



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Many students were well prepared and responded readily and clearly to questions, giving interesting information and opinions. Some gave unusual answers with appropriate vocabulary and idioms, and handled unexpected questions confidently. Many students voluntarily expanded on their answers and offered opinions spontaneously, while others made effective use of repair strategies. Some answers were lacking in breadth and depth in both information and ideas. Overall, the students carried the conversation forward, even though some experienced a few difficulties.

The assessment this year in both sections was divided into three sections – communication, content and language.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – General conversation

Communication

The topic for the general conversation section was ‘the student’s personal world’, and, as this was known beforehand, the responses were mostly appropriate and varied. Most students understood the questions and gave suitable replies. Expansion and elaboration was required and opinions needed to be expressed about various aspects of the student’s personal world. This was the student’s opportunity to demonstrate what they could do. Students should link topics and elaborate, rather than giving short sentences or monosyllabic answers.

Some students had prepared chunks of text that they had learnt off by heart. When interrupted or asked a question, they often had difficulty continuing. Sometimes they did not listen carefully enough to the question, but only focused on a key word like ‘school’ and then rattled off a prepared response, which was not necessarily relevant to the question. Flexibility is essential, as is the ability to talk about unexpected aspects.

Words like *Was*, *Wie*, *Wer* and *Warum* were often misunderstood; for example, to the question ‘*Was haben Sie interessant gefunden?*’ came the answer ‘*Ja, es war interessant*’ or to ‘*Wie war das Leben besser?*’ came ‘*Ja, das Leben war besser*’. Some students also had difficulty understanding ‘*Waren Sie schon einmal in Deutschland?*’ or the expression ‘*zu Hause bleiben*’. Practice in answering questions starting with *Warum* is vital.

Pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo are also assessed in the communication section. Students should not speak too slowly, quickly, loudly, or softly in order to be understood and to be heard on the cassette. Some students had excellent pronunciation; others had difficulty with words like *Australien*, *Englisch*, *Familie*, *Mitglied* and *Universität*.

Content

Students generally found it difficult to reflect on their own experiences. For example, when talking about school, it would help if they thought about good and bad experiences, what they might miss when they leave, which were their best and worst years, and how they and the school’s expectations have changed through the years. If talking about family, students could detail what different members do, what common and contrasting interests they have, what each one does on the weekends and how they relate to each other.

As the examination was held during the last week of school for most Year 12 students, it would be useful for them to practise answering questions like ‘*Was machen Sie an Ihrem letzten Schultag?*’ or ‘*Was planen Sie, wenn die Prüfungen fertig sind?*’ Some students did not understand these questions; others did, but lacked the vocabulary and structures to respond. Students should be familiar with words like *Reisen*, *Ferien* and *Führerschein*.

If students say that they do an activity in their free time, they should be prepared to give more details about it, as the assessors will follow the leads they are given. If they have a job, they should be able to describe what they do, the people they work with and how they feel about aspects like the actual work and their pay. If they are asked about their future they should know the correct name and details in German about the course they wish to undertake or the career they wish to follow, and give reasons for wanting to choose this.



Language

Here the stress was on accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar. Better students used a wide range of vocabulary and their structures and expressions were appropriate and correct. They constantly used the appropriate style and register. Some responses were characterised by errors in gender, verb forms (particularly modal verbs and the perfect tense with the wrong auxiliary or past participle), case endings, word order and the passive mood. Subject and verb agreements sometimes produced strange forms such as using *haben* after *Meine Schule* or after *er*. The infinitive was often interchanged with the past participle.

Words that were similar or 'false friends' were often confused, for example: *wer* with *who*, *geliebt* with *gelebt*, *Gymnasium* with *Turnhalle*, *wollen* with *werden*, *wann* with *wenn* or *als*, *studieren* with *lernen*, *Stunde* with *Uhr* and *also* with *auch*. *Bettzimmer* was used instead of *Schlafzimmer*, *Hochschule* was used for a secondary school and the sentence '*Ich kann später aufstehen*' was thought to mean 'I can stay up later'.

Personal pronouns presented problems, with students confusing *sein* with *ihr* and using the accusative after comparisons. There was also a tendency to use *meine* before masculine words like *Vater* or *Bruder*. Students should also be careful to use the correct pronouns for masculine and feminine things, for example *er* for *der Film* and *sie* for *die Schule*, not simply *es* for everything.

Section 2 – Detailed study

The choice of topic here was absolutely crucial. The topic chosen should reflect the interests and abilities of the class, and it is wise to choose texts that interest students. Some students find it almost impossible to comprehend sophisticated topics which involve the political, economic and historical implications of the Cold War. When students in Year 10 or 11 are doing Units 3 and 4 German, it is important to realise that most do not have the same maturity as students in Year 12, and they may need help to find a topic that is appropriate to their level.

Some good topics were: '*Jugendprobleme*', '*Deutsche Einwanderer in Australien*', '*Märchen*', '*Problemkinder*', '*Die Stasi*', '*Die DDR vor und nach der Wende*', '*Deutsche Feste*', '*Die Wiedervereinigung*', '*Ausländer in Deutschland*' and '*Internierungslager Tatura*'. Some topics, like '*Entartete Kunst*', '*Ostalgie*' or '*Die Qual der Wahl*', proved to be brilliant for better students but a disaster for those who were not as competent.

Some topics were far too broad, like '*Menschen in Deutschland*', '*Salzburg*', '*Sport in Berlin*', '*Weihnachten*', '*Kindheit*' and '*Umweltschutz*'. When a topic was so wide, students were often asked questions that they could not answer. If such a topic is narrowed down to something more specific, it is easier for the student and the assessors. Other topics, such as '*Musik*', '*die Olympischen Spiele*' or '*Drogen*' were not specifically related to German-speaking communities. The resources must be related to the topic and not be too simple nor too disparate as they need to be discussed together, compared and contrasted. It is recommended that the three texts studied be in German and of different text types. This means it is not advisable for students to choose two feature films as two of their texts.

Communication

Better students gave the required introductory statement, named their specific topic and highlighted their particular focus and interests. If illustrative material was brought in, they showed it here and were later able to expand on it by presenting unusual and often fascinating details. They demonstrated their understanding of the topic by responding readily and confidently to questions. They carried the discussion forward with some original input and could maintain the conversation without the assessors having to support the student. They were skilled in formulating and expressing interesting ideas and opinions and in guiding the discussion into areas which most interested them. Where needed, these students used effective repair strategies. Their pronunciation, intonation and stress were very good and they spoke at a suitable tempo without significant pauses.

Students should avoid asking the assessors how to say words in German or to translate phrases for them. They should not resort to English words at any time, but should try to develop the skill of expressing something in different words if they cannot find the right ones in German.

Content

In the introduction, which should take no longer than one minute, students should say something like '*Wir haben Sprache und Kultur durch Texte gemacht*', name their topic and texts clearly and say if they have brought any supporting material with them. It should be noted that this material should not have German writing on it (apart from a label). A well-chosen picture can provide valuable content and raise the opportunity for a stimulating discussion and the expression of worthwhile ideas. Some students named resources which appeared not to have been studied in depth, if at all. Teachers could help students by ensuring that they feel confident about their introduction. Sometimes students said



a text or topic was boring: such a statement should have been followed up with an explanation as to why they felt this way. Sometimes students had rote-learned a very complicated introduction, which could not be understood because of mispronunciation and the wrong intonation. It also seemed as if some students did not understand what they were saying.

Students need to practise what to do when asked a question which they do not understand or for which they cannot formulate an answer. Instead of having a long awkward pause, they should ask for clarification or explain that they have not studied this aspect, indicating at the same time what they have studied. They must understand very clearly what each of the resources is about and how it is related to the topic and be able to show its similarity or differences to the other texts. Some students thought they only had to discuss the topic and did not need to know very much about the texts. Not being well prepared here translates into simplistic answers that lack depth and breadth. Students should be able to elaborate on their own ideas and opinions and be able to justify these, demonstrating a sophisticated level of content.

Increasingly, students seem to have difficulty linking their texts to their topic as well as being able to see common themes within the material. The resources seemed to be dealt with as independent and mutually exclusive in content. Students should be encouraged to practise structures like *'In dem Film und in dem Artikel sehen wir...'* or *'Der Film und das Interview haben... gemeinsam'*. Sometimes the texts themselves seemed to have a very tenuous link to the topic, which meant students had difficulty giving explanations and clarifying their ideas.

Very factual texts did not allow students to develop and express ideas and opinions. While facts are essential as a basis for study, there needs to be material that leads to the presentation of ideas and opinions and that enables students to support and elaborate on these opinions and ideas with evidence from the texts. Students should try to analyse what they think themselves and give some original opinions, not simply repeat ideas they have heard from others.

For some students, the concepts behind the Cold War and the division of Germany and Berlin are difficult to understand. If this topic is chosen, students need to have a basic political knowledge and a comprehension of the issues, so that they avoid the danger of making unsubstantiated judgements. Students regularly made comments that everything in East Germany was bad – the people were unhappy, poor, old-fashioned and hungry – perpetuating inappropriate stereotypes about the East. While students are not expected to know everything about their topic, they should at least be accurate about significant dates and facts. The breadth and depth of their handling of the topic is important. When words like *Redefreiheit* or *Reisefreiheit* are used, they should be understood and students should be able to explain what they mean if asked. Technology is another challenging area where unfamiliarity with the necessary vocabulary can cause problems.

Language

Better students used an excellent range of vocabulary and expressions accurately and appropriately and were able to self-correct. They had good control of sentence structures and also used an appropriate style and register. Some students did not know expressions like *anders als*, *Vor- und Nachteile*, *Unterschiede*, *vergleichen* or *verschieden*. They need to practise the vocabulary and skills needed to compare and contrast across a wide range of topics, but particularly on their own detailed study. Students should concentrate their preparation around their texts.

As 15 hours of class time is required for the detailed study, it is expected that students will know the genders of the key words, be able to use correct grammar and will have mastered suitable structures to discuss the subject. To widen their vocabulary, students should learn and use a variety of adjectives, not just *gut* and *interessant*. When discussing an historical topic, it is important to use the correct tense and to be able to apply the passive; for example, 'the Berlin wall was built in 1961'.

Well-prepared students performed very well in the oral examination. They could discuss their own personal world with unusual facts and illustrations and were able to express ideas and opinions about many aspects of their life, using a wide vocabulary and accurate grammar. For the detailed study, they had selected a topic that really interested them and studied their three texts carefully. They had thought about what was involved and could talk freely, giving correct facts with references to the texts and well thought-out ideas and opinions.



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students coped well with the exam this year, showing the development of their language skills throughout their school years. Students who scored well were able to use a wide range of structures and vocabulary to respond to each of the sections and contexts they faced.

One of the biggest problems for students was a lack of active vocabulary, where students had difficulty understanding both the written and spoken language. They may have been able to perform better had they recognised a greater number of key words.

Once again, some students needed to write more clearly. Marks cannot be given if the writing is illegible and the answer cannot be deciphered.

Key exam techniques often needed to be improved. Students should avoid rewriting the questions, especially as they are given only a limited amount of space on the examination paper. Two lines usually indicate there are two points to be selected, not that one line should be used to rewrite the question. Unnecessary errors were made when students did not read the question carefully. Naturally students are nervous during the exam, but practising exam technique enables students to read questions carefully and look for every requirement of a question, especially where a task requires several steps.

Students need to beware of words that sound or look similar to English, but do not actually mean the same thing as their English 'partner'; for example, *familiär* and *Kontaktperson*. Likewise, they should beware of words that look similar in German; for example, *Riesen* and *Reisen*, *Schluss* and *Schloss*, and *Stadt* and *Staat*. Errors were also made where one English word has two equivalent German words which are used in specific circumstances, such as *anders* and *verschieden*, and *hilfreich* and *hilfsbereit*.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

It is very important to practise the skill of note-taking during the listening passages. It would appear that students who took notes then prepared their answer once the passage was completed (rather than writing answers during the playing) had a better level of success than those who wrote quickly during the playing, without gathering their thoughts. This was especially evident in the Part B responses in German.

Many errors were English related; notes in the margins suggested that students may have heard the right words, but were unable to interpret the questions adequately to supply the right answer. Many students appeared not to think about the answer they were writing, so answers were illogical or even nonsensical, especially for questions that required students to explain a meaning or draw a conclusion.

Teachers and students need to be reminded that the German Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design states that questions may require the student to identify information related to 'aspects of the language of the text, for example, tone, register, knowledge of language structures' (Page 31). Question 8 asked what language structures are used in the text to express advice. This question was often poorly answered, however some students did identify appropriate language structures.

Part A – Answers in English

TEXT 1

Question 1

(D) cancelled

Question 2

Fog at Düsseldorf and Cologne **or** the planes are unable to land.

Question 3

To book an alternative flight **or** to get a taxi coupon.

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Question 4

Because the plane from Düsseldorf will not be leaving, and two planes cannot leave for Düsseldorf and Köln. Therefore, both **departing** flights and **arriving** flights for the two cities are affected.

TEXT 2

Question 5

Once a week.

Question 6

(A) Relax

Question 7

Any four of:

- take their work and themselves very seriously
- tend not to have a lot of fun
- always try to be grown up
- think too much about tomorrow
- are not ambitious
- are not very tolerant
- are unrealistic
- don't present things realistically, and therefore don't get any realistic results
- don't stay cool and factual (technical)
- are matter of fact
- are objective
- are too pragmatic/not pragmatic.

Question 8

Any of:

- uses imperatives
- uses the word 'you' to address the listener directly
- uses modal verbs such as *man kann* and *man muss nicht*.

TEXT 3

Question 9

Evening/dinner time

Question 10

- constantly talking on the mobile phone
- sending and receiving SMS messages.

Question 11

Anna's **father** is concerned that she is out all the time, has a super-active lifestyle and appears stressed. He thinks it is not a 'normal' lifestyle, that she goes to too many parties and needs time to relax

Anna's **mother** says she would not like it if Anna stayed home all the time in front of the television, she is getting good marks at school and does her homework.

Question 12

Anna should find a middle point between her social life and being at home; that is, not go out so often and so late, not use the mobile phone constantly in front of her parents, and come home for dinner more often.

Question 13

The mother thinks the father works all the time and/or doesn't take any time out to rest.

Question 14

Any two of:

- she is well-liked in her circle of friends
- she is able to lead a super-active lifestyle ('she is having fun' was not sufficient)



- she manages to complete all tasks required and still have an extensive social life
- she gets good marks.

Part B – Answers in German

TEXT 4

Question 15

They weren't able to meet at the party, the man says he is looking forward to meeting her for the first time (implied in language – *kennenlernen*). **Not** that he calls her *Frau* or *Sie*.

Many students were under the misapprehension that people only use *Sie* when they have not met. However, these are clearly two adults with a business contact. It is unlikely that they would stop using *Sie* after their first meeting. Twice in the passage it was mentioned that *sie sich noch nicht kennengelernt haben / Er freut sich, sie bald kennenzulernen*.

Question 16

Because the route is mainly a pedestrian mall (it takes longer than walking).

Question 17

A

TEXT 5

Question 18

- work in national parks
- type of work: any two of:
 - bring nature closer to visitors
 - inform visitors about environmental questions
 - take guided tours
 - plan activities for children and youth groups
- how long: three to six months
- begin: April or October
- living: organised by Europarc and/or in the vicinity of the workplace
- payment: 255 **Euros** per month (**not** marks or dollars)
- application: form on web site, Internet.

Question 19

(B) university students

Question 20

Frau Schwarz is the manager of Europarc.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answers in English

Students need to be careful in their reading and avoid making assumptions about facts and content. For example, in Question 21, 'things that Franz Graf offers in his Backpacker hotel' are not necessarily offered in all backpacker hotels. However, it was acceptable to take Backpacker facts and reverse them to explain things not done by youth hostels, such as collecting guests from the airport.

In Question 25 there were many amusing translations of the words *Zwerg unter Riesen* (dwarves, midgets, travelling midgets, under travellers) and *Schluss mit dem Gigantismus* (castles, keys, bowls, locks). One would have liked to give credit for initiative if not for accuracy. However the instruction to 'explain the meaning' does not mean simply to translate an expression word for word, rather students should explain in effective English. A dwarf under giants is not sufficient. It gives no real meaning and does not clarify the expression at all.

TEXT 6

Question 21

Any five of:

- youth hostels are bigger
- youth hostels have definite closing times

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- there are often only noisy school classes for company in youth hostels
- guests can't come back to youth hostels late at night
- the atmosphere is less friendly in youth hostels
- the service is less personal in youth hostels
- guests are not able to use the kitchen in youth hostels
- guests at youth hostels are less able to make contact with other travellers
- youth hostels do not pick up from the airport.

Question 22

Backpacker hostels are still new in Germany; they haven't been around for decades.

Question 23

Backpacker hostels are similar to youth hostels, but they are smaller, offer less formal amenities and haven't been around as long. Like a younger sibling, they seek to improve on what the older sibling has done.

TEXT 7

Question 24

Any two of:

- the people of Leipzig
- the mayor of Leipzig
- other East German cities
- German sport associations.

Question 25

- *Zwerg unter Riesen*: Leipzig is a dwarf among giants, a small city among large cities
- *Schluss mit dem Gigantismus*: an end to the gigantic cities; it offers an end to the enormous nature of Olympics.

Leipzig can use existing facilities, and partner cities' facilities, without resorting to the enormous demands of the huge cities. The whole city will become the Olympic village, all the people will be involved, the accommodation will be in current vacant buildings. Jacques Rogge could support its application.

Question 26

The original team was accused of corruption.

Question 27

Any three of:

- currently empty buildings will be put to use
- the town will get a lot of sporting facilities
- there may be an economic upturn in the region
- the Olympics will bring employment.

Question 28

Any two of:

- experiences with massive sport festivals in the former East Germany
- the Football World Championships in 2006
- the change in committee members.

Part B – Answers in German

Many students simply repeated projects rather than commenting on each project. This was a waste of words in a task which required a number of points to be made. Lengthy descriptions of the task were not necessary; simple comments were acceptable, such as *Das Plastiktüten Projekt war sehr erfolgreich, und unsere Schule sieht jetzt sehr schön aus, nachdem eine Gruppe Bäume gepflanzt hat. Die Strom- und Wassersparen Projekte waren auch sehr interessant.*

Some students did not follow the instructions, or realise that this report was responding to an event that had already taken place. Some students wrote about environmental issues they had studied in class rather than addressing the issues



in the task. One or two did not address any questions or issues raised at all, despite writing a reasonably fluent report about the environment. Others confused *Strom* (electricity) with a river.

TEXT 8

Question 29

The report should have responded to major questions and issues in the memo, such as:

- providing an opinion on the success of the project of Environment Week
- commenting on each of the projects:
 - plastic bags
 - trees
 - water
 - electricity
- which initiative was the most successful?
- why?
- how to integrate Mr Tesselman's suggestions for the planning of environment protection at school?
- is there a need for a school-based environment group?
- what guests could be invited?
- giving suggestions for themes.

Section 3 – Writing in German

Many writing tasks lacked several key characteristics of the text type. Teachers and students need to pay close attention to the key characteristics of each asterisked text type in the German Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design list of text types, and also to the later clear description of the main characteristics of common text types. The title and author were frequently missed from the short story and magazine article. These are two simple but important characteristics of those text types.

Students should practise completing many writing tasks during Years 11 and 12. This will enable them to gain a good sense of the correct length for the task and knowledge of how to include the characteristics of text types within the word limit.

It was disappointing to see the number of students who paid little attention to the details of the writing tasks, and who took a guess at what was required. For example, some students described all Australian states (or only cities), some wrote a letter about how hard German is, but not about its value in Australia. Others wrote a short story about a car, but included no family. The canteen and student health topic was one where the majority of students presented full and thoughtful responses.

Many students who chose to write a letter did not consider the content required. Many did not identify that this was **personal** writing, therefore they included too many facts and not enough human interest for the required text type.

Question 30

Students were to write an evaluative magazine article that included:

- a comparison and contrast of the student's state to another state
- concentration on tourist aspects relevant to a school trip and school students
- two or more important aspects, discussed rationally by using evidence to support the contrasting sides/alternatives
- use of an objective style that appealed to reason not emotion, giving an impression of balance and impartiality
- 1 a conclusion reached through the logical presentation and discussion of facts and ideas.

Magazine Article: title, content, author (fictional name), register, style, layout.

Very few students addressed the issue, which was clearly stated in the topic, that the tourist aspects were for a school trip and school students. Most students listed tourist sites, rather than explaining their appeal to a school group or school trip. Students should read the requirements carefully, going beyond the first sentence or line, and noting all the demands of the task.

Question 31

Students were to write a personal letter that included:

- the advantages and disadvantages of studying German in Australia

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- the importance of learning German in Australia
- a sense of person/personality for the writer
- the establishment of a relationship (exchange partner) between the writer and reader
- emphasis on ideas, opinions and feelings as well as the realities of studying German.

The letter may have used contracted language such as that used in personal communications.

Personal Letter: address, date, salutation, greeting, body (content), farewell/signing off (fictional name), register, style, layout.

This question presents a challenge to German teachers to talk more with students about the advantages of studying German, as there appeared to be a lack of knowledge on this issue. Few students had any idea of why learning German might be relevant in Australia. Hardly any students could see beyond German being useful for travelling, and fewer still mentioned the implications of learning German for its value in business (as a result of globalisation), or the implicit value of studying a language.

This topic was generally dealt with in a very simplistic manner, rather than looking at all aspects of the topic.

Question 32

Students were to write a persuasive speech that:

- persuaded fellow students to support the initiative
- manipulated readers' emotions and opinions
- used persuasive techniques and language appropriate to a school assembly
- showed careful choice of words
- may have used exaggeration, extravagant language and humour to create a relationship
- used the second person for direct address and appeal.

Speech: title/topic, structure, content, register, style, layout.

This topic was generally completed effectively, with considered reasons for eating healthy foods. The skills for persuasive writing were generally quite good, but it is a style that would possibly benefit from more practice and discussion in the classroom.

Question 33

Students were to write an imaginative short story that included:

- the car as a central character in the story
- the car being treated like a member of the family
- a strong sense of context
- description and careful selection of language
- use of a range of techniques to create the desired atmosphere or emotion.

The story may have broken normal sequencing for added impact.

Short story: title/topic, structure, content, author (fictional name), register, style, layout.

Although students' language skills are not the equivalent of Year 12 English, it is to be expected that the imaginative story content should not be that of primary school level. The art of story telling would appear to have been neglected by some teachers and students judging by the responses in this question. Students often presented simplistic stories, rather than considering the characteristics and structure of imaginative writing. Students are expected to develop a logical sequence of events, possibly insert some humour, and develop atmosphere and emotion with the careful selection of language. Sometimes weakly constructed conversations and absurd sequences were inserted.

Virtually every story had a car that could talk and take on a human personality. One of the stories involved a family car saving a drowning child, overcoming a shiny new rival car in the process.