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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Subsidiary Level  
In German (WGN01/01)  
Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response

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## International AS Level in German WGN01 January 2021

This is an 8–10 minute assessment in two sections that total 40 marks with 15 minutes preparation time.

In advance of the examination, the student chooses two of the four specified general topic areas (GTA) to prepare.

The GTAs are:

- Youth matters
- Lifestyle, health and fitness
- Environment and travel
- Education and employment.

A randomisation grid informs the teacher, which of the two chosen areas will be tested. The student is told this immediately before the preparation time begins.

**Section A** requires students to respond to four set questions on a stimulus related to one of the student's chosen general topic areas (GTA).

**Section B** requires the teacher/examiner to engage the student in a discussion that, although still relating to the same GTA and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus.

Stimulus cards are provided for each area. These form the assessment for section A. Before starting the examination, the candidates have 15 minutes to prepare with the stimulus card provided. They may make notes of up to one side of A4 sheet of paper in this time, which they may refer to during the examination.

In Section A, the candidate is asked four questions relating to the stimulus card. These questions are mandatory and may be repeated, but for the purpose of fair assessment across all centres, they **must not be re-phrased**. The first two questions relate specifically to information in the stimulus material, the second two relate to aspects of the sub-topic, upon which the stimulus text is based.

For question 1, it is expected that the candidate will manipulate the wording of the text in order to arrive at a complete answer to the question. A lift of information from the stimulus text will not provide sufficient information to answer the question completely. This question targets information in the first paragraph of the stimulus text. There are three possible elements to the answer to question 1 in the first paragraph and candidates should try to include as many of these elements as they are able.

For question 2, it is expected that the candidate will find the answer in the second paragraph. It will be necessary to manipulate the language found in the stimulus text to arrive at a complete answer.

For questions 3 and 4 it is expected that the candidate will give answers which are full and detailed, drawing on the research that they undertook on the GTA, in preparation for the examination.

The candidate's understanding of this stimulus-specific topic area is marked out of four. The four marks are not directly allocated as one mark per question. The statement in the mark grid, which best matches the entire performance of section A, will dictate the mark awarded.

In Section B, the teacher examiner must initiate a discussion about the general topic area chosen by the randomisation grid. The teacher examiner must move away from the sub-topic of the Stimulus Card to more general discussion of the topic area and its linked subtopics. The sub-topics of each area are stated in the specification. The students must attempt to show a clear understanding of the chosen topic, and use the research they completed in advance of the examination in order to do this, ideally citing sources they have used in their research.

The candidate's knowledge and understanding of the general topic area is marked out of a total of ten. The marks of five for Quality of language (Accuracy), five for Quality of Language (Range of lexis) and sixteen 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, examiners follow the guidance stated in the "Unit 1 Further Marking Guidance" which is available to centres via the Edexcel website. The examiners will stop assessing tests beyond ten minutes, and will base their judgements on the performance offered up to that time limit.

### **Choice of General Topic Area (GTA)**

As in previous examination sessions, the most popular combination of topic areas chosen by candidates was once again Youth Matters combined with Lifestyle, health and fitness. Lifestyle, health and fitness was the topic area tested most often, in almost a third of tests overall. It was pleasing, however, to note an increase in the number of candidates choosing the topics of Environment and travel and Education and employment. There is perhaps more specialised topic-specific related to these two GTAs, and so candidates who commit to these topics tend to score highly for Quality of language (Range of lexis). Choosing these two GTAs also generally allows candidates to demonstrate very good or excellent knowledge of their selected General topic

area. Good candidates are able to use sophisticated lexical items when talking about the topic areas of Youth matters and Lifestyle, health and fitness, but weaker students tend to employ rather pedestrian vocabulary, often drawing on their IGCSE knowledge, offering anecdotal evidence, or talking about personal preferences when responding to examiner questions, which can restrict access to the higher mark bands.

## **Application on the Marking Criteria**

### **Understanding Stimulus Specific AO2**

To arrive at a mark, examiners consider primarily the mark band descriptions, rather than the number of “correct” answers. A response attains full marks when the student correctly identifies **all three elements to question 1**. To respond to Question 2, the candidate has to manipulate the language in the stimulus text sufficiently, rather than answering from their general knowledge or personal experience. This may require the manipulation of pronouns, verbs and tenses, as well as summarising information in the paragraphs, without including irrelevant details, or details which suggest that the question and the text have not been fully understood.

The candidate should then also go on to provide developed, justified answers to questions 3 and 4, which consider more than one implication and use examples to illustrate answers.

### **Quality of Language - Accuracy**

To access three or more marks, students need to show accuracy in basic principles, such as subject/verb agreements, tense formation and word order. At three marks, communication may be impeded at times, either due to pronunciation issues, or grammatical errors. To access full marks, communication must be clear at all times, and the student will demonstrate the ability to pronounce German well enough to be understood without undue difficulty. There may be minor errors in case agreements and complex structures, as well as the occasional major error, but these will be outweighed by a generally accurate response.

### **Quality of Language - Range of Lexis**

To assess the performance in this area, the grammar list in the specification is considered, and examiners listen for a wide range of specified structures in order to award the higher marks. In addition to this, the GTA is important, as

examiners are standardised to listen for and reward a range of **topic-specific** lexis.

### **Spontaneity and Development**

Candidates are assessed on the ability to communicate spontaneously in speech. Spontaneous use of language occurs when students use their knowledge of structures, lexis and the GTA and apply it appropriately in response to questions. The discussion should develop naturally, and should build on the answers to previous questions. It should not be a list of pre-determined questions devised in advance of the examination.

A well-developed discussion is one where the candidate expands on an idea, justifying, illustrating and clarifying their points, and where the teacher examiner responds to what the candidate says. The teacher examiner might, for example, ask, "Wie meinen Sie das?", "Warum?" or "Können Sie ein Beispiel geben?". When giving examples, students should draw on their research, not on anecdotal evidence or personal experience, as doing so will not enable them to demonstrate understanding of the GTA.

### **Knowledge and Understanding – General Topic Area**

It is expected that candidates will undertake preparatory work in their two chosen topic areas in advance of the examination. There must be evidence of knowledge and understanding, beyond what is considered general knowledge and awareness, in order to satisfy the criteria for the highest marks in this section. Good or excellent knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated by referring to independent research which has taken place in preparation for the examination. This could take the form of mentioning a statistic or referring to a named source, such as an article online, which the student has used.

Knowledge which is based entirely within the student's personal experience is not sufficient to satisfy the terms "many" or a "wealth" of ideas, as stated in the mark grid. Many candidates – even linguistically very able ones - rely on anecdotal or general knowledge to illustrate their ideas, and they can only be credited in the "some relevant ideas" band of this mark grid.

### **Specific Comments on Stimulus Card tasks**

Youth matters C

Cards 1A/B

Question 1 prompted candidates to reflect on the positive aspects of different generations living together in a multi-generational house. The question was unambiguously understood by all candidates, and the majority responded with the

required 3 items from the first paragraph. Questions 2, 3 and 4 prompted candidates to reflect on the wider issues of multi-generational living and on the issues of living on your own. These questions were understood well by the vast majority of candidates and most demonstrated a good or excellent understanding of the stimulus text and the wider topic area.

#### Youth matters Cards 2A/B

The stimulus text was based on a successful young fashion blogger. Whilst the text was understood well, not all candidates identified 3 items of information from the first paragraph in response to question 1. Many candidates who attempted this card appeared to believe that one item is sufficient. Question 2, however, was competently answered by all candidates. Questions 3 and 4 on cards 2A and 2B that prompted candidates to explore the wider importance of fashion, generated some interesting and individual candidate responses. These often included good justifications and development but occasionally drew on personal experiences.

#### Lifestyle, health and fitness Cards 1A/B

The stimulus text referred to the temporary closure of city streets to allow children to play outside and neighbours to meet. The text was generally well understood by candidates of all abilities, although not all offered the required 3 items of information in response to Question 1. Question 3 on card 1A, which prompted candidates to reflect on the advantages for children of living in an urban area, drew some interesting candidate responses and was thus more successful than Question 3 on card 1B, which prompted candidates to offer ideas on how city life could be improved.

#### Lifestyle, health and fitness Cards 2A/B

This card, based on a stimulus text of exploring Vienna on foot, proved to be successful in the majority of candidate cases. Candidates responded with a high degree of success to all four questions. Once again it was noted that despite their good understanding of the source text, however, not all candidates offer the required 3 items from the first paragraph in response to Question 1. Questions 3 and 4 on cards A and B were equally successful in prompting candidates to think about the wider aspects of urban life, and provoked some individual and interesting candidate responses.

#### Environment and travel Cards 1A/B

Although this topic area was selected on fewer occasions than the topic areas of Youth matters or Lifestyle, Health and Fitness, this stimulus card on German youth hostels was particularly successful for those candidates who attempted it. Questions 1 and 2 were answered correctly by the vast majority of candidates. The final two questions on cards A and B encouraged candidates to suggest suitable holiday types for young people, nominate reasons to justify overseas trips, debate the merits of holidays in the home country, or think about what is involved in planning a holiday. These questions produced extremely interesting and individual

responses that allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and research into the topic area.

#### Environment and travel Cards 2A/B

This card related to the environmental impact of living in a solar-energy home. Perhaps because of its topic-specific vocabulary that prompted candidates to read the stimulus text very carefully, questions 1 and 2 produced successful responses from most candidates. Question 3A, which asked candidates to suggest how children could be encouraged to save energy, proved to be more successful than Question 4A, which asked candidates to outline which form of renewable energy they considered to be important and why. Question 3B, which required candidates to justify whether the individual or industries should do more for the environment, produced some unique and complex responses that helped candidates attain the higher mark bands, especially where candidates made good efforts to draw on topic-specific vocabulary.

#### Education and employment Cards 1A/B

The introductory paragraph about opportunities for work in Swiss farming was understood well by all candidates who attempted it, with the majority of candidates offering 3 items of information in response to Question 1. Questions 2, 3 and 4 on both Stimulus Cards were generally also understood well. Candidates debated with considerable confidence the difficulties of jobs in farming, their predictions for jobs that will lose in importance in the future, and the potential disadvantages of holiday jobs.

#### Education and employment Cards 2A/B

This card referred to the practicalities of combining a part-time job with school work. Although the stimulus text was understood well, question 1 proved a little problematic as not all candidates offered the required 3 items of information from the first paragraph. Question 4 B, which asked candidates to debate whether university studies should be started immediately after graduation from school, produced some specifically interesting responses from linguistically able candidates.

### Summary

For subsequent series, the following points should be noted.

- During their preparation period, teacher examiners should not allow candidates access to the questions they will ask.
- Rephrasing questions for section A will render a candidate's response void, as it may give an unfair advantage. It is, however, acceptable to change 'Sie' to 'du'.
- Question 1 on the stimulus card refers to the first paragraph only and will **have three possible elements for the answer**, which must be



communicated by the student in his or her own words, in order to be considered a full answer. Question 2 will relate to the second paragraph, and the student must manipulate the language from the text in order to answer the question. Questions 3 and 4 must be developed in order to be considered as complete answers.

- Pronunciation is an important aspect of the accuracy mark, and centres should encourage their students to develop their pronunciation skills, in order not to impede communication.
- Knowledge and understanding (GTA) must show evidence of research into the topics chosen, ideally citing at least one source. General knowledge, or personal experiences alone, will not demonstrate “many” ideas or a “wealth” of ideas, which are required for marks of 7 or higher.
- The question words on the stimulus card are important – for example “inwiefern” must have an answer which addresses this particular question word, i.e. both sides of the argument. A comparison question must show an ability to compare in the answer.
- Topic-specific lexis and the specified grammar contents are important considerations when awarding marks for Quality of Language (Range of lexis).
- Very able candidates should be discouraged from giving overly long answers in response to the four questions in Section A, as this will limit the time available for the discussion in Section B and will have an impact on the overall marks that can be awarded for Understanding (General topic area).
- Section B should be a discussion. It is not good practice for the teacher examiner to pose a question, for the candidate to reply – sometimes at length – and for the teacher examiner to ask another question on a different sub-topic. Fewer topics being covered in Section B usually leads to a more natural and in-depth discussion that will allow candidates to access the higher mark bands for Spontaneity and for Understanding (General topic area).
- The questions asked in Section B should relate to the same General Topic Area as the stimulus card that has been covered, as otherwise the mark that can be awarded to Understanding (General topic area) will be adversely affected.
- Questions should be challenging enough for candidates to demonstrate that they have moved on from IGCSE level;. Asking about the candidate’s personal preferences or interests, for example, does not achieve this, nor does inviting candidates to offer long lists of vocabulary items or long pre-learned sequences of speech.
- Even in the case of large centres, it is helpful if examiners do not work from a “list” and refrain from asking identical questions to candidates of different linguistic abilities. Instead, by commenting on individual candidate responses, and challenging candidates’ answers, the teacher examiner will give their candidates the chance to access the higher mark bands for Spontaneity and for Understanding (General topic area).

The examiners marking on this 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. The hard work that goes into preparing candidates for examinations is also appreciated and we seek to reward this whenever possible.

