

GCSE GERMAN

Unit 2 Reading
Report on the Examination

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Question 1

This question was answered correctly by the majority of the students.

Question 2

While part (b) was correctly answered by a large majority of the students, other parts of this question appeared to pose some difficulty. Part (c) was correctly answered by just over half of the students, with answer E (*Badezimmer*) attracting a significant number of answers. Part (d) was correctly answered by less than half of the students, while part (a) proved most difficult of all: slightly less than a third of students gave the correct answer and options A (*Arbeitszimmer*), B (*Balkon*) and D (*Garten*) being offered as the answer by quite significant numbers.

Question 3

Students performed well on this question overall. All parts were correctly answered by a large majority.

Question 4

a) A large majority of students scored at least one mark on this question, although less than half scored both the marks. While most students appeared to know the word *klein*, *sauber* was known by far fewer.

b) More than three-quarters of the students scored at least one mark for this question, but only a third gained both marks. It was surprising that *U-Bahn* did not appear to be known and many students completed this gap with the answer 'train'.

c) Students performed better on this question and a large majority gave the correct answer.

Question 5

Students answered this question well overall. The only problem was part (c) where only just over half gave the correct answer.

Question 6

This question was well answered, with a large majority of students scoring a mark for each part.

Question 7

Students had little problem with part (a), but the other parts proved more difficult. Only a minority gained a mark for (b), and M (Maria) was offered more often than the correct answer. Approximately half the students gave the correct answer to parts (c) and (d), although in (c) a significant number offered P (Petra) as the answer – presumably having read *drei Kinder* and failing to realise that it applied to Petra's husband.

Question 8

a) The large majority of the students answered this question correctly.

- b) Very many students did not appear to know the word *Fußgängerzone* and of those who did many were not aware of the English expression for it. There were many generalisations, such as ‘city centre’, and ‘the middle of town’. The reference to *Fuß* led many to suggest ‘football stadium’ as the venue, or simply to state that they were playing ‘on the footpaths’. The incorrect answer ‘in the park’ was less easy to explain, as there was no reference to a park in the text.
- c) (i) Many students gave an answer which suggested what Stefan thought of French (e.g. he hated it), which could not be substantiated from the text. All that was needed to gain the mark was a factual statement about his poor grades. There was a considerable number of students who regarded *Note* as a cognate, and said that he made bad notes, while some even thought that it referred to musical notes.
- (ii) Having got the first part of this question right, many students went on to say that Stefan was now fluent – again something which cannot be supported from the text. Reference to his comprehension ability was required (*ich kann alles verstehen*) or to his general improvement (*verbessert*), but this information was only given by a small minority of the students. A large number of students made reference to the fact that Stefan now knew some Italian – despite the fact that the question asked about the quality of his French.
- d) Having recognised the two cognates *klassisch* and *modern*, many students were happy to make that their answer and suggested that the band played both classical and modern music, without reading the sentence for the necessary detail (‘in a modern style’). There were also many who understood *Stil* as the English word ‘still’ (‘it’s still modern’). The question was answered correctly by only a small minority of the students.
- e) A number of German and Austrian cities are listed in the vocabulary list, and in most cases the English form of the name differs from the German one. Students are expected to be familiar with these. The spelling of Cologne posed considerable difficulty for many students and examiners were fairly generous in the forms which were allowed. Students were, however, expected to know that the English form began with the letter C. There were many careless readings of the question and places such as Italy and France were frequently cited as cities. Many non-German cities were mentioned, and it was difficult to see how the incorrect German cities offered as an answer (e.g. Berlin, Munich, Dortmund) had been derived from the German form *Köln*. A significant number of students also failed to offer any answer at all for this question.

Higher Tier

Question 1

This question was well answered at this level, with almost all students gaining a mark for each part.

Question 2

Again, Higher Tier students performed better on this question than those at Foundation Tier, although part (b) again posed some problems, with just over half of the students giving the correct answer.

Question 3

- a) Almost all of the students answered this question correctly.
- b) There was an improvement in performance in comparison with the Foundation Tier question, but still less than half the students gave the correct answer. Similar errors occurred in this question as in the Foundation Tier question, It was noticeable that many students, having given the correct answer, felt the need to explain or qualify their answer. Often the qualification rendered the answer ambiguous and a mark could not be awarded. Teachers should advise students not to add information in brackets or to suggest two alternatives, divided by an oblique stroke.
- c) (i) Performance was much improved in comparison with the equivalent question at Foundation Tier and a large majority of students gave the correct answer.
- (ii) Again, performance was better than at Foundation Tier, but again less than half of the students gained a mark. Many students demonstrated a knowledge of *ich kann alles verstehen*, although there was still a significant number who made reference to his fluency in speaking.
- d) Students gave similar wrong answers as in the equivalent question in Foundation Tier, but there was a larger number of students giving the correct answer.
- e) In comparison with the Foundation Tier question there were more students who were aware that Cologne was the English version of *Köln* and they were also more likely to spell it correctly. There were fewer answers which were well wide of the mark.

Question 4

Marks on this question were spread across the full range, although a majority of students scored two marks or more. A fairly significant number of students failed to score on this question.

Question 5

There was a reasonable performance on most parts of this question. The parts which caused most problems were (d), where more students answered True than gave the correct answer, and (e), where only half the students were able to deduce from the paragraph headed *Zeitung* that newspapers were available to all passengers.

Question 6

Performance varied on this question. Parts (b), (c) and (e) were correctly answered by a majority of students. In part (a), however, more students gave the answer A than the correct answer. Presumably they had failed to make the link that a full fridge meant that one did not have to do any shopping. Part (d) was correctly answered by just under half the students, with answer B proving to be a very significant distractor. Perhaps here the phrase *meine eigene Wohnung zu finden* led students to choose answer B, without taking the rest of the sentence into account – namely that he was not thinking about it at the moment.

Question 7

The large majority of students scored two marks or more on this question, with three marks being achieved by almost half. Many students offered G as an answer, maybe because they regarded

this 'safety first' approach as logical and did not take the phrase *ohne im Voraus zu reservieren* in the text into account.

Question 8

a) Students found this question quite difficult and only a small minority gave the correct answer. Others appeared to base their answer around the one word which they recognised (*Universität*). There were some near misses, such as 'neglected his university studies' or 'didn't work hard enough at university'. The remainder were largely divided between those who suggested that his passionate interest in electronics led him to go on to study it at university and those who thought that the gadgets posed such a distraction that he failed to gain a university place.

b) In answering this question, students needed to locate the key phrase *mit den anderen Kindern*. Many ignored this phrase, which would have led them to the correct answer (more strictly) and suggested, on the basis of the next paragraph, that the children had to help in the house – information which was part of the answer to question 8c(i). However, a majority of students gave the correct answer. In order to gain the mark, it was sufficient for students to show that they knew *streng* to mean 'strict'. The comparative was not insisted upon. A relatively small number of students understood *streng* as 'strong'.

c) i) In answering this question, the key phrase was *mehr als ihre Freunde* and to gain the mark it was necessary to make this comparison between the Hulbert children and their friends. Many students appeared not to read the sentence to the end and simply said that they had to help with the housework. The question was correctly answered by less than half of the students.

ii) A pleasing number of students gave the correct answer to this question, many of them giving a clear rendering of the answer. The commonest error was to state that it prepared the children for later life or for having their own families. However, quite a large number of students did not attempt this question at all.

d) This relatively straightforward vocabulary item posed considerable problems for students. Many students confused dishwasher with washing machine and thus failed to gain the mark. Those who correctly identified dishwasher often said that Raphael had to load and empty it, when only the latter verb is mentioned in the text. There were also many who said that he had to sort the rubbish – again something not mentioned in the text. The mark for this question was only gained by a small minority of the students.

e) The key word in answering this question was *weitere*. In order to gain the mark, students had to suggest that Raphael did extra work, in addition to the jobs he was already doing. A majority of students were successful in gaining a mark for this question. Those who did not, often suggested that Raphael should take a part-time job. By treating *weitere* as a semi-cognate, a small number thought that he should take a job as a waiter.

f) Many students failed to gain a mark for this question by giving one of the details incorrectly: *fünf Minuten* was often rendered as 'fifteen' or 'fifty' (an error which should not occur at this level) while *Spielzeugen* was often translated as 'planes', presumably being confused with *Flugzeugen*, or as 'toy trains' due to a misreading of *-zeug* as *-zug*. The reference to electronic gadgets in the opening paragraph (or simply their prevalence as 'toys' in today's world) may have led many students to say that Lennard was playing on some form of games console, which again could not be credited.

g) As students tended to refer in this question to the same item (e.g. game console) that they had mentioned in part (f), no further penalty was imposed for mentioning the wrong item here. However, the greater problem in answering this question was the failure of many students to observe the prepositions *bis zum*. There were many who said that Lennard had his toys etc taken away from him **for** the weekend, which often rendered an otherwise accurate answer incorrect. In these final questions of the Higher Tier paper students need to make sure that they read in detail and accurately. Other answers often appeared to be the product of the student's imagination ('he was grounded / not allowed out) or based on small sections of the text recognised ('he was given a five minute time out'). A small minority of students gave the correct answer to the question.

h) The deceptively simple phrase *Nein sagen, und dabei bleiben* posed considerable problems for students and correct answers were few and far between. Many offered answers which related to some aspect of the situation outlined in the article, and there were also some surprisingly draconian rules offered. A significant number of students failed to attempt this question.

Question 9

a) This question was perhaps unusual in that the order of the questions did not follow the order in which the information was presented in the text. Students at this level should, however, have been able to deal with this and a pleasing number did so. Those who failed to gain a mark for this question usually gave an answer which related to the money referred to in the first half of the statement. Others, who realised the information was presented in reverse order seemed to overlook the word *halbe* and gave answers which suggested apologies for only sending a post card or for sending it late. Those who apparently did not understand the joke apologized for the fact that the postcard was torn or that it was not a very good one.

b) A pleasing number of students gave the correct answer to this question. Most of those who did not, suggested that postcards were too expensive or that Vienna was an expensive place. A significant number of students understood *ausgegeben* as 'lost'.

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