Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Subsidiary
In German (WGN02) Unit 2: Understanding and Written Response

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General comments

The cohort had increased in size by about fifty per cent. The cohort was significantly more diverse this year than last, with more candidates in the middle and at the bottom of the range. The reading and the listening were quite challenging for many, although there was a significant minority of candidates for whom all questions were very accessible. Nevertheless, another significant minority of candidates did not seem to have moved beyond the standard required by International GCSE.

The multiple choice questions proved more challenging this year, and even Q1, which was anticipated to be accessible to all, differentiated across the range of ability, with part (b) proving most demanding and part (c) most accessible. In Q2 parts (a) and (d) proved quite accessible, whilst parts (b) and (c) were quite demanding, even in the upper end of the range. Q3 was well done, with part (c) proving more challenging. In this question, some otherwise able candidates seem not to have paid sufficient attention to the listening text, entering responses which made sense, but which did not correspond to the text. Other candidates picked words which were grammatically inappropriate, such as adjectives with no endings in part (d). Q5 proved relativey accessible, although part (c) was more challenging.

Questions 4, 6 and 7 require short responses in German, and these questions discriminated across the range. Candidates are instructed to use their own language as far as possible, and questions are written so that candidates will need to use their own language, or at the very least, manipulate the language in the text. Lifting answers from the text is, therefore, not a successful strategy, but there was in increase in wholesale lifts from the text this year.

As last year, candidates struggled with the questions which target higher level cognitive skills, so candidates should expect to be asked to, for example, summarize, interpret, infer and / or come to judgements. Here again, lifting answers is not a successful strategy. Equally, looking for an answer in one particular sentence will not be useful in cases where candidates need to select and summarise, or to come to a judgement.

Once again, candidates seemed to struggle most with inference questions, even when they appeared to have competent language skills, often writing information from the text. Candidates should look for trigger words such as *wohl* and *vielleicht* which might indicate that they need to draw an inference.

The essay question requires a personal response to a stimulus and contains a discursive element. Some candidates of all linguistic abilities appeared to have identified a general topic from the stimulus, and set off to write their opinions or to rephrase the stimlusus. Candidates

should be prepared to respond to the bullet points specifically and precisely.

Question 4

This question discriminated across the range of ability, with parts b), c) and e) providing the greatest challenge.

Candidates should answer this question in German in their own words as far as possible. It is acceptable to use words or short phrases from the text, but these should be contained within candidates' own language. A majority of candidates tended to select words from the text to use in their responses.

It is also important that candidates should read the questions carefully and answer the questions which are asked. Candidates quite often wrote down what was said in the passage, without directly addressing the questions – even when they demonstate a generally high level of proficiency in German.

As noted in the general comments, this question targets higher level cognitive skills, so candidates should expect to be asked to, for example, summarize, interpret, infer and / or come to judgements.

Part (a) was generally accessible, although many candidates wrote down what Jakob said, instead of referring to his attitude.

Part (b) provided more cognitive demand. Candidates needed to comment on the extent to which Traudl agreed with Jakob, and examiners were looking for either one statement which summarised this extent, or one point of agreement and one point of disagreement. However, candidates tended to simply write down what Traudl said, with no reference to Jakob. More successful candidates responded by saying something like, *Traudl glaubt <u>auch</u>, dass beige hässlich ist.*

Part c) required two details of Jakob's opinions, and many candidates were able to access at least one of the available marks. However, many candidates lifted, and thus did not answer the question directly.

Part d) was generally accessible, and most candidates were able to mention an *ungeschriebenes Gesetz* although a significant minority used the wrong tense.

Part e) was an inference question, requiring candidates to fill in gaps in what was actually said in the text. Although many candidates simply wrote down what Jakob said, a significant minority were able to move from what he said to the idea that such clothes were *altmodisch* or *veraltet.*

Question 6

This question requires short answers in German, in the candidates' own words. It includes questions with higher cognitive demand, such as summary, inference, interpretation or judgement. As a result, candidates who answered by lifting parts of the text tended not to achieve highly.

Most candidates were able to access one or two marks in parts a) and b). Parts c) and d) provided a greater challenge.

In part c) a significant proportion of candidates did not understand the question, *für wen.* A further significant proportion responded with the information in the text. However, manipulation was required. The text tells us that radio and television are important news sources, but that the older young people get, the more important online news is, with two thirds of 16 – 18 year olds informing themselves on online sites. So radio and TV are presumably more important for younger teenagers – or indeed, as a number of candidates pointed out – for older people.

Part d) required candidate to identify two pieces of information, and was relatively straightforward in demand. Most candidates were able to manipulate the correct passage in some way, however small, but there were also candidates who simply lifted the relevant sentences without changing anything and thereby did not answer the question.

Question 7

This question requires short responses in German, in the candidates' own words. Lifting is not a successful strategy. Candidates are also expected to respond to questions requiring higher cognitive skills, such as summary, interpretation, inference and judgement.

Parts a) and d) were relatively accessible, although candidates did need to refer to the attitudes of the local people / Anne as well as quote what they said. A significant minority of candidates did manage to say that the local people looked forward to the event because it was a highlight, or that Anne liked the week because of the racing or the scenery. A small minority of candidates simply said that the attitudes were positive, without justifying that claim, which was not acceptable at this level.

Parts b) and c) were accessible, with most candidates able to isolate the correct information.

Part e) proved challenging. Candidates seemed to miss the instruction to give two points of contrast, and either gave information more or less as it was presented in the text, or gave information which did not present a contrast. Candidates generally seemed to write a lot to little effect, but it was possible to gain full marks with very few words, for example:
- Dampfschiffe: alt und langsam.

- Wasserskishows: modern und schnell.

Part f) was relatively challenging because it was an inference question, signalled with *wohl*, and many candidates simply wrote down what was in the text. The text told us that Thomas Held was an enthusiastic sailor and had a lot of intereting information. Candidates needed to move beyond this to say that, for example, because he was an enthusiastic sailor, he had relevant expertise, or was able to explain the the racing to non-sailing tourists.

In part g), a significant proportion of the candidates was able to say that the good atmosphere lay in the friendly, approachable sailors. However, a significant minority seemed not to recognise that *Stimmung and Atmosphäre* were synonyms, and thus responded that the good atmosphere lay in the good atmosphere.

Most candidates were able to gain one mark in part h), but many, simply wrote down information from the text with insufficient manipulation. Even where lifting was more targetted, candidates wrote that it was possible to shop *zwischen den weißen Pavillons.* However, the text talks about strolling between the white pavillions. It was possible to buy things at the stands, or in the pavillions.

Question 8

The grammar question discriminated across most of the cohort, with most candidates gaining between three and nine marks, although there was a significant minority which gained 10/10, indicating an excellent, possibly near-native, command of grammar, and another significant minority which gained 0 marks, indicating insufficient progression from GCSE.

As last year, candidates should be aware that they need to write extremely clearly in this part of the question. In particular they need to distinguish the endings on verbs and adjectives, such that examiners can be certain what the candidate has written. If examiners cannot tell, for example, whether an adjective ends in –r, -en or –em, candidates cannot be credited with knowing what the ending sh ould be.

Parts a), c), i) and j) proved challenging. It was distressing to see candidates struggle to manipulate *sein* for the second year running.

Question 9

This question requires extended writing in response to a stimulus. Candidates need to address the bullet points directly, and to demonstrate an appropriately wide range of lexis and grammatical structures.

Candidates were generally familiar with the lexis and structures associated with climate change, and were often able to produce relatively complex language.

Some candidates produced pre-learned responses which did not deal with the bullet points, which was unsuccessful, as it is essential to deal with the bullet points.

Bullet 1 required candidates to interact with the stimulus, and most candidates were able to do this, with varying degrees of clarity and development.

Bullet 2 required candidates to give a personal response. These tended to be either very simple lists, as might be expected at GCSE or to talk about what people can do in general, which did not directly address the bullet point. The more successful candidates were able to discuss their own ways of being more environmentally friendly in a suitably complex way, using subordinate clauses and perhaps contrasting their earlier bad habits with current good habits.

Bullet 3 intends to provoke a discursive response in which candidates consider different views and come to a conclusion. Here, the most successful candidates said, for example, that, although individual decisions in isolation might make no difference, taken together, they could make a difference, and one person's positive actions could influence those around them. Less successfully, candidates tended to list more things that people in general could do to live in a more environmentally friendly way.

Bullet 4 is also intended to stretch candidates to show what they can do. Most were able to express some ideas about what governments could do, like informing people about the dangers of climate change and what they could do to help counteract it and that included special sessions in schools. Imposing fines on firms which cause pollution and rebates to those which do not, subsidies for public transport and electric cars, raising tax on petrol and fossil fuels and encouraging the development of renewable energy were common arguments.

Overall comments

The strongest candidates were able to link their ideas together coherently, with significant development, and to structure their essays effectively within paragraphs as well as overall. Weaker candidates tended to provide a list for each bullet point, or to lose focus and ramble.

The range of grammar, structures, lexis and accuracy was extremely variable, from articulate bilingual candidates through competent language learners to those candidates who clearly had not progressed beyond GCSE level.

Verbs and word order posed the greatest challenges for those candidates who were not bilingual, whilst bilingual candidates tended to struggle with the written register, and to write as they might speak – often including phonetic spelling, slang and a complete lack of commas.

A significant proportion of the weaker candidates struggled very much with verb endings and applied them very inconsistently e.g. "ich" followed by an "en" ending and then "t" on the next verb, etc.

Modals/future were often used with zu + infinitive or the ordinary declined verb e.g *Ich werde …. bin; ich werde …... zu gehen.*

Genders: often used inconsistently even for very basic words or those given in the stimulus material. Several candidates did not realise that "des Klimaswandels" was genitive and used it as a nominative e.g "Des Klimawandels ist ein großes Problem (or more likely "eine große Probleme!")

By far the most common errors were word order (of course!) and verbs.

A few candidates had obviously pre-learnt a few fairly complex structures which they used at every opportunity, even when it was not appropriate, and that, in fact, did not enhance communication.

A small minority of candidates were produced language which was so poor in some cases as to render it virtually impossible to understand what had been written.

Nevertheless, overall, candidates were generally able to do themselves justice in this question, and there were many very pleasing responses.