Rosa's Clockwork Challenge: Telling the Time in French

1. Il est quatre heures. (2 marks)

Working: The hour hand is on 4 and the minute hand is on 12.

1 mark for 'Il est', 1 mark for 'quatre heures'.

2. It is half past ten. (1 mark)

Working: dix = ten, heures = o'clock, et demie = half past.

Accept 'It is half past ten' or 'It is 10:30'.

3. 2:15 (1 mark)

Working: deux = two, et quart = quarter past.

Accept 2:15 or 2:15 am/pm.

4. Il est six heures moins le quart. We mention the next hour because we are counting backwards from the upcoming hour. (3 marks)

Look for: The student identifies that 'moins' means 'minus' or 'less', so they are subtracting 15 minutes from the next hour.

Good: Il est six heures moins le quart. We say six because it is almost six.

Better: Il est six heures moins le quart. We use the next hour because we are saying it is a quarter to six.

Best: Il est six heures moins le quart. We mention the next hour because 'moins le quart' means 'minus the quarter', so we are counting 15 minutes back from the hour of six.

What moves an answer up: The answer moves up by explaining the mathematical logic of the subtraction rather than just describing the time.

5. Il est neuf heures et quart. (2 marks)

Working: neuf = nine, et quart = quarter past.

1 mark for 'Il est', 1 mark for 'neuf heures et quart'.

What a secure answer looks like

A secure answer demonstrates an understanding of the 12-hour structure and the specific French vocabulary for quarter-hour intervals. Pupils should be able to distinguish between 'et' (plus) and 'moins' (minus).

If your child is stuck

Remind the child that 'et' means 'and' (adding time on) and 'moins' means 'less' (taking time away from the next hour).

Common mistakes to watch for

Pupils often confuse 'et quart' (quarter past) with 'moins le quart' (quarter to), or forget to change the hour number when using 'moins le quart'.