

Report on the Units

June 2008

3862/7862/MS/R/08

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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 syllabus 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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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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Advanced GCE German (7862)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE German (3862)

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2661 Speaking

General Comments

The majority of candidates presenting themselves for the AS speaking examination had prepared themselves at least adequately. Many teacher/examiners set a welcoming tone and gave their candidates every opportunity to do their best. Timings were mostly good, and many teacher/examiners used a beeper to time the examinations correctly. This beeper should not be placed near the microphone for obvious reasons. The use of CD recordings rather than cassettes is increasing.

Role-play

Most teacher/examiners adhered to the Randomisation Sheet sequence on page 2 of the Examiner's Booklet, and consequently role-plays A and C were the ones most frequently heard. Most candidates used the *Hilfsvokabeln*, although pronunciation of some of these items was not always good. It is essential that teacher/examiners use the same vocabulary as the candidates are expecting to hear.

Markers and moderators reported that the four role-plays this series were of an even level of difficulty. Some candidates found difficulty in wording the initial two questions correctly, as in previous series. Criterion 1A assesses response to the stimulus material. Some centres still seem to be unaware that a brief summary of the text is inadequate. Many candidates were able to provide enough information to score 3/5, but the higher marks can only be awarded if all or virtually all details are conveyed. Some markers noted an increased frequency of teacher/examiners not eliciting further information from the stimulus material. Candidates who offer a good range of structures and vocabulary gain access to the higher marks on 1C, provided that the basics are also sound. Unfortunately, serious errors involving basic verb forms, word order and subject/verb agreement are still frequent. It was apparent that some candidates had been encouraged to translate whole sentences of the stimulus material. Such candidates seemed unable to respond well to questions probing for further information. Centres should strongly discourage the writing of full sentence translations on the Candidate's Sheet during the preparation time. Candidates should make brief notes and use the stimulus material itself during the actual examination. Relatively few candidates gave a really convincing, imaginative performance full of initiative (criterion 1B), but those who did scored highly. Many simply responded only adequately to questions posed.

It has been stated (probably ad nauseam) in reports to centres and at Inset meetings that teacher/examiners have a vital role to play in exploiting the stimulus material. Unfortunately, some teacher/examiners simply read out the suggested questions from the Examiner's Booklet, ignoring what the candidate was saying. This often occurred after a candidate had already supplied the required information. This can only cause confusion for candidates who are already nervous. The function of the questions on the Examiner's Sheet is to encourage the candidates to supply the information. They should **not** be used as a script. Listening to what the candidate is saying is crucial. Good teacher/examiners listen carefully, react to the candidates' responses and suggest further stimuli designed to extract more information if necessary, without, of course, providing the vocabulary. Teacher/examiners should **not** expect candidates to deliver a monologue on the stimulus material, nor wait till the candidates finish speaking before intervening. Successful role-plays involve much interaction, in particular where the teacher/examiner realises that candidates have omitted details. The importance of good preparation by the teacher/examiner has been emphasised on numerous previous occasions. Good teacher/examiner knowledge of the stimulus material **and** the Candidate's Sheet is therefore very important. If candidates fail to express adequately what is in the stimulus material, the role of the teacher/examiner is to encourage them to supply further details.

Many teacher/examiners prepared themselves for the examination very well. Many have learnt the art of exploiting the stimulus material skilfully, giving candidates the opportunity to gain higher marks, especially on criterion 1A. Markers noted a slight increase in candidate use of the visuals supplied with each role-play, sometimes involving the website information. Timing of the role-play continued to be good from many centres. Where role-plays exceed the time allowed, assessment ceases after five minutes.

Comments on Individual Questions

Role-play A: National Trust Working Holidays

Being the first in the Randomisation sequence, this role-play was the one most frequently used. Most candidates scored at least 3/5 in attempting to convey the details in the stimulus material. The two initial questions were not always done well. Some candidates failed to recognise the need to change the information to make sense: *wie will der Briefpartner die Sommerferien verbringen?* was not infrequently heard.

Many candidates had a good overview of the text, but details were often either omitted completely or not expressed well (e.g. *Menschen und Frauen / Männlein oder Menschen* [male and female], *jemand* [anyone] / *jemand* [everyone] *muss kochen*, and in one case *man muss sich kochen!*). Some had difficulties conveying simple numbers, a regular feature of many role-plays! The minimum age 17 was sometimes 16, and £60 - £80 was often incorrect. A surprising number claimed that they would be paid £60 - £80 a week, even when this was questioned by teacher/examiners. 'Different ages and backgrounds' caused problems, as did 'can accept the simple yet friendly way of countryside life'. The important thing is to convey the information; markers are not looking for exact translations. Some candidates were unable to suggest examples of projects, even though three examples were stated in the text. Most coped with the idea of taking a turn at cooking, but not all were able to suggest examples of domestic chores. Most oddities occurred in the list of necessary equipment, and *strenge Schuhe / Wasserprüfkleider / eine Schlaftasche* were relatively common.

The final bullet point asked the candidates to suggest the advantages of such a holiday job. Some misinterpreted the question as the advantages of a summer job, claiming payment as one such advantage. Most of those who did understand the question coped by offering a reasonable response such as helping the environment, making new friends etc.

There were some good responses and the majority of candidates were able to convey details with at least adequate success. However, as with all the role-plays, the many candidates scoring 3/5 on 1A might have been helped to score at least one more mark with better teacher/examiner help.

Role-play B: Catalyst

Catalyst was the subject of role-play B, a visitor attraction suitable for the examiner's supposed 12-year old brother. Most coped at least adequately with the text but, as with many role-plays, candidates tended to omit considerable detail, such as 'fun-filled', 'scientific knowledge', 'important role', 'chemicals', 'concessions'. Often, candidates had to be encouraged to state what was in the bulleted second paragraph, as they tended to offer brief overviews, instead of conveying what was actually in the text. The word *Exponate* from the *Hilfsvokabeln* was frequently mispronounced as *Exponante*, and the qualifying words 'different' and 'interactive' were often ignored. Many did not know 'roof' or 'terrace', and some thought that Catalyst was to be found in Windows, Cheshire. Many stated the correct adult price, but were confounded by examiners asking what the price for the young brother might be. This is an example of initiative and imagination coming into play... or not. The final bullet point, asking why such a visit might be ideal for everyone, stimulated most adequate responses.

Role-play C: Schöndorf

This role-play invited the candidates to describe a small town in Germany (allegedly). Some candidates did not understand that their family was supposed to be thinking about visiting Schöndorf in the coming summer. It is important that candidates do read the rubric properly and understand their role. The text itself proved to be straightforward and most candidates managed to express at least half of the points. 'Unforgettable' was often forgotten, as was 'experience'. In the first bullet point, the words 'average' and 'degrees' were not always known. In one case the temperature was 24° Fahrenheit (probably caused by the *Uhren von Sonnenschein* or the *viele Sonnen*). The most common feature was the tendency of many to summarise the second bullet point paragraph in such a brief way as to reduce it to an absolute minimum (*man kann schwimmen, Wassersport machen, Tennis spielen, Golf spielen, wandern*). As stated earlier, one of the roles of the examiner is to exploit the stimulus material to extract all relevant information. Some did, but too many teacher/examiners simply accepted this summary and moved on to the next paragraph without asking for further details. Surprisingly few knew *Hallenbad/ Freibad* (often *Draußenbad / Außenbad* or *Drinnenbad / Innenbad*), and few knew how to form the plural *Bäder*. 'Five star' (hotel) was often *Fünf Star*, and in one case *Fünf Sterb Hotel!* This may have been because the local food was mostly *Wurst* or *Sauerkraut*, and foreign food often *Fisch mit Pommes*. It is rewarding to know that English haute cuisine has now reached a more international level. Usually examiners are adept at moving on quickly when confronted with statements such as *man kann Italiener essen*. *Verkehrsamt* and *Frühstückspension* were also frequently unknown.

The final bullet point asked candidates to suggest the best way of travelling from England to Schöndorf. Many made sensible suggestions and reasons for their choice. Some suggestions seemed to have rather a loose grip on reality. Some suggested going to Schöndorf by car, then offered three or four hours as the time required to get there. Not all by any means knew where the German Alps are. When asked if there was an airport near Schöndorf, suggested responses were not infrequently Berlin (other suggestions being Milan / Stuttgart / Köln, Hamburg and Luxemburg).

Role-play D: Eurocamping Co-ordinator

This role-play, asking candidates to imagine themselves as students at the end of their studies and contemplating a first job, was the last in the Randomisation sequence and thus the one done least frequently. As with many role-plays, candidates could do some parts better than others. Many did not express the job well, and 'train' and 'co-ordinate' seemed to be a hurdle to many. Some misunderstood the word 'site'. Many items in the bulleted section were done at least adequately, but rarely did candidates express all the vocabulary correctly. 'Hardworking', 'well organised', 'be able to drive', 'sense of humour' caused some problems. Occasionally, what was said was not what was meant by the text (*Motivation haben* [be able to drive]/ *man muss eine komische Person sein* [have a sense of humour]). The last paragraph seemed to cause difficulties.

The final bullet point, asking candidates the advantages of such a job, was done satisfactorily.

Conclusion

The role-plays offered weaker candidates the chance to express some basics and challenged stronger candidates to use initiative and imagination. The level of language heard was as in previous series. Weaker candidates restricted themselves to simple sentence structures and frequent and repeated use of *es gibt*. They often encountered difficulties with basic verb forms, agreement and word order. At the other end of the scale, stronger candidates had not only a sound grasp of the basics, but also impressed with their use of ambitious language and complex structures.

The role-play has always been a good test of authentic language, and will continue to be so in its enhanced format, to be tested for the first time in June 2009 in the new specification. Increased weightings for the present criteria 1A and 1B will require teacher/examiners to ensure that candidates express as much of the stimulus material as possible, and respond to examiner stimuli. The many teacher/examiners currently conducting the examination well will experience few difficulties in adapting.

Topic

As is often the case, topic discussions this series ranged from the very weak at one end of the scale to the highly impressive at the other. Most candidates were well prepared for this part of the examination; some were over-prepared. Presentations were mostly well timed at between two and three minutes; a few lasted longer than the maximum three minutes. Teacher/examiners are again reminded that in such cases they **must** intervene after three minutes, to ensure 7-8 minutes of spontaneous discussion, following the headings on the Oral Topic Form and starting with the first heading. Most headings should be covered during the course of the discussion but not at the expense of good timing. Oral Topic Forms should be in the candidate's own handwriting and be sent to markers and moderators with the Working Mark Sheets (WMS), cassettes/CDs and Attendance Register/MS1s. WMS should be sent in recording order.

Topic discussions should encourage spontaneity and an important part of the teacher/examiner's role should be to explore statements made by candidates. Generalisations should be challenged (not all 80-odd million Germans are *fettleibig* or eat *Sauerkraut*) and examples asked for. The best discussions are those where much genuine interchange takes place. This occurs naturally when discussions have not been over-rehearsed. Unfortunately, some centres still allow too many pre-rehearsed mini-monologues to take place where there is little and sometimes no spontaneity. Such candidates penalise themselves on 1E, often severely. A good oral examiner prevents candidates from delivering a series of pre-rehearsed statements and encourages them to speak naturally. A series of cues from teacher/examiners followed by a series of statements from candidates with no interaction means there cannot be spontaneity. Such pre-rehearsed material is often couched in written rather than spoken German, using vocabulary which sounds totally artificial in a spoken context. Candidate responses starting with *nichtsdestoweniger* or *trotzdem* are not likely to be spontaneous responses. Sadly, some markers and moderators reported an increase in over-preparation.

Virtually all topics this series related to a German-speaking country. Candidates choosing topics where no reference to Germany/ Austria/ Switzerland takes place restrict themselves to a maximum of 8/20 on 1D. Those teacher/examiners who allow candidates to offer such topics are advised to read the Specification. Headings on the Oral Topic Forms were often well presented. They should be headings, not sentences, and limited to a few words. They should not be written in the teacher's handwriting. Teachers can obviously help candidates beforehand to organise their material into some logical fashion. The only function of the headings is to remind both candidate and examiner of the direction for the discussion. It is counterproductive to regard the headings as an excuse for a mini-essay. Timing of the topic (presentation and discussion combined) was often good. Centres are again reminded that overlong topics gain the candidates no further marks as assessment ceases after the official ten minutes.

Markers and moderators were pleased that the decline in numbers of those candidates offering *das deutsche Schulsystem* seems to have been maintained, although *Deutsches Essen / Weihnachten in Deutschland / Weihnachtsmärkte / Fettleibigkeit / Rauchen / Drogen* still feature regularly. These topics tend to be attempted by weaker candidates, but often lack depth and prove to be GCSE-type topics treated in a superficial way. German films (e.g *das Leben der Anderen, Goodbye, Lenin!*) are popular, although, as with literary texts, more than a mere explanation of the plot is required. Individual and unusual topic choices such as *die Passionsspiele in Oberammergau / Wilhelm Messerschmidt / Karl Jaspers / das Holocaust-*

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Denkmal in Berlin / die Krampus-Tradition in Österreich often reveal excellent private research. Markers and moderators are grateful to those centres offering a range of topics. Centres should encourage candidates to research a topic with a German perspective in depth and, for the purposes of the speaking test, become expert in that particular field. Merely to have a mild interest in a topic but to have done no research does little to impress and scores few marks on 1D.

Some discussions this series were extremely good and very well informed. They are a testimony to the excellent standard which can be reached by young learners of German, who have often experience of the country. At the other extreme, some discussions were superficial and contained little in terms of depth of factual knowledge. Pronunciation remains a problem and 3/5 is a common mark, where candidates have yet to conquer some or all of the *ei/ie/st/sp/ch/r/z/ä/ö/ü* sounds. Accuracy relating to subject/verb agreement, verb forms and cases is still a major difficulty with weaker candidates, as are verb second idea and word order in subordinate clauses.

Listening to successful interchanges of ideas and opinions in the foreign language is a rewarding experience for both teachers and markers/moderators. Many topic discussions do achieve this. The best discussions are authentic, lively, enthusiastic, spontaneous, full of factual information on the chosen topic and accurate. Candidates can, and often do, research a particular topic well. The internet and other written sources often provide an excellent base for discovering information. However, this information is often in a non-spoken format which sounds false if simply learnt by heart and declaimed unprocessed. One of the candidates' main tasks is to process this information into a form which sounds natural in an oral context. They should, for the purposes of this part of the examination, become expert in some aspect of a German-speaking country which engages them and which they can explain in a lively and spontaneous way.

2662 Listening, Reading & Writing

General Comments

The candidature of some 1,800 has reduced somewhat in recent years. This paper will still be available in January and June 2009, but it is expected that entries for June 2009 in particular will be considerably reduced as the new specification comes on stream. Unlike the January examination, where there is a considerable minority of native speakers, the candidature in June is composed mainly of students whose mother tongue is English. It is thus particularly satisfying to be able to report that there were many scripts of a really high standard. The marks obtained covered the whole range from the teens to the maximum, but very poor scripts were few and far between. Candidates have become quite sophisticated in organising their time round the varying demands of this paper, and it was rare to find a script incomplete because of lack of time. Similarly there were very few rubric errors. Candidates seemed to find the paper accessible, and tackled it with a degree of confidence. A general comment would be that their understanding of spoken and written German is at a high level: problems arise with their construction of written German, in particular with case, gender, prepositions and word order.

Specific Comments

1: *Der europäische Super-Jumbo*

This listening passage proved accessible to most candidates, although completely correct answers were not all that common. In particular the alphabet/number linking of A380 in (a) proved difficult for a good number of candidates. Candidates penalize themselves by writing numbers in full, which is actually in contravention of the rubric. Examiners will, however, accept numbers written in full, but not if they are spelt incorrectly. These early questions have to be tested in a non-verbal way: therefore examiners are likely to make frequent use of numbers and the alphabet.

2: *Theaterstück in Berlin*

Most candidates scored well on this question, with question (e) posing what difficulties there were. Possibly candidates did not know what *der Bundestag* was, or could not believe that the examiners had not chosen a single B answer!

3: *Der Lebenslauf*

This question too proved very accessible with most candidates scoring well. Many of the questions have a similar format, and the candidates who score particularly well are those who read carefully enough and have a wide enough vocabulary to differentiate between what are often minor changes. The first section of questions tended to be well answered, with the problems caused by the perhaps more challenging questions after the *Pause*. On the whole examiners were pleased with the range of differentiation afforded by this question.

4: *Ultraleicht wandern*

This question proved to be more challenging than corresponding ones in some recent years. It proved to be a very effective discriminator of its type, with only the most able candidates scoring highly. Most candidates managed the correct answers to (h), (i) and (j), but the remaining questions tested the full range of difficulty.

5: *Herr Schröder ruft an*

This question tackles both the listening skills of the candidates, and their ability to communicate the answers in German. The first part of the exercise they achieved with relatively little difficulty, whereas the second part proved more challenging. Examiners are mindful of the fact that this is a listening exercise, and are therefore prepared to accept versions that a sympathetic native speaker would be prepared to understand. Some excellent responses to this question in mature

and fluent German showed a firm grasp of AS structures as well as a good understanding of spoken German in a world-of-work context. Problems arose for those candidates who still do not know the interrogatives, confusing *wo*, *wie* and not understanding what was required by *woher*. '34 million euros' was regularly written as 35 while *das Fünffache* was rarely understood and *Spielmaschinen* regularly replaced the correct *Spülmaschinen* in c(ii). Of the four countries required, only *Österreich* was regularly correct. Problems with *Slowenien* can be understood, although it should not be too hard at this level to apply the rules of spelling, whereas *Polen* and *Ungarn* are found at a basic level in German text-books. Far too many candidates failed to score on this question (d). Basic rules were also not applied when *Zusammenarbeit* and *Nachfrage* were each written as separate words, with guesswork supplying capital letters in a variety of incorrect combinations. To understand *Näheres* also proved challenging. Once again, this year, far too many candidates are cavalier in their application of capital letters. Grammatically the most successful candidates are those who can manipulate persons and adjectives effectively, as in questions (cii) and (h). Time spent practising these skills on such questions would be well spent. Nevertheless, there were many pleasing answers and, generally speaking, candidates seem to be getting to grips with this challenging type of exercise.

6. World of Work – Reading

The format of this type of question is now well established. Candidates are always asked to write a memo for their employer. Although they will not be penalized for translating, it will allow the rendering to flow much better, and therefore be more cogent, if the memo style is adopted. It was very marked again this year that some candidates, even some quite able ones, disadvantaged themselves by giving a rendering that was much too free. Examiners have a very precise mark scheme which follows the text exactly, and candidates who miss out whole chunks, or who change the order without good reason are usually heading for disaster. This question accounts for a quarter of the marks for the whole paper and, on this evidence, a significant number still need to spend more time practising this skill. Candidates are again reminded that they should put in all the relevant information and should practise beginnings and endings of formal letters in English. *Angenehm*, in the first paragraph, was barely known and in the second paragraph a good number of candidates did not appreciate that Dawlish was a place name. In the third paragraph *einiges* eluded many: all too often it was rendered as "one thing". There was a range of understanding of the rest of the paragraph with *gereinigt* being often only approximately understood. Some holidaymakers were afflicted by only going to the facilities once in five days - a truly unfortunate holiday! In the fourth paragraph the shopping hours were generally well understood, and most candidates grasped the essence of *nicht viel im Angebot*. Unfortunately a high number did not translate *Lebensmittelgeschäft* accurately enough. In the fifth paragraph most candidates understood that German campsites were to some degree different, although the exact difference eluded many. There was a widespread misconception that somehow the traffic **outside** the campsite was to blame, which was further reinforced by the reference to *Verkehr* in *Fremdenverkehrsamt* in the final paragraph. Several examiners noted that many candidates failed to realize that *schicke* in this final paragraph was a Present Tense. Failure to put this into the correct tense lost many candidates the mark. In this final paragraph also the aforementioned *Fremdenverkehrsamt* was often misunderstood, with references to traffic and foreigners being legion. It is worth pointing out again that only meticulous attention to detail, such as the correct rendering of the tense in the final paragraph will result in high marks. Many candidates, however, were able to combine the necessary accuracy from the foreign language with the high level of competence in English grammar, punctuation and spelling required for very high marks. Overall the standard on this question seemed similar to that of previous years.

7. Letter to Herr Schmidt

This letter is invariably topped and tailed for the candidates, and they do themselves no favours by inserting their own (sometimes incorrect) beginnings and endings. It cannot be stressed too much that this question is always part of the 'World of Work' section of the paper, and thus this letter **must** be written in the polite form. It is appreciated that pupils are taught 'du' and 'dein' from a very early age, but AS Level study requires the mastery of a more formal genre. As this is

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invariably a business-orientated letter, revision of the adjectives and pronouns associated with the polite form (*Sie, Ihr, Ihnen* etc.) will pay dividends. Small is beautiful, and the most successful candidates can answer the task very well by constructing the bare minimum of perfectly formed sentences. This is not primarily a vocabulary exercise: candidates will (and generally did) find most of the words they need in Question 6. In this respect there has been a significant improvement over the last few years. It was very heartening to see that most candidates managed, however imperfectly, to thank the writer for the letter. This has been mentioned in almost all examiners' reports over the past few years and it seems that the message has finally been heeded. Most could render the idea of 'enjoying the countryside', although a good number stumbled over 'cleanliness' in the second bullet point. Similarly, too many could not render 'surprised'. Most managed to translate 'visitors' in some form or other (*Leute* on its own was not accepted), although 'complained' was not widely known. Most candidates managed to compose the final two bullet points in an acceptable way with judicious paraphrasing of Question 6 (the recommended course of action), but 'usual' eluded a surprising number. It is worth reiterating that candidates disadvantage themselves by quoting pre-learned sentences and formulaic constructions of doubtful relevance to the task in hand. There were, however, quite a number of delightfully concise and accurate answers. It was pleasing to note, and this came over to most of the examiners, that even the weaker candidates managed to produce something that a sympathetic native speaker would be able to recognize. This is a not inconsiderable achievement and teachers are to be congratulated on this progress.

2663 Reading & Writing

General Comments

This summer's paper produced candidate responses over the full mark range. The vast majority of candidates have been well prepared and are therefore quite familiar with the format of the examination, thus making rubric infringements a very rare occurrence. Although some did not complete the essay, it was clear that this was a deliberate decision and not due to a lack of time. The standard of the candidate responses was very similar to that of the previous summer series. Although Section A comprised two quite demanding test types, marks for Section C, the Cloze Test, appear to have been generally higher.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Both questions in this section were good predictors of performance in Q.3.

- Q.1 The matching of beginnings and ends of sentences is a task that weaker candidates find difficult and they appear sometimes to put random letters as answers. There were, however, many candidates who gained full marks or close to full marks. There was little or no detectable pattern to the marks scored.
- Q.2 This gap-fill task was quite demanding and some candidates who had gained full marks on Q.1 failed to do so here. Most completed 2 and 5 correctly, whilst 4 caused problems for many candidates. Many went for the distractor *vermieten* perhaps because *besitzen* was not widely known.
- Q.3 The text revisited the topic of food with the notion that you can improve your intellectual performance by eating the right things. Most candidates seemed to grasp the general themes, although some seemed fixated on the physical benefits of healthy eating and failed to score marks. As usual, there were 14 content points available, of which the candidate had to convey 10 to gain full marks on Grid B. Some of the points were quite detailed, as with point 6, where candidates had not only to mention that muesli was not on the breakfast menu but explain why. Some candidates failed to get point 8 by putting the *nur* in the wrong place. Most candidates, however, managed to score points by mentioning items on the breakfast and lunch menus, as only two and three items respectively were required. Although only a small minority of candidates achieved full marks for comprehension, most were at least in the 'adequate' category. Some more able candidates over-summarized and missed out on marks, although they clearly understood the text. This seems to occur most often with candidates who have some native speaker background and have perhaps had less preparation for the examination.
- In part (ii) of Q3 the candidates were asked to give their own response to the notion of brain food. They were also asked whether too much importance is given to food. Many candidates neglected this second question but were not penalized for doing so. Opinions varied widely on the subject - some dismissed it as the latest food fad, but others seemed impressed and promised to try it out! As often happens, many candidates approve of the principle just as long as no one expects them to do it themselves. Better candidates widened out the discussion to point out that physical activity and adequate sleep are just as important for brain activity as food. Some weaker candidates listed what they ate without tying it into the question and therefore scored badly. Points are awarded on the basis of the ideas expressed and the development or justification of those ideas and then matched with the criteria in Grid C.

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Grid A is used to award marks for Quality of Language over both parts of the question. Most candidates had sufficient vocabulary at their disposal to cope with this essay, as it is a mainstream topic area. There were the usual problems with singular / plural, basic word order, random punctuation and capital letters. These errors bring down the marks of candidates who otherwise have an extensive vocabulary and know a good range of structures. The level of language is often uneven between the two parts of the essay: some candidates are good at manipulating the language of the text in (i) but go to pieces when they have to improvise, others struggle with the text but can express their own ideas quite fluently. Very few candidates overstep the 5 word lifting limit but some at the opposite end of the spectrum go to extreme lengths to avoid the charge of 'lifting'. They should be reminded that they are expected to manipulate and not reinvent. There were few recurring problems particular to this series, apart from several imaginative versions of *gesund* and its noun and comparative.

Section C

The marks for the Cloze Test were encouraging with the vast majority of candidates scoring above 10. There was little observable consistency to the pattern of error.

2664 Speaking & Reading

General Comments

As we approach the “end of the road” for this specification, though this unit happily continues in almost unchanged form under another title from 2010, candidates and teachers are on the whole thoroughly familiar with the format and demands of the examination and one would expect there to be fewer original comments that could usefully be made in this report. Of necessity, therefore, there will be some repetition of points made in previous years. This is partly because there are still new centres joining the Board and also because some points seem to require regular repetition! Not that this means that 2008 was a year full of problems; on the contrary, it was another successful series with a generally very high standard of work to be heard. It was particularly pleasing again to hear very little “text lifting”, which means candidates merely reading out parts of the text without manipulation or “own words”, and few “unprepared” candidates, that is to say people who for whatever reason do not prepare a topic but waffle vaguely on the general subject of their title. Almost all candidates had researched their topics well but not all in sufficient depth for a high mark on the “knowledge” grid. This year there were one or two more candidates with rather shallow or restrictive topics that could scarcely sustain conversation. One particular example was “Plastic Packaging”. Considering that the conversation should have lasted approximately 12 minutes, it would surely have been preferable to have chosen two or three different aspects of “The Environment” to talk about. Very few candidates fail to deal with aspects of life in a German speaking country as required by the specification, though some still try to disguise a “general” topic such as *Rauchen* with only very few specific references to the situation in Germany. It is not sufficient for the candidate or examiner to add an occasional *in Deutschland* to an otherwise bland statement. Similarly nearly all centres are now aware that an “up-to-date” topic is required, in other words one dealing with current issues or at least events or issues relevant within the past seven years. It is sometimes regretted that literary topics are precluded by this regulation, but this need not be the case if a modern writer is chosen, or one whose themes or influence can be linked to the present day situation.

As far as the questions on the text offered on the Examiner’s sheet are concerned, it is worth repeating that these are merely a guideline as to what might be asked and not a script to be followed by the teacher. The teacher-examiner’s task is to elicit as much information as possible from the candidate on each of the four paragraphs, and this is certainly not possible simply by using the four suggested questions, which are a bare minimum. It is not a good idea either to encourage candidates to read out a “summary” of each paragraph that they have written during the 20 minutes’ preparation time, as this approach will attract few marks on grid 4B (Response to Examiner) and is thus to be avoided. Even an extremely fluent candidate who does not take part in any interchange with the examiner and is not offered any “unexpected” or challenging questions can expect to lose some marks. This applies still more to the equivalent responsiveness grid for the topic conversation (4C). There were again some centres this year that had clearly encouraged their candidates to pre-learn their responses to “prepared” questions on their topics. Please note that anything that sounds like “written German” will attract very few marks on this criterion.

Fortunately, the feeling is that candidates were in general more spontaneous-sounding this year. There are no general comments to be made about pronunciation and grammar this year, except perhaps the vague feeling that there has been a slight improvement. Problems with bad recordings and lack of paperwork still occur, though fortunately infrequently. Some tests are far too long, and teachers are asked to remember the maximum time, which should be 18 minutes. On the whole, though, timing of tests was excellent.

Comments on Individual Questions

Text Discussion

A Willkommen im Haus der Jugend!

This text proved to be possibly the most accessible of the three and stimulated some excellent discussions, though there was a tendency to skim over, or even overlook perhaps, the main point of the text, namely the financial problems facing the youth centre and the related discussion point as to what should and what should not be publicly funded. The issue of young people's problems and how do deal with them caused fewer difficulties and seemed, as ever, to be a popular talking point.

In the first paragraph there were some good attempts to explain *auf der roten Liste* but clearly not everyone knew *Gehalt. Stadt* was confused with *Staat*. Some good follow-up questions to the paragraph, either tackled separately at the end or interwoven, included: 'Do you respect social workers/ could you be one?' 'What do we mean by "at risk"?' 'Why can't teenagers talk to their parents?'

In the second paragraph the three key points that were not always mentioned were: the ever-open door, the absence of *Leistungsdruck* and the concept of *gewaltfrei*. A good question was: 'What do we mean by *nicht aus idealen Familien*?'

The story of Sandra Christiansen in the third paragraph seems to have caught the imagination and there was even some speculation as to why she really committed suicide, fortunately none as lurid as the actual explanation in the original "unsanitised" news item! A good question here was 'Didn't the Youth Centre fail on this occasion?' There seemed to be no problems of vocabulary, not even *Leiche*.

Similarly, the final paragraph posed few difficulties, though, when asked what people were not allowed to do in the house, only the best candidates thought of adding 'use violence', harking back to the second paragraph. A few centres exploited the references to drugs and alcohol to launch into an (overly familiar) general discussion on the subject, which was not exactly the intention though Examiners are of course free to raise any related issue they feel is appropriate, unless it is too closely related to the topic conversation to follow.

B Mobbing – eine Umfrage

This text seemed to work well, though it was the most complex from both a linguistic and content point of view, even though the topic was well known, and it stimulated some interesting discussions.

It was interesting that in the first paragraph most people could interpret the statistic 43% but far fewer the 25%, which was often simply ignored. Perhaps it was the *tat es leid* that caused the confusion. The passive construction *sie wurden gemobbt* caused difficulties too, especially when candidates tried to render the phrase in their own words, and it was often transformed into *sie haben gemobbt*. The weaker candidates could not always tell who was bullying and who being bullied. The word *geprägt* was clearly not well known, but could usually be avoided, and it was surprising that *schon einmal* was sometimes taken literally to mean "once".

In paragraph two the main problem was explaining *Streber* and noticing the key word *absichtlich*. Some people thought students with **bad** grades got bullied. Some candidates and examiners ignored this paragraph altogether, at the cost of a couple of marks, because they confused the answer to the suggested second question with the information appearing in the third paragraph. This referred to the types of bullying, however, rather than reasons for people getting bullied.

Paragraph three in itself was quite well handled, though some people contented themselves with reading it out almost verbatim, which costs marks on grid 4B. *Ausschluss* was sometimes confused with *Ausschuss*, which appeared in the next paragraph. There were some good attempts at own words using verbs like *hänseln* and *beschimpfen*. *Mobbing VOR den Lehrern* was unfortunately confused with *VON den Lehrern*.

The final part of the text caused few problems, though there was a tendency to ignore the point about the people who are bullied usually being unwilling to discuss it, whilst the sentence "The longer they wait, the worse the problem gets" was hardly ever mentioned.

Examiners had few problems thinking up discussion questions on this particular topic and some extended the discussion to cyber-bullying, bullying in the work-place, happy-slapping, and other related issues. The role of the school in such issues, as with those arising from Text A, naturally interested many examiners and a few appeared shocked to hear that some of their candidates had themselves been bullied. It is to be hoped that examiners choose the most appropriate text for each individual, particularly if the text deals with an issue that could perhaps cause some embarrassment. The main elements of the choice of text should of course be: firstly to avoid a possible clash with the subject matter of the chosen topic and secondly to choose a text that might possibly interest that candidate. Please remember: **Under no circumstances** may the candidates see all three texts and make the choice themselves.

C Junge Deutsche lernen im Ausland

The text appeared easy and was on the familiar topic of languages, dear to many examiners' hearts, so it was unfortunate that it was slightly underestimated and sometimes led to more superficial treatment than the other two texts. There were, however, also some very lively discussions.

The first paragraph was often rather glossed over and the details of the statistics were not always given. Not many commented on the idea of *Urlaubskombination* and the link between *MINDESTENS zwei Wochen* and the next paragraph was missed.

It was quite disappointing to hear a large number of candidates referring to Leonie as *er*, especially as she was described as *die 18-jährige Leonie!* The idea of *gründlich erlernen* was not explained and there were some quite bad misunderstandings at times, for example the verb *reichen nicht aus* being interpreted as meaning she wasn't rich!

Was bedeutet 'die Mentalität der Amerikaner'? would have been a good question in paragraph three, but was rarely heard. A good initial response was *wie sie denken*. Similarly the "differences" discussed did not always cover the full range of possibilities and concentrated on the aspect of the school dress code, where naturally enough not many people could pronounce *Dekolletee*. There were some very good attempts at own words like *kurze Tops* or even *seltsame, willkürliche Regeln!*

Some people left out the final paragraph altogether, again at the expense of losing some marks, and not many covered it thoroughly enough. A few people picked up *Spanien wird zunehmend beliebter* for an interesting follow-up.

Topic Discussion

Fewer centres now get all their candidates to prepare the same topic and there also seemed to be relatively few that encouraged regurgitation of pre-learned material, or material that sounds like 'written German'. Please remember that such 'discussions' attract very few marks for spontaneity or responsiveness. A few candidates still list 3 sub-topics and discuss all three, which is not a good idea, nor is it permissible to prepare only one topic for discussion. 'Prepare two, and discuss one or two on the day' is the best advice. There was a nice variety of topics from many centres and a lot of candidates showed a great deal of creativity in the way they tackled them. Some candidates had issued their own *Fragebogen* to base their topic around. This would be something for other centres to encourage. Most information was up-to-date and the "seven year" rule in the specification was nearly always adhered to. Please remember that opinions are also important, if based on the factual knowledge offered, but opinions without a sound knowledge base are worth very little. For more details please refer also to the remarks in the General Comments section of this report.

2665 Listening, Reading & Writing 2

1. General Comments:

The overall performance of candidates in this paper was very much in line with previous years. Examiners felt that the paper was fair, appropriate and discriminated well. There was no shortage of excellent candidates who had been well taught. Many of these were intelligent English learners, but, as always, there were a number of German nationals and this year it was noticeable that there was an increased number of candidates of Eastern European origin whose performance demonstrated a familiarity with German.

Candidates in the middle range were, on the whole, fairly competent and well trained in examination techniques. This was particularly evident in exercise 5(v), where even weaker candidates, who had achieved only mediocre Quality of Language marks previously, were able to express their opinions convincingly.

There was only a handful of candidates who did not complete the paper: a couple who apparently did not have sufficient English skills to cope with the text in English, and one who had answered the first four questions in pencil and then set about inking in her answers, unwisely, before she has completed Section C. Comments made by some, on the blank pages introduced this year for notes, indicated that they found they had too long. The response of examiners would be that the candidate should use the time to check his or her work, as many marks are always lost by lack of attention to detail. Good use was made of these blank pages by many, particularly in the Listening section, where candidates clearly welcomed the chance to jot down notes before formulating their answers. One candidate helpfully used the space to give us his opinion of the whole paper, which, in view of candidate performance, probably reflected the experience of many, i.e. that the listening was fine, questions 3 and 5 not too bad, but question 4 very difficult.

2. Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A: Listening.

Apart from a few who understood very little at all, candidates found the two passages accessible and performed well, with most gaining well over half marks. Marks were lost, both for comprehension and language, by candidates who wrote out a blanket and garbled version of what they thought they heard, without showing any understanding of it. This tended to happen, however, only in the case of a few questions.

Exercise 1

- b. A small point of grammar that very few knew was the capital letter for *Besonderes*. Some lost the point for writing *nicht besonders*.
- d. Candidates who simply tried to transcribe often wrote gibberish, e.g. *solle in sich....*
- j. This was very often misunderstood, although various spellings of *Götter* were accepted. It frequently became *Goethe*, showing how cultured some candidates are.

Exercise 2

This was experienced as the more difficult of the two passages in terms of making language mistakes, but not necessarily in scoring marks.

- a. Candidates lost this point if they wrote down too much, thus making nonsense of their answers. The ability simply to select the word *pragmatisch* demonstrated true understanding and good language skills.
- d. *eineinhalb* defeated many. Nevertheless most candidates gained this mark. A lack of care led to some losing the mark by omitting *Millionen*.

- g. The spelling of *Kinderbetreuung* caused a few problems, most spelling it with only one *u*, and *hohe* was frequently spelt with an Umlaut. One candidate wrote *Kinderbedrohung*.
- h. Weak candidates had difficulty with this question, a number writing out *vor allem gegen die Kinderlosigkeit* at the beginning of their answer. Only the best candidates recognised the need to use the dative in their answer.

Section B: Reading

Exercise 3

This task discriminated well among candidates, many finding it quite challenging. Candidates who interpreted the instruction to use their own words too literally and who wrongly thought *Worte* meant individual lexical items ended up trying to find synonyms for everything, even *Bürgermeister* – an impossible task. Centres need to train candidates to answer the questions precisely, adapting the language given in the passage to do so. In previous papers there has often been a separate task asking candidates to explain certain words or phrases from the passage in their own words. Here questions (a), (g), (k), (n) and (p) were of this type, which clearly confused some candidates who saw complications that were not intended. Some weaker candidates had difficulty with question words, *wen* in particular, but some gave impossible answers even to *Was ist...?* High language marks were gained only by candidates who really attempted to answer the question in a precise and grammatically correct way.

- b. This question was often answered wrongly, since it required careful reading of the text. A common answer from weak candidates, who tended to try to identify the right place in the text and copy something out that they thought might fit, was *der Bund an die einzelnen Länder*.
- e. A common wrong answer was *Es ist tabu* (referring back to *das Thema* in the question).
- g. This proved to be a very difficult question, eliciting very few correct answers.
- h. Carelessness led to quite a number of candidates writing *neuen* rather than *neun*, which led to them losing the mark.
- i. This was answered correctly only by better candidates, again because it required careful reading of the text. The tense in the question was often overlooked.
- m. The blanket copying out of a phrase from the text was common, and did not gain a mark since it made no sense in relation to the question.
- p. Most candidates understood this and there was frequent mention of the biblical origin of the expression (which was not required).
- q. *Worauf* was rarely answered precisely.
- s. Blanket copying out was common, as was the careless omission of the *t* in *Beschäftigten*.

Exercise 4

Many candidates found this text difficult. There was clearly a lot of guesswork in the answers and overall marks were quite low. One stumbling block was that they were confronted with vocabulary that even quite good candidates clearly did not know, some surprisingly, such as: *eintreten; Papierkörbe; Bilder; Rahmen; reißen; gegenseitig; Gegenstände; fliegen; Anweisungen; Unterstützung; Termine; aufstehen; verlachen; Schauplatz; Machtkampf; Anerkennung*.

In (a) the word *Knallkörper* was rather more obscure, and one could forgive candidates for thinking it had something to do with bodies: skeletons and plastic models or dummies often appeared.

Similarly the translation of *Perspektiven* in (g) was not easy, the word 'perspectives' in English not conveying the intended meaning, so this, again, was a difficult mark to get. The answer to question (f) was often a guess, few understanding *Sackgasse* and *keine Wendemöglichkeit mehr*.

The other issue with this exercise, apart from knowing the vocabulary and understanding the German was the poor level of English of some candidates, some because English was not their native language, but there were other quite weak English nationals who had difficulty in expressing themselves clearly or who did not read the questions carefully enough. Then there were those who lost points by omitting details. In question (h), for instance many ignored the word *neueste*, although they almost certainly knew it.

Section C

As usual candidates had some very good ideas on this and were able to raise their language in (v) in order to gain an adequate language mark, even if they had had difficulty with some of the vocabulary in the previous questions. The best candidates imported and cleverly adapted a lot of set phrases with subjunctives and passives.

Most candidates were happy with the general context of the passage, although, worryingly, more than one candidate confused the GDR with Nazi Germany, and others used the abbreviation 'GDR' rather than 'DDR' in German as well.

As always in this exercise, there is a small core of vocabulary which is essential to the subject matter. If this is unknown the candidates experience real difficulties. This year it was "smell", "to remember" and, surprisingly, "can". The first could be cleverly avoided on each of the two or three occasions it was needed by using the text's *Trabiduft*, but many did not realise this and were tempted into inventions such as *ein Stinkt in ein can zu putzen, die Fumen zu trappen* and even *die Schniffe*. Most, in (i), could not correctly express "shot" or "escape from", and often gave their own reasons as to why this item should not be sold, particularly that it was dangerous or environmentally unfriendly.

Verbs with prepositions are clearly a weak point, for hardly any candidates could cope with *sich erinnern an*. Passives and fairly common past participles caused real difficulty too. A very common error in (iv) was *bei* for "by". Very few candidates realise that *um...zu* + infinitive cannot be used where there is a change of subject.

2666 Culture and Society

General Comments

There was a wide range in the standard of candidates. There were a substantial number who scored highly at the top end of the criteria for essays which showed an in-depth, detailed and perceptive knowledge of text or topic, written in polished and accurate German. Others struggled to communicate very basic and often simplistic ideas because of their inadequate knowledge of vocabulary and syntax. Often the genders of words fundamental to the topic were not known and there were frequent errors in adjectival endings, noun plurals and cases after common prepositions, knowledge of which is essential at Advanced Level.

About three-fifths of the essays were on the non-literary topics in Section C and two-fifths on literary texts from questions in either Section A or B. The texts chosen for Section B tended to be those set for Section A, but there were some different choices which worked well: *Der Vorleser*, *Im Westen Nichts Neues*, *Effi Briest* and *Mutter Courage* among them. The most common reason for losing marks for content, structure and understanding, on both literary and non-literary topics, was lack of relevance to the question. The second reason for a failure to gain marks at the top end of the criteria is the use of narration and description rather than analysis and evaluation. Sometimes candidates had knowledge which they failed to apply to the question asked. At other times it was clear that candidates had very little knowledge of any relevance at all.

As in previous years there were a large number of native speakers. Centres seem not always to prepare native speaker candidates for the examination and they often score low marks on this paper, since thorough knowledge and analytical skills are essential and being a native speaker is not in itself sufficient. A number of these candidates wrote a few sentences either on every question or on eight to twelve questions. Many answered a question on several or all of the set texts by paraphrasing the printed extract, although it was clear that they had never read the text. Some may do this deliberately because of lack of knowledge, but some have clearly not read the rubric and not been pre-warned by the centre: one candidate addressed eight questions by writing one or two sentences on each, then realised his error and wrote two good essays on two selected questions. Two native speakers wrote on English texts: they had clearly not been prepared for the examination.

Comments on individual questions

Q.1(a) Not all candidates gave full details of the successful aspects of Sträubleder's public life which led to his being described as *unwiderstehlich* and the effects of his unmasking on people other than Katharina were sometimes neglected.

Q.1(b) Candidates tended to lapse into description rather than using analysis and there was much narration of events from Katharina's early life. Only a few succeeded in focusing on the characteristics and choosing relevant detail to illustrate these.

Q.3(a) Candidates knew the factual background well, but many responses were at a superficial level, especially when considering the question of the more suitable *Heiratspartner*. Some candidates assumed that it was enough to advise marrying Shu Fu because he was rich without referring to any of the moral problems thrown up by the play.

Q.3(b) This question brought some excellent responses from candidates, who wrote relevant and detailed analyses of how the *Verfremdungseffekt* is used in the play. A few candidates did not keep the question in mind and wrote as though they were analysing Brecht's use of the *Lieder*, for example, instead of adapting their knowledge to the question.

Q.4(a) Factual knowledge was sound, but candidates were not always able to analyse the *Lehrer's* role at the end of the play by explaining the changes in his moral stand.

Q.4(b) Too much reliance on the first part of the question led to narration of the plot and insufficient analysis of why events occurred. Few candidates could make a connection with Dürrenmatt's purpose in showing the changes in *III*.

Q.5(a) The first question was often inadequately answered with few candidates being able to analyse the effect of the *Vermummen* on the *Andorraner*. Candidates did not know the scene well enough to answer the question of what the family did to try to save Andri. The development of Barblin's role was sometimes well analysed, but sometimes reduced to a re-telling of the story.

Q.5(b) There were some very good answers to this question. Some candidates, however, ignored the question of how the structure contributes to the play and just described the structure.

Q.6(a) Candidates tended to concentrate on the early chapters and the *Lehrer's* difficulties with his class and to neglect the wider picture given of the Nazi influence later in the text.

Q.6(b) Candidates found it difficult to analyse what the *Lehrer* discovered and why. There was much reliance on narrating the significant outer events in his life without relating these to developments in his moral understanding.

Q.7(a) There were some good analyses of the *Vater's* role and of the reasons for his attitude to Gregor. Factual references to the text were sometimes incomplete.

Q.7(b) Candidates did not always appreciate how Gregor is shown as being gradually alienated from human and family life by his physical change nor did they always analyse whether anything remains of his original personality at the end.

Q.9 Candidates choosing this question had often read one of the novels written for young people (*Die Wolke*, *Damals war es Friedrich*, *Ich fühle mich so 50-50*) which do not always lend themselves to analysis in depth. Many responses were superficial and descriptive and only a few candidates managed to analyse and differentiate.

Q.10 Candidates failed to look at the reasons underlying the situation of the women in the chosen text and to analyse which factors might contribute to their weakness or strength and evaluate whether, for instance, personal character and personal choices, social status, economics, or the pressures of society played a part. Many resorted to narration.

Q.11 In general candidates understood how war could produce these opposite effects and there were some interesting and thoughtful analyses, particularly referring to the text *Im Westen Nichts Neues* and one good examination of *Mutter Courage*. Where the question was not answered relevantly, it seemed that the candidates had an already prepared answer and were anxious to use it regardless of the question.

Q.12 Candidates sometimes failed even to refer to the two possible reasons presented by the question for the fact that the individual might not feel part of society. While a satisfactory answer can be constructed which places responsibility for the exclusion mainly on one side, there does need to be some weighing up of the two possibilities offered by the question. It was often clear that a candidate had lost sight of the question and was using material from another essay without adapting it.

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

Q.13 This question requires evaluation of the different factors involved in determining the path in life as well as the ultimate fate of the chosen protagonist. Candidates often narrated the events without analysing their importance.

Q.15(a) There were some excellent essays, which showed a thorough knowledge of the facts, were stylishly presented and addressed the question relevantly. A few failed to use their knowledge to answer the question of whether the inflation of 1923 could have been avoided.

Q.15(b) Fewer candidates chose this question than 15(a). Although fair or good knowledge was usually evident, the facts were not used to answer the question.

Q.16(a) Few candidates tackled this question and several of those who did had very little information on the topic to convey. They did not address the question or give examples.

Q.16(b) There were some knowledgeable and thoughtful appraisals of the German press. Not all answers dealt satisfactorily with the question of whether the newspapers were effective and unbiased – and in some cases this was not mentioned at all.

Q.17(a) There was a wide range of competency seen in the answers to this question. At the top end there were some which showed very good relevant research, which was used appropriately; at the bottom end were essays with a few generalisations and a few statistics about the illness world-wide, but little or nothing about Germany and no information about treatment or prevention.

Q.17(b) Some candidates seem to have attempted this question, the most popular one on the paper, with no specialist knowledge. They wrote from a general knowledge of beer, bread and sausages and failed to address the question of influences or of the government's concerns and measures. There were also some very well-prepared and well-informed answers at the top of the scale. Some essays only dealt with one aspect and not with both influences and the government's response.

Q.18(a) Some essays were a pleasure to read, as they showed detailed and relevant knowledge. Some candidates seemed to be answering a different question with the knowledge at their disposal, often one set in a previous examination. It is essential that the information is used relevantly if marks are to be gained.

Q. 18(b) Lack of relevance to the question was also a problem here, but more often it was lack of precise knowledge and a tendency to narrate the plots of famous films. Sometimes information about a specific director was used to answer this question instead of the first one and this was rarely done successfully.

Q. 19(a) Some candidates had a great deal to say about the part played by sport in German life since the reunification and presented their facts and their evaluation effectively. Others had really very little or no factual knowledge upon which to base a view.

Q.19(b) This question was chosen by fewer candidates and a number of these, not all of them from the same centre, produced what was clearly a pre-learned essay on a particular sports person. This essay had little or no relevance to the question asked and so could not score highly. There were one or two genuinely knowledgeable and relevant answers, for instance how a high achieving rower had transformed the image and practice of rowing in Germany.

Q. 20(a) The answers suffered from a lack of precise data about what is happening in the German regions. The information was sometimes out-dated or irrelevant. Several candidates wrote mainly on the effect of acid rain and the chemical processes involved in its formation and its consequences for the trees, but little or nothing about Germany.

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

Q. 20(b) There was a similar dearth of precise knowledge in all but a few of the answers to this question. Little was known about measures undertaken by Germany nationally or about its international collaboration.

Q. 21(a) There were some excellent comparisons of two eras, but also essays which described two historical periods without comparing them or answering the question.

Q. 21(b) This question was in general less well done than (a). Candidates had little precise knowledge and sometimes failed to single out what was most important for the town or region. One candidate, however, wrote a fascinating essay, excellent in language, content and style, which scored full marks.

2667 Coursework: Culture & Society

General Comments

As in previous years, Coursework remains the more popular option for candidates, with many more opting for Coursework than for the Written Paper. The majority of centres met the deadline for submission of coursework and complied with all the requirements concerning word counts, length, bibliographies, plans, mark sheets and authentication forms, enabling moderators to carry out their task efficiently. However, it is felt by moderators that there are still a few centres who seem unfamiliar with the 'Coursework Guidance for Teachers' booklet, multiple copies of which are sent out to all centres.

The majority of candidates opted to write one long essay, rather than two short ones. This presented a challenge for weaker students who sometimes found it a daunting task to find enough material for a 1200-word essay and keep control over it as well. However, by writing a lengthy essay able candidates had the scope to develop their arguments fully and attain marks in the higher assessment bands.

Quality of language

As is to be expected, there was a wide variation in standard. It ranged from the outstanding – and not always from native speakers – to the truly appalling. There was an increase in the number of candidates who appeared to have written their essay in English first and then either translated it word by word using an on-line dictionary or, with even worse results, used an on-line translation tool. The result, of course, was that not only was the quality of German extremely poor, but also that large parts were incomprehensible. This, in turn, made moderation more of a problem this year because teachers, anxious to do their best for their candidates, had clearly done their utmost to elicit some kind of meaning from sentences which contained none and had thus given inflated content marks, while recognising, although not always sufficiently, the poor quality of the language. Amongst the numerous examples of wrongly chosen or ill thought out vocabulary were *Stirbt Zeit* (that well-known German newspaper) and the word *Kontaktlinsen*, mysteriously appearing in the middle of an incomprehensible sentence about the *Weißer Rose*. Even in the work of good candidates who seemed to be in control of their language an incongruous word would suddenly appear.

Marks for content

Many candidates clearly approached their topics with much personal engagement and enthusiasm, and the level of research and the quantity of information provided by some candidates was impressive. The Internet was, of course, the most frequent provider of information, *Wikipedia* being the most common source. Candidates were not always as skilled at selecting their information and putting it together coherently. This often led to overlong essays, where the candidates did not demonstrate the skill to select material carefully. Moderators felt that there was more of a tendency this year to supply information – in the form of a history lesson or telling the plot or the life story or giving statistics – without making much of an attempt to use it to develop an argument. Even though the majority of titles posed a question, candidates often chose to ignore it. So, for example, an essay asking how the Treaty of Versailles could have led to the coming to power of Hitler became simply a sequence of dates in the middle of which Hitler became Chancellor and at the end of which came the war, with no attempt to say how and why events were linked. Where a centre's content marks were reduced, this was very often the reason. Some candidates demonstrated a lack of care in their research, which was particularly evident in historical essays which contained wrong facts. The worst case of this was, perhaps, the candidate writing about the German leader in the Second World War, who consistently misspelt his name as *Hilter* throughout.

Topics and titles

Many centres clearly encourage their students to pursue their own individual interests, which can lead to a range of totally different topics and titles from the whole centre. Some of this work is highly successful, and moderators were again impressed by the amount of individual research engaged in by candidates, as well as the support given by teachers in assistance with titles and plans and finding suitable source material. Moderators mentioned, in particular, enjoying essays on geo-thermal energy in Switzerland, on Liechtenstein, the brothers Grimm and a comparison of two Goethe poems. The most popular general topics were:

- Integration of foreigners/ multiculturalism
- Germany since reunification
- Environmental issues (particularly alternative energy sources)
- Unemployment
- The changing role of women
- Neo-Nazis
- The Nazi period
- Problems with the school system
- Violence in society

A number of centres chose to read and discuss a work of literature. Where all candidates wrote on the same book, success was variable. Where there were very few candidates in a centre and the work in question had sufficient depth and richness to invite studies of totally different aspects, then it could lead to original essays. Works of literature studied included:

- Schlink: *Der Vorleser*
- Remarque: *Im Westen nichts Neues*
- Brecht: *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*
- Brecht: *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*
- Brecht: *Mutter Courage*
- Böll: *Ansichten eines Clowns*
- Böll: *Katharina Blum*
- Dürrenmatt: *Der Besuch*
- Dürrenmatt: *Die Physiker*
- Dürrenmatt: *Der Richter und sein Henker*
- Frisch: *Andorra*
- Frisch: *Biedermann und die Brandstifter*
- Gotthelf: *Die schwarze Spinne*
- Horvath: *Jugend ohne Gott*

Films were popular again this year, with *Das Leben der Anderen* taking over from *Lola rennt*. Where just one or two candidates from a centre wrote on films, there was no problem, and fresh and interesting essays often emerged. However, there were cases of teacher-led coursework resulting in similar essays from all candidates.

Titles

It was dispiriting to see poor titles or ones full of language errors, as this, together with the plan, is an area in which the teacher can give a good deal of support to the candidate. Moderators' hearts fell as they read titles such as *Das Autosystem in Deutschland ist es so effektiv als was Leute sagen?* As always, the best titles were clearly those that the candidate had developed together with the teacher, and that fitted the material the candidate had already researched. There were many good titles (not necessarily all answered well), which were quite provocative or which encouraged the candidate to develop an argument. It was pleasing to see that many

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centres are giving thought to the phrasing of titles in order to provoke a response that goes beyond the narrative. The majority of titles fell into this category.

Examples included:

Sind erneuerbare Energien die Zukunft für Deutschland?

Einbürgerungstest: Fair, gerecht, tolerant?

Inwiefern hat die Veränderung des Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetzes das Leben der in Deutschland wohnenden Ausländer und ihrer Kinder verbessert?

Inwiefern waren die Immigrationsgesetze 2005 und 2007 erfolgreich?

War Richard Wagner Rechtsextremist?

Zum Scheitern verdammt? Hat die Hauptschule noch eine Zukunft in Deutschland?

Spielen Wehrdienst und Zivildienst noch eine wichtige Rolle in der modernen deutschen Gesellschaft?

Titles that did not work so well were either questions that invited a descriptive narrative approach or were simply labels.

Examples included:

Wie ist Hitler an die Macht gekommen?

Inwiefern war Hitler ein starker Führer für Deutschland?

Hat Deutschland seit dem Ende des zweiten Weltkriegs wieder die wirtschaftliche Macht eines führenden Landes in Europa erlangt?

Was macht Deutschland, um die Umwelt zu schützen?

Was für eine wirtschaftliche Bedeutung hat das Rheinland für Deutschland?

Ein Überblick auf die österreichische Wirtschaft.

Die Umwelt in den deutschsprachigen Ländern.

Adolf Hitler und Deutschland von 1919 bis 1945.

Das Rauchverbot in Deutschland.

Centre assessment

Some centres provided details of how they reached their assessment in the space provided on the cover sheet. These 'Teacher's Notes' were always useful, although it is not mandatory to complete them. It is particularly helpful to know if the candidate has some German background or is a native speaker, as otherwise the moderator may suspect plagiarism. It is also helpful to the moderator to know exactly how the candidate has been penalised if the essay is of the wrong length. Adjustments to marks were necessary mainly when centres had overrated the content of the essay, usually because of a tendency to narrate and describe rather than structure, argue and evaluate, or, as mentioned above, because of an eagerness to try to understand the candidate's point even if it was incomprehensible. The assessment of language

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was generally more satisfactory, although some centres awarded the full range of marks when it was not appropriate. Sometimes, in the case of native speakers, although full marks were deserved for language, the content marks were overvalued by the centre. In the majority of cases, however, it was pleasing to find that assessment was accurate.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced Subsidiary GCE German 3862
June 2008 Assessment Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
2661/01	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2661/02	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2661/03	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2662	Raw	80	61	53	46	39	32	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2663	Raw	60	49	43	37	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3862 (Agg Code)	300	240	210	180	150	120	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3862 (Agg Code)	28.15	47.52	63.45	80.44	92.27	100.0	1309

1048 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

**Advanced GCE German 7862
June 2008 Assessment Series**

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
2664/01 and 03	Raw	60	48	43	38	33	29	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2665	Raw	80	63	56	49	42	35	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2666	Raw	60	46	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2667	Raw	60	50	45	40	35	30	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
7862 (Agg Code)	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
7862 (Agg Code)	37.43	65.73	84.60	93.49	98.27	100.0	922

22 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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