

A-level **GERMAN**

Unit 3 Listening, Reading and Writing
Report on the Examination

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General comments

Students were entered appropriately for the examination and there were very strong and pleasing responses across the range of questions. The overwhelming majority completed the whole paper and there were very few blanks in the translations. This suggests that the paper was again accessible to all.

There were some infringements of rubric and it is worth repeating two important points. In Section 'A' in questions requiring a letter to be placed in a box, there should be only one letter clearly written so there is no doubt about the intended answer. Occasionally it is difficult to decipher the letter and this emphasises the need for clear handwriting. In Section B students should indicate accurately the number of the question they are answering, for example *12a*, *15b* etc.

Overall, there were few examples of poor handwriting but students should still be reminded of the importance of legibility in a written paper.

Section A**Question 1**

This proved to be a good "settler" and a successful introduction to the paper with a high number of students able to identify the significance of the numbers involved in the report about violence towards foreigners.

Question 2

The first part of the question caused some difficulty insofar as students associated *Fußballfelder* with a wish to maintain sports fields rather than with the size of forest area being lost daily. Vocabulary on this topic seemed to be widely known and presented no barrier to scoring high marks.

Question 3

Students were asked to identify and underline incorrect information and write the correct version underneath. A handful of students underlined a set of words and transcribed lengthy passages but this is not necessary in an exercise of this type. An example was provided to illustrate what needed to be done and students do need to read instructions carefully in order to complete the question well. Responses showed that the vocabulary in this report was well within the grasp of all students.

Question 4

Students were asked to identify seven correct statements about Frau Maarouf. This type of exercise requires careful listening and it is pleasing to report that many students scored well here.

Question 5

Students were asked to complete a gap-fill text by identifying the missing noun from a list of ten. The vocabulary was undoubtedly topic-specific but responses showed that placing *Verbraucher* and *Gewinnung* in the right order caused some difficulty.

Question 6

This question was well done by the majority of students. Perhaps because of the length of possible responses some found Question 6(f) more of a stumbling block than other parts of the question but, overall, both the vocabulary and sense of the text were well understood.

Question 7

There was some testing vocabulary in the three extracts but responses showed that students were familiar with the topic and considered all statements carefully. This question was very well done on the whole.

Question 8

Questions asking students to select the most appropriate answer from a list of nine requires concentration and effort as well as knowledge of the topic-specific vocabulary and concepts. Therefore, it is very pleasing to report that, on the whole, this question was successfully answered.

It is highly encouraging to see students attempting ALL questions and not leaving any gaps in the Listening and Reading section. There was evidence of careful listening and reading and well - considered selection of responses. Students were familiar with the entire range of topics and associated specialist vocabulary. This is a very positive and most welcome trend.

As every year, the translation exercises proved to be a discriminating element in the paper as a whole. However, the number of students who did not score any marks on either Question 9 or Question 10 was in low single figures and this is, again, a positive trend.

Question 9

There were the usual very good and excellent translations which not only revealed detailed knowledge of vocabulary and grammar but also displayed an ability to write in fluent, accurate English. It is worth pointing out that credit is given to translations which convey the meaning in acceptable English. For example, for *viermal öfter als üblich ist* students gained the mark for renderings such as ‘four times more (often) than the norm’ but NOT ‘four times more often than allowed’ because the latter does not convey the meaning of *üblich*.

It should be stressed that translations do need to be accurate and this means taking note of all verb tenses, pronouns and other important aspects of language. For example, *lehnt ... ab* is ‘rejects’ and not rejected in this context, and *dass diese Jugendlichen ein Leben ohne Verbrechen führen werden* is ‘that these youths will live a life without crime’. Similarly *es soll ihnen hier nicht schlecht gehen* should be given as ‘it shouldn’t be a bad time for them here’ rather than ‘it shouldn’t be bad/hard here.’

Some students omitted important words or phrases which are important to the passage as a whole. *Eine eigene Zelle* is ‘their own cell’ and not merely ‘a cell’ and *diese Jugendlichen* is ‘these youths’ and not merely ‘youths.’ Vocabulary was not as much of an issue as in the past but in a fairly high number of cases, *Häftling* and *tagsüber* were not known.

Whilst the translation is not a spelling test and some misspellings are tolerated (*prisonner*, *activitys*) renderings such as ‘whose ideas are controverser’ cannot legitimately be given credit as it does not exist in the English language and is too far removed from what is sought.

Question 10

Each sentence has four elements, each worth one mark. Students should be encouraged to write what they can as each element is discrete and can gain credit. However, the need for grammatical accuracy to score highly is clear, and by “accuracy” we include capitalisation. This year the main topic area was Pollution. The paper tested word order, the passive voice, cases, verbs requiring the dative case, prepositions with the genitive case, separable verbs.

- (a) Well done on the whole. Common errors included the use of *sollen* instead of *sollten* and the spelling of *recycle/n* was often rendered as *recyclen*. On a more positive note, a good number of students used *wiederverwerten* and, although slightly colloquial, *wegschmeißen* was accepted, of course.

- (b) The best answers gave the desired ‘time-manner-place word’ order, although *am Strand im Sommer* was tolerated. Many students offered *auf dem Strand* but this was not credited as it is not an expression used by native speakers.
- (c) This was a good example of a sentence where students could have avoided the dative phrase and, as many excellent responses did, render the translation as *Die Deutschen haben viel Erfolg darin/damit gehabt, viele Flüsse zu reinigen/sauberzumachen* or *Die Deutschen haben es geschafft ...* Other successful and acceptable translations included *die Reinigung vieler Flüsse*. With such praiseworthy efforts, students successfully translated the sentence without paraphrasing.
- (d) Although some students did not recognise the dative plural at the start, this sentence was the most successfully tackled in terms of completion, accuracy and marks awarded.
- (e) Vocabulary was widely known but the word order was not always successfully given. Unfortunately, only a few students knew that *teilnehmen* takes *an* as the preposition and there were even problems with *zehntausend*. The easiest way of dealing with this problem would have been to write the number in figures.

Section B

The standard of many essays this year was very high. Students were well prepared and were able to write with focus about many of the titles. Even in those answers where some poor German impeded the immediate comprehension of points made, there were some discernible elements worthy of credit. Despite these positive aspects it is worth pointing out what could be of help to students in future.

A small number of students still do not enter in the box provided, the number of the question they were attempting. They need to be reminded of this simple administrative procedure. Attention should also be drawn to the rubric prior to Questions 13 and 14.

If students choose to study a poet for Question 14 it should be noted that a substantial body of work needs to be considered. Limiting the answer to one or two poems does not adequately reflect the requirements of the specification. Similarly, if a painter or musician is chosen for Question 15, study should not be restricted to one piece of work. The specification clearly states the focus should be a painter and not a painting, a musician and not a piece of music.

Too often some students try to over-impress examiners and use adventurous language which does not always convey points successfully. By contrast there were examples of English-style phrases, such as *und ich verstehe was er spricht über, es ist klar was er denkt von es*. Similarly, too many students used *bekommen* instead of *werden*.

There was a noticeable tendency in some answers to try to reproduce pre-learned essays based on previous questions. Answers must address the set question to gain access to the higher bands for Content and students need to be aware that the content of the essay will impact on marks for vocabulary, complexity of language and accuracy. Without doubt the very best answers attracting the highest marks are those which consider the set task and respond by making lots of points concisely and coherently, providing support from the work studied and offering personal opinion. Introductions set out the strategy for answering the question and conclusions draws together the preceding material to end with a definite answer to the precise question set, rather than merely repeat verbatim what has gone before. Essays do not need to be excessively long; this often leads to repetition and poor structure. Sound advice is given in the rubric before the questions and further guidance can be found on the AQA website in the Cultural Topics FAQ section of the Teacher Resource Bank.

Question 11

As stated in previous reports, teachers and students need to consider what constitutes *eine Region im deutschsprachigen Raum*. Small home towns are not regions and those choices inevitably restrict the scope for a full and detailed response. Advice and guidance can be found on the AQA website in the Cultural Topics FAQ section of the Teacher Resource Bank.

Question (a) encouraged some rather generalised answers which provided little more than a list of things to see and do in the region. These were largely descriptive and lacked evaluation, giving the impression that a region had not really been studied in any depth or detail. Essays which took a broader view of *für jeden* scored high marks. These answers were characterised by reference to tourists, locals, students, younger and older, business people, those interested in culture, history and architecture and provided concrete examples from the region as a form of evidence with a level of personal opinion/reaction expressed throughout.

A relatively small number of students chose Question (b) but these were generally very thoroughly done with precise descriptions of economic problems caused by the closure of industries traditional to the area, immigration, skills shortages and globalisation. This was followed by details of what government and businesses small and large have done to address them and an insight as to what the future might hold. There were some very impressive answers here.

Question 12

Some students still do not explicitly state which period they have studied for the focus of their answer. Others are rather vague – *die Nazizeit* or *der Mauerfall*, many of which this year went on to discuss the period 1953 -89. There were also many who still chose very wide periods, such as 1945-89, and these answers often lacked detail and good levels of analysis. The most impressive answers in Question (a) were those concentrating on one or two personalities, giving clear, detailed factual information about the individuals' deeds followed by a personal commentary about the impact of their actions.

The second Question (b) on *Gewinner und Verlierer* elicited some excellent responses and students took the opportunity to give sound reasons for their opinions. Many showed very thorough factual knowledge of the period and clear understanding of the task by their convincing support for their arguments.

Question 13

Both questions allowed students to explore either characters or themes in depth and answers here were often outstanding. Question (a) was the less popular choice but there were some very convincing essays on, for example Hanna and Michael in *Der Vorleser* and Bärlach in *Der Richter und sein Henker*. Students not only showed deep knowledge of the characters but explained why it was or was not important to find them *sympathisch* in terms of the plot and the author's intentions. Many exploited Question (b) to the full by considering two or three major themes before coming to a conclusion about which one they considered to be central. Examples in support of their arguments were well chosen and several alluded to the importance and relevance of the themes to the world today.

It is very pleasing to report that examiners found very few examples of simple narrative in this year's responses. Students displayed thorough knowledge of the works and impressive levels of analysis and comment in both Questions (a) and (b).

Question 14

There were very few answers on poetry and it is, therefore, not possible to produce a meaningful report on that aspect of this question. However, for the questions on dramatists, Questions (a) and

(b) were equally popular choices. The most frequently selected works were *Der Besuch der Alten Dame*, *Andorra*, *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, *Biedermann und die Brandstifter* and *Die Physiker*. In Question (a) students had free rein as they could decide for themselves what the dramatist's/poet's intentions were in producing the work. There were well supported views about entertaining the audience, highlighting social and/or global problems and protesting about social injustice. Question (b) allowed students to offer depth and breadth of evaluation in the form of personal comment about whether the work was comic or tragic. There were a number of successful approaches. Some found their chosen dramatist's work showed elements of both, analysing the use of humour to highlight a tragic *situation*. Others chose to analyse the *characters* and whichever approach they took there was some very impressive support for arguments made. In a few responses there was the tendency to narrate and merely describe the plot; these answers could not justifiably access the higher bands for content.

Question 15

Students chose overwhelmingly to study a film director. It is true that there were a few answers on Hundertwasser, but only a handful of responses on a musician or an artist. As in recent years the most popular choices by far were von Donnersmarck (*Das Leben der Anderen*), Gansel (*Die Welle*) and Becker (*Goodbye Lenin*). Others such as Weingartner (*Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*) were offered very occasionally.

Both questions were generally well done, although some answers on Question (a) were prone to excessive narrative treatment. The better responses were illustrated by relevant examples, supported by personal evaluation or an assessment of the work's relevance to the student personally, or to society today. Question (b) invited a personal approach and gave students the opportunity to fully express their own views. Reference was made to aspects such as humour, music, film techniques, themes, historical accuracy and characters. Some students found nothing to criticise at all in the work and this was a perfectly acceptable approach provided there was an explanation as to why this view was taken. In this question the best answers displayed sound knowledge of the work and a depth of analysis.

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