

OCR Report to Centres

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

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

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Advanced GCE German (H476)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE German (H076)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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F711 Speaking

General Comments

For this series, all candidates had been entered appropriately for the AS speaking test and teacher/examiners conducted the examination well. The majority of tests were timed correctly in both parts. Most CD and mp3 recordings were audible.

Role Play

Grid A is marked according to the 15 Key Points.

Role plays were successful when:

- teacher/examiners had prepared the Examiner's Sheet and the Candidate's Sheet, and used the same vocabulary as the candidates were expecting to hear.
- teacher/examiners elicited information in the stimulus material, especially from candidates who were not forthcoming with the information, by using open questions inviting the candidate to relate what was in the text.
- teacher/examiners used the correct form of address.
- candidates changed the word order and/or verb ending in the initial two questions.
- candidates took the initiative and explained why it might be good to take certain actions.
- candidates conveyed all the information in the stimulus material systematically and chronologically.
- teacher/examiners listened carefully and elicited further information, if they recognised that candidates had omitted parts of the stimulus material, if they reacted to candidate responses and suggested further stimuli designed to extract more information.

Comments on Individual Questions

Role play A: The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The first of the two initial questions required some manipulation and was frequently done well. Successful candidates conveyed all the information in the stimulus text. Teacher/examiners who recognised that candidates had omitted the information from the first paragraph and who encouraged them to provide this were able to increase their candidates' chances of gaining marks on Grid A. The final two bullet points were done successfully.

Role play B: Parkhotel Frankfurt

The two initial questions posed little difficulty and most candidates correctly used the polite form of address. Candidates who performed well provided details such as early 20th century/at any time/choice of restaurants/perfect place for drink before meal/short walk/secure car park. The final two extension bullet points were dealt with successfully. Teacher/examiner further extension questions were successful.

Role play C: Kettle's Yard

The two initial questions and the stimulus material were accessible to most. Successful candidates were able to convey 20th century art/everyday furniture/family lived there 16 years/made into single home/just come/go in. The two final extension bullet points elicited sound responses.

Topic Discussion

Candidates offered a variety of topics, and some topic discussions were of a high standard. Many candidates prepared themselves well for this part of the examination, and the most successful conversations were those with genuinely spontaneous interchange of ideas between candidate and teacher/examiner. Candidates should be encouraged to choose a topic relevant to a German-speaking country which interests them, and which they can research in depth. The headings on the Oral Topic Form should be different aspects relating to the same topic.

Grid D (Ideas, Opinions, Relevance) has a maximum of ten marks to be awarded for the ability to convey ideas and opinions, supported by factual information referring to a German-speaking country. Purely factual topics do not allow scope for ideas and opinions.

Grid E1 (Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness) awards ten marks for the ability to use German spontaneously and fluently. Those candidates who lead the conversation and keep the momentum going are likely to achieve a mark of at least 7–8. The headings outlined on the Oral Topic Form should be followed in chronological order. Candidates are not penalised if a heading is omitted, as long as the conversation has been successful. Discussions should take nine to ten minutes, no longer. Assessment ceases after ten minutes.

Genuine spontaneity is vital. To achieve this, teacher/examiners should react to statements, challenge and ask for clarification. Good teacher/examiners encourage genuine and spontaneous interchanges. This happens naturally when discussions have not been over-rehearsed.

Grid C1 (Quality of language) awards 5 marks for a combination of accuracy and range. Candidates who offered accurate basic language but little ambitious language are likely to gain 2 marks. Those offering a good range of ambitious structures in accurate German are rewarded with higher marks.

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

F712 German Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments

The format of the examination is now familiar, especially to candidates in this January series who are often taking it for the second time. The paper produced a full range and a good distribution of marks. There were few problems with candidates misinterpreting the rubric or failing to attempt questions. The standard of handwriting, however, seems to be declining, which makes the marking of some scripts, especially the essay, more difficult.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A – Listening and Writing

Task 1

Candidates needed to choose the correct ending to the ten sentences out of a choice of three options concerning vocational training. Although most candidates clearly understood the gist of the conversation with Herr Timm, very few captured the detail sufficiently to get all ten correct. There was no discernible pattern to the errors.

Task 2

This gap-fill task concerning environmental holiday tips discriminated between candidates and was a good predictor of performance for the paper as a whole. The words to be inserted were all nouns and those most often correctly identified were (c) *Flugzeug*, (d) *Busfahrt*, (e) *Bahnfahrt* and (j) *Skiurlaub*. (b) *Gegend* was most frequently incorrect, followed by (g) *Andenken* and (h) *Gewohnheiten* for which *Müll* proved to be an effective distractor.

Task 3

Answering questions in English is generally well done and most candidates did well on this text about the Hamburg marathon. A number of candidates had difficulties with *weiblich* and came up with a range of alternatives. Few candidates could translate *körperliche Herausforderung* to answer (g) but most worked out *Geld für gute Zwecke zu sammeln* was collecting money for charity and a pleasing number successfully recycled the vocabulary for the writing task in Task 4.

Task 4

Most candidates communicated the content of this letter, although some lost marks unnecessarily through omitting elements of a message. Most difficulty was caused by *apply* and *take part*. Some candidates struggled to translate *accommodation*. Word order and tenses were generally good but candidates had difficulty with reflexives and pronouns.

Section B – Reading and Writing

Task 5

Candidates typically achieved nearly full marks in the first part of Task 5; (e) seemed to cause a problem. The second part was a new task for this paper requiring candidates to identify a word from the text from the definition given. Most candidates found the first three and then had difficulties spotting *verschenkt* and *reich*.

Task 6

Most candidates were familiar with the subject matter of this text about Facebook but candidates need to ensure that they read the questions carefully. They are designed to prevent the candidate from lifting answers directly from the text and to allow them to demonstrate that they have genuinely understood. Candidates are not expected to find synonyms for everything but are expected to manipulate the language of the text in order to give a direct answer to the question and, thus, gain marks for Quality of Language. For example, (d) was straightforward except for the fact that the *Freunden und Kontakten* in the text should have been converted to *Freunde und Kontakte* in the answer. The former answer gains marks for communication but not for Quality of Language. (c) proved to be a source of difficulty, candidates did not always answer the question and put a negative in the answer which made it nonsensical. Some candidates failed to understand (i) but those who did answered it well. In (j) *ich trete aus* seemed unfamiliar and, even if candidates understood the gist, they had problems producing the 3rd person singular form in the answer. In (k) the *wie* was sometimes overlooked and the incorrect answer *gegen mangelnden Datenschutz* was given.

The Quality of Language was generally sufficient to convey the meaning but it was important to include details.

Task 7

(a) Most candidates got the gist of this text about relationships and friendships, although there was some confusion over Lothar Matthäus and his relationship and some candidates thought *keine Ausnahme* was the same as *kein Problem*.

(b) Candidates who have plenty of ideas can gain a much better mark in this essay question than their performance elsewhere on the paper might predict. There were some excellent essays on friendships and relationships from those candidates who had read the question carefully (*what is important for you ... and not how important are ...*) and did not limit themselves to a discussion of age, which tended to get repetitive. Relevant ideas and developments of those ideas, including examples, are all credited. Planning helps to keep the essay focussed on the question.

Most candidates had sufficient vocabulary and structure to articulate their ideas. Many could express themselves fluently but marks were sometimes lost for Accuracy because there were basic errors in agreements, commonly used verbs, plural forms and spelling.

The Accuracy and Range grids in the Mark Scheme are identical for AS and A2 but the expectations of "complex language" are not the same. An ability to express opinions is clearly important and *Meiner Meinung nach*, *ich finde* and *dass* are perfectly adequate ways of doing this. Occasionally substituting *da* or *denn* for *weil* provides variety in justifications and the confident use of subordinating conjunctions like *obwohl*, *damit* and *wenn* can be considered as complex language at this level.

F714 Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General Comments

Candidates found the paper accessible, and although some had vocabulary gaps in certain areas, perhaps because they were taking the examination early in the last year of the A Level course, there were many successful attempts at all the tasks. The quality of language marks awarded for the Listening and Reading sections reflected whether a candidate was able to answer questions succinctly and accurately and also to manipulate language in the more complex answers that were required in certain questions. This included subordinate clauses, passives, subjunctives and also cases. Again there was evidence that many candidates had not yet quite perfected their grammar.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Listening and Writing

Task 1 Child Refugees

The gist of the text was understood well. Candidates who read the questions carefully, perhaps underlining key words, performed best. Questions (a) and (b) required precise answers. Question (a) asked about the background of the children and question (b) about the people who bring the children to Germany. The answer “They have the wrong impression of what life in Germany is like” does not therefore answer either question. This was a common answer, however. This first Listening exercise always tests specific vocabulary. The best candidates knew vocabulary such as *Waisen*, *Schulden*, *Flucht*, *ängstlich* and thus gained more comprehension marks. Many candidates grasped the situation described and gained the marks for (e) and (f).

Task 2 Zivilcourage

There was evidence of good understanding of the meaning of the passage and, even though they may have been unfamiliar with the term *Zivilcourage*, most clearly grasped the general concept. Almost all candidates gained the first mark and also the second, although expressing “killed” or “kicked to death” occasionally caused problems. For (c) many candidates gained the marks. Here, however, some candidates did not have sufficient language skills to make the point clearly. Question (d) presented more of a challenge, with fewer candidates gaining the mark. A common error in (e) was the transcription of *Sie haben klare Persönlichkeitsmerkmale*, which was not accepted, even if it was transcribed accurately, as it was not a direct answer to the question. Candidates who included this possibly did not understand what they had heard. Question (f) discriminated well between candidates. *Ungerecht* was sometimes spelt in a way that indicated it had not been understood and *Mitleid* also presented an occasional stumbling block. Question (g) often gained 4 marks. Question (h), which was more challenging, was also usually answered correctly, demonstrating that almost all candidates know the word *ähnlich*. Questions (i), (j) and (k) presented no particular problems apart from the fact that not all answered (j) sufficiently precisely, answering *sich in Gefahr bringen*.

Section B: Reading and Writing

Text 1 Wir wollen wählen

Task 3

There was a wide range of marks for this task. In question (a) the word *genau* was important, indicating that more than just *wählen* was required in the answer. A number of candidates did not get both marks for (c), as an understanding of the whole situation as described in the first few lines was required rather than just one small section. The answer to (f) was often missed, perhaps because candidates found the answer hard to believe. The final three questions again necessitated a clear understanding of the concepts described.

Task 4

This was a non-verbal task, completed by all. Again, it discriminated well between candidates. Few scored full marks. In some cases this was due to candidates overlooking the fact that the answers had to be gleaned from paragraph 3. In other cases it was simply due to not knowing the vocabulary.

Task 5

For marks to be gained candidates needed to read the text carefully and manipulate the language to make the sentences read correctly. The majority of candidates approached this task with some success and had clearly understood the sense of the passage. The sentences that caused most difficulty were the ones that necessitated a longer phrase to complete them, ie (c), because of the loose use of *ihr* which led to many candidate answers being wrong, and (d) which candidates found hard to express clearly. Nevertheless, some candidates coped with all of these sentences perfectly.

Text 2 Nanotechnologie – die Debatte

Task 6

Marks for the transfer of meaning task showed that candidates grasped the sense of the text well. The structure of the sentences presented few problems, but there were vocabulary items that caused difficulty, namely *Teilchen* (although many candidates were able to deduce it from the next sentence), *Eigenschaften* and *sich verflüssigen*. *Winzig* seemed to be widely known. Working on this first paragraph in detail perhaps helped candidates to be able to access the rest of the text.

Task 7

Explaining words and expressions from the text is becoming a familiar task. Most of the words were understood, but not all candidates were able to find the words to express the meaning. However, the improvement in candidates' ability to use relative clauses is continuing.

Task 8

As always with this type of task, direct answers to the questions are required, which will very often not be in complete sentences. This was the case for the first three questions, and many candidates responded concisely and well. Questions (e) to (g) were phrased in such a way that whole sentence replies were needed. Whereas (f) was answered correctly by most, (g) was found to be quite taxing and was a good "stretch and challenge" question.

Task 9

Again, this task discriminated well. Many candidates lost a mark for (b) by using a plural rather than a singular verb, which confused the sense. The need for the passive in (e) was also too demanding a test for some, and this meant the comprehension point was lost.

Section C: Writing

The most popular titles were 10, 12 and 13. There were a few essays on all the other titles except 14. The majority of candidates wrote the correct amount, without going on to extra sheets and almost all appeared to have finished their essays and have time for a concluding paragraph. It was noticeable that unlike in June last year, when there was much more of a focus on the question set, there were a number of candidates who wrote an essay that was not a response to the title set but rather on the general topic area. This meant that content marks could not be other than very low.

Many candidates wrote essays in good German, demonstrating advanced topic-specific vocabulary and the ability to express complex ideas in a way that was usually understandable and often impressively competent.

Question 10

This was a very popular choice. The best essays showed knowledge of current unemployment figures in Germany and the fact that Germany is suffering far less than other countries despite the world economic crisis. Many candidates were aware of this and turned to other causes of unemployment in Germany, which was a highly acceptable way of answering the question. The importance of training was one area highlighted. There were a few candidates who chose this question without having any knowledge of the unemployment situation at all, and their content marks suffered accordingly.

Question 11

There were only a few candidates who wrote on women's lack of equality, and none of these showed concrete knowledge. Some appeared to be trying to adapt the title set last June and wrote about feeling discriminated as an immigrant in Germany, with just one or two mentions of the problems of being an immigrant woman, which was not enough.

Question 12

Many candidates demonstrated fair knowledge of the topic area, mentioning recycling, passive houses, solar panels and car sharing and the better candidates were able to make their knowledge relevant to the question. Many other candidates needed to make much more reference to the title and show clearly how they were responding to it.

Question 13

Some candidates topped and tailed their writing with a mention of the *Umweltministerium* and then devoted several paragraphs to renewable energy, presumably from a pre-learnt essay. Others did not refer to the *Umweltministerium*, climate change or CO₂ at all. The best candidates framed their work as a letter and used relevant material such as the need for more renewable energy and the closing down of atomic power plants to support their arguments.

Question 15

Candidates who chose this title tended to score rather better on Grid O than Grid N, as their ideas were good but their knowledge was generalised. There was, however, at least one candidate who was able to introduce a range of German examples, including the fact that *Heiligabend* remains untouched by technology.

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