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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 Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Grade thresholds taken for Syllabus 9717 (German) in the November 2005 examination.

	maximum mark available	minimum mark required for grade:		
		A	B	E
Component 1	100	78	68	48
Component 2	70	47	41	23
Component 3	40	32	28	17
Component 4	75	51	46	34

The thresholds (minimum marks) for Grades C and D are normally set by dividing the mark range between the B and the E thresholds into three. For example, if the difference between the B and the E threshold is 24 marks, the C threshold is set 8 marks below the B threshold and the D threshold is set another 8 marks down. If dividing the interval by three results in a fraction of a mark, then the threshold is normally rounded down.

Grade Thresholds are published for all GCE A/AS and IGCSE subjects where a corresponding mark scheme is available.

Boundaries for 8671 AS Literature and 8683 AS Language are lower than for the A Level syllabus.

Papers 8683/01 and 9717/01
Speaking

General comments

There was a wide range of entry, from candidates who had a German-speaking parent or relative to candidates for whom German was a completely foreign language acquired at school. There were some very lively, interesting **Topic Discussions** and **General Conversations**.

The majority of teachers at Centres which have entered candidates for Speaking in the past seem now to be aware of the various requirements and regulations for this component. Tests from these Centres were well examined and assessed.

However, there are two aspects which need to be considered by some Centres including new ones:

- The candidate must ask at least two questions in the **Topic Conversation** and in the **General Conversation**. The syllabus states: 'Candidates are required to seek information and the opinions of the teacher'. If the candidate fails to ask a question, no marks can be awarded under the heading 'Seeking information and opinions'. If only one question is asked, then the maximum mark is 3 out of 5. If no question is asked, then no mark can be awarded.
- All timings of the test should be adhered to. The **Sustained Speech** should last three minutes, the **Topic Conversation** seven to eight minutes and the **General Conversation** eight to nine minutes. At a few Centres, parts of the test lasted too long, and so the examination as a whole was allowed to run on much longer than the stipulated twenty minutes.

Individual Centre Reports will highlight any shortcomings.

There are no further comments on specific sections of the Speaking test.

Papers 8683/02 and 9717/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

The level of difficulty of the paper was similar to last year's and candidates performed in a similar way. Unfortunately, the written German of a fair number of candidates was poor. Centres will find in this report some aspects of performance which need attention.

Comments on specific questions

Erster Teil

Question 1

Part (a) was usually answered correctly. Candidates had mixed success with the other questions.

The word *durchkreuzt* was offered as an incorrect answer to various questions, especially (b) and (e).

Question 2

Many candidates had difficulty in rephrasing the sentences with correct grammatical constructions. Common errors were as follows:

- (a) Candidates should not change the tense of the verb in this exercise. There were some poor attempts to put the verb in the perfect tense or in the passive mode.
- (b) Candidates made the mistake of adding an adjectival 'e' to the adverb *international*. Some finished the sentence with *die internationale Verpflichtung* instead of the correct *international verpflichtet*.
- (c) Once more, there were some poor and inappropriate attempts to use the passive.
- (d) Candidates used incorrect word order: *hat Geldmangel* and/or *es will*.
- (e) Even some of those who could cope with the genitive superlative *der wichtigsten*, added the dative 'n' ending to *Entwicklungspartner*.

Question 3

There were two major reasons why candidates lost marks in this exercise: mentioning irrelevant points and being unable to express the answers with original wording instead of lifting them from the text. The rubric for **Questions 3 and 4** states: *ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*. Where the candidate merely copies the relevant part of the text, no mark is awarded. Candidates of average to less than average ability in the language need more practice in the art of finding synonyms to express concepts. Good candidates were able to make most points and to gain four or five marks for language in this exercise.

- (a) Some candidates failed to mention the idea of development or growth in their answer. A few others thought that Germany was helping *Brasiliens Entwicklungspartner* instead of Brazil.
- (b) Development was sometimes mentioned here, but it was irrelevant in this question.
- (c) Some did not state Germany's exact position, i.e. ninth.
- (d) The answer was relatively straightforward but quite a few candidates gave muddled responses.
- (e) Few candidates were able to express the ideas that terrorists claim that the world is unfair and that development aid can show that this claim is not valid.
- (f) The text was frequently copied in answer to both parts of this question. In part (ii) candidates often overlooked the statement about the lack of security in the world.

Zweiter Teil

Question 4

The general comments made with regard to **Question 3** above also apply to this question.

- (a) Many candidates omitted the crucial time phrases from their answers: *Kriege ruinieren in kurzer Zeit das, was man seit langem herstellt.*
- (b) A number of candidates failed to see that it was the symbolic nature of the German troops sent to the Congo that critics considered ridiculous. Some candidates did not mention where the troops were sent.
- (c) A fair number of candidates were able to make only slight alterations to the text and score three or four marks out of the four marks available for this question.
- (d) The text was frequently copied in answer to both parts of this question. Few candidates gained all three marks.
- (e)(i) Many candidates were able to make the following point: *Jedes Jahr fließt mehr Geld als Schuldzinsen aus den armen Ländern des Südens in den reichen Norden.* However they failed to add: *als Entwicklungsgeld aus dem Norden in den Süden.*
 - (ii) Most candidates were able to gain the mark here.

Question 5

A fair number of candidates appeared not to have devoted adequate time to this exercise, either failing to answer it or writing a very short answer.

The essential task is to summarise the two texts with original wording, according to the question set. Ten marks out of twenty are awarded for this aspect, as is stated on the question paper. Some candidates merely copied large extracts from the texts in an incoherent fashion without attempting to answer the question. However, candidates who had understood the texts well were able to gain many content marks, and, in some cases, all ten marks.

After the summary, the candidate is asked to give his or her own opinions on the issue for five marks. Indeed, some very able candidates express their own views whilst summarising the texts, in order to avoid repeating details. A few summarised the passages very well but gave little personal response to the texts, thereby gaining only one or two marks out of five.

It is important to organise the response like a mini-essay in order to fit everything in to the stipulated 140 words. The answer is cut off at around 150 words or at the end of the sentence after 140 words is reached, and no further marks can be awarded for the remainder. This year, only a few candidates wrote at great length and failed to mention enough points in their first 140 words.

Finally, five marks are awarded for language. For candidates who had properly planned their response to this question, language marks awarded here were broadly comparable to those awarded in **Questions 3** and **4**, as these candidates maintained their consistency. Others made more errors than they had in previous exercises. Indeed, there were a few candidates who wrote very inaccurate and sometimes incomprehensible German.

Papers 8683/03 and 9717/03

Essay

General comments

No candidate attempted **Question 1** on contemporary aspects of German speaking countries. All other questions were attempted and proved equally popular, with the exception of **Question 6** on the theme of cloning. The most popular was **Question 5** on *Umwelt*, closely followed by **Question 2** on *Menschliche Beziehungen*. There were a significant number of linguistically weak essays, particularly from some 8683 candidates. A good many candidates still have problems with word order, inflected endings and with more specialised vocabulary. There are some recurrent problems, for example the use of *man* in oblique cases and when subsequently repeated in a sentence. Thus, one finds, *das macht man viel Spaß* and *das hilft man*. Also, *man kann unabhängig sein, weil er kann...*

At the top end of the range were a number of fluent, correct and well written essays.

Previous reports have pointed out that titles set are intended to provoke discussion, and that this is not helped when candidates state their conclusions at the outset. The main criticism of many essays is that they fail to construct an argument that sets out the issues and arrives at a conclusion. There is a tendency to rely on generalised, or even random, statements which are not supported by evidence. However good the language of the essay, it is important to remember that a significant proportion of marks is given for relevance, coherent argument, structure and the ability to draw conclusions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There were no candidates for this question.

Question 2

Freundschaft ist wichtiger als Verwandtschaft. Was denken Sie?

This provided a stimulus for some interesting essays, drawing on personal background, where, in some cases, family was all-important and irreplaceable. Other candidates argued that there were bound to be inhibitions upon what could be said within the family, whereas with friends anything could be discussed. A frequently made point was that you could choose your friends, whereas you were stuck with the family you happened to be born into. Another good point was that in a changing world, with greater mobility, family was no longer the force it had once been and friends were more important.

Question 3

'Globaltourismus bringt sowohl Vorteile als Nachteile mit sich.' Ist das auch Ihre Meinung?

This was a question with some appeal for international candidates. Many candidates were able to give local examples of the negative effects of tourism upon the environment and upon local cultures. In economic terms, it was felt that there were clearly advantages, but it was pointed out that the money involved was often earned by international hotel chains rather than local workers. There were certainly both pros and cons providing the opportunity for good argument and discussion.

Question 4

Wer oder was ist für Sie am wichtigsten gewesen, während Ihrer Schulzeit?

Despite the importance of learning and qualifications which was generally recognised, it was interesting that the great majority of candidates tackling this question were convinced that the most important aspect of school was social. What mattered most were the friends you made. Some candidates extended this idea to friendships with teachers.

Question 5

Was ist für Sie das größte Problem, das gelöst werden muss, wenn man eine Umweltkatastrophe vermeiden will?

Attitudes to the environmental crisis varied. Technology was seen as a great problem, because of the waste created. But all agreed that the key problem was to change the way people think. As one candidate concluded: *Wir, als Menschen, leben in einer gemeinsamen Erde. Da viel Statistik and Testergebnisse beweist hatten, dass eine grosse Umweltkatastrophe zu erwarten sei, ist es Spitzenrangig, unsere Mentalität zu wechseln.*

Question 6

Sind Sie für oder gegen das Klonen von Menschen? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

There were a limited number of essays on this theme. One candidate seemed to think that human cloning had already been achieved, and that it was no bad thing. Others took the more usual line that man should not try to play at being God, and that cloning was a step too far.

Papers 8671/04 and 9717/04

Texts

General comments

In this paper candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Those who did well were able to show what they knew, choosing good examples to illustrate points made and structuring their argument well.

A number of the difficulties encountered by candidates were similar to those highlighted in previous reports: relevance to the question and an ability to organise their essays coherently were crucial.

Focus on the terms of the question

Many candidates failed to engage with the terms of the question set and to focus on the issues raised. Often candidates tended to use passages and questions as a springboard for storytelling, but did not actually attempt answers to the questions in the paper. The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide on the significance of the words used.

Structuring the essay

An essay should be seen 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 omitted the introduction completely or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion e.g. *Es scheint, dass diese Aussage richtig ist.* Other candidates did not come to any clear conclusion. In some cases this happened because the candidate had run out of time and the answer just finished, sometimes mid-sentence.

Clear paragraphing also helps to structure a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. In some cases candidates did use paragraphs, but the points they were making overlapped from one paragraph into the next. This made it more difficult for the reader to follow the argument. Some candidates wrote whole essays without any paragraphing at all.

Storytelling

It is 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 text, but this must be tied in to the title of the essay, and evidence cited from the book must be relevant. Relevant points made need to be backed up with detailed examples from the text.

Language

Many essays were difficult to follow because of weaknesses in lexis, punctuation and grammar e.g. *Auf andere seite er war sehr gut und hatte nichts aber ob Aschenbach nicht den schönen Tadzio in Venedig getroffen hat, wurde er, wenn es das Venedig krank ist je weggefahren worden.*

Examples of particular weaknesses:

- usage of capital letters on nouns
- confusion over the use of *wenn vs als; kennen vs wissen; werden vs bekommen; Mann vs man*
- subject-verb agreement: e.g. *Aschenbachs Augen sah nur Tadzio*
- adjectival endings: e.g. *Er ist moralische und psychologische krank*
- use of the passive: e.g. *Also, kein Humor benutzen ist*
- prepositions plus change of cases: e.g. *Und an ein tag die Münchner war mal tod am ein Strand*
- mixing languages: e.g. *Tätsächlich, Mann geben uns auch viele descriptions von Todesboten. Sie wohnen Strohhut und haben die Aspekte von eine Skull*
- comparatives and superlatives: e.g. *Hauke ist mehr tolerant als die Leute denken*
- word order in subordinate clauses e.g. *Ja weil die Geschichte ist sehr interessant und leicht.*

Punctuation seemed to be increasingly shaky. Just a few candidates did not know where to put a full stop, but almost all candidates were unaware of how to use a comma, especially for subordinate clauses.

Length

Many candidates' answers were too short. Very few candidates wrote the prescribed amount of words. In some cases what was written indicated that a better performance could have been achieved, if the candidate had carried on with their essay. Several candidates tackled just two questions instead of the three required. A few candidates wrote just a couple of sentences instead of 500 – 600 words in response to questions.

Instructions to candidates

Candidates should know before they enter the examination room what the demands of the question paper are. To remind themselves, candidates are advised to read the instructions on the front of the question paper carefully. 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. Copying the wording of the question at the top of their answer can help candidates to focus on the requirements of the chosen task and is recommended. More candidates followed this advice this year. Only very few candidates indicated that they intended to tackle **Question (a)** on a particular text, but then went on to write an answer that was better suited to **Question (b)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

BÖLL, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*

- (a) Fourteen candidates chose this question, which looked closely at the relationships between the two men, Blorna and Sträubleder, and at their respective relations with Katharina. Candidates were expected to quote from the passage, analyse language as well as content and to give their own opinion.
- (i) This question focused on use of language and candidates needed to refer to Böll's particular style and aspects of it. Candidates were expected to comment on the author's choice of words, grammar and punctuation. Very few candidates were successful in producing a good linguistic analysis of the extract, highlighting, for example, the length of the sentences, the use of parenthesis and subjunctive, indirect as well as direct speech, emotional language and repetition, and explaining what effect Böll was seeking and created.
- (ii) Candidates were expected to discuss the difference in attitude to Katharina shown by the two men. While Blorna wants to help Katharina and has his life destroyed for his pains, Sträubleder, who as the *Herrenbesuch* was partly to blame for the treatment that Katharina received from the police and the press, decides rather than to help her to save himself, and gets away with it.
- (iii) The third question invited candidates to express in how far they agreed or disagreed with the sentiment that the *Herrenbesuch* was partly to blame for Katharina's misery. There were very few well structured responses to this question.
- (b) There were relatively few candidates for this question, which invited candidates to look at any parts of the story which could be seen as amusing. There was scope here to refer to the author's use of hyperbole in dealing with the press and the police as well as to his use of black humour and sarcasm.

Question 2

VON DROSTE-HÜLSHOFF, *Die Judenbuche*

- (a) Very few candidates chose this question.
- (i) In this part of the question candidates were invited to write about why Friedrich had a bad conscience and thus to bring the extract into context.
- (ii) Here candidates were expected to interpret the conversation between Friedrich and his uncle in the context of the whole story. Successful essays used quotes from the extract to support points made about their relationship.
- (iii) This point of the story is a 'Wendepunkt', because Friedrich turns away from what is right and his downfall is now predetermined. At this point Friedrich stops listening to his conscience and changes as a person.
- (b) Few candidates chose this question which invited them to focus on religion within the story. A lot of religious symbolism and vocabulary could be referred to and interpreted or explained in the light of the time at which the story is set and the plot. On the whole, candidates who chose this question were successful in looking at the different characters and how religion influenced their lives.

Question 3

RICHTER, *Damals war es Friedrich*

- (a) There were just a few candidates for this question. Not all answers made good use of the extract provided.
- (i) Candidates were expected to use the extract to draw conclusions about the adult characters in the book. The adults described are from different families, all of them representing different social groups at the time, i.e. the mid 1920s.
- (ii) This question prompted candidates to describe and to analyse the political and economical situation in Germany at the time. Successful candidates also included references to other parts of the book, as well as using the extract to back up their points.
- (b) Very few candidates chose this task, but the answers of those that did showed a good understanding of the question set. Successful candidates referred to the fact that the narrator realised for the first time the fact that Friedrich's family was better off than his own. The chapter is an important *Wendepunkt* because, from the moment the boys start school, they leave the protection of their parents and are exposed to the politics of the time.

Question 4

LANGGÄSSER, *Saisonbeginn*

- (a) Nobody chose this question.
- (i) Successful answers were expected to explain why these two people are meeting in this way. Candidates were expected to fit the extract into whole story.
- (ii) Here candidates were expected to explain the social situation of the two protagonists, which was, of course, that they were both aristocrats: Baronin von S. and Graf von Chodowiecki. They are politically divided by the times, but they have a language in common, the language of the aristocracy, which is also often called the language of love, i.e. French.
- (iii) This final part of the question asked candidates to interpret the title of the story in the context of the plot. Both protagonists are re-born during the story: Graf von Chodowiecki is given back his self-esteem and his freedom. Baronin von S. is re-born, because the encounter with the Graf changes her character. She says of herself later that she used to be full of hatred, until she met him.
- (b) This question invited candidates to describe and analyse why it was so difficult to be a 'decent' German citizen during the Third Reich. Candidates were expected to refer to several stories in the collection.

Section 2

Question 5

MANN, *Der Tod in Venedig*

- (a) Many candidates chose to answer this question. Successful essays discussed a range of themes and explored whether one was more important than another. Possibly because the question was more open than others, many candidates tackled this question successfully.
- (b) This was a popular task with candidates. However, many did not focus on Tadzio's role in the story and how his bad teeth symbolise a certain decay within society and Aschenbach's own frame of mind, but instead listed '*Todesboten*' in general. Many essays did not even attempt to answer the question, but would have scored better under **Question (a)**.

Question 6

STORM, *Der Schimmelreiter*

- (a) Four candidates chose this question, which invited them to discuss whether the character of Hauke Haien and the spectre of the Schimmelreiter could be seen as one and the same. Successful answers proceeded to either prove or disprove this idea with detailed examples from the text to back up their ideas.
- (b) Thirteen candidates tackled this task, often quite successfully. Stronger answers looked at Hauke's life and pointed out where his behaviour could have been seen as intolerant. Most candidates disagreed with the sentiment of the question and used clear arguments to show that Hauke was really a very caring person who only wanted the best for everybody, but that he lacked what is nowadays called 'emotional intelligence' in his approach. They also pointed out that there was intolerance on both sides in this battle of enlightenment versus superstition.

Question 7

ENDE, *Das Gauklermärchen*

- (a) Nobody chose this question referring to the function of the Prologue in the play.
- (b) Very few candidates tackled this question though on the whole sound and relevant answers were given. Clear reasons were cited for candidates' choice of the most fascinating figure in the play and relevant quotes were provided to back up their argument.

Question 8

SCHLINK, *Der Vorleser*

- (a) Eight candidates opted for this question. Successful answers explained in detail why they thought that the book should be recommended. Some answers just retold the story, but others developed a coherent argument to explain their reasons.
- (b) Few candidates tackled this question, which invited them to explore the consequences Michael's illness had for his later life. Successful essays looked at the boy's struggle at school and his low self-esteem, as well as at the relationship with Hannah arising from his illness and its consequences.