

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in German (6GN01)
Paper 1A Spoken Expression and Response

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Summer 2014

Publications Code US038401*

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The test is divided into two sections- Section A and B.

SECTION A

This requires candidates to respond to four Pearson Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the candidates chosen general topic area. The teacher/examiner will first ask two questions about the general content of the stimulus and will then follow on with two other questions that invite candidates to express their opinions on, or give reactions to, the stimulus.

SECTION B

In the second part of the exam the candidate is expected to **discuss and develop** the general topic area as part of a wider conversation.

Assessment Principles

This paper carries 50 marks. It consists of a conversation between the teacher/examiner on a General Topic Area chosen by the candidate.

The General Topic Areas are:
Youth Culture and Concerns
Lifestyle Health and Fitness
The World Around Us
Education and Employment.

Stimulus cards are provided for each of these. Before starting the examination, the candidates have 15 minutes to prepare with the stimulus card provided. They may make notes of up to one side of A4 in this time, which they may then refer to during the examination.

It is expected that the candidate will keep the notes throughout the exam and they, together with the card, will be collected at the end.

The speaking exam lasts **between 8 and 10 minutes** and is made up of two parts. In Part A, the candidate is asked 4 questions relating to the stimulus card which are set by Pearson Edexcel. These questions are **mandatory** and may be repeated, but for the purpose of fair assessment across all centres, they must **not be re-phrased or expanded on in any way**. The first two questions relate specifically to information in the stimulus material, the second two to the wider issues developed from the stimulus material.

For questions 3 and 4 it is expected that the candidate will give answers which are **as full and as detailed as possible**. The candidates' understanding of this stimulus specific topic area is marked out of 4.

In Part B, the teacher/examiner must initiate a discussion about the General Topic Area chosen by each student, and the teacher/examiner must move away from the subtopic of the stimulus card to more general discussion of the topic area and its linked subtopics. Failure to move away to different subtopics could have an adverse impact on final marks.

The candidates must also show a clear understanding of the chosen topic. The subtopics of each area are stated in the specification. The candidate's understanding of the General Topic Area is marked out of a total of 10. The marks of 8 for Quality of Language (Accuracy), 8 for Quality of Language (Lexis) and 20 for response apply to the test as a whole. It is important that the full test lasts **at least eight minutes**. If the test is too short, it will be liable to a penalty.

Similarly, the examination must not last beyond ten minutes as markers will usually not listen beyond this point. Much like a written examination has a fixed time when candidates must stop, it is much the same for an oral test.

SECTION A

Questions were properly asked by examiners in nearly all cases; in rare cases where a question had been rephrased or expanded on, it was noted on the Oral Form and credit was not given for that response. Most candidates dealt with the first two section A questions with relative ease. There was occasional difficulty when a candidate failed to identify the text extract with the required information. In some cases this resulted in an unclear response.

Q3 & Q4 were invariably more searching and generally more effective in discriminating between able and less able candidates. There were some extensive and thoughtful answers to such questions, which required candidates to think quickly about the enquiry as well as find the appropriate language for the response. At the other extreme, some less able candidates sometimes struggled to give more than minimal answers to these questions.

Once again the two most popular topics were Lifestyle Health and Fitness and Youth Culture and Concerns, then The World Around Us and finally Education and Employment.

The first two questions from the stimulus card require quite brief answers which will **relate directly** to the text. It is possible to lift the answers directly from the text and this is acceptable. **There is no need for the candidate to expand the answers at this point.** However, the examiner **must** ask the questions **exactly** as they are

worded on the examiner's version of the stimulus. **No additions** whatsoever such as 'meinen Sie' are allowed. This is to enable exact consistency of examining across the whole entry. There were examples where examiners reworded the questions, thus disadvantaging the candidate, or even asking a significant amount of supplementary questions.

It is also not expected that the questions are repeated unless the candidate asks for them to be repeated. The only change permitted to the wording of the questions is to change 'Sie' to 'Du' if the examiner and candidate prefer this. Please be aware that any change to the wording of the questions will result in this question not being considered as part of the assessment.

The third and fourth questions do require further expansion and Development, typically requiring personal ideas and opinions. However, this expansion must be directly relevant to the question. Many candidates complete this section in less than the four minutes suggested in the specification. This is perfectly acceptable.

All four questions should always be asked, even if a candidate has partially answered the next question in their previous answer. There were very few instances of examiners missing out questions, intentionally or not. Candidates must **not see the cards in advance** of the examination and the table provided in the instructions to examiners giving the order in which the cards should be chosen **must** be used. For this reason, it is not expected that the candidate will begin a response to any question without a few moments of thinking time.

Specific Comments on the Stimulus Cards

Youth Culture & Concerns (1A/1B) Q1 and Q2 were usually answered without many problems. Likewise Q3 on 1A and 1B posed no problems. However, some candidates found it difficult to focus on the purpose of the question. Q4 (1A) was well answered, Q4 (1B) led to some confusion for certain candidates.

Youth Culture & Concerns (2A + 2B) Q1 was usually well answered, but in Q2 the tense of the sentence was not always understood. There was some confusion, as some candidates mistakenly thought the centre had shut already. Q3 (A+B) and Q4 (B) were answered well, but in Q4 (A) the word *Sicherheit* was often not understood.

Lifestyle health & Fitness (1A/1B) Q1 was well answered with most candidates easily identifying the key words. However, Q2 posed a

problem with less able students who heard *in Zukunft* and homed in on the wrong part of the text. Q3 & Q4 allowed the more able candidates, and the majority, to perform well by drawing on personal experiences with regards to healthy eating.

Lifestyle, Health & Fitness (2A/2B) There was often an overlap of responses in Q1 and Q2. Most candidates could answer Q3 on both cards after a moment's thought. Q4 on both cards provided mixed responses, with many candidates not understanding what might or might not be involved in this issue.

The World around us (1A/1B) The more able candidates were able to deliver excellent and well-researched responses making references relating to carbon footprint. Q4 (1B) was a challenging question, which the more able candidates were able to grasp. As a whole, Q3 on Stimulus Card 1B was not well understood.

The World around us (2A/2B) This was well answered by those candidates who had chosen this topic, some candidates demonstrating excellent research into Recycling. Note that some candidates did have problems with the concept of extra sacks for the garden waste.

Education & Employment (1A/1B) Q1 proved difficult for some candidates. Most produced the required detail for Q2. For the most part, Q3 & 4 were well answered, though some found the comparison required by Q3 (1A) difficult.

Education & Employment (2A/2B) Most candidates supplied the required detail for Q1 & 2. There were some varied answers to Q3 & 4; with some candidates providing clearly developed ideas about problems relating to illiteracy.

SECTION B

The second part requires the teacher examiner to engage the candidate in a discussion that, although still relating to the same General Topic Area and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus. It is a good idea to make a clear distinction between the two parts of the test. A phrase such as: *Gut, also das waren die vier Fragen zum Stimulus. Wir sprechen jetzt über andere Themen*, shows a clear movement between the two parts of the test.

The questions posed in this part of the test must give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of the topic chosen. Therefore personal and anecdotal questions are not appropriate.

Unfortunately some teacher/examiners still ask questions that are inappropriate at this level, such as *Rauchst du? Trinkst du Alkohol mit deinen Freunden?*

Answers to these kind of questions, as well as to GCSE-level questions, will not allow the candidates to show understanding or to demonstrate their knowledge of lexis and structures appropriate at AS level.

Another type of question to avoid are closed questions, or others giving a choice of two possible answers. For example: *Ist Sport wichtig für dich?* This question could simply be answered with 'ja' or 'nein'. As it is a personal question, it should always be avoided.

This question could in fact be improved by phrasing it as: *Wie wichtig ist Sport für einen gesunden Lebensstil?* This question now requires the candidate to give some opinions, and cannot be answered with a yes or no. The question word '*Inwiefern..*' would also be appropriate - *Inwiefern ist Sport wichtig für einen gesunden Lebensstil?*

A question such as *Was ist dir wichtiger, Freunde oder Familie?* is a further example of a question that is inappropriate for this level. Firstly, because it is personal and secondly, because it could be answered by just lifting one of the two choices. A more suitable alternative would be: *Wie wichtig ist es, gute Freunde zu haben?*

A further important aspect of this part of the test is that it **must** be a **spontaneous** discussion. Therefore, candidates should avoid any pre-learnt monologue. The feeling may be that the candidate should be allowed to speak as much as possible and, although development of answers is important, an answer, no matter how lengthy, which is just simply a regurgitation of a large piece of language, is not an effective method to obtain the full range of marks.

Under no circumstances should the candidate know the questions in advance, something which would encourage pre learnt monologues. Teacher/examiners are urged to interrupt candidates in order to elicit clarification of points made, as well as to add their own thoughts. In this way the examination becomes a discussion, rather than a one sided monologue. Phrases such as '*Was meinst du damit?*' or '*Warum ist das der Fall?*' are to be encouraged.

In order to access the top range of marks for understanding of the General Topic Area, candidates need to back up the points they make - possibly with statistics or examples. For instance, if the topic of Lifestyle, Health and Fitness is chosen, candidates could be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the numbers of young people who are

overweight, to what extent it has got worse, and possibly what the government is doing about it. This goes beyond simply stating that too many young people are overweight.

The candidate's chosen topic should have been studied in detail and therefore just stating personal, anecdotal information will not suffice.

Centres should not repeat the same questions to each of their candidates. The best orals develop naturally from the spontaneous response of the candidates.

Examiners should be aware of the need to cover a variety of sub-topics in Section B, to allow candidates to show the range of their understanding and knowledge. They must also move away from the original stimulus in Section A.

Care should be taken to not stray into a different General Topic Area. The discussion must be rooted in the candidates' chosen General Topic Area. For example, the subtopic of smoking in Lifestyle, Health and Fitness deals with health aspects. Asking why young people start smoking, will then lead the discussion into Youth Culture and Concerns, with expected answers of peer pressure etc.

Good examining requires a good balance between keeping the candidate at ease by encouragement, whilst at the same time asking probing questions which stretch the ability of each candidate. Certainly no candidate should have grammatical errors corrected, nor should a teacher/examiner disagree in an aggressive fashion with the candidate.

Conduct of the Examination

The majority of examiners conducted the examination quite well. There were, however, a number of issues which arose – as outlined below:

- Timing was accurate overall, with most tests between 8 and 10 minutes. Please note that very short tests are subject to severe penalties, longer tests are not marked beyond 10 minutes.
- Recording quality: as this was the last year that cassettes are permitted, there were only a few centres using cassettes. CDs and USB sticks are now far more popular and they provide better quality recordings.

The orals from some centres on cassettes had a poor recording quality.

Centres are however requested to make sure that CDs have been properly formatted before submission. It is advisable that centres check the recordings before sending them on, and that they are

packaged appropriately, as we have come across a number of broken CDs this year.

USB sticks are becoming more popular too, but these carry the slight danger of transferring of a virus. It is requested that only new USB sticks are used and a check made for viruses.

Whatever mode of recording is chosen, it is vital that the recordings are clear, with both teacher examiner and candidate audible.

- Oral forms: each candidate must complete the **new** OR1 form, which **must** be signed by the candidate and the examiner and submitted with the recordings. This is available on the Pearson Edexcel website.
- Examiners must **never** rephrase the questions in section A, or ask supplementary questions in this section.

NB: Please note that following notification on the qualification page of the Pearson/Edexcel website, and via the updates from the Subject Advisor, Mr Alistair Drewery, we will no longer be accepting audio cassettes for assessment from September 2014 onwards.

Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response

Marking guidance for oral examiners

Tests that are too short

A test is too short if it is less than 7 minutes 30 seconds (this includes a 30 second tolerance). Drop down one mark band to the corresponding mark across the following assessment grids:

- Quality of Language - Accuracy
- Quality of Language - Range of lexis
- Response

e.g.

4-5	Accuracy variable but errors rarely impede communication; pronunciation and intonation inconsistent but comprehensible.
6-7	Generally accurate but some errors in more complex language; pronunciation and intonation generally good.
8	Highly accurate with perhaps some very minor errors; pronunciation and intonation authentic.

If a candidate would have scored 7 for Accuracy, they should be given 5, if they would have scored 6, they should be given 4. A similar adjustment should be made for Range and for Response. This will not affect the other assessment criteria 'Understanding - Stimulus specific' or 'Understanding - General Topic Area'.

Test that are too long

Once the 10 minute mark has passed, the examiner stops listening at the end of the next sentence/sense group.

Tests that do not move away from initial stimulus sub topic

Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score.

- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis' - limited to a maximum of 3 marks
- 'Response' - limited to a maximum of 8 marks
- 'Understanding - General topic area' - cannot score more than 0

Spontaneity/Response

If a test appears to lack spontaneity in large part to the extent that significant sections *appear to have been pre-learnt*, the mark for **Response** will be limited to a maximum of 8 marks. It may be that intonation is also impaired; however, poor intonation would not, on its own, suggest pre-learning.

Please note:

Understanding – Stimulus specific should only be used to mark **Section A** of the oral test.

Understanding – General topic area should only be used to mark **Section B** of the oral test.

When marking the oral exam, examiners are advised to immediately allocate a mark for Section A, prior to allocating marks for the rest of the test (Section B).

It is important that the PE and team leaders can see clearly the justification for marks awarded and examiners should note briefly on the OR1 form the reason for any caps which are applied in marking an oral test.

If a score of '0' is awarded for any of the assessment grids, the oral recording should be referred to your Team Leader.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

