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# FOREWORD

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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

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## GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 8671/04

Texts

### General comments

#### 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 the candidates used passages and questions as a springboard for storytelling, but did not actually attempt answers to the questions set in the paper. Candidates should be reminded that essay titles are worded with care, and the first task when tackling an essay is to get to grips with the meaning of the title.

#### 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, others do not conclude in any noticeable way, their essay just stops.

#### Storytelling

It is clear from the published marking criteria 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. Some candidates wrote only two essays rather than three or produced three half finished answers.

#### 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, punctuation and grammar.

#### Instructions to candidates

Candidates should be aware of the demands of the question paper before they enter the examination room. The instructions on the front of the question paper remind them of the requirements: three questions should be answered, one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and one other. Not all candidates were aware of these requirements and attempted three questions from **Section 1** and none from **Section 2**.

**Comments on specific questions****Section 1****Question 1**

Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*

A limited number of attempts were made at this text. Candidates showed that they were not thoroughly familiar with the plot. For instance, not knowing whether Orest is a man or a woman, or in the case of Iphigenie herself *Diese Person könnte ein Lehrer sein – oder ein Pfarrer...* Too much speculation without proof from the text was presented e.g. *Orests Vater war vielleicht eine primitive Person.*

**Question 2**

Frisch, *Biedermann*

- (a) The candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the questions quite well. Some candidates know the play well and sustained good arguments about the behaviour of the characters and humour in the extract as well as in the rest of the story. Biedermann and his character and patterns of behaviour were also discussed particularly well in some cases. Few candidates repeated the points made in (i) under (iii), without showing further insights. The weakest answers show problems with the language and are insubstantial with very little relevance.
- (b) Nobody chose this question.

**Question 3**

Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*

- (a) Few of the candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the points raised in the questions well. Only very few went beyond simply quoting from the text and story telling. Some candidates showed some understanding of the theme of *moralischer Verfall*, but in many cases the argument was difficult to follow because of problems with the language.
- (b) More candidates chose this questions which involved discussing Aschenbachs *Reiselust* in the light of a longing for death. This question was, on the whole, not tackled well by most. Candidates retold the story, without including their own opinion. Some candidates had problems expressing their ideas coherently, often it appeared that candidates had learnt an essay about *Todesboten* by heart and were unable to make their material relevant to the question set in this paper.

**Question 4**

Storm, *Der Schimmelreiter*

- (a) Many candidates chose this question, although few were able to discuss the situation well. On the whole, not many candidates referred to the extract whilst discussing points (i) - (iii).
- (i) This question was answered mostly to the point but with little reference to the extract. Some candidates tried to use the passage, but contradicted themselves by claiming first the relationship Hauke has with his wife is a good one and then proceeding to prove the opposite, with quotes from the passage.
- (ii) The second part-question was tackled successfully only by very few candidates who were able to use the passage within the context of the whole story. Some candidates had very little of relevance to say.
- (iii) This question was left unfinished in some cases or used for storytelling.
- (b) Many candidates attempted this question and on the whole the answers were satisfactory. In some instances, however, there was no discernible material and no relevance to the question at all. In some cases the answer started off satisfactorily, but was then left unfinished.

## Section 2

### Question 5

Andersch, *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund*

Nobody chose this text.

### Question 6

Brecht, *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*

- (a) Very few candidates chose this question. Answers were on the whole satisfactory.
- (b) This question attracted some good answers. Weaker candidates spent most of their time retelling the story, but others produced a good argument which showed a deeper knowledge of the text and Brecht's understanding of *Gerechtigkeit*.

### Question 7

Böll, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*

- (a) Quite a few candidates opted for (a). In general, candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the story. There were a couple of good answers which discussed the question in detail and used the text to back up their argument. Weaker candidates had inadequate language to write a coherent argument and their knowledge shown was only marginal.
- (b) More candidates attempted this question. Few answers showed a good understanding of the text and were able to find the proof asked for in the question. Weaker candidates tended to retell the story and many answers were abandoned and left unfinished.

### Question 8

Horváth, *Jugend ohne Gott*

- (a) Very 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 made good use of in well sustained arguments.
- (b) This question was also tackled by very few candidates and presented the opportunity to discuss the historic situation as well as the teacher's personal one. This task, on the whole, was carried out quite well.