

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Advanced GCE German (H476)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE German (H076)

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F711 Speaking

General Comments

Teacher/examiners conducted the speaking test well, establishing a friendly atmosphere which was conducive to good performance. On the whole, timing of both role-play and topic discussion was of the recommended length, although there were instances where the time allowance was exceeded. Assessment stops after six minutes of the role-play and ten minutes of the topic discussion. Slightly more centres sent CD recordings than used the Repository.

Role-Play

All three role-plays proved to be accessible and equal in terms of difficulty. Candidates often scored high marks on Grid A. Teacher/examiners are becoming familiar with the fact that the Key Points are used to assess Grid A and candidates are conveying the information from the stimulus better.

Role-plays were most effective when:

1 Teacher/examiners

- had prepared the Examiner's Sheet and the Candidate's Sheet thoroughly
- encouraged candidates to supply details from the stimulus material by using open questions
- did **not** supply the information which candidates were intended to supply
- listened carefully and elicited further information, if they recognised that candidates had omitted parts of the stimulus material
- listened attentively, reacted to candidate responses and suggested further stimuli designed to extract more information
- used the correct form of address
- followed up the final two bullet point questions with *warum*, giving candidates the opportunity to be inventive and imaginative.

2 Candidates

- changed the word order and/or verb ending in the initial two questions
- conveyed the stimulus material systematically and chronologically
- took the initiative and used their imagination
- **only** wrote down key words in the preparation time and spoke spontaneously, rather than relying on too extensive notes.

Comments on Individual Questions

Role-play A: Film Club

The two initial questions were straightforward and most candidates asked them correctly. Successful candidates understood that they were members of a film club in England. (Not all role-plays involve recommending situations to the examiner)
Successful candidates were able to convey information from the text such as: have a great time / 1972 / films of varying kinds / unusual / town hall / chat. It was rewarding when candidates used initiative, and some invented and named a relevant sounding website. The final two bullet points were accessible and most candidates were able to respond to questions asking about their film preferences and whether cinema is better than DVD.

Role-play B: Suffolk

Candidates responded well to this visitor attraction and asked the initial two questions successfully. They provided relevant details such as: walk along the fascinating coast / an inspiration for world-famous artists / throughout the year / exhibition of many works / guided walks / spend a few nights / seaside resort / cycle paths. The final two extension bullet points were done well.

Role-play C: The Garden Centre

In this role-play about a part-time job, candidates had little difficulty with the initial two questions and succeeded when they

- recognised that they were thinking of applying for this job, rather than doing it already or recommending it for the examiner. It is vital that both candidates and teacher/examiners understand their roles.
- supplied details such as: successful firm / on a regular basis / throughout the year / in the main shop / cash tills / filling shelves / gardening products / work out in the open / willing to do a variety of tasks / cope with manual work / discounted canteen / work clothing is provided / complete an application form online.

The final bullet points elicited mostly sound and sensible responses.

Topic Discussion

Candidates are required to offer a topic based on the AS topic list, and many successful conversations took place, with spontaneous interchange of ideas between teacher/examiner and candidate. The quality of language this series was good. Candidates should be encouraged to select a topic which is relevant to a German-speaking country, which engages their interest and which they can research in depth. The headings on the Oral Topic Form should be different aspects relating to the same topic and interconnected.

Grid D (Ideas, Opinions, Relevance) awards a maximum of ten marks for the ability to convey ideas and opinions, supported by factual information referring to Germany / Austria / Switzerland. Successful discussions in this series were based on information relating to the AS topics/sub-topics and also to a German-speaking country.

Grid E1 (Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness) offers a maximum of ten marks for the ability to use German naturally, fluently and genuinely spontaneously. Candidates who are in charge of the conversation and can “keep the momentum going” are likely to achieve a mark of at least 7-8. The headings outlined on the Oral Topic Form should be followed in sequential order. Candidates are not penalised if a heading is omitted, as long as the conversation has been successful. Discussions should last nine to ten minutes. Centres should be aware that overlong discussions do not bring candidates any advantages, as assessment stops after ten minutes.

Spontaneity is vital. One crucial role of teacher/examiners is to react to statements made by candidates and to challenge statements or ask for further clarification. Those candidates who can respond spontaneously and fluently to such interventions score highly on this grid. Good teacher/examiners encourage many genuine and spontaneous interchanges. This happens in a natural way when discussions have not been over-rehearsed.

Grid C1 (Quality of language) awards up to 5 marks for a combination of accuracy and range. Candidates who mostly offer accurate basics but little ambitious language are restricted to 2/5. Those offering a good range of ambitious structures in accurate German are rewarded with higher marks.

Grid G (Pronunciation and intonation) (5 marks). Candidates with good German pronunciation and intonation are rewarded with high marks.

Recordings can be submitted in a variety of formats, the preferred one being mp3. Most recordings this series were audible, although some candidates' voices could only be heard with the volume control set at maximum and with headphones pressed against ears. This is unsatisfactory, and centres are advised to check that the equipment used is fit for purpose and volume levels are satisfactory for playback. As a general rule, equipment should be set up so that the candidates are recorded for loud playback; this often means having the microphone nearer the candidate than the teacher/examiner.

F712 German: Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments

The paper produced a full range of marks. The majority of candidates were well-prepared and produced responses of a high standard. There were few instances of candidates misinterpreting the rubric or failing to attempt questions.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A – Listening and Writing

Task 1

This task about the sport of floorball involved choosing the correct ending, out of a choice of three, to ten sentences. It proved to be an accessible listening and provided a positive beginning to the paper for the majority of candidates.

Task 2

This gap-fill task about online price comparison websites proved to be much more challenging but most managed to place at least half of the words correctly. There was no distinct pattern to the errors although *unzuverlässige* appeared to be a vocabulary item that many candidates were not familiar with.

Task 3

Candidates clearly understood the gist of this interview about holiday jobs but sometimes gave insufficiently precise answers to gain the marks. An example of this was in (f) where candidates were asked 'what job?' and a significant number answered 'canoe tour', which is clearly not a job and only part of the answer. There were unexpected problems with the comprehension of *Verantwortung*, needed for (b), and *Verwandten*, *Bekannten* needed for (c). It was pleasing that so many candidates recognised the *je mehr... desto* construction required for the answer to (e)(ii) but few candidates were precise enough to gain all three marks in (g).

Task 4

Most candidates were capable of communicating the content of the letter, although some lost marks unnecessarily by omitting elements of the message. There are often ways of transferring meaning successfully that do not exactly mirror the English but it is vital to include all the information. Some candidates used *Urlaub* for holidays, which was not the appropriate word in this context and the conjunction 'as' was not always accurately communicated; *weil* would have been perfectly acceptable. *Küche*, despite being GCSE vocabulary and in the listening task, caused problems for a surprising number of candidates. *Kuchen* was not acceptable. A significant number of candidates lost communication points in the last sentence for omitting 'personal' and 'suitable'. Many candidates clearly could not recall a word for 'suitable' and wrote *einen guten Job* which was not accepted. *Den richtigen Job* or *einen Job, der gut für uns wäre* would have been fine. *Beruf* was also considered to be inappropriate in this context.

Word order and tenses were quite good but there was inaccuracy in cases, genders and agreements.

Section B – Reading and Writing

Task 5

Many candidates identified nearly all of the 10 correct sentences referring to a film review. (c) was the incorrect option most frequently ticked, presumably because *unauffällig* is quite a challenging item of vocabulary.

Task 6

Most candidates understood this text about Slow Food and gave appropriate answers to the questions. The exception was (e), as *womit* was very often read as just simply *wo*. The answers require manipulation of the text in order to give a direct answer to the question and the accuracy with which candidates do this influences their marks for Quality of Language. Most candidates gained marks for communication by locating the necessary words but did not always make the grammatical changes which would have given them higher marks for Quality of Language. Examples of this are: (b) *frisch und regional* involved changing the adjectival ending, (f) *die Vögel* involved a change of case and (g) *auf dem Biobauernhof* required a change of preposition.

Task 7

(a) Most candidates understood the main points of this text and managed to communicate about 7 points out of the 13 they had to choose from. Some candidates confused the happiness of the parents with happiness of the children and failed to recognise that stress was caused by insufficient money, not just the process of buying shoes.

(b) This question could not be misinterpreted and most candidates kept their ideas on track. Some candidates seemed a little surprised to be asked whether they would like children, especially male candidates, but without exception they rallied to the challenge and many wrote thoughtful, detailed and interesting responses, for which they scored high marks. The less successful essays were those where the candidate only looked at one side of the question.

Most candidates had sufficient vocabulary and structure to articulate their ideas. On this occasion there was little need for topic specific vocabulary. The majority of candidates had a good range of vocabulary and attempted to introduce variety into their essays through the use of complex structures. However, there were errors in agreements, commonly used verbs, plural forms, capitalisation and spelling.

F714 Listening, Reading and Writing

General Comments

The entry, as is to be expected in January, was relatively small. Most candidates coped well with the demands of the Listening and Reading sections but not so well with the demand of the essays. The four or five months teaching still to come in Year 13 before the June paper will, hopefully, give candidates the practice in essay-writing skills they need to perform more evenly across the paper.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Listening and Writing

Task 1

All candidates completed this task and there was a wide range of marks. Few candidates failed to gain marks for (a) and (f). Question (c) was found to be most difficult, with many candidates missing the second mark through the omission of the word 'out' in 'dying out'. Question (g) was also found to be more challenging.

Task 2

Again, this task discriminated well. All candidates completed the task, many very successfully. Question (a) required the changing of 'vor' in the text to 'seit' for the answer to be a direct answer to the question, and not all candidates managed this. Question (b) was straightforward, although the understanding/transcription of 'Zonen' caused occasional difficulty. Question (c) was usually answered correctly, although a few candidates' answers were too concise to gain the mark and did not actually answer the question. In (d) the most common error was in the transcription of 'Sanität'. Questions (f) and (g) were intended to be more challenging, as they demanded more than simple transcription. The understanding or spelling of 'Märsche' was the main difficulty in question (h). Spelling 'psychologisch' convincingly was the main problem in (i). Questions (j), (l) and (m) were answered well. Candidates who simply transcribed without using an infinitive did not gain the mark for (n). By far the hardest question was (k), because the majority of candidates did not realise that the direct answer to 'Wen?' must be a person.

Quality of Language

The quality of language mark was affected if answers were not syntactically correct. Some answers required a one word response. On other questions, although candidates might still get the comprehension mark, they gained better language marks if the response was a little longer. For example, the question word 'Warum?', in (c), enabled candidates to demonstrate their mastery of 'weil' with the verb at the end.

Section B: Reading and Writing

Text 1 Berlin – eine gespaltene Stadt

Task 3

This was a nonverbal task, completed by all, with a high degree of success.

Task 4

This produced a mixed response, with a range of marks. Candidates needed to read the text carefully and manipulate the language to make the sentences read correctly. For (c), for example, the task was to match the noun 'Empfänger' with the verb 'empfangen', and then put it into the past tense. This was achieved successfully by many candidates. Synonyms for 'empfangen' were of course accepted. In this task it was sometimes necessary to read on to be aware of the following questions. The answers to (g) and (h) were interdependent, for example, and followed on logically from the previous sentence.

Task 5

The majority of candidates performed well on this task showing good understanding of both the text and the questions. Questions that caused the most difficulty were (d), which required an answer using an active verb to demonstrate understanding, and also (i). Candidates who gained this mark really did show that they had grasped the sense of the text.

Text 2 ALIAS – dein Freund und Helfer

Task 6

The majority of candidates performed well in this task. The text was clearly accessible and candidates were familiar with both the language and the concepts.

Task 7

It is often the first paragraph that has to be transferred into English, but not always. Many candidates conveyed the meaning well. When marking, the use of English is also taken into account and marks were lost because of inaccurate punctuation and spelling. The vocabulary was generally known to candidates, the main omission being 'Botschaft'.

Task 8

This was found to be more challenging. Unexpectedly, many candidates did not explain 'künftig' satisfactorily, as they gave 'bald' as their answer, which was not accepted as correct.

Task 9

Candidates coped well with this task, and there was a range of marks. The majority were able to manipulate the language satisfactorily to make the sentences read correctly.

Quality of Language

Candidates who gained a higher mark demonstrated the ability to answer questions fully and directly and to use complex language when required.

Section C: Writing

The most popular titles were 10 and 12; several candidates also chose 16 or 17. There were a few responses to 13 and 15 but there were no or practically no responses to 11 and 14.

A number of candidates knew very little about the subject they were writing about, and had perhaps chosen the wrong essay title. Possibly because they were only halfway through their Year 13 course, they had not covered the topic areas thoroughly. Consequently marks for Grid N were often in the 3-4 band, with the essay fitting the description: "Includes some relevant information but does not always address the requirements of the task". Grid O marks tended to be slightly higher, but few candidates appeared to have planned their essays before beginning to write, and the structure of the writing was often lacking in control, focus and clarity.

Overall the level of language was encouraging, with many candidates showing the ability to use complex language to express themselves comprehensibly, if not always absolutely accurately.

Q 10

This was very popular. There was no correct answer to the question, but candidates were expected to address measures to help people through unemployment and perhaps to get back to work rather than measures to curb unemployment or reasons for unemployment. Unfortunately a number of candidates decided to focus on the latter, which meant that their essays were largely irrelevant. Most candidates had correct knowledge of unemployment figures in Germany but there were also a few sweeping and wrong statements about the very high level of unemployment.

Better candidates were able to support their answers by knowledge of *Arbeitslosengeld* and *Hartz IV*, *1 Euro Jobs*, *Tafeln* and community projects to help the poor / unemployed.

If candidates wanted to write about unemployment but had not prepared these particular aspects, they could, perhaps, have considered answering Question 17 instead, which offered the scope to write about any issues they liked.

Q 12

Here also there was a lack of focus on reducing energy consumption and much general discussion of alternative energy sources, which was not what the task required. The context of the *Atomausstieg* is, of course, important and made a good introduction, but, unfortunately many candidates did not have the knowledge to proceed beyond this.

Better candidates were able to use their knowledge of recycling to illustrate energy conservation. There was little knowledge shown of the government's 'Energiewende' and 'Stromsparinitiative' although 'Passivhäuser' were often mentioned as a good example of energy efficiency.

Again, Question 17 might have been a better vehicle for candidates who knew more about alternative energy sources than energy efficiency measures.

Q 13

The few candidates who chose this question had varying degrees of success in adapting their style to addressing the needs of primary school children.

Q 15

Responses to this question were not always successful as they lacked specific detail about schools in Germany.

Q 16

Works chosen all happened to be books, although candidates could equally well have written about a film. Candidates showed an impressive knowledge of their texts and attempted to answer the question relevantly. The impression often given was that they were thinking it out as they went along, and some of these essays, in particular, became very long and rambling. It would have been helpful to these candidates to jot down ideas and write a plan before embarking on the essay.

The most popular texts were *Die Verwandlung*, *Biedermann und die Brandstifter* and *Der Besuch der alten Dame*.

Q 17

As mentioned, this title gave candidates the opportunity to be quite free in their answers, and they chose all sorts of subjects, from the environment, immigration policy, benefits and unemployment to taxation. Not all candidates read the question carefully, however, and some said they were the President (rather than chancellor); some wrote it as an election manifesto, which only partially fulfilled the task set.

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