

GERMAN

Paper 9717/01
Speaking

Key Messages

- Most of the following key messages had already been acted upon by the majority of Centres after appearing in previous years' reports, but they are repeated here for reference.
- Presentations (**Section 1**) should be firmly rooted within the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where German is spoken. Candidates who make no reference to such a country will have their marks for Content halved, or, if there is very little reference, reduced. Native speakers of German should not assume a listener realises that they are speaking about their homeland and should also give specific details and references. It is not acceptable to make a presentation about the country of domicile, unless this occurs as part of a comparison, where information about the German-speaking country should still predominate. General presentations on such topics as "Global Warming" are often unsuitable, as it is hard to fit them into the above-mentioned form. Fairly trivial or restrictive topics, such as "Kebabs in Germany" should also be avoided at this level.
- Both in the Topic Conversation (**Section 2**) and in the General Conversation (**Section 3**) candidates must engage in a dialogue with the Examiner and ask him or her some questions. It is not acceptable to include these questions in the Presentation, except perhaps one at the very end to introduce the Topic Conversation, nor is it acceptable to ask a large number of questions at the very end of **section 3**, having previously asked none at all. If no questions are asked within either of the sections, no marks may be awarded for Seeking Information in that section. To obtain a mark of 4 out of 5 in a section at least two questions must be asked. The maximum mark is three if there is only one question.
- Please adhere to the timings specified for this examination. Presentations should not be allowed to be too long. An Examiner should interrupt with a question after about four minutes, and three and a half minutes would be a more appropriate length. **Section 2** and **Section 3** conversations should be of approximately equal length, say around eight minutes. It is difficult to achieve a high mark for Providing Information or Responsiveness if one section is cut too short. There is no point in allowing the examination to last more than 20 minutes in total as no extra marks can be gained and a candidate might tire after this length of time.
- A quiet and perhaps relatively small room should be chosen to conduct the examination in. If machinery is operating, or if there is loud traffic or people talking in the background, or even an echo in a large space, candidates will not have optimum conditions. For preference record onto cd rather than tape, as sound quality is notably better, and please place the microphone or recording equipment where both Examiner and candidate are audible to a listener / Moderator.

General Comments

Most Centres had a relatively small entry, often just two or three candidates, but nearly all were correctly entered at this level. Recording quality was generally very good again this year, as the majority of Centres are now recording onto cd, and the labelling and general admin surrounding the recordings was also excellent. Most Centres included the correct paperwork, namely MS1, working mark-sheet and attendance register, which was a great help with Moderation. The standard of marking was generally very good, though sometimes a little optimistic with regard to the mark-scheme. Specific examples of marking criteria will be mentioned in the final section of this report. Some Centres with native speakers of German were again a little harsh on them with regard to their feel for the language, their accuracy and their ability to provide information. It should be remembered that the mark-scheme refers predominantly to non-native speakers, and that the majority of native speakers will, therefore, score nearly maximum marks on these criteria.

However, this will not necessarily be the case at all with regard to Content in their presentations, nor to Seeking Information and Opinions, or even Responsiveness, if they are not challenged. Particular vigilance should, therefore, be exercised when marking on these criteria.

Specific Comments on the sections of the examination

Some of the comments above will also be relevant to this part of the report but will not be repeated here.

Section 1 (Presentation)

- The manner of delivery of the presentation should be taken into account. Only award nine or ten marks for Content if the delivery is lively and confident rather than stilted and hesitant, in addition to including the ideas and opinions stated in the mark-scheme.
- For a mark of five for Pronunciation a candidate does not have to be a native speaker. "Hesitation", though mentioned in the mark-scheme, should not really figure highly when considering Pronunciation, but perhaps more so when considering delivery of the presentation or the Language mark.
- A well-prepared presentation by a correctly entered candidate should be able to access at least 4 marks for Language, as the criteria mention a "reasonable range" of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary, delivered "fairly fluently", and provided there is no ambiguity of meaning.
- There was a good range of interesting Presentation topics, of which the following are just a selection:

Sterbehilfe; das Jahr 1994; deutsche Politik und Geografie; Volkswagen; die Gentrifikation Berlins; Internetsucht; Gesundheit und Fitness; Chancengleichheit; Generationskonflikte and Tanzen.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- The important issues surrounding the marking criterion "Seeking Information", the marking of native-speakers and non-native speakers, and timing of this section are mentioned above.
- If a candidate has memorized his material entirely or predominantly, a mark from the "Satisfactory" box should be awarded as a maximum, as it cannot really be claimed that he or she is responding to "unexpected questions".
- Similarly a mark from this box should be awarded if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but not more complicated ones.

Section 3 (General Conversation)

- This section should be completely distinct from **Section 2**. The Examiner should make an announcement for the benefit of the recording, the candidate, and the Moderator: "Jetzt kommen wir zum dritten Teil der Prüfung", or similar, and there should be a complete change of topic.
- Personal details such as the candidate's future and his or her interests should feature briefly but should not necessarily form the main element of this discussion. It is better to move fairly swiftly on to more complex or wider issues to enable the candidate to access the higher marks for "Comprehension and Responsiveness" or "Providing Information and Opinions".
- Open questions by the Examiner are more effective in drawing the required kind of response from a candidate than closed ones. Brief questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* can be particularly useful in this regard. It should not be expected that the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the Examiner, perhaps a topic of current affairs, or even necessarily have an opinion about it. If this is the case, it would be better to switch quickly to a different topic.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/21
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- For **Questions 3 and 4** it is very important that candidates use their own words in their responses, as this paper is designed to test Writing as well as Reading comprehension. The guidance ***ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*** is highlighted in the instructions to **Questions 3 and 4**. Major lifting of textual material, including the mere re-arrangement of words in key phrases, cannot receive credit for comprehension. In particular, where imagery, idioms and key vocabulary are used to convey ideas in the texts, candidates are expected to show their understanding of these in their own words.
- The paragraph indicators given at the end of each sub-question, indicate where the answer material is to be sought, thus helping candidates to follow the progression of the text concerned. Candidates need therefore to demonstrate their understanding of the new question in context and how it relates to the new paragraph detail. This is all the more important where the same paragraph is indicated for successive questions.
- Some answers to **Question 5 (a)** were again too long, and candidates did not heed the word-limit stated. The response to parts **(a)** and **(b)** of this question should together not exceed 140 words. (See further guidance below). This is an exercise in summary skills, which demands some ability to select, interpret and relate main points. Time management for this paper should therefore take account of the need to organise and plan an answer to this final question.

General comments

Both texts this year on the theme of school lunches in Germany were clearly accessible to the considerable majority of candidates. Whilst the range of marks achieved was again wide, a good number of papers showed excellent comprehension and were of a high standard linguistically.

There was some evidence that weaker candidates did not always understand the questions, tending to focus on particular words within questions, e.g.: *Obst und Gemüse* **Question 4(e)** and then moving directly to the paragraph indicated. Even though the textual paragraphs were short, some answers were then long in the attempt to include every detail.

Candidates should be advised to write clearly and legibly, and ideally to leave a line between answers within **Questions 3 and 4**, as well some distinctive space between these Question sets. It is helpful if a candidate's answer sheets are properly fastened together.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 (Erster Teil)

Question 1 (Vocabulary substitution)

- (a) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (b) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (c) This was mostly answered correctly. Very occasionally *erst* was suggested.
- (d) This was mostly answered correctly.

- (e) This was mostly answered correctly.

Question 2 (*Grammatical manipulation*)

- (a) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (b) This was usually answered correctly. A change of tense was not awarded. This was not required, and suggested that *wird* had not been recognised as passive in the original sentence.
- (c) This was usually answered correctly. Correct non-passive answers were accepted, provided that the article *das* before *Essverhalten* was retained.
- (d) This was usually answered correctly.
- (e) This was usually answered correctly. There was occasional difficulty with the rendering of *schmeckt*.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to manipulate the language of the text effectively, and successfully produced 'own language' answers. Others were reluctant to move away from key language items and text sequencing. As stated above, the simple reproduction of a section of the text by way of an answer does not confirm comprehension and hence cannot receive credit.

- (a) Most candidates were able to earn at least two marks here. However, the text statements on *Gemüse* and *Pasta* were quite often reproduced in their entirety.
- (b) There was some tendency to carry forward the idea of *Probleme* from the previous question, and so to focus on *Qualitätsunterschiede*. Some candidates then lost sight of the remainder of paragraph three.
- (c) Most candidates were able to earn at least one of the two marks available here. Not all answers embraced the two different responses of the schoolchildren. Again there was, some over-reliance on the text, and the notion of *fit* on its own was incomplete by way of an answer.
- (d) Despite close reliance on the text, a good number of candidates earned two of the three marks available here. Some answers did not include the third factor of 'concentration'.
- (e) Most candidates earned the mark for observing meal preparation. Some candidates did not appear to appreciate the 'learning' purpose of the farm visits. Others relied rather too heavily and closely on the long text sequence *mehr Interesse an der Herkunft der Nahrung zu wecken*.
- (f) Very occasionally candidates did not appear to recognise the quite different slants of this and the previous **Question (e)**, as both referred to paragraph five. There was some reluctance to express *ein viel gesünderes Miteinander* in own words, but equally some excellent own version renderings that captured the essence of this idea often simply yet perfectly – e.g.: by means of *freundlicher / freundliche(re) Atmosphäre*.

Section 2 (*Zweiter Teil*)

Question 4

This question set, as should be expected, was a little more demanding. Some candidates coped equally well, and occasionally better, with it. Again there were some problems with over-reliance on the text.

- (a) There were four acceptable answer elements here and most candidates were able to identify at least three to earn the maximum 3 marks available.
- (b) Most candidates earned the full 3 marks here. Occasionally only *Johann Lafer* was mentioned without reference to the other specialists, and occasionally candidates omitted to state the aim of the project.

- (c) This 4 mark question was generally accessible, and a good number of candidates were able to earn at least 3 marks. *Schokoriegel* or *Süßigkeiten* on their own did not sufficiently represent the point that 'snacks' were easier and therefore preferable to the children.
- (d) Weaker candidates experienced difficulty here in relating the question to the material in the paragraph, and referred simply to the factual elements of autographs and photos. Some saw *Investition* simply in terms of money.
- (e) Most candidates were able to earn two of the three marks available here. Some candidates did not identify the significance of cost variation depending on the season. There was also some evident tendency to see the *EU-Schulobstprogramm* as the same thing as the research project with which *Lafer* was involved. However, the way that answers were individually phrased did not necessarily lead to the forfeit of this last mark.

Question 5

In their responses to this task candidates are required to summarise the main issues and arguments presented in the two texts in the form of continuous prose. A list of bullet points is not an appropriate format. It is clearly important to consider the question carefully for its direction. Both texts should be referred to, and candidates should expect to present an organised overview of the relevant elements, and how they relate to each other, extracting the main points from the detail. This year a summary, as presented in the texts, of Germany's handling of school lunch issues was required.

It should be made very clear to candidates in preparation for this Paper that the word limit of 140 encompasses both parts of the question, and that therefore the conciseness and effectiveness of their writing is likely to have a bearing on achievement. Some candidates wasted words initially by re-stating the outline of the task, without moving forward. Candidates who wrote at considerable length, without apparent regard for any word limit, invariably forfeited marks for the 'personal response' part of their answer, because they left this too late. The marking of this exercise must cease at the end of the sentence after 140 words, with an absolute limit set at 150 words, and teachers are advised to ensure that candidates are aware of this.

As a general point, candidates benefit considerably from advance practice in the skills of summary, which involve selection and analysis. It is recommended that candidates draft a plan before writing up their answer, which will help them to organise their delivery, and minimise the need for untidy crossings-out. It is good practice and helpful also to provide a word-count. This is checked, and is expected to be accurate.

There were a good number of points to be made again this year, and many candidates were able to earn some five or six of the ten marks available for this summary part of the question. Candidates should aim to strike a good balance of selected textual points, drawn from the different approaches of the two texts for their overall relevance to the question. Some answers explored too much of the detail, some were too generalised or superficial and made little reference to textual points.

Candidates' clearly preferred option is to address **Question 5** in two distinct parts, indicating **(a)** and **(b)** in their response. However, if they should choose to write a 'combination' essay, thus covering both parts of the question in the one sequence, it is essential that personal views and ideas be made completely clear as such, and distinguishable from points adduced from the texts. In part **(b)** answers this year there were some original and interesting references to organic foods, to meal size and proportions and to own experience. Other candidates restricted themselves to simple personal opinions of the textual content, and this often tended to limit their achievement here.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Question 5** are for the Quality of the Language, and for most candidates marks here were broadly comparable with those awarded for **Question sets 3 and 4**, as might reasonably be expected. Where responses fall significantly short of 140 words, the language mark must be restricted.

Persistent errors were seen in the non-distinction of *dass* and *das*, and also in gender and prepositional use. Overall, candidates experience the greatest difficulty with text language adaptation, which may then lead them to various sorts of error. At the same time, there were again a good many candidates who were able to write both fluently and impressively, and their responses frequently made excellent reading.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/22
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- For **Questions 3 and 4** it is very important that candidates use their own words in their responses, as this paper is designed to test Writing as well as Reading comprehension. The guidance ***ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*** is highlighted in the instructions to **Questions 3 and 4**. Major lifting of textual material, including the mere re-arrangement of words in key phrases, cannot receive credit for comprehension. In particular, where imagery, idioms and key vocabulary are used to convey ideas in the texts, candidates are expected to show their understanding of these in their own words.
- The paragraph indicators given at the end of each sub-question, indicate where the answer material is to be sought, thus helping candidates to follow the progression of the text concerned. Candidates need therefore to demonstrate their understanding of the new question in context and how it relates to the new paragraph detail. This is all the more important where the same paragraph is indicated for successive questions.
- Some answers to **Question 5 (a)** were again too long, and candidates did not heed the word-limit stated. The response to parts **(a)** and **(b)** of this question should together not exceed 140 words. (See further guidance below). This is an exercise in summary skills, which demands some ability to select, interpret and relate main points. Time management for this paper should therefore take account of the need to organise and plan an answer to this final question.

General comments

Both texts this year on the theme of school lunches in Germany were clearly accessible to the considerable majority of candidates. Whilst the range of marks achieved was again wide, a good number of papers showed excellent comprehension and were of a high standard linguistically.

There was some evidence that weaker candidates did not always understand the questions, tending to focus on particular words within questions, e.g.: *Obst und Gemüse* **Question 4(e)** and then moving directly to the paragraph indicated. Even though the textual paragraphs were short, some answers were then long in the attempt to include every detail.

Candidates should be advised to write clearly and legibly, and ideally to leave a line between answers within **Questions 3 and 4**, as well some distinctive space between these Question sets. It is helpful if a candidate's answer sheets are properly fastened together.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 (Erster Teil)

Question 1 (Vocabulary substitution)

- (a) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (b) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (c) This was mostly answered correctly. Very occasionally *erst* was suggested.
- (d) This was mostly answered correctly.

- (e) This was mostly answered correctly.

Question 2 (*Grammatical manipulation*)

- (a) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (b) This was usually answered correctly. A change of tense was not awarded. This was not required, and suggested that *wird* had not been recognised as passive in the original sentence.
- (c) This was usually answered correctly. Correct non-passive answers were accepted, provided that the article *das* before *Essverhalten* was retained.
- (d) This was usually answered correctly.
- (e) This was usually answered correctly. There was occasional difficulty with the rendering of *schmeckt*.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to manipulate the language of the text effectively, and successfully produced 'own language' answers. Others were reluctant to move away from key language items and text sequencing. As stated above, the simple reproduction of a section of the text by way of an answer does not confirm comprehension and hence cannot receive credit.

- (a) Most candidates were able to earn at least two marks here. However, the text statements on *Gemüse* and *Pasta* were quite often reproduced in their entirety.
- (b) There was some tendency to carry forward the idea of *Probleme* from the previous question, and so to focus on *Qualitätsunterschiede*. Some candidates then lost sight of the remainder of paragraph three.
- (c) Most candidates were able to earn at least one of the two marks available here. Not all answers embraced the two different responses of the schoolchildren. Again there was, some over-reliance on the text, and the notion of *fit* on its own was incomplete by way of an answer.
- (d) Despite close reliance on the text, a good number of candidates earned two of the three marks available here. Some answers did not include the third factor of 'concentration'.
- (e) Most candidates earned the mark for observing meal preparation. Some candidates did not appear to appreciate the 'learning' purpose of the farm visits. Others relied rather too heavily and closely on the long text sequence *mehr Interesse an der Herkunft der Nahrung zu wecken*.
- (f) Very occasionally candidates did not appear to recognise the quite different slants of this and the previous **Question (e)**, as both referred to paragraph five. There was some reluctance to express *ein viel gesünderes Miteinander* in own words, but equally some excellent own version renderings that captured the essence of this idea often simply yet perfectly – e.g.: by means of *freundlicher / freundliche(re) Atmosphäre*.

Section 2 (*Zweiter Teil*)

Question 4

This question set, as should be expected, was a little more demanding. Some candidates coped equally well, and occasionally better, with it. Again there were some problems with over-reliance on the text.

- (a) There were four acceptable answer elements here and most candidates were able to identify at least three to earn the maximum 3 marks available.
- (b) Most candidates earned the full 3 marks here. Occasionally only *Johann Lafer* was mentioned without reference to the other specialists, and occasionally candidates omitted to state the aim of the project.

- (c) This 4 mark question was generally accessible, and a good number of candidates were able to earn at least 3 marks. *Schokoriegel* or *Süßigkeiten* on their own did not sufficiently represent the point that 'snacks' were easier and therefore preferable to the children.
- (d) Weaker candidates experienced difficulty here in relating the question to the material in the paragraph, and referred simply to the factual elements of autographs and photos. Some saw *Investition* simply in terms of money.
- (e) Most candidates were able to earn two of the three marks available here. Some candidates did not identify the significance of cost variation depending on the season. There was also some evident tendency to see the *EU-Schulobstprogramm* as the same thing as the research project with which *Lafer* was involved. However, the way that answers were individually phrased did not necessarily lead to the forfeit of this last mark.

Question 5

In their responses to this task candidates are required to summarise the main issues and arguments presented in the two texts in the form of continuous prose. A list of bullet points is not an appropriate format. It is clearly important to consider the question carefully for its direction. Both texts should be referred to, and candidates should expect to present an organised overview of the relevant elements, and how they relate to each other, extracting the main points from the detail. This year a summary, as presented in the texts, of Germany's handling of school lunch issues was required.

It should be made very clear to candidates in preparation for this Paper that the word limit of 140 encompasses both parts of the question, and that therefore the conciseness and effectiveness of their writing is likely to have a bearing on achievement. Some candidates wasted words initially by re-stating the outline of the task, without moving forward. Candidates who wrote at considerable length, without apparent regard for any word limit, invariably forfeited marks for the 'personal response' part of their answer, because they left this too late. The marking of this exercise must cease at the end of the sentence after 140 words, with an absolute limit set at 150 words, and teachers are advised to ensure that candidates are aware of this.

As a general point, candidates benefit considerably from advance practice in the skills of summary, which involve selection and analysis. It is recommended that candidates draft a plan before writing up their answer, which will help them to organise their delivery, and minimise the need for untidy crossings-out. It is good practice and helpful also to provide a word-count. This is checked, and is expected to be accurate.

There were a good number of points to be made again this year, and many candidates were able to earn some five or six of the ten marks available for this summary part of the question. Candidates should aim to strike a good balance of selected textual points, drawn from the different approaches of the two texts for their overall relevance to the question. Some answers explored too much of the detail, some were too generalised or superficial and made little reference to textual points.

Candidates' clearly preferred option is to address **Question 5** in two distinct parts, indicating **(a)** and **(b)** in their response. However, if they should choose to write a 'combination' essay, thus covering both parts of the question in the one sequence, it is essential that personal views and ideas be made completely clear as such, and distinguishable from points adduced from the texts. In part **(b)** answers this year there were some original and interesting references to organic foods, to meal size and proportions and to own experience. Other candidates restricted themselves to simple personal opinions of the textual content, and this often tended to limit their achievement here.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Question 5** are for the Quality of the Language, and for most candidates marks here were broadly comparable with those awarded for **Question sets 3 and 4**, as might reasonably be expected. Where responses fall significantly short of 140 words, the language mark must be restricted.

Persistent errors were seen in the non-distinction of *dass* and *das*, and also in gender and prepositional use. Overall, candidates experience the greatest difficulty with text language adaptation, which may then lead them to various sorts of error. At the same time, there were again a good many candidates who were able to write both fluently and impressively, and their responses frequently made excellent reading.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/23
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- In answering **Questions 3 and 4** candidates should heed the rubric ***ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben***, which appears highlighted at the top of the respective pages.
- **Question 5 (a)** requires that candidates summarize the significant points relevant to the phrasing of question by specific reference to both texts. This should be done clearly and as concisely as possible, given the word limit requirements of “about 140 words” as stated in the Syllabus. This first part **(a)** should not include personal opinions or details of personal experience. The second part **(b)** of this question requires a personal response to the issue under discussion – this year, the future of commercial aviation - but should be considered in the wider context of overall relevance of the issue for society or the world as a whole.

General comments

As comprehension is being tested through the target language and in written form, it is necessary that answers show understanding of the question, and of the material selected for answering, in the candidate's own words. This is underlined by the provision of paragraph indicators at the end of each question, which show that the relevant material need not be sought elsewhere in the text.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 (Erster Teil)

Question 1 (Vocabulary substitution)

- (a) This was answered correctly.
- (b) This answer was incorrect.
- (c) This was answered correctly.
- (d) This answer was incorrect.
- (e) This answer was incorrect.

Question 2 (Grammatical manipulation)

- (a) This answer was incorrect. Subject/verb accord was incorrect.
- (b) This answer was incorrect. A passive construction was required.
- (c) This answer was incorrect. The separable verb *durchgehen* was not recognized.
- (d) This answer was incorrect. A *dass* clause was attempted, but incorrectly implemented.
- (e) This answer was incorrect. Subject/verb accord was incorrect.

Question 3

As stated above, the simple reproduction of a section of the text by way of an answer does not confirm comprehension and therefore cannot receive credit.

- (a) This was answered correctly. The candidate was able to adapt the question to the material of the text.
- (b) There was some extensive lifting from the text for the first answer element.
- (c) The candidate's answer omitted to mention the shortage of space.
- (d) The candidate's answer omitted to include the notions of comfort and privacy.
- (e) There was extensive lifting from the text here, without variation or attempts to explain.
- (f) The candidate's answer did not show comprehension either of the question or the text, and copying from the text was extensive.

Section 2 (Zweiter Teil)

Exercise 4

This exercise, as should be expected, was a little more difficult in the main.

- (a) The candidate's attempt to explain *ruinierte Urlaubspläne* was satisfactorily comprehensible.
- (b) Extensive copying from the text rendered the candidate's German sentence incorrect. However, one mark could be awarded in this particular instance.
- (c) The correct answer of climate change being the suggested cause of the atypical weather was negated by the candidate's *nicht*. The last part of paragraph two was unsatisfactorily – and incorrectly – copied.
- (d) The candidate's extended copying of *wenn ein Vulkan.....macht* could not be awarded and did not provide a satisfactory answer to the question.
- (e) There was extensive reliance on the text here, but sufficient material could be extracted for the award of 2 marks.
- (f) The candidate's answer did not show comprehension of *Beliebtheit* or of the question.

Question 5

Candidates are here required to summarise the issues and arguments presented in the two texts, as relative to the direction of the question given (*cf Key Messages*, above). Reference must be made to both texts. Essential relevance, as well as conciseness and the effectiveness of the writing, will have a bearing on achievement. Words should not be wasted by too long or too general an introduction, and it is strongly recommended that candidates allow themselves time to plan their response. As the task of assembling and linking selected points effectively is not a naturally easy one for candidates, it is clear that summary skills for this purpose need to be quite well practised in advance. Whilst each text may be dealt with separately in the answer to part (a), a useful approach can also be to compare and contrast ideas in the two texts, in order to link appropriate points. This can save words, and so aid conciseness.

Whilst the candidate observed the word limit requirements for parts (a) and (b) of this question, both answer parts were personalized and repetitive in content. In order to score higher marks, it was required to weigh up the considerations and ideas expressed in the texts for the future of air passenger transport.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Question 5** are for the quality of the language. The candidate's performance, consistent with own language offered in answers in **Questions 3 and 4**, showed that there were difficulties with subject/verb agreement, with word order, prepositional case and with range of vocabulary – eg: *in die Zukunft, man können die wetter kontrollieren*. Whilst there was some awareness of modal verbs – *muss* and *können*, sentence structure was simple, and not always comprehensible – eg: *Mann muss nur in dem Pläne sitzen und bleiben dann sie können auf alle Kontinente auswirkte*. Content relied here quite heavily on repetition of material eg: *Fliegen ist*. In order to score highly for Language, candidates need to demonstrate an ability to write consistently accurate and to use more complex structures.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/31
Essay

General Comments:

The essays were mainly distributed between the first four topics on both papers this series, with *Cultural Life* being the least popular topic. As always there was the complete range of responses: from thoughtful, well-structured essays to those where the candidate struggled both for ideas and the means to express them.

It was pleasing that most candidates wrote within the prescribed number of words (between 250 and 400), as a longer essay does not necessarily increase the number of marks either for Content or Language. Nearly all candidates are aware of the need to provide an introduction and a conclusion and use paragraphs well. It is important that candidates study the essay question carefully so that they are clear about what they are being asked to discuss. Those who had read one or two vocabulary items in the title and then made false assumptions about what was required were limited to low band marks. The same was true for those who wrote an essay on the topic area which failed to address the specific title. It would seem good practice for the candidates to copy out the question before starting on the essay and constantly refer back to this title to ensure that the points they are making are relevant. Some thinking time before starting to write is very beneficial, as an essay with considered arguments makes a better impression than one with a number of very superficial observations.

Some candidates have an excellent command of German and achieve marks for Language in the Very Good category. They have an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific and are ambitious in their use of structure. Some of these are semi-native speakers whose errors are generally of a phonetic nature. There are also candidates who have a wide ranging vocabulary but still have difficulties with rudimentary grammar and make basic errors. If possible, it is a good idea to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for careless language errors. Help offered in the titles, for example key words and their gender, is often overlooked.

Common errors:

- the use of *man* causes difficulties with possessives for many candidates. As a result many switch to 3rd person plural which creates confusion between singular and plural verb endings.
- confusion between *ob* and *wenn*
- word order after subordinating conjunctions
- using *sollen* instead of *sollten*
- the incorrect use of *bekommen* to mean 'become'
- a lack of article

Question 1

Wir leben immer länger. Sollten wir deshalb auch immer länger arbeiten? Was meinen Sie?

There were plenty of directions to explore in this title: from the effects on the individual to the consequences for the state. Most candidates who wrote on this topic managed to produce a good number of arguments for and against working beyond the current pensionable age and were quite evenly divided in their conclusions.

Question 2

Die traditionelle Zeitung aus Papier ist ein veraltetes Kommunikationsmittel, das bald verschwinden wird. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

Candidates had plenty of ideas at their disposal for this title. As young people, most had experience of, and preferred, online news but few seemed to think the demise of the traditional newspaper was imminent.

Question 3

„Es ist nur möglich die Natur zu retten, wenn man die Menschen von ihr fernhält.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

Most candidates who opted for this essay disagreed with the statement, although they were almost all in favour of intervening on behalf of the natural world. The points made tended to be rather general but a few essays made reference to aboriginal peoples who lived in harmony with their environment.

Question 4

„Alles, was man zum Lernen braucht, steht im Internet.“ Könnte der Computer den Lehrer im Klassenzimmer ersetzen? Was wären Ihrer Meinung nach die Vorteile und Nachteile davon?

The subject matter of this essay was within the personal experience of the many candidates who chose this title. They made many valid and sometimes insightful points about the nature of the learning process. It would seem that, if it is left to the candidates, teachers need not fear for their jobs.

Question 5

Die Mehrheit der berühmten Kunstwerke wurde von Männern geschaffen. Sind Frauen als Künstler Ihrer Meinung nach weniger begabt?

This topic is always a minority interest and this series was no exception. The essays tend to be at either end of the spectrum: those that are thoughtful and coherently argued or those that tend to be sketchy and where the candidate often disregards or misunderstands the title.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/32
Essay

General Comments:

The essays were mainly distributed between the first four topics on both papers this series, with *Cultural Life* being the least popular topic. As always there was the complete range of responses: from thoughtful, well-structured essays to those where the candidate struggled both for ideas and the means to express them.

It was pleasing that most candidates wrote within the prescribed number of words (between 250 and 400), as a longer essay does not necessarily increase the number of marks either for Content or Language. Nearly all candidates are aware of the need to provide an introduction and a conclusion and use paragraphs well. It is important that candidates study the essay question carefully so that they are clear about what they are being asked to discuss. Those who had read one or two vocabulary items in the title and then made false assumptions about what was required were limited to low band marks. The same was true for those who wrote an essay on the topic area which failed to address the specific title. It would seem good practice for the candidates to copy out the question before starting on the essay and constantly refer back to this title to ensure that the points they are making are relevant. Some thinking time before starting to write is very beneficial, as an essay with considered arguments makes a better impression than one with a number of very superficial observations.

Some candidates have an excellent command of German and achieve marks for Language in the Very Good category. They have an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific and are ambitious in their use of structure. Some of these are semi-native speakers whose errors are generally of a phonetic nature. There are also candidates who have a wide ranging vocabulary but still have difficulties with rudimentary grammar and make basic errors. If possible, it is a good idea to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for careless language errors. Help offered in the titles, for example key words and their gender, is often overlooked.

Common errors:

- the use of *man* causes difficulties with possessives for many candidates. As a result many switch to 3rd person plural which creates confusion between singular and plural verb endings.
- confusion between *ob* and *wenn*
- word order after subordinating conjunctions
- using *sollen* instead of *sollten*
- the incorrect use of *bekommen* to mean 'become'
- a lack of article

Question 1

Wir leben immer länger. Sollten wir deshalb auch immer länger arbeiten? Was meinen Sie?

There were plenty of directions to explore in this title: from the effects on the individual to the consequences for the state. Most candidates who wrote on this topic managed to produce a good number of arguments for and against working beyond the current pensionable age and were quite evenly divided in their conclusions.

Question 2

Die traditionelle Zeitung aus Papier ist ein veraltetes Kommunikationsmittel, das bald verschwinden wird. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

Candidates had plenty of ideas at their disposal for this title. As young people, most had experience of, and preferred, online news but few seemed to think the demise of the traditional newspaper was imminent.

Question 3

„Es ist nur möglich die Natur zu retten, wenn man die Menschen von ihr fernhält.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

Most candidates who opted for this essay disagreed with the statement, although they were almost all in favour of intervening on behalf of the natural world. The points made tended to be rather general but a few essays made reference to aboriginal peoples who lived in harmony with their environment.

Question 4

„Alles, was man zum Lernen braucht, steht im Internet.“ Könnte der Computer den Lehrer im Klassenzimmer ersetzen? Was wären Ihrer Meinung nach die Vorteile und Nachteile davon?

The subject matter of this essay was within the personal experience of the many candidates who chose this title. They made many valid and sometimes insightful points about the nature of the learning process. It would seem that, if it is left to the candidates, teachers need not fear for their jobs.

Question 5

Die Mehrheit der berühmten Kunstwerke wurde von Männern geschaffen. Sind Frauen als Künstler Ihrer Meinung nach weniger begabt?

This topic is always a minority interest and this series was no exception. The essays tend to be at either end of the spectrum: those that are thoughtful and coherently argued or those that tend to be sketchy and where the candidate often disregards or misunderstands the title.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/33

Essay

General Comments:

The essays were mainly distributed between the first four topics on both papers this series, with *Cultural Life* being the least popular topic. As always there was the complete range of responses: from thoughtful, well-structured essays to those where the candidate struggled both for ideas and the means to express them.

It was pleasing that most candidates wrote within the prescribed number of words (between 250 and 400), as a longer essay does not necessarily increase the number of marks either for Content or Language. Nearly all candidates are aware of the need to provide an introduction and a conclusion and use paragraphs well. It is important that candidates study the essay question carefully so that they are clear about what they are being asked to discuss. Those who had read one or two vocabulary items in the title and then made false assumptions about what was required were limited to low band marks. The same was true for those who wrote an essay on the topic area which failed to address the specific title. It would seem good practice for the candidates to copy out the question before starting on the essay and constantly refer back to this title to ensure that the points they are making are relevant. Some thinking time before starting to write is very beneficial, as an essay with considered arguments makes a better impression than one with a number of very superficial observations.

Some candidates have an excellent command of German and achieve marks for Language in the Very Good category. They have an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific and are ambitious in their use of structure. Some of these are semi-native speakers whose errors are generally of a phonetic nature. There are many candidates who have a wide ranging vocabulary but still have difficulties with rudimentary grammar and make basic errors. If possible, it is a good idea to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for careless language errors. Help offered in the titles, for example key words and their gender, is often overlooked.

Common errors:

- the use of *man* causes difficulties with possessives for many candidates. As a result many switch to 3rd person plural which creates confusion between singular and plural verb endings.
- confusion between *ob* and *wenn*, *wenn* and *als*
- word order after subordinating conjunctions
- using *sollen* instead of *sollten*
- the incorrect use of *bekommen* to mean 'become'
- a lack of article

Question 1

„Zu viel Freizeit verursacht nur Probleme.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

This question was the one most popular with candidates but it did not necessarily stimulate the best essays of the series. Many candidates just listed what they considered to be good and bad leisure activities and overlooked the role of *zu* in the title, which immediately shifts the focus to a negative interpretation. There were some who mentioned the psychological effects of too much free time, but few attributed it to unemployment and its consequences. An essay just giving an opinion on leisure activities would be more appropriate for a GCSE examination, so if a title looks entirely straightforward, the candidate should beware. It is always good practice to work out the possible implications of the title before starting to write.

Question 2

Sind Reality-Shows im Fernsehen eine Zeitverschwendung? Was meinen Sie?

There was a wide range of essays on this topic which revealed the global coverage of some shows in this genre. Some candidates had clear opinions and could provide detail in their essays but many would have benefited from giving a clear definition of what they understood by the term 'reality television' at the start of their essay. This would have stimulated more specific ideas, thus avoiding the temptation to make vague generalisations or merely write about the advantages and disadvantages of watching television.

Question 3

Wenn wirtschaftliche Interessen im Gegensatz zu einem Naturschutzprojekt stehen, auf welcher Seite würden Sie stehen? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

This title appeared to be chosen by candidates with ecological interests as no one seemed to be prepared to take the side of business. The boundary between *Naturschutz* and *Umwelt* inevitably becomes blurred but many candidates strayed into long paragraphs about the causes and consequences of climate change which were not entirely appropriate for this title. The conservation of forests was widely mentioned but in a very general way. More reference to specific conflicts would have been welcome: between tourist infrastructure and the environment, for example.

Question 4

„Ich schwänze regelmäßig die Schule. Der Unterricht interessiert mich nicht. Es ist mein Leben. Ob ich lerne oder nicht, das ist meine Sache.“ *Daniel, 14 Jahre.*

Was halten Sie von Daniels Standpunkt?

This was a popular title which stimulated some excellent essays. The best amongst them focused quite closely on Daniel and his problems but there were a number of responses which described the advantages of education with only a cursory reference to the title. Although there was some sympathy for Daniel's point of view, no candidates fully shared his opinion.

Question 5

Welche Künstler oder Kunstwerke von heute werden wir in hundert Jahren noch bewundern? Warum?

This topic is always a minority interest and this series was no exception. Candidates with specific knowledge of and enthusiasm for culture and the arts write excellent essays, others who choose the topic apparently on impulse do not have sufficient ideas to sustain an essay of 250 words.

GERMAN LITERATURE

Paper 9717/41

Texts

General Comments

In this section of the examination candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Candidates who did well were able to show good knowledge of the text, choosing good examples to illustrate points made and structuring their argument well. The majority of the candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to marshal their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

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

Layout and Labelling: Most of the candidates labelled their work conclusively, but it would have helped greatly if both, overall question and sub-questions, were clearly recognisable for all three chosen essays, so that no errors occur.

Following Instructions: A small minority of candidates only wrote two essays rather than the three pieces required for this paper. One can only assume that in their case the title page of the paper has been read incorrectly.

When candidates chose **section 1** essays and opt for **(a)**, both sub-questions have to be answered, not just **(i)** or **(ii)**.

It is not allowed to answer two questions on the same text, three different books have to be covered, one from each big section and one of free choice.

All three essays should have a length of about 500 words each to allow candidates to make a variety of points pertaining to the question of their choice. Some answers were significantly shorter and therefore candidates penalised themselves by not mentioning enough detail to access the higher marks.

Focus on the terms of the question: The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide what is expected of them. A generic, pre-learnt essay or an accumulation of knowledge listed in the answer does not constitute a good essay, however accurate the knowledge may be. It would be helpful to candidates to copy down the question and clearly label their own work to focus on their topic of choice and they can then refer back to the question in order to ask themselves whether each point they are making is relevant for the correct answer.

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 or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion. Other candidates did not come to any conclusion, partially because they seemed to have run out of time.

Clear paragraphing also helps to structure a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. Some candidates wrote whole essays without any paragraphing at all which made it more difficult to discern between individual ideas. Often this also led to unnecessary repetitions and as no new ideas were introduced, no extra credit could be earned. Good candidates made relevant points in paragraphs, supported those with relevant examples and evaluated or analysed what they had read well.

Language: The majority of candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write good essays that could be followed easily. The expressions and idioms used to convey ideas were often well thought through, but it was noticeable that even candidates with a very secure grasp of vocabulary and grammar made an array of spelling mistakes not expected at this level.

Good Practice for candidates:

- Chose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question
- Make sure you read the question carefully and know the focus of it
- Divide your time into three equal chunks and start working on the first essay
- Label each essay with the section and question number, do not forget sub-questions
- Think about paragraphs: one main idea and some supporting evidence per paragraph would be good
- Evidence does not have to be a precise quote, but should show that you have read the text in detail, not just a summary of the plot (or watched the film, if available).
- Make sure you have an introduction, main part and conclusion in your essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: *herunter*, not *runter*, *nichts* not *nix*, *etwas können* instead of *was drauf haben* etc. are examples for this.
- At the end, read through each essay and make sure spelling mistakes are eliminated as far as possible. Spell names of characters correctly and make sure they belong to the text you are referring to!

Examples of particular weaknesses:

- *ß* and *ss*, the former still required after long vowels and diphthong, the latter after short vowels
- *das* and *dass* got confused a lot
- meanings of words sometimes not clear: *verschiedenen* used as a verb instead of *unterscheiden*, *Abitur nicht erkannt* instead of *anerkannt*
- adjectival comparatives and superlatives incorrect: *leichterer* instead of *leichter*, *mehr schwierig* instead of *schwieriger*
- Wrong possessive pronouns: *wie sein Bruder* (her brother) should be *wie ihr Bruder*
- Register/style: the language is sometimes too informal. There is a definite issue to be addressed here, relating to candidates not being able to differentiate between spoken/colloquial and written/formal language. (*rum* instead of *herum*; *drauf haben* instead of *etwas können*, *nix* instead of *nicht*)
- Anglicisms: often candidates who had weaknesses in their vocabulary used English phrases and translated them into German on a one to one basis: *“In meiner Meinung”* instead of *“Meiner Meinung nach”*, *“Werden wir gezeigt”* instead of *“wird uns gezeigt”*
- Words misspelt: *Gränze*, *Ausländerin*, *rolle*

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Zweig – Schachnovelle

- (a) (i) Good answers contained a short description of the episode that led up to the event pictured here and mentioned the “Schachfieber” and Dr. B.’s divided personality. The majority of candidates summarised the whole captivity story instead of focussing on the outcome and then left themselves little time to answer the second half of the question.
- (ii) Most candidates thought that Dr. B. had won something by winning at least one chess game and some thought that overcoming his illness required only this one reminder by an outside person. The better candidates clearly realised that Dr. B. played an imaginary game and had fallen back into the patterns which had driven him mad in captivity and that on his own he was powerless to avoid this happening. Czentovic uses his weaknesses to further his own plans, a point made by most candidates. The very top candidates went beyond the book and equated Czentovic to the Nazis and saw Dr. B. as a victim of their brutality.

- (b) The best candidates who chose the second question did start off with a definition of a “Dilettant” and distinguished well between the chess playing and the rest of the lives both of the characters led. Czentovic’s basic upbringing and lack of profession was mentioned, as well as the cultural background of Dr. B. and his professionally correct behaviour even throughout the interrogations. Czentovic was seen as the more professional player as he had already achieved a high ranking in the world of chess, but the fact that Dr. B. can beat him was also established. Some candidates failed to see that Czentovic capitulated early in the first game in order to avoid a total loss of face, which made him sound better than he actually was. It was pleasing to see some very well differentiated answers of this question.

Question 2

König – *Ich fühl mich so fifty-fifty*

- (a) (i) The first part question asked the candidate to look at reactions of Sabine’s colleagues to her. Her reception in West Germany is somewhat frosty, most co-workers see her as a foreigner and think she uses the system to get easy money and they see the East Germans as a threat. It would have been necessary here to distinguish carefully between foreigners, immigrants and people from East Germany (nicht Aussiedler, sondern Übersiedler und schon gar nicht Asylanten) and asylum seekers, a distinction made by the best candidates only.
- (ii) The second part dealt with Sabine’s friend Maria, who as a foreigner in Germany joins forces with Sabine and is her first friend in West Germany. She helps Sabine first of all to cope with every-day life and then later on contributes to the realisation of her dreams (travelling to Greece). With Maria’s help Sabine learns to adapt to life in West Germany and evaluates her old experiences differently.
- (b) In the second question candidates were asked whether Mario and Sabine had a better life in East or West Germany and what their experiences were in the West. Mario flees to have choices about his career and his music and finds out that he has to work hard and start at the bottom of the ladder to get even a small flat and some money. Eventually he finds a band to join, but in the meantime, Sabine and his mum stay with him in a crowded flat and he is disillusioned. Sabine ends up working in an old people’s home. The old people themselves are friendly to her and like her. This together with her friendship to Maria lets Sabine balance her viewpoint when the employees are nasty to her and show their prejudices. Sabine enjoys the choices she can make every day (shopping, cinema, pop concerts), but she misses her old friends and her family. She feels torn between the East and the West, but would rather have that than the limited life-choices the East offered her, particularly as she can now study a subject of her choice and do the travelling she has always dreamed of.

Question 3

Kafka – *Die Verwandlung*

- (i) Most candidates accurately depicted the reactions of the family and the Prokurist, but the better candidates saw the dad’s reaction as an assertion of his dominant role, the mum’s reaction as a reflection of the times – females being helpless and powerless and constrained – and the Prokurist’s reaction as a sheer panic, which showed that Gregor’s work was literally gone.
- (ii) Gregor’s sister is not present when Gregor tries to come out of his room and he sees her as a potential rescuer. Most candidates referred to the sister as a person who could have rectified the immediate catastrophe, namely the job loss. She could have gone after the Prokurist and reassured him, so that Gregor could have gone back to work eventually. More extended answers highlighted the close connection between Gregor and his sister and the expectations Gregor has of her. The better candidates realised that his expectations would be disappointed and that the sister is the one who eventually gives up on him and convinces the family to abandon him.
- (b) The second question was answered well. Candidates clearly grasped that Gregor was still thinking like a human being, but had difficulties acting like one because of his transformation. The better candidates mentioned that he seemed to not even register the possibility of the status quo being permanent rather than transient at this stage in the narrative.

Section 2

Question 4

Och – *Das Salz der Erde und das dumme Schaf*

- (a) Jana and the granddad learn different things in their respective homes. Jana learns to look at the other girls and realises that as good as some might have it at first glance (lots of money and presents, siblings) each of them has their problems, too. She comes to realise that she misses her granddad (even when she finds out she is adopted) and the certainty of his love more than anything else and in the end her abduction is something she is pleased about. The granddad enjoys the physical comforts of the home (puts on weight, flirts with the nurses, brews alcohol), but stays his old self by introducing chaos and anarchy in his care home, too. Better candidates mentioned all the above points, but most concentrated on the granddad not helping Jana and leaving her whilst he is enjoying himself. In the end both of them need each other, which all of the candidates worked out well.
- (b) Clothes are important for Jana throughout the novel. She is so poor that her shoes are falling apart, her skirt is too small and her shirts are either her granddad's or too small, too. When Jana turns into a teenager who starts to develop, she gets embarrassed by her non-fitting bras and by having to give her underwear to her granddad to have it washed. In important situations, like her first (abandoned) date, she would like to be pretty and look like everyone else which would entail wearing normal clothes like all the other people in her class. Jirka who is dressed impeccably is somebody who likes her like she is and she begins to see that, so clothes become less important in the end. Better candidates mentioned that Jana often uses her clothes in an ironic way (shoe colour guessing in School) and learns to live with the lack of money, especially after she sees that the girl in care with the money is even unhappier than she is.

Question 5

Brecht – *Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan*

- (a) Better candidates started off by mentioning how the relatives multiplied and how small the accommodation is and how difficult it is for Shen Te to feed everybody. The laziness and the criminal offences of the relatives were mentioned, too. Some candidates saw the relatives as victims of the capitalist state, the majority however saw them as parasites who exploited Shen Te until the cousin dealt with them and put them into "his" factory. The relatives were people who were seen to take and take and who gave nothing back, forcing Shen Te back into poverty. Most candidates identified with Shen Te and her difficulties with the relatives rather than writing about the function the relatives had in the play overall.
- (b) Some candidates only wrote about the extra information the plays in front of the curtain provided: the split of Shen Te into Shui Ta, the cousin, the cheating of the Water Seller. The better candidates knew about Brecht's theory of alienating the audience in order to avoid identification with the individual characters and the fact that if you interrupted the play and gave extra information and addressed the audience directly the identification was unlikely to happen. It would have been pleasing to see a differentiated approach to the individual scenes in front of the curtain, Shen Te's *Zwischenspiele* and Wang's *Zwischenspiele*, but candidates gave the impression that time was running out and some essays were rather short on this topic.

Question 6

Wohman – *Treibjagd, Erzählungen*

- (a) All candidates mentioned the variety of topics that Gabrielle Wohmann writes about; relationships between couples, parents and children, neighbours and relatives. They mentioned that some relationships were doubtlessly taken from the life experiences of the author, but the better candidates avoided writing too much about their own reading experience but mentioned instead that all ages could identify with her short stories and that some themes might be relevant for different groups of people. Most essays would have benefitted from a closer link to the actual stories and not just generic statements.
- (b) No candidate chose this question.

GERMAN LITERATURE

Paper 9717/42

Texts

General Comments

In this section of the examination candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Candidates who did well were able to show good knowledge of the text, choosing good examples to illustrate points made and structuring their argument well. The majority of the candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to marshal their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

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

Layout and Labelling: Most of the candidates labelled their work conclusively, but it would have helped greatly if both, overall question and sub-questions, were clearly recognisable for all three chosen essays, so that no errors occur.

Following Instructions: A small minority of candidates only wrote two essays rather than the three pieces required for this paper. One can only assume that in their case the title page of the paper has been read incorrectly.

When candidates chose **section 1** essays and opt for **(a)**, both sub-questions have to be answered, not just **(i)** or **(ii)**.

It is not allowed to answer two questions on the same text, three different books have to be covered, one from each big section and one of free choice.

All three essays should have a length of about 500 words each to allow candidates to make a variety of points pertaining to the question of their choice. Some answers were significantly shorter and therefore candidates penalised themselves by not mentioning enough detail to access the higher marks.

Focus on the terms of the question: The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide what is expected of them. A generic, pre-learnt essay or an accumulation of knowledge listed in the answer does not constitute a good essay, however accurate the knowledge may be. It would be helpful to candidates to copy down the question and clearly label their own work to focus on their topic of choice and they can then refer back to the question in order to ask themselves whether each point they are making is relevant for the correct answer.

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 or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion. Other candidates did not come to any conclusion, partially because they seemed to have run out of time.

Clear paragraphing also helps to structure a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. Some candidates wrote whole essays without any paragraphing at all which made it more difficult to discern between individual ideas. Often this also led to unnecessary repetitions and as no new ideas were introduced, no extra credit could be earned. Good candidates made relevant points in paragraphs, supported those with relevant examples and evaluated or analysed what they had read well.

Language: The majority of candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write good essays that could be followed easily. The expressions and idioms used to convey ideas were often well

thought through, but it was noticeable that even candidates with a very secure grasp of vocabulary and grammar made an array of spelling mistakes not expected at this level.

Good Practice for candidates:

- Chose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question
- Make sure you read the question carefully and know the focus of it
- Divide your time into three equal chunks and start working on the first essay
- Label each essay with the section and question number, do not forget sub-questions
- Think about paragraphs: one main idea and some supporting evidence per paragraph would be good
- Evidence does not have to be a precise quote, but should show that you have read the text in detail, not just a summary of the plot (or watched the film, if available).
- Make sure you have an introduction, main part and conclusion in your essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: *herunter*, not *runter*, *nichts* not *nix*, *etwas können* instead of *was drauf haben* etc. are examples for this.
- At the end, read through each essay and make sure spelling mistakes are eliminated as far as possible. Spell names of characters correctly and make sure they belong to the text you are referring to!

Examples of particular weaknesses:

- *ß* and *ss*, the former still required after long vowels and diphthong, the latter after short vowels
- *das* and *dass* got confused a lot
- meanings of words sometimes not clear: *verschiedenen* used as a verb instead of *unterscheiden*, *Abitur nicht erkannt* instead of *anerkannt*
- adjectival comparatives and superlatives incorrect: *leichterer* instead of *leichter*, *mehr schwierig* instead of *schwieriger*
- Wrong possessive pronouns: *wie sein Bruder* (her brother) should be *wie ihr Bruder*
- Register/style: the language is sometimes too informal. There is a definite issue to be addressed here, relating to candidates not being able to differentiate between spoken/colloquial and written/formal language. (*rum* instead of *herum*; *drauf haben* instead of *etwas können*, *nix* instead of *nicht*)
- Anglicisms: often candidates who had weaknesses in their vocabulary used English phrases and translated them into German on a one to one basis: *“In meiner Meinung”* instead of *“Meiner Meinung nach”*, *“Werden wir gezeigt”* instead of *“wird uns gezeigt”*
- Words misspelt: *Gränze*, *Ausländerin*, *rolle*

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Zweig – Schachnovelle

Fifty two essays were produced on this text and the majority concentrated on the first question.

- (a) (i) Good answers contained a short description of the episode that led up to the event pictured here and mentioned the “Schachfieber” and Dr. B.’s divided personality. The majority of candidates summarised the whole captivity story instead of focussing on the outcome and then left themselves little time to answer the second half of the question.
- (ii) Most candidates thought that Dr. B. had won something by winning at least one chess game and some thought that overcoming his illness required only this one reminder by an outside person. The better candidates clearly realised that Dr. B. played an imaginary game and had fallen back into the patterns which had driven him mad in captivity and that on his own he was powerless to avoid this happening. Czentovic uses his weaknesses to further his own plans, a point made by most candidates. The very top candidates went beyond the book and equated Czentovic to the Nazis and saw Dr. B. as a victim of their brutality.

- (b) The best candidates who chose the second question did start off with a definition of a “Dilettant” and distinguished well between the chess playing and the rest of the lives both of the characters led. Czentovic’s basic upbringing and lack of profession was mentioned, as well as the cultural background of Dr. B. and his professionally correct behaviour even throughout the interrogations. Czentovic was seen as the more professional player as he had already achieved a high ranking in the world of chess, but the fact that Dr. B. can beat him was also established. Some candidates failed to see that Czentovic capitulated early in the first game in order to avoid a total loss of face, which made him sound better than he actually was. It was pleasing to see some very well differentiated answers of this question.

Question 2

König – *Ich fühl mich so fifty-fifty*

45 candidates wrote about these questions, most chose to write about the extract from the book. The answers were well considered in the majority of cases.

- (a) (i) The first part question asked the candidate to look at reactions of Sabine’s colleagues to her. Her reception in West Germany is somewhat frosty, most co-workers see her as a foreigner and think she uses the system to get easy money and they see the East Germans as a threat. It would have been necessary here to distinguish carefully between foreigners, immigrants and people from East Germany (nicht Aussiedler, sondern Übersiedler und schon gar nicht Asylanten) and asylum seekers, a distinction made by the best candidates only.
- (ii) The second part dealt with Sabine’s friend Maria, who as a foreigner in Germany joins forces with Sabine and is her first friend in West Germany. She helps Sabine first of all to cope with every-day life and then later on contributes to the realisation of her dreams (travelling to Greece). With Maria’s help Sabine learns to adapt to life in West Germany and evaluates her old experiences differently.
- (b) In the second question candidates were asked whether Mario and Sabine had a better life in East or West Germany and what their experiences were in the West. Mario flees to have choices about his career and his music and finds out that he has to work hard and start at the bottom of the ladder to get even a small flat and some money. Eventually he finds a band to join, but in the meantime, Sabine and his mum stay with him in a crowded flat and he is disillusioned. Sabine ends up working in an old people’s home. The old people themselves are friendly to her and like her. This together with her friendship to Maria lets Sabine balance her viewpoint when the employees are nasty to her and show their prejudices. Sabine enjoys the choices she can make every day (shopping, cinema, pop concerts), but she misses her old friends and her family. She feels torn between the East and the West, but would rather have that than the limited life-choices the East offered her, particularly as she can now study a subject of her choice and do the travelling she has always dreamed of.

Question 3

Kafka – *Die Verwandlung*

40 candidates wrote about this book, the majority having chosen the first question.

- (i) Most candidates accurately depicted the reactions of the family and the Prokurist, but the better candidates saw the dad’s reaction as an assertion of his dominant role, the mum’s reaction as a reflection of the times – females being helpless and powerless and constrained – and the Prokurist’s reaction as a sheer panic, which showed that Gregor’s work was literally gone.
- (ii) Gregor’s sister is not present when Gregor tries to come out of his room and he sees her as a potential rescuer. Most candidates referred to the sister as a person who could have rectified the immediate catastrophe, namely the job loss. She could have gone after the Prokurist and reassured him, so that Gregor could have gone back to work eventually. More extended answers highlighted the close connection between Gregor and his sister and the expectations Gregor has of her. The better candidates realised that his expectations would be disappointed and that the sister is the one who eventually gives up on him and convinces the family to abandon him.

- (b) The second question was answered well. Candidates clearly grasped that Gregor was still thinking like a human being, but had difficulties acting like one because of his transformation. The better candidates mentioned that he seemed to not even register the possibility of the status quo being permanent rather than transient at this stage in the narrative.

Section 2

Question 4

Och – *Das Salz der Erde und das dumme Schaf*

29 essays were written about this text, with an equal split between the two questions.

- (a) Jana and the granddad learn different things in their respective homes. Jana learns to look at the other girls and realises that as good as some might have it at first glance (lots of money and presents, siblings) each of them has their problems, too. She comes to realise that she misses her granddad (even when she finds out she is adopted) and the certainty of his love more than anything else and in the end her abduction is something she is pleased about. The granddad enjoys the physical comforts of the home (puts on weight, flirts with the nurses, brews alcohol), but stays his old self by introducing chaos and anarchy in his care home, too. Better candidates mentioned all the above points, but most concentrated on the granddad not helping Jana and leaving her whilst he is enjoying himself. In the end both of them need each other, which all of the candidates worked out well.
- (b) Clothes are important for Jana throughout the novel. She is so poor that her shoes are falling apart, her skirt is too small and her shirts are either her granddad's or too small, too. When Jana turns into a teenager who starts to develop, she gets embarrassed by her non-fitting bras and by having to give her underwear to her granddad to have it washed. In important situations, like her first (abandoned) date, she would like to be pretty and look like everyone else which would entail wearing normal clothes like all the other people in her class. Jirka who is dressed impeccably is somebody who likes her like she is and she begins to see that, so clothes become less important in the end. Better candidates mentioned that Jana often uses her clothes in an ironic way (shoe colour guessing in School) and learns to live with the lack of money, especially after she sees that the girl in care with the money is even unhappier than she is.

Question 5

Brecht – *Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan*

45 essays were produced on this text, two thirds on the first question.

- (a) Better candidates started off by mentioning how the relatives multiplied and how small the accommodation is and how difficult it is for Shen Te to feed everybody. The laziness and the criminal offences of the relatives were mentioned, too. Some candidates saw the relatives as victims of the capitalist state, the majority however saw them as parasites who exploited Shen Te until the cousin dealt with them and put them into "his" factory. The relatives were people who were seen to take and take and who gave nothing back, forcing Shen Te back into poverty. Most candidates identified with Shen Te and her difficulties with the relatives rather than writing about the function the relatives had in the play overall.
- (b) Some candidates only wrote about the extra information the plays in front of the curtain provided: the split of Shen Te into Shui Ta, the cousin, the cheating of the Water Seller. The better candidates knew about Brecht's theory of alienating the audience in order to avoid identification with the individual characters and the fact that if you interrupted the play and gave extra information and addressed the audience directly the identification was unlikely to happen. It would have been pleasing to see a differentiated approach to the individual scenes in front of the curtain, Shen Te's *Zwischenspiele* and Wang's *Zwischenspiele*, but candidates gave the impression that time was running out and some essays were rather short on this topic.

Question 6

Wohman – *Treibjagd, Erzählungen*

Four essays were produced on this text, all about the first question.

- (a) All candidates mentioned the variety of topics that Gabrielle Wohmann writes about; relationships between couples, parents and children, neighbours and relatives. They mentioned that some relationships were doubtlessly taken from the life experiences of the author, but the better candidates avoided writing too much about their own reading experience but mentioned instead that all ages could identify with her short stories and that some themes might be relevant for different groups of people. Most essays would have benefitted from a closer link to the actual stories and not just generic statements.
- (b) No candidate chose this question.