



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel International AS level
In German (WGN02/01)

Unit 2: Understanding and Written Response

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Examiner's Report: Paper 2,

External assessment: written examination

Availability: January and June

First assessment: June 2017

Total marks: 90

Weighting: 69.2% of the total IAS raw marks

34.6% of the total IAL marks

Examination time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Assessment across Unit WGN02 01 relates to the following General Topic Areas:

General Topic Area	Subtopics
Youth matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Family relationships and friendships● Peer pressure and role models● Music and fashion● Technology and communication
Lifestyle, health and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Food and diet● Sport and exercise● Health issues● Urban and rural life
Environment and travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tourism, travel and transport● Natural disasters and weather● Climate change and its impact● Energy, pollution and recycling
Education and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Education systems and types of schooling● Pupil/student life● Volunteering and internships● Jobs and unemployment

Assessment

The assessment for this unit has three sections.

Section A: Listening (20 marks)

Candidates listen to a range of authentic recorded TL (Target Language) material and retrieve and convey information given in the recording by responding to a range of TL questions.

Candidates need to show understanding of both the general sense and specific details conveyed. The questions will elicit non-verbal responses and short answers in the target language.

Section B: Reading and Grammar (30 marks)

Candidates read authentic TL printed materials and retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of TL test types. The questions elicit both non-verbal responses and TL answers.

Questions are linked to a range of reading comprehension exercises.

Candidates also need to understand and manipulate grammatical structures in the TL by selecting the most appropriate word form to fit a gap.

Section C: Essay (40 marks)

Candidates write a 240–280-word essay in the TL, in response to a TL stimulus and four related bullet points. The assessment rewards effective communication of information as well as quality of language.

General comments

The examiners marking on the unit would like to thank centres for the effort they put in to ensure the assessments run smoothly for their candidates and to allow them to reach their full potential. For many, if not most candidates, this will have been their first experience of an external assessment and the examiners, who are also practising teachers in schools, fully understand the difficulties and challenges associated with returning to the pre-covid method of assessment.

Questions 4, 6 and 7 require short answers in German. Generally, the examinations are designed in such a way that simply lifting words from the texts will not satisfy the requirements of the question. At least some manipulation of the language in the text will be required. Although grammatical accuracy is not assessed in the comprehension questions, the response does need to communicate a full answer to the question, without ambiguity. Candidates may use their own words, and many are doing so increasingly effectively. Lifting very short, focussed phrases is sometimes enough, but here the skill is really shown in the precision with which information is selected. It is also rarely possible. Lifting full sentences will almost never be a way to score a mark, and it is important that all candidates are aware of this. Sometimes only very limited manipulation of the text is required, so this is something which all candidates should be able to manage to some extent. There will be more specific examples of this in later sections of the report (question 7).

Candidates need to be aware that tasks 4, 6 and 7 contain questions of varying cognitive demand. For example, low demand questions require candidates to demonstrate comprehension of the text. However, some questions require judgement or inference, and these questions require candidates to reflect and evaluate on what they have read or heard, before answering.

An essential part of the comprehension test is also the ability of candidates to not only understand the text, but also to understand the questions and answer them directly.

Some examples to inform future candidates will also be provided in later sections.

Question 9 requires a written response to a stimulus in German. Candidates should address all four bullet points in a coherent, well organised and purposeful fashion.

Candidates generally performed well in this question and examples of what is meant by the terms coherent, organised and purposeful in the mark grids will be provided below.

Section A: Listening

Q1 Multiple Choice

This was a listening text about environmentally friendly fashion. Candidates had four options A, B, C, or D for each part (the correct response, and three distractors). Candidates appeared to identify with the topic and seemed familiar with the concepts raised in the recording.

This proved to be an accessible question to nearly all, with approximately 90% of candidates scoring full marks. 1a and 1d proved slightly more difficult than 1b and 1c, although not significantly. It would be advisable for centres to check the vocabulary in those questions, as there are areas for improvement. 1a continued the “immer + comparative” construction and 1d contained the preposition “statt”, which could have challenged some.

Q2 Multiple Choice

This listening text was on the topic of meat free diets. This task is identical in design to question 1.

2a, b and c proved just as accessible as question 1. 2d, however, was more demanding, and was answered successfully about 65% of the time. This was challenging, as the information in the text was about what happens if the parents do not respect their children’s wishes, but the question needed candidates to deduce what will happen if they do. Centres should highlight this question to their candidates, in order to demonstrate this type of high demand question.

Q3 Summary completion

This question requires candidates to listen to a short passage and then complete a summary text, selecting from a pool of eight items. The topic of the text was work experience. This is a higher demand question than the previous two and this was reflected in the candidates’ performances. Although the majority of candidates were able to provide the correct responses, 3d proved slightly harder than the others. Many candidates did provide a grammatically possible response, in this case “Mitarbeiter”, however the recording referred to “Betriebe”, which was a synonym of the correct answer “Firmen”. Candidates should be encouraged to think of synonyms of the words provided in the options pool before listening, as the exact words from the options pool are not likely to appear in the text.

Q4 Short Answer Questions

Question 4 requires a written response from candidates, although the quality of the language provided by candidates is not assessed discreetly. Examiners credit responses which communicate the answer to the question in understandable German. It is important that the answer is not ambiguous. Each part is worth 1 or 2 marks. Q4 was about the advantages of sport.

The mean mark for this question was around half marks, suggesting that the question was pitched at the correct level to discriminate between candidates of all abilities. Therefore, this

question is useful to teachers and future candidates as an indicator of the AS Level standards and requirements.

4a was quite frequently answered incorrectly, the most common incorrect answer being “Sport verbessert das Aussehen” or similar. This did not answer the question.

4c was also likely to be wrong. The question asks what a happy person is able to “do”. Therefore, candidates needed to respond with an active verb. Reflexive and passive constructions, therefore, did not communicate the answer clearly enough. Teachers should make candidates aware that verbs such as “tun” and “machen” in questions will require an active verb in the answers.

4d was also often misunderstood - the word “Zusammenhang” required candidates to communicate how posture influences mood. This is another keyword for candidates to be aware of, in order to improve examination technique.

All other parts were generally well answered.

Section B: Reading and Grammar

Q5 Multiple Choice Questions

Candidates choose from four options: A, B, C, or D for each item within the question (the correct response, and three distractors). This text was set on the topic of environmental concerns faced by coastal regions.

The first reading question is intended to be accessible to the majority of candidates and to help place candidates at the lower end of performance into the correct rank order. This question seems to have served that purpose, with between 80% and 90% of candidates scoring marks on each of the questions. 5e was intended to be the most difficult part of the question, and this was reflected in the statistics. The word “wahrscheinlich” in a question, as is present here, should be pointed out to candidates as a signal word for interpretation or inference based on the text.

Q6 Short Answer Questions

This question required short written responses from the candidates, each part was worth 1 mark. The quality of language was not assessed here, and responses were considered in the same way as for question 4. The text handled the issue of “Peer Pressure”.

Candidates mostly seemed to recognise the topic and mainly felt able to respond. Candidates performing at E/U grade level may have felt overwhelmed by parts of this question and so did not respond, but this was quite rare.

The trickiest parts of this question proved to be 6a and 6b.

For 6a, although nearly everybody attempted to answer, many provided an ambiguous answer. For example, “Gruppendruck ist größer” or “Gruppendruck wird immer größer”. In

both instances, the ambiguity surrounded “when” pressure increases, and so this could not be credited.

For 6b, the issue was mainly a lack of precision in the answer. Those who did not score this mark often said that grades were “Nicht wichtig”, which is not true according to the text. Grades are less important, not unimportant. Making candidates aware that this level of precision will be required in high demand questions would be helpful to them.

Q7 Short Answer Questions

This question also required very brief written responses using a single word, a phrase or a short sentence. The marking principles were exactly the same here as for questions 4 and 6. Each part was worth 1 or 2 marks. This question was about home schooling in Austria.

Although many parts of this question were considered to be high demand, candidates performed generally well, with a mean mark of 6.5 out of 8. Candidates seemed to recognise the key vocabulary and were able to deduce the meaning of or challenging vocabulary thanks to their good contextual knowledge.

Whilst most candidates were able to respond well, those working at the grade E level were at times overwhelmed by the demands and left questions blank. Again, this was rare.

7b, similarly to 6b required precision. The idea of “who” needed to be addressed, as required by the word “wen” in the question. Some candidates did not pick up on this, so perhaps reminding them that this particular question word is sometimes declined would be helpful. The key idea of “countryside” also needed to be communicated to gain credit.

7d is an example of how lifting from the text will not score, however, a simple omission of the word “daher” from the text was sufficient manipulation of the language to score the mark.

7e was also challenging for a number of candidates. Again, it should be noted that the verb “tun” is in the question, so the answers must be active verbs. Also, a number of candidates did not demonstrate or communicate an understanding the idea of at the end of paragraph 3 of the text, which said “Wenn die Leistungen des Schülers im Homeschooling seiner Schulstufe nicht entsprechen....”.

Question 8

This question continued on the theme of home schooling in Austria. There were 10 words selected, which were presented in the infinitive form for verbs, or the non-declined form in the case of adjectives.

This question requires absolute precision, so it is not surprising that some candidates find it very challenging. Nearly all candidates had some degree of success in this question, zero marks was very rare.

8g and 8i elicited a lot of interesting responses, due to the spelling irregularity in the adjective “flexibel” and the verb “wechseln”. Examiners were tolerant of candidates who had not correctly changed the spelling, as long as the response in 8g ended with “en” and the adjective was recognisable. The spelling change was considered perhaps more of an

iAL level task than an iAS level task. Also, in 8i, as long as the verb ended in “In” other recognisable spellings of the verb were accepted.

Comparative or normal forms of adjectives were also accepted, when they made sense. For example, 8h “glücklich”, although the correct ending was required.

Examiners insisted on the umlaut in 8j “anfangen” as this is an appropriate demand for iAS level.

Candidates should be encouraged to focus on spelling, as it was not unusual to see the answer to 8f “sein” written as “währe”, which was not accepted because it becomes too similar to “Wahr”, which makes the answer ambiguous.

Section C: Writing

Q9 Essay

This section requires candidates to write a response based on a short, written stimulus. The recommended length for this is 240-280 words, though examiners mark the full response, whatever its length; they do not count the words when marking the essay. It is perfectly possible for an essay of 240 to gain full marks and candidates should avoid writing essays which are excessively long, as they often start to lack organisation or purposefulness. There is no automatic penalty for responses shorter than the recommended length, the content is assessed on its own merits, but candidates should be aware that detail is a key consideration in this assessment. Short answers may not contain this in sufficient amounts for the top marks.

The topic of the essay was “Umweltschutz” and all candidates were able to respond at some level.

The marks for content and communication are awarded based on how well candidates address each of the bullet points in the task and how well they structure and present their ideas.

The ideal answer covers all 4 bullet points in a logical order, making good use of paragraphs, which satisfied the “coherent” element of the mark grids. Candidates, whose responses seemed convincing as an email to the magazine editors were able to satisfy the “purposeful” element of the top mark band. Linking paragraphs well also provided good evidence of purposefulness. Those candidates who did not deviate from the topic and therefore did not include additional information that was not required were also able to satisfy the “pertinent” element of the top mark band.

Nearly all candidates addressed the first two bullet points of the task successfully.

Bullet point 3 did cause some confusion as to the meaning of “Umweltdemonstrationen”. Some candidates misinterpreted this, and their answers became less focussed.

There were a number of candidates who responded well to bullet point 4, with ideas such as paperless offices, “Homeoffice” reducing the need to travel, and the idea that many companies understand the need to present an environmentally friendly image in order to keep customers and make money. However, many candidates provided more general responses to this part of the question. Responses, which detailed general environmentally

friendly activities that apply to more than just the workplace were considered less successful.

Quality of language was, on the whole, very good and often excellent. Teachers can help their candidates to improve their marks in this section by drawing their attention to key words in the mark scheme.

The highest mark band requires a wide range of structures and vocabulary. Ensuring that all of the task bullet points are thoroughly dealt with, and including different ideas when doing so, will also help the candidates to widen the range of vocabulary and structures that they use.

Finally, the marks for language take account of control and accuracy. It is important to make candidates aware of the following areas, if they wish to attain the highest marks for this assessment objective. Pay attention to verb agreements, particularly in longer sentences. Candidates should use an appropriate register for writing, rather than conversational German. Completing regular spelling practices would be helpful, particularly for those candidates who speak more German than they write. Many candidates produced German which seemed to be at the level of a native speaker. Such performances were considered to be above the requirements of the task. However, the expectation for full marks was not perfection. All candidates who demonstrated significant progress from level 2 were awarded full marks for language.

Paper Summary

Based on candidates' performance on this paper, we offer the following advice:

- A careful reading of each part, with attention to the specific question words is important. The angle of the question needs attention.
- Manipulation is often required and lifting from the passage is only successful if the correct information is directly given.
- All German offered needs to communicate unambiguously in the comprehension questions.
- Examiners assess the skills of deduction and inference in this specification, and candidates will not find all the required information presented explicitly in the passages.
- Candidates should offer succinct and direct responses.
- In Q9, candidates should address all four bullet points fully.

Grade Boundaries

There has been much work on the comparability of the speaking units for French, German and Spanish. Senior examiners continue to work closely together to ensure that they apply the common marking guidelines consistently across the three languages. It is possible to find grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, on the website via this link:

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

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