for communication in the Presentation and follow-up discussion: Presentation, interaction/responsiveness (AO4:S1 and S2), Level 4:

- **Communicates detailed information with ideas and opinions that are mostly clear and supported.**

  The Presentation shows clear evidence of research, although the candidate's delivery lacks flow, which occasionally compromises communication, as does the omission of a subject in some sentences e.g. *Selon l'organisation mondiale de la santé chez les adolescents [le nombre de cas] a triplé dans de nombreux pays*.

- **Justifies, develops and explains their answers.**
  The candidate fits this profile neatly, but lacks the consistency and breadth of Level 5: *pourquoi est-il [la malbouffe] si populaire alors ? Parce qu'elle est rapide, savoureuse et peu coûteuse; en plus, c'est souvent vu comme quelque chose de cool ou à la mode entre amis; elles* [les campagnes de sensibilisations] *peuvent aider, surtout si elles sont simples et visibles comme à la télé ou sur les réseaux sociaux*.

- **Engages in the conversation. Candidate has good interaction with the examiner and responds to most questions.**
  The candidate generally interacts well with the examiner, to the extent of asking her a question, but has difficulty continuing at one point.

Mark awarded = 8 out of 10

Language range

In line with the mark scheme for Language range in the Presentation and follow-up discussion (AO4:S3), Level 4:

- **Uses a range of linking and cohesive devices to connect a series of mostly well-developed points.**

  Points in the Presentation and the follow-up discussion are generally well connected: *c'est-à-dire, souvent, surtout, selon, mais, parce que, de plus, donc, pour conclure, comme*, but are sometimes limited in scope.

- **Uses a range of vocabulary appropriate to the tasks. Occasionally uses less common vocabulary.**

  Vocabulary is appropriate to the task: *les aliments riches en sucre, en sel et en grasses saturées; les chaînes de restauration rapide produisent tant d'emballages* but rarely goes beyond the 'common'.

- **Attempts to vary formulation but some repetition is present.**

  There is relatively little repetition, but this has to be weighed against the fact that the candidate's answers are limited and expressed in fairly simple language.

Mark awarded = 7 out of 10

Language accuracy

In line with the mark scheme for Language accuracy in the Presentation and follow-up discussion (AO4:S4), Level 4:

- **Accurate use of simple grammar.**

  There are minor errors in the follow-up, particularly of gender, agreement of the definite article and of tense, although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between errors of grammar and errors of pronunciation.

- **Uses some complex grammar, with occasional slips.**

  Complex grammar is limited to the Presentation and, though accurate, is limited in scope.

The candidate is borderline between Level 4 and Level 3 but has been given the benefit of doubt and placed in the lower bracket of Level 4.

Mark awarded = 7 out of 10

Total mark awarded for Presentation and follow-up discussion = 22 out of 30

Conversation task card (Card 3)

Task completion and communication

In line with the mark scheme for Task completion and communication in the Conversation task card (AO4:S1 and S2), Level 4:

- **Completes most tasks fully.**

  The candidate completes all the tasks the examiner invites her to explore.

- **Communicates relevant information. Develops an argument that is mostly clear and supported by their points of view**

  The candidate's opinions are uncomplicated and are backed up by simple statements.

- **Engages in the conversation. Candidate has good interaction with the examiner and responds to most questions/prompts.**
  The candidate fits the profile and generally interacts well with the examiner

Mark awarded = 8 out of 10

Language range

In line with the mark scheme for Language range in the Conversation task card (AO4:S3), Level 4:

- **Uses a range of linking and cohesive devices to connect a series of mostly well-developed points.**

  The candidate uses a range of linking and cohesive devices: *surtout, ce qui est, parce que, selon moi, comme, par exemple, aussi, car, souvent* which link a series of fairly well-developed points.

- **Uses a range of vocabulary appropriate to the tasks. Occasionally uses less common vocabulary.**
  Vocabulary is appropriate, but mainly conservative: *l'énergie solaire; les produits de saison, le recyclage*. *Covoiturage* and *écoresponsable* are the only two slightly less common words.
- **Attempts to vary formulation but some repetition is present.**

  As in the Presentation, the candidate's responses are simple statements, and she is not encouraged to develop/deepen her thoughts. Repetition is therefore minimal.

  On balance, fits the lower band of Level 4.

Mark awarded = 7 out of 10

Language accuracy

In line with the mark scheme for Language accuracy in the Conversation task card (AO4:S4), Level 3:

- **Accurate use of simple grammar.**

  There are several instances of *pouvoir* without a following infinitive: *je pourrai* [ ] *attention; je pourrai* [ ] *de douches courtes*.

- **Uses some complex grammar, with occasional slips.**

  Apart from *ce qui*, *en respectant* and *qui,* there is nothing complex. Although most future tenses are accurately formulated, *je préparai* is given in error for *je préparerai*; *je le faire* for *je le ferai.* Elsewhere: *qui économise le* for *et qui l'économise*.

Mark awarded = 7 out of 10

Total mark awarded for Conversation task card = 22 out of 30

Pronunciation and intonation for the whole speaking test

In line with the mark scheme for Pronunciation and intonation (AO4:S5): Level 2:

- **Pronunciation is intelligible and intonation is mostly appropriate.**

  The profile fits exactly.

- **Individual sounds are mostly articulated clearly, though with some slips.**

  Although it is sometimes hard to be sure, the candidate seems to mispronounce *les* as *le* and *des* as *de*. There are quite a few slips: *envir**onne**mentale, le gou**verne**ment, **sur**tout, **ce**pendant, **ou, une,** frais [payés], **dé**couvrir, empr**ein**te*.

  On balance it fits best in Level 2.

Mark awarded = 3 out of 5

Total mark awarded for Speaking test = 47 out of 65

How the teacher/teacher/examiner performance could improve

The teacher/examiner is strongly advised to follow the suggested questions in the Conversation Task Card section and not to deviate too widely from them. Her first question – *"Que pensez-vous de cette proposition?"* – used up valuable time. For the same reason it is best to avoid asking candidates to repeat material covered in the presentation, even if, as was the case after the examiner's first question, the candidate was able to answer using different vocabulary. As it was, the test was too long: 23 minutes, and the examiner only asked one of the two prompts in each of the four cues. The teacher/examiner could also have asked more in-depth questions. Please note that it is no longer a requirement for candidates to ask the examiner questions, although it is recognised that questions may arise naturally during the conversations.

How the candidate performance could improve

There are certain aspects which require attention: basic pronunciation, the need for greater grammatical accuracy; and the need for more complex constructions and vocabulary.

Example candidate response – low

Conduct of the test

The teacher/examiner followed the prescribed format of the test but only allowed three minutes preparation time for the Conversation Task Card instead of the recommended five minutes. All the other sections of the test were slightly too long. The teacher/examiner was business-like, but also empathetic towards the candidate. The candidate's topic *Blaise Pascal* did not overlap with Conversation Task Card 5.

Presentation and follow-up discussion

Presentation, interaction/responsiveness

In line with the mark scheme for communication in the Presentation and follow-up discussion: Presentation, interaction /responsiveness (AO4:S1 and S2), Level 3:

- **Communicates information that is sometimes detailed, provides ideas and opinions.**

  The presentation concentrates on Pascal's medical and industrial discoveries in some detail and contains some ideas and opinions.

- **Some attempt to justify their answers.**

  The candidate's language limitations restrict his ability to express anything but basic justifications.

- **Engages in the conversation, with some interaction with the examiner. Attempts a response to most questions.**

  Apart from the questions about scientific advances and about ethics, the candidate understands the teacher/examiner's questions first time and replies immediately. However, his answers are restricted by his limited language ability.

Mark awarded = 6 out of 10

Language range

In line with the mark scheme for Language range in the Presentation and follow-up discussion (AO4:S3), Level 3:

- **Uses some linking and cohesive devices to connect a sequence of points, not always fully developed.**

  The candidate does use a wide range of linking and cohesive devices**:** *d'abord, grâce à, aussi, ensuite de plus, enfin, pour conclure, en fait, par exemple, parce que, selon moi, mais, à mon avis, comme*.

- **Uses vocabulary appropriate to the tasks. There is an attempt to use less common vocabulary.**

  The candidate does use vocabulary appropriate to the task, but it is very limited in scope. Apart from *la séringue* and *la presse hydraulique* in the presentation, there is no attempt to use less common vocabulary.

- **There is some repetition and hesitation.**

  There is a lot of repetition and hesitation.

  On balance, it fits best in the lower band of Level 3.

Mark awarded = 5 out of 10

Language accuracy

In line with the mark scheme for Language accuracy in the Presentation and follow-up discussion (AO4:S4), Level 2:

- **Uses simple grammar with some errors.**

There are many basic errors: *dans l'époque quand il était; il avait pas très idées et son idée est seulement à lui; moi je crois serait le IA; dans en Japon; le philosophie et le science est vraiment compatibles*.

- **Attempts to use more complex grammar, with limited success.**

  No attempt at more complex grammar. When the candidate does try to express more complex ideas, his grammatical limitations restrict what he is trying to say.

- **Errors sometimes impede communication.**
  On many occasions this is the case: *dans le médecin il peut te dire "Ton maladie, c'est quoi."; je crois les inventions qui a une beaucoup plus bien avantage dans l'humain*.
  Best fit: upper band of Level 2.

Mark awarded = 4 out of 10

Total mark awarded for Presentation and follow-up discussion = 15 out of 30

Conversation task card (Card 5)

Task completion and communication

In line with the mark scheme for Task completion and communication in the Conversation task card (AO4:S1 and S2), Level 3:

- **Completes some tasks successfully.**

  The candidate attempts all the tasks, but with limited success. His meaning is not always clear, owing to his limited grammatical grasp. He has apparently mistaken *Comment?* for *Quand?* in Prompt 1b.

- **Communicates information that is sometimes relevant. Develops an argument with ideas and opinions, which are not always justified.**

  The candidate attempts to express more than he the ability for. Consequently, his justifications lack clarity.

- **Engages in the conversation with some interaction with the examiner. Responds to some questions/prompts.**

  The candidate certainly enters into the spirit of the topic and responds to all the prompts.

  On balance it was decided that this performance fits the upper band of Level 3 best.

Mark awarded = 6 out of 10

Language range

In line with the mark scheme for Language range in the Conversation task card (AO4:S3), Level 3:

- **Uses some linking and cohesive devices to connect a sequence of points, not always fully developed.**

  Linking and cohesive devices are fewer here than in the first section: *Pour moi, parce que, peut-être, par exemple, comme*.

- **Uses vocabulary appropriate to the tasks. There is an attempt to use less common vocabulary.**

  The range of vocabulary is far more limited in this section, even though it is appropriate. The only unusual vocabulary is *louper*. When the candidate runs out of words, he often ends with *Et oui*.

- **There is some repetition and hesitation.**

There is a fair amount of repetition: sometimes the candidate seems unable to get beyond a small group of words he is familiar with.

Mark awarded = 5 out of 10

Language accuracy

In line with the mark scheme for Language accuracy in the Conversation task card (AO4:S4), Level 2:

- **Uses simple grammar, with some errors.**

  The candidate is sometimes able to use simple grammar accurately, but there are gaps in his knowledge e.g. the consistent absence of *que* in phrases like *je crois moi je suis bien organisé dans ma vie* or *La technologie, non je crois pas ça va offrir de solutions*.

- **Attempts to use more complex grammar, with limited success.**

  There are some conditional and relative clauses, but nothing more complex.

- **Errors sometimes impede communication.**

  Errors do sometimes impede communication: *… on peut écrire une autre temps on va être où dans le journée de différents semaines; Par exemple dans ta vie professionnelle, tu vas être plus énervant* [sic]*. Oui, tu ne vas pas parler bien avec ton ami, tu ne vas parler bien avec ton famille. Ils vont croire que tu as été vraiment méchant parce que tu as pas de temps pour nous et après quand tu travailles pas, tu parles comme ça. Et oui.*

Mark awarded = 4 out of 10

Total mark awarded for Conversation task card = 15 out of 30

Pronunciation and intonation for the whole speaking test

In line with the mark scheme for Pronunciation and intonation (AO4:S5), Level 3:

- **Pronunciation is intelligible and intonation is appropriate.**

  Pronunciation is intelligible and intonation is mostly appropriate.

- **Individual sounds are articulated clearly.**

  There are some slips: *liquide, construction, industrie*.

  This is borderline Level 3/2, but on a fine balance it was deemed to fit best into Level 3.

Mark awarded = 4 out of 5

Total mark awarded for Speaking test = 34 out of 65

How the teacher/teacher/examiner performance could improve

Timing was an issue here, particularly the shorter preparation time. The use of a timer is strongly recommended. In the follow-up discussion on Blaise Pascal, it might have been better not to broaden the discussion quite so early.

How the candidate performance could improve

The candidate needs to have a more secure grasp of basic grammar and a wider knowledge of vocabulary so that he can express and develop his ideas and opinions with absolute clarity.

Common mistakes, misconceptions and guidance

- Candidates should choose a topic for their presentation that genuinely interests them, so that they can freely enter into a discussion about issues arising from the topic.

- Teachers should advise candidates with their topic choices so that they do not choose topics which are either predominantly factual or simply too big to cover within the given time frame.

- Teachers should encourage their candidates to prepare their presentation, but not to learn it off by heart as this often leads to very stilted intonation, garbled delivery due to the candidates speaking too fast, and mispronunciation of more complex words.

- Candidates should be encouraged to time their presentations, so that they are not too long even if they speak at a normal speed.

- Teacher/examiners should give candidates plenty of scope to present and develop their ideas and opinions through questioning that encourages them to do that.

- The timing of the tests is important. Teacher/examiners are advised to use a timer.

- Teacher/examiners are strongly advised to use the prescribed questions/prompts in the Conversation Task Card section, to help the candidate cover all the prescribed tasks.

- Candidates who learn their presentations off by heart often sound stilted and may speak so fast that communication is impaired. There is a fine dividing line between thorough preparation and rote memorisation.