



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In German (6GN01) Paper 1A & 1B

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Format of the Test

The test is divided into two sections.

SECTION A

This requires students to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the student's 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 students to express their opinions on, or give reactions to, the stimulus.

SECTION B

In the second part of the exam the student 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 visiting or teacher examiner on an AS topic area chosen by the student.

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 area. Before starting the examination, the students 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 refer to during the examination. It is expected that the student 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 student is asked 4 questions relating to the stimulus card which are set by 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 developing from the stimulus material. For questions 3 and 4 it is expected that the student will give answers which are **as full and as detailed as possible**. The students' 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.

The students must also show a clear understanding of the chosen topic. The subtopics of each area are stated in the specification. The student'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, there is no point in continuing the test beyond ten minutes and examiners will usually not listen beyond this point. It is possible that some students may start to tire significantly beyond 9 minutes or so and there is no need to prolong the exam beyond 10 minutes. Examiners should possibly remember that a written examination has a fixed time when students must stop and the same should apply for an oral test.

Students' Performances

As this was the final year of the exam one can assume that most students were re-sitting the speaking exam, or were probably native or near-native speakers doing both AS and A2 in a year, the standard of German was higher than previously. The vast majority of students chose Lifestyle Health and Fitness and Youth Culture and Concerns, only very few chose to speak about The World Around Us or Education and Employment.

Students choosing these latter topic areas were often very good as the topics lend themselves to show research more clearly.

This year there were hardly any teacher examiners who rephrased or expanded on the prescribed questions.

Most students dealt with the first two section A questions with relative ease. There was occasional difficulty when a student failed to identify the text extract with the required information and in some cases produced an invalid response, because it did not refer to the text.

Q3 & Q4 were invariably more searching and generally more effective in discriminating between able and less able students. There were – and these not only from native speakers – some extensive and thoughtful answers to such questions, which required students to think quickly about the enquiry, as well as find the appropriate language for the response. At the other extreme, weaker students sometimes struggled to give more than minimal answers to these questions or to answer coherently.

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 perfectly acceptable. **There is no need for the student 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 very few examples where examiners reworded the questions, thus disadvantaging the student, or even asking a significant amount of supplementary questions. It is also not expected that the questions are repeated unless the student 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 student 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.

Non-taught native speakers had a tendency to answer the first two stimulus questions based on their own personal thoughts as opposed to the content of the stimulus cards, for which they were not credited.

The third and fourth questions do require further expansion and development and will usually require personal ideas and opinions. However, this expansion must be directly relevant to the question.

Many students 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 student has partially answered the next question in their previous answer. There were no instances of examiners missing out questions.

Students must **never 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 student will begin a response to any question without a few moments of thinking time.

Specific Comments on the Stimulus Cards

YCC 1A+1B:

These questions were answered well with detailed answers given for the final 2 questions in most cases. Question 2 caused a number of students difficulty as they spoke about how grandparents can help but did not specify how they can help with problems.

YCC 2A+2B:

These questions were also successfully answered by many students. However, some students did not know 'ersetzt' in 2A Q4. Lots of detailed and interesting answers were given for Q3 on card 2B.

LHF 1A+1B:

These questions were answered well by most students for Card 1A, as they were able to link answers to text but also add detailed responses to Q3 and

Q4. In Card 1B a surprising number of students missed the 'Sonnenstudio-**Verbot**' and instead discussed why lots of people support going to tanning studios.

LHF 2A+2B

Card 2A was mostly answered well, and detailed answers and interesting ideas were given to the questions on tax and where children should learn to cook. However, some students, including the more able, missed the word 'Steuer' and also in Q4 sometimes 'Wo?' was misinterpreted and pupils only focussed on why children should cook.

WAU 1A+1B:

Although not often chosen as a topic, these cards were answered well with some imaginative ideas for tourism of the future in Card 1A and for Q4 in Card 1B.

WAU 2A+2B

Card 2 caused more difficulty for a number of the students who were unable to use the text information to answer questions 1 and 2 accurately. Q3 and Q4 on both cards produced a range of detailed and sophisticated answers from all levels of students.

EE1A+1B:

Not many students chose this topic but of those who did, they were able to respond well to the cards well and provide detailed answers for all elements on the card.

SECTION B

The second part requires the teacher examiner to engage the student 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 students the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of the chosen topic area. Personal and anecdotal questions are not appropriate.

Answers to these kinds of questions will not allow the students to show understanding of the General Topic Area (GTA) or to demonstrate their knowledge of lexis and structures appropriate at AS. They may also put the student under pressure in the examination situation due to their, at

times, probing nature.

A further important aspect of this part of the test is that it **must** be a **spontaneous** discussion. Spontaneous use of language occurs when students use their knowledge of structures and lexis and apply it appropriately in response to unpredictable questions.

The unpredictability is created by the teacher examiner responding to the students' views to elicit development. Unpredictability on the part of the teacher examiner will facilitate a proper level of spontaneity.

Therefore the student should not be allowed to respond with a pre-learnt monologue. The feeling may be that the student should speak as much as possible and, although development of answers is important, an answer, no matter how lengthy, which is just simply the regurgitation of a large piece of language, will not score highly. Under no circumstances should the student know the questions in advance, something which would encourage **pre-learnt** monologues.

Examiners are urged to interrupt students in order to elicit clarification of points made, as well as to add their own thoughts. In this way the oral 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 very high marks for understanding of the general topic area, the students will need to back up points made, possibly with statistics or examples. For instance, if the topic of Lifestyle, Health and Fitness were chosen, students could be expected to know something about the numbers of young people who are smoking, to what extent it has got worse, and possibly what the government is doing about it. This goes beyond simply stating that many young people are smoking.

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

To reach the full range of the marking criteria there will be frequent examples of discourse. The student needs to demonstrate the ability to interact within a subtopic. This means developing the subtopic area and exploring it in some depth. The best orals develop naturally from the spontaneous response of the students. A mere question and answer approach cannot facilitate a spontaneous discourse as described above. Examiners should be aware of the need to cover a variety of sub-topics in section B so that students can show the range of their understanding and knowledge. They must also move away from the original stimulus in section A.

Care should also be taken not to stray into a different General Topic Area. The discussion must be rooted in the students' chosen GTA. For example the subtopic of smoking in LHF deals with the health aspects, but asking why young people start smoking will lead you into YCC with expected answers of peer pressure etc.

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

Conduct of the Examination

The majority of examiners conducted the examinations well. However, with potentially three different AS level speaking examinations on offer for international centres, there have been incidents where centres have mixed up the new and the legacy papers.

The majority of issues were the following:

- **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:** there was generally no problem with the sound quality, however, care should be taken to record the exams in a quiet area of the centre, as background noises can be very off putting to the student.

Centres are 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 label the individual students properly and not just leave it as track 1, track 2 etc.

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 student audible.

- **Oral forms:** each student must complete the **new** OR1 form, which must be signed by the student and the examiner and submitted with the recordings.
- Examiners must **never** rephrase the questions in section A, or ask supplementary questions in this section.
- Examiners should not simply work their way through a list of questions when conducting the exam, as that will not lead to a coherent discussion.
- Also it should be avoided to ask the same set of questions to all students.

Grade Boundaries

Much work has taken place on the comparability of the oral units for French, German and Spanish. The senior examiners have worked closely together to ensure their application of the common oral marking criteria is consistently applied across these three languages. This has been in response to queries from centres about the results at unit level on the oral examinations.

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>

