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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

GERMAN

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

<p>Paper 8671/04</p>

<p>Texts</p>

General comments

The weaknesses in candidates' essays were the ones that Examiners report on every year:

Focus on the terms of the question

Candidates fail to engage with the terms of the question set and to focus on the issues raised by the question. Thus, in many cases a summary of the story was given, but not an answer to the questions set in the Paper. Candidates should be reminded that essay titles are worded with the greatest care, and the first task when tackling an essay is to decide what is the significance of the words used.

Structuring the essay

An essay should be seen, first and foremost, as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates start their essay by agreeing with the title, that is to say they begin with their conclusion. Other candidates just do not conclude in any noticeable way, their essay just stops.

Storytelling

It must be clear from the published criteria for marking the essay that simple retelling of the story gains low marks. Obviously, candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the story, but this must be tied in to the title of the essay, and evidence from the book must be *relevant* to the title. A candidate gains few marks if their knowledge of the text is not examined critically in the light of the question asked.

Length

Some candidates' answers were too short. In many cases what was written indicated that higher marks could have been achieved, if the candidate had carried on with their argument. A small number of candidates wrote two essays rather than three.

Language

Many candidates lacked the ability to produce language suited to express an appropriate argument. Often the essays were difficult to follow because of weaknesses in lexis and grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*

A small number of candidate chose this text and answered **(a)**. They showed good knowledge of Iphigenie's story and conflict, expressed their arguments well and made good use of the passage.

Question 2

Frisch, *Biedermann*

- (a) Candidates know the play well and sustained good arguments about Gottlieb Biedermann's behaviour in the extract as well as in the rest of the story.
- (b) This question involved a discussion of the stupidity of some people which may lead to their ruin. Most candidates argued well how Frisch criticised some people's attitudes through the character of Gottlieb Biedermann.

Question 3

Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*

- (a) Most of the candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the points raised in the questions well. However few went beyond simply quoting from the text and story telling. All candidates had understood the significance of the stranger in the extract, but not all of them continued to explain clearly enough where in the story this figure appears again and in which people.
- (b) Fewer candidates chose this question which involved discussing Aschenbach's moral decline throughout the story. This question was tackled well.

Question 4

Storm, *Der Schimmelreiter*

- (a) The candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the situation and Storm's narrative technique well.
- (b) Some good points were made, and on the whole it appeared that most candidates were able to argue and express their opinion well, with good reference to the book. A few candidates simply retold the story, without answering the question.

Section 2

Question 5

Andersch, *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund*

- (a)(b) A small number of candidates chose this text. The questions were answered well and good knowledge of the text was apparent. Even the more complex question (a) triggered interesting responses which were well presented.

Question 6

Brecht, *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*

- (a) Good answers gave examples of Azdak's decisions. Other candidates retold the whole story or only quoted one example of Azdak's way of applying the law, in the dispute about the child.
- (b) This question gave opportunities to deal with a complex quote in the title.

Question 7

Böll, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*

- (a) There was some difficulty in interpreting the requirements of this question.
- (b) A very popular question. Answers showed a good understanding of the text, although, in some essays the story of Katharina Blum was simply retold. Better answers discussed why Katharina's story could happen to any of us at any time. A few candidates did not refer to the story in detail, but wrote down their opinion about the press and journalists. In a couple of instances, the essay was more about Princess Diana than about Katharina Blum.

Question 8

Horváth, *Jugend ohne Gott*

- (a) Few candidates chose this question, but the answers showed a good understanding of the text and some good points were made. Interesting passages were quoted and used in well sustained arguments.
- (b) This question presented the opportunity to discuss the whole society under the Nazi regime in detail. This task, on the whole, was carried out quite well, with some good use of quotes and references to history. Good knowledge of life under the Nazi regime was displayed.