



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel

International Advanced Level

In German (WGN0) Paper 4

Research, Understanding and Written
Response

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Publications Code WGN04_01_1906_ER

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Outline

Candidates had been well prepared for this paper and were able to deal with the topic areas covered. Most could attempt all parts of the paper, with only a few omitting some more challenging questions. Whilst many fared well with the comprehension questions in Sections A and B and were able to rely on their own experience of the language to select relevant detail and draw conclusions, Section C provided more of a challenge.

Section A – Listening

Hörtext 1 (Erdbeben) was an accessible start to the listening section of the paper and 3 or 4 marks was the general profile of candidates. Some found parts (b) and (c) more demanding where careful listening was required to make the link between *zur selben Zeit* in the recording and *gleichzeitig* in part (b) and *keinerlei Alarm* in the question and the clues embedded in the recording in (c).

Hörtext 2 (Videokameras an Schulen) was generally well answered with only part (b) causing occasional problems when candidates did not make the link between *illegal* and *verboten*.

Hörtext 3 (Eine Schumuckdesignerin) required candidates to choose the correct word from a box to complete four sentences. The majority of candidates managed to complete the sentence grammatically, but did not always choose the correct word. Often they thought that the designer had broken off her textile studies early or that the offcuts from her workbench were thrown away rather than re-used. However, most managed to identify *einmalig* in (b) and *Ideen* in (d).

Hörtext 1 (Freiwillige Arbeit) presents candidates with a longer interview with questions about the content in German. It is important for candidates to be familiar with a range of interrogative forms so that they answer the question which is being asked rather than the one which they imagine they are reading. A number of candidates misread question (b) which asked how Herr Sigl tried to ensure the future of voluntary work. Instead they gave an answer which explained why he thought it was important.

The inference at (e) was lost on all but the most astute listeners. Whilst the text stated that that Herr Sigl could attend to uninjured people after a catastrophe. The question required the opposite to be stated, ie that he was not therefore presumably not allowed to attend to injured patients.

Targeted lifts are sometimes possible in this section, but more usually it is sensible for candidates to attempt an answer in their own words which reflect their understanding of the spoken passage. However, short answers only are required as long as the full detail is given. For example in (d), many missed scoring a mark because they omitted the necessary detail *pro Woche* from their answer.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Again, candidates made a confident start to this section often gaining full marks for Question 5 (*Ausländische Studenten in Deutschland*). Part (c) proved the most challenging

and some candidates wrongly assumed that the foreign ministry wanted foreign students to be sent home.

Question 6 (*Verstädterung in Österreich*) proved to be the most difficult text in the reading section of the paper. Marks were often lost when candidates missed the exact detail in the text or were unable to express what they had understood succinctly. In (a) it was necessary to state explicitly that the conference was seeking solutions to the problems of increasing urbanisation rather than merely discussing the issue. In (e) the best answer was that the ZLT had a common goal; the link to why it set a good example was made with the linking of the first two sentences with *damit*. In this whole question, candidates tended to rely on direct lifts from the text which usually did not answer the question accurately enough. Some candidates were tempted to write far too much in their answers. Reference to the published mark scheme will show the essence of each answer. Longer answers can often miss the point or may start with a wrong detail before eventually giving the correct answer which is therefore negated by what has come first.

The same principles of how to go about answering questions in German applies to Question 7 (*Sicherheit kinderleicht*). A certain amount of thought and reflection needs to be applied before candidates commit their answer to paper. In part (a) for example, less successful candidates had not noticed the difference between the past which was asked about in the question and the present state of affairs: they often wrongly assumed that Maria always had to go home alone which was not the case. In (c) some less able candidates simply repeated the idea of the new lock being quickly installed which was already in the question (*schnell*) rather than look for other reasons for ease of installation. The other parts of the question caused few problems when candidates identified the correct section of text.

Question 8 was a challenge even for some clearly fluent speakers of German.

8(a): the transfer of meaning from an infinitive clause with *um/zu* to a subordinate clause with *damit* was only successful when the verb at the end of the new clause was correct.

8(b): this was generally correct.

8(c): some candidates failed to spot the comma at the end of the new stem and therefore failed to produce the required relative clause with an adjective with no ending.

8(d): this proved taxing for even the best with only a minority of candidates able to produce a comparative adjective such as *bedeutungsvoller* to form a new sentence.

8(e): although many managed to rephrase this using *indem*, some were hampered by an inability to produce the correct present tense form of the verb.

8(f): as a sign of the times, both genitive plural and dative plural were accepted after *wegen*. However, the endings on the adjective and noun had to be correct to secure the mark.

8(g): the comma in the stem gave the clue to the fact that the sentence had to be rephrased with an infinitive clause with *zu*. Most candidates managed this.

8(h): this was a more demanding manipulation of language which was only successful when candidates started the new relative clause with *man*.

8(i): the passive required in the relative clause was achieved only by the best. Although *entwickelt wurde* or *entwickelt worden war* was the desired outcome, the statal passive with *war* was also accepted.

8(j): while most candidates managed to produce an appropriate verb form at the end of the new clause, the manipulation of *Türschlosses* caused problems for less able candidates.

Section C

It is crucial that candidates understand the nature of what is expected in the final essay. Since marks awarded for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical analysis, Organisation and development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of language (out of 5), it is important that some examination time is spent planning the response to the specific question asked. While some candidates clearly have been trained to do this, others write fluent essays in German of a very high quality which score low marks for the other two categories because their response lacks relevance or is simply a regurgitated version of everything they know about the topic or work.

Most importantly, candidates should realise that the thrust of the questions set is mostly in the second part. The descriptive first part is simply a *Sprungbrett* to allow them to show relevant knowledge resulting from their reading or research. To access the higher mark bands they must engage in an analysis of the issues. Essays which relied too much on description and less on evaluation fared poorly.

Geografisches Gebiet

Since this is a topic which has been researched by the candidate, it is assumed that there will be relevant supporting evidence for the points made in the essay. The more common option was 9 (a). However, some candidates, for example writing about Switzerland, simply wrote a description of the countries geographical situation which read like an attractive holiday brochure. To score a high mark it was necessary to make links between the geographical features and the success of the region for example by quoting statistics about the number of tourist who came to ski or the exact benefits for the country of being in such close proximity to the countries of the European Union without being a member state. Essays on demographic change in (b) tended to resort to bemoaning or exhorting the influx of immigrants without ever given exact details about numbers or justifying the points of view made in the essay.

Geschichtliche Studien

Many of the essays on historical subjects were full of relevant information and managed to present facts to support general ideas and to draw conclusions required by the questions set. However, it is important to remember that the essay must focus on Germany rather than be a more all-embracing essay such as would be written for a history exam. Some candidates who chose to answer 10 (b) wrote convincingly about the extent to which Hitler and his party had achieved their goals, but often added irrelevant detail, sometimes at great length, about Mussolini and Stalin. Nevertheless, there were some impressive responses with a wealth of knowledge about the subject, but few which achieved a mark in the top box for Critical analysis, Organisation and Development since the essay tended to ramble rather than adopt an analytical stance with a clear argument leading to a well-stated conclusion.

Literatur

It is not necessary to introduce the essay with general information about the genesis of the work. In fact, this produced a poor start when it appeared. Better candidates provided an opening paragraph which identified the issues to be addressed in the essay with direct reference to the essay question set.

The most common text studied was still *Der Besuch der alten Dame* with a fairly even split between 11 (a) and 11 (b). In both essays, it was necessary to select relevant evidence from the play to support the argument put forward. Those who wrote with conviction about the *Bürgermeister* often were able to track his progress from a scheming ambitious politician to a ruthless and cowardly murderer. Essays about the use of names in the play often focused only on Claire, but lacked an analysis of the significance of the dehumanisation of individuals by the removal of their names.

Film

Answers were given to all five films in the specification and it was evident that candidates had enjoyed studying these. The most popular choice was *Almanya - Willkommen in Deutschland*. Whereas knowledge of the details of the film was sound and candidates were usually able to select relevant information to describe the comic elements in 19 (a) or the irony in the film's title in 19 (b), there was often an over-reliance on plot rather than on underlying issues.

The best essays were in clear paragraph form with a main sentence to introduce the paragraph, followed by several examples. A final evaluative sentence often referred back to the essay title in some way.

Conclusion

To prepare for success in this paper, candidates should:

- familiarise themselves with all topic areas listed in the specification
- develop as wide a range of vocabulary as possible

- practise reading and listening to passages of German with a view to extracting the most important information and become used to rewording the details in the written or spoken text succinctly
- become familiar with German grammatical usage, concentrating on complex verb forms and the fine details of declension of adjectives and nouns
- study their chosen topic, literary text or film in detail
- practise the skill of planning and writing an essay which focuses on analysis rather than on narrative.