

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE

GCSE German (1231)

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Paper 1 - Listening and Responding

Paper 1F (Foundation)

It was pleasing to see that centres had once more entered the vast majority of candidates at the appropriate level. As the format for the paper is now well established most candidates understood the requirements of the different task types and had been well prepared for the examination. The Foundation paper was tackled quite well by most candidates and differentiated well between candidates of varying abilities. Weaker candidates were able to identify key words and messages from topics with which they were familiar. At the higher end of the scale candidates were able to demonstrate more advanced listening skills such as identifying opinions.

Advice given in previous reports on this paper still applies. Candidates should be prepared to listen for more than key words. They need to develop the skill of listening for the gist and to understand simple sentence structure to help them improve their listening skills. It is also important that candidates are advised on how to best use the five minute preparation time before the playing of the CD. Candidates should be encouraged to attempt all questions; the importance of having a go cannot be over-stressed. Centres are reminded that copies of past papers are available and that these are an invaluable resource in preparing candidates for the examination. This year's paper differentiated well, producing a similar level of performance to previous years.

Questions 1-5 (Einkaufen)

Most candidates scored well on this question which tested familiar items, all contained within the minimum core vocabulary. Although virtually all candidates knew *Hose* and *Parfüm*, there were quite a few who did not recognise *Buch*. *Schmuck* was unfamiliar to weaker candidates and caused problems even for some better candidates.

Questions 6-10 (Essen)

Candidates coped well with this accessible question which tested a very familiar topic. Many scored full marks although there were some problems with *Hähnchen* (often assumed to be ham) and *Würstchen*.

Questions 11-15 (Urlaub)

Most candidates scored well on this question. *Auto* and *Zug* were as familiar as one would expect but it was encouraging to see how well known *Wohnwagen* was. Some candidates failed to recognise the significance of the compound noun *Radtour*. Perhaps unsurprisingly many candidates did not appreciate the significance of the negative in *nicht mit dem Boot*.

Question 16 (Brüder)

This crossover question proved relatively accessible to many better Foundation tier candidates. At C Grade candidate must be able to extract details and points of view from language spoken at normal speed. Most candidates spotted the link between *unordentlich* and *chaotisch* and between *spielt Geige* and *musikalisch*. The least accessible answer proved to be Q16b which required candidates to understand *ärgert*. When preparing for these crossover questions candidates should be trained to look for the synonyms used on the recording and on the question paper.

Question 17 (Umwelt)

This crossover, which required candidates to make simple deductions, produced some excellent performances from stronger candidates. However it proved a good discriminator at this level; weaker candidates scored very marks here. Vocabulary for this topic was well known and candidates were able to make the necessary links between the language on the recording and the summary statements on the examination paper.

Question 18 (Fliegen)

This type of crossover question often causes problems at this level; the majority of candidates gained no more than 3 marks. Note-taking is a useful skill which needs practice, even at Foundation Level. Q18a (*Mittwoch*) was answered correctly by most students but Q18d (*Rucksack*) caused some difficulties despite being a cognate noun. Some candidates clearly did not know what a rucksack is and invented concepts such as a *Rugsack*. Many candidates were unable to render *Koffer* sufficiently accurately to score marks. As always times caused some difficulties for weaker candidates, frequent answers to Q18b being *9.30* or *9-3*. Q18c (*€85*) frequently became *€5,80* or *€580*. Poor handwriting remains an issue here, sometimes costing candidates useful marks. If handwriting is very small examiners are unable to readily distinguish letters.

Question 19 (Arbeit)

This question proved taxing at Foundation Level, few candidates scoring more than 1 or 2 marks. Most candidates were able to link *Englisch und Spanisch* with *Fremdsprachen* but many of the other answers were little more than random guesses.

Questions 20-24 (Sonntag)

These questions were targeted at Grade F and therefore proved well within the capabilities of most candidates. Q21 + Q22 were answered correctly by almost all candidates. The only problematic answer was to Q23 which required knowledge of *spazieren*. Many candidates interpreted this as skateboarding.

Question 25 (Films)

As usual the English questions proved quite taxing for the majority of candidates, although almost every body was able to recognise *Freitag* as meaning *Friday*. A minority of candidates answered this question in German. It is important to read the questions carefully; there was some confusion between *when* and *where*. Candidates should realise that there are negative adjectives other than the ubiquitous *boring*. *Spannend* and all the other vocabulary for this question is taken from the minimum core vocabulary. Incomplete answers often cost marks. In Q25d (*near the town hall*) the preposition is essential if the mark is to be awarded. *Rathaus* was frequently taken to be *Rad* and therefore answers such as *bike shop* were common.

Question 26 (School in England)

This question proved rather more demanding than the previous English question but proved a good discriminator because a significant minority of candidates scored well. Few identified *ein halbes Jahr* as the answer to Q26a, preferring instead to take *two years* from a different section of the dialogue. Many correctly identified *Geschichte* but lost marks on the final part because they did not indicate that it was the teacher who was friendly. Even at this level candidates need to be precise in their answers if they are to score well.

Paper 1H (Higher)

Throughout this paper candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and ability but it also proved effective in differentiating between candidates of differing abilities. The best candidates displayed a wide vocabulary, a high level of comprehension and listening skills, together with an ability to express themselves accurately. The vast majority of candidates had been well prepared for this paper and clearly understood the demands of the different question types. Although most candidates had been entered at the right level there are some who would score more highly if they took the Foundation Tier paper. Copies of past papers are available from Edexcel and are an invaluable resource when preparing for the examination.

For the Higher Tier paper it is essential that candidates have the opportunity to practise global listening techniques. Some weaker candidates were unable to go beyond listening for key words. The strongest candidates were able to recognise attitudes, opinions and emotions drawn from a variety of sources and referring to past, present and future events and to give precise answers in the demanding final section of the paper. Crossover questions were tackled more confidently at this level.

Candidates need to take care over the presentation of their work as there are still a large number of illegible answers. Examiners are unable to award marks if they cannot read a candidate's handwriting. When crossing out sections candidates must make it absolutely clear what their final answer is supposed to be. The problems caused by the use of blue ink were much reduced this year.

Question 1 (Fliegen)

Despite inaccuracies in spelling this crossover question was much better answered at higher level. However, many grade C candidates still had difficulties with times and prices as outlined in the report on 1F Q18.

Question 2 (Umwelt)

This crossover question proved to be the most accessible on the whole paper. Even weak candidates were able to score almost full marks.

Question 3 (Au-Pair-Mädchen)

This question differentiated extremely well. Stronger candidates were able to use the 5 minutes preparation time to narrow down the possible answers for each part of

the question by identifying which part of speech was required. Candidates must realise that their suggested answer must make sense in the context. The most frequent correct answer was Q4a which involved linking *fantastisch* with *toll*. Most problematical was the link between *meine Unterkunft ist kostenlos* and *sie zahlt nichts*.

Question 4 (Der Wiener Zoo)

This style of question is proving more accessible year by year as centres become more familiar with the format. Although targeted at Grade A even weaker candidates proved able to score relatively well here. Many of the links between targeted vocabulary were relatively straightforward. Most candidates were able to see the link between *Souvenirladen* and *Geschäft* and also between *Geburtstag im Zoo feiern* and *zu einer Party einladen*. Q4b proved most taxing, requiring candidates to identify that the elephants *leben nicht mehr im Wiener Zoo* because they were *in den Hamburger Zoo transportiert*.

Question 5 (Universität)

There were creditable attempts at this demanding question from stronger candidates but weaker candidates achieved very little. Some candidates were unable to distinguish between advantages and disadvantages and therefore lost marks. Although accurate spelling is not a pre-requisite on this type of question it has to be close enough to make meaning clear, a task which proved beyond weaker candidates. Centres would be well advised to practise this type of question. The key to success is the ability to transcribe key sections with a fair degree of accuracy. *Studium* was unfamiliar to many although *Studien* was accepted as an alternative. Some candidates heard *Stunden* and suggested that university courses last a long time - six hours! Only the best candidates understood that students often need a part time job for financial reasons.

Question 6 (Inline-Skaten)

This Grade B question was answered well by most able candidates. Only weaker candidates had problems with the year in Q6a. Only a few were confused by the distractor *Parkplätze* in Q6b. The most difficult section proved to be Q6d, *mehrmals* being familiar to stronger candidates only.

Question 7 (Brüder)

This crossover question discriminated very well at this level. It was invariably answered well by stronger candidates but contained enough taxing material for the Grade D candidates for whom it was intended. (See comments on 1F Q16)

Question 8 (Arbeit)

Although this was a crossover question there was enough here to challenge the better candidates. Most frequently correct were part i) Sonja (*Fremdsprachen*) and at this level also part iv) Martin. Many higher level candidates were able to deduce that *ich will nicht abends oder am Wochenende arbeiten* comes under the heading of *Arbeitszeiten*.

Question 9 (Heidi Klum)

The final two questions were the most demanding on the paper, being targeted at the A* grade. The importance of including all necessary details in clear English cannot be overemphasised. A one word answer is rarely sufficient at this level. Many candidates lost marks because they included only some of the necessary information or could not phrase their answers sufficiently clearly.

Candidates fared slightly better on this question than Q10 although the question differentiated well, only the very best scoring highly. Many candidates scored their only mark on the final part of the question although many thought that Heidi Klum was just advertising perfume rather than bringing out her own brand. Many thought that 1992 was important because it was her first TV role. Even able candidates lost the mark through lack of precision describing it as her first prize. Few candidates knew *Moderatorin* in Q10d, many preferring to imagine Heidi as a typical footballer's wife.

Question 10 (German Traditions)

This question served its purpose extremely well, differentiating well between the very best and the rest of the cohort. Candidates often understood *Feuer*, although many took it to be *Feier* and talked about parties. Although very few understood that hard-boiled eggs were decorated many more realised that, once this had been completed, the eggs were hidden in the garden. Q10c was quite well done, many candidates realising that teenagers are not interested in the old traditions. The final part of the question proved demanding. There were a lot of wild guesses and many failed to fit the grandmother into the answer at all.

Paper 2 - Speaking

Administration

The excellent administration in most centres is appreciated by the examining team. It should be noted that the role play numbers and the conversation topics for each candidate should be announced clearly on the tape. The second topic chosen for discussion must be one of the two listed at the bottom of the B role play which the candidate has attempted.

The quality of recordings is generally satisfactory. Teacher examiners should remember that it is the candidate's voice that examiners need to hear clearly and the microphone, if only one is used, should be directed to the candidate rather than the teacher examiner.

Level of entry

The majority of candidates are entered at higher level, mostly appropriately. However, a minority of candidates are out of their depth in the C role play and would fare better and possibly have a more positive experience in the examination if entered for the more realistic foundation level. At both levels, candidates are helped best by efficient and calm examining with due respect to the procedures laid out by Edexcel.

Role plays

Most candidates are very aware of what is required in each of the three types of role play. In the A role plays, four simple transactions are required, sometimes of only one word. At the next level, candidates are normally required to produce some longer utterances, for example a short phrase or sentence. In the C role plays, there is opportunity to produce extended responses; candidates who fail to do so in response to at least three of the bullet points will not be able to access the higher mark bands, even though they may have completed the task in each case.

Teacher examiners must beware that rephrasing any of the questions in a role play will make the following response invalid. If a candidate produces two responses at once, it is not necessary to ask the question which has already been answered. The teacher examiner should simply proceed to the next appropriate question.

Candidates should be prepared for the fact that they will be required to ask question in the B and C role plays.

A role plays

- A1 This is a familiar topic. *Tee, Pommes Frites* and *Mineralwasser* are often mispronounced. *Was kostet das?* is often given as *Wie kostet das?*
- A2 It is worthwhile reminding candidates that in the A role play it is not necessary to produce *Ich möchte...* If mispronounced, it will reduce the mark. Therefore, the second utterance was acceptable simply as *Käse* or one of the other items.
- A3 Very few candidates asked for inappropriate quantities.
- A4 *Seife* and *Zahnbürste* were rarely known. *Toilettenpaper* was often mispronounced. *Kasse* and *Käse* are still confused by many.
- A5 *Tomaten* was the most common request; *Kartoffeln* was occasionally heard; *Blumenkohl* was rarely given.
- A6 *Mappe* is still confused with *Landkarte*. The French *stylo* was often given instead of *Kuli*.

B role plays

- B1 *Eintrittskarte* was not well known, although *Karte* alone would have sufficed. Even *Dreimal, bitte* would have been acceptable. Many candidates at both foundation and higher level struggled to ask when the pool closes.
- B2 The icons proved problematic here. They were intended to be a river and a cathedral. However, many other interpretations were accepted.
- B3 This common topic posed few problems.

- B4 Ingenious candidates who could not remember *Einzelzimmer* got round the problem by asking for *Ein Zimmer für eine Person*.
- B5 *Wann* and *wenn* are confused by many weaker candidates. Otherwise it was noted that candidates were generally able to say a correct time.
- B6 The most common error here was to omit to mention the time in the first utterance. *Rückfahrkarte* was not well known.
- B7 Many candidates who began confidently failed to grasp the meaning of *Wo bist du?* and replied with a statement about their well-being.
- B8 This proved to be problematic for many candidates who simply did not seem to know the word *Geschäft* or *Laden*. The pronunciation of *Euro* was better than in previous years.

C role plays

- C1 This role play was withdrawn prior to the examining period. The candidates in a few centres in which the notification had not been read were marked as normal. None were disadvantaged.
- C2 The unpredictable elements caused some problems for weaker candidates, but there were many good extended replies along the lines of *In der ersten Stunde hatten wir Englisch. Das war für mich einfach, und es hat viel Spaß gemacht* or *Heute Nachmittag haben wir frei. Ich habe vor, mit meinen Freunden, einkaufen zu gehen*.
- C3 The scenario of telephoning to apply for a job is familiar to many. However, it is imperative that candidates think through the role play carefully in their preparation time. Too many gave an inadequate opening response to *Grund für den Anruf*. An appropriate introduction would have been *Guten Tag. Mein Name ist Smith. Ich suche einen Job im Moment. Haben Sie eine Stelle in Ihrem Botanischen Garten?* rather than simply *Ich möchte in dem Botanischen Garten arbeiten*.

- C4 This is another familiar topic and there were many good performances. Some candidates even displayed an impressive knowledge of Salzburg.
- C5 This caused few problems. However, some reasonably good candidates gave very short responses and failed to gain high marks.
- C6 This caused problems for some candidates who did not fully grasp the significance of *Wann genau ... ?* or did not realise that the travel agency also sold tickets for the train or the coach. However, those who did often produced spirited responses with various reasons why the midnight flight was not acceptable.
- C7 In centres where the candidates had been well prepared using examples of role plays from previous series, this caused no problems and there were some impressive performances. Good vocabulary included *stattdessen*, *Vegetarier* and *empfohlen*.
- C8 The following scripted dialogue shows what can be expected of the very best candidates who are not native speakers:
- Exam: *Grüß Gott! Wie kann ich Ihnen helfen?*
- Cand: *Guten Tag! Ich bin mit meiner Familie hier in Zürich und wir möchten Hotelzimmer reservieren. Können Sie das machen?*
- Exam: *Wie lange bleiben Sie in Zürich?*
- Cand: *Wahrscheinlich bleiben wir vier Nächte, aber wenn das Wetter schön ist, bleiben wir länger.*
- Exam: *Was wollen Sie in Zürich machen?*
- Cand: *Wir werden die Sehenswürdigkeiten besichtigen und wir gehen auch ins Theater. Meine Eltern wollen auch eine Stadtrundfahrt mit dem Bus machen.*
- Exam: *Das ist alles hier möglich.*
- Cand: *Wir wollen nicht nur in der Stadt bleiben. Kann man auch Ausflüge in die Region machen? Was kostet das?*
- Exam: *Ja, das geht. Hier ist eine Broschüre.*
- Cand: *Wo haben Sie Deutsch gelernt?*
- Exam: *Ich lerne seit fünf Jahren Deutsch. Letztes Jahr bin ich nach Frankfurt gefahren und habe viel Deutsch gesprochen.*
- Exam: *Gut.*

Conversations

There are many examples of outstanding questioning technique which pushed candidates to give their best performance throughout the conversations. However, the following problems still occur:

- Candidates are allowed to begin with a prepared introduction. This should not be long and should certainly not dominate the time of the first conversation. Sadly many who prepare a perfect speech fail to answer some simple questions which then ensue. In fact, for more able candidates, this introduction is a waste of time unless it genuinely puts them at their ease. Lengthy monologues are disregarded.
- Teacher examiners should not read the questions from the handbook verbatim, but should use them to build a genuine conversation. It is not necessary to cover all the suggested topic areas on the page. For example, it is quite possible in the topic area Social activities, fitness and health to develop a good conversation only about what the candidate did last Saturday.
- Closed questions should only be used for weaker candidates or when a candidate needs some help to move on. Rather than asking *Wohnst du in einem Haus oder in einer Wohnung?* is not as good an opener as *Erzähl mir bitte, wo du wohnst.*
- Although every effort is made by examiners to be fair to candidates, overlong conversations may well affect the candidate's final mark. It is important to stick to the time limits.

Teacher examiners should remember that the candidate must produce a range of tenses and verb forms and a wide range of opinion to access the higher mark bands. The best candidates at higher level produce a wide range of vocabulary and structures over the two conversation topics including modal verbs, subordination with *weil*, *obwohl* and *als*, a confident use of infinitive clauses and a sound command of syntax.

Paper 3 - Reading and Responding

Examiners were encouraged to note once again that candidates fared well at both tiers and were able to progress purposefully through the papers. The vast majority of candidates had been well prepared for the paper and clearly appreciated the demands of the various question types.

1231 Paper 3F Foundation

On the whole centres entered their candidates appropriately at Foundation level. Consequently, examiners felt that they were assessing the performance of genuine Foundation level candidates. A few candidates failed to attempt the more demanding questions and the importance of 'having a go' must be stressed. Centres are reminded that questions appear in a sequence of peaks and troughs to encourage candidates to keep going to the end and that individual questions follow the sequence of the text and thus appear in chronological order.

Question 1

The familiar topic of school subjects offered candidates a gentle introduction to the paper. Most did well here.

Question 2

As anticipated, the majority of candidates were able to recognise the buildings in town and found this question most accessible.

Question 3

This crossover question on the weather targeted Grade D. It was surprising how few candidates knew fairly basic weather vocabulary such as *neblig* and *bewölkt*. Whilst the icon used to denote *Gewitter* (D) was not the usual one, there was no evidence to suggest that candidates were thrown by this different icon. Better candidates who understood the weather lexis, were able to match (e) *regnerisch* with icon B and distinguish this from (c) *Gewitter* (D). Icon C was the distractor but many candidates matched this with (b) *neblig* and even though icon G had been used in the example, many candidates used it again to match with (d) *bewölkt*. Thus the evidence suggests a distinct lack of familiarity with general weather vocabulary and this might be an area for revision for future series.

Question 4

This crossover question targeted Grade C and only stronger candidates were successful in identifying the key concept in each category. The Grade Description at this level does require candidates to identify and extract detail but weaker candidates often lifted random chunks from the text. Performance varied depending on how carefully candidates had read the text and whether they were able to link the lexis to the relevant heading.

Wohnort: This was generally well done. However, unsurprisingly perhaps, a common incorrect answer here was *München*, which suggests inadequate reading of the text. Weaker candidates offered both Miami and Paris.

Aussehen: Weaker candidates offered simply *grünen* as an answer here. Many candidates appeared unclear on the difference between *Aussehen* and *Charaktereigenschaft* and so offered physical characteristics in (c) *Charaktereigenschaft* as well as in (b). Many candidates who gave *München* as their answer in (a) offered Berlin here - for which there is no immediately obvious explanation.

Charaktereigenschaft: This proved to be the most demanding element of the question. See comment above.

Instrument: This was the most consistently correct response. Incorrect answers included *Musik hören* and *Jack Johnson*.

Freizeitaktivität: A significant number of candidates gave *Lesen* which again would suggest a superficial skimming of the text. *Salsa* on its own was fairly common and could not be rewarded as it represents an ambiguous answer.

Question 5

Some candidates failed to recognise *Blumenkohl*, otherwise this question proved most accessible.

Question 6

This crossover question represented a challenge to many borderline candidates. However, most were willing to have a good attempt at it and only rarely were boxes left blank. There was an enormous variation in the quality of responses. Weaker candidates picked out indiscriminately (often incomplete) chunks of text which did not make any sense on their own thus demonstrating a lack of any real understanding. On the other hand, there were some very impressive responses demonstrating sound understanding, where candidates had tried to paraphrase, instead of simply copying the text, although this is, of course, permissible.

It should be noted that this question targeted grade C and at this level the QCA Grade Description for Reading requires that candidates should identify and extract details and points of view from texts. The positive and negative aspects will be mixed within such a text and candidates must be able to determine the bias of each point made. Not all candidates were able to pinpoint the positive as opposed to the negative aspects and place the relevant answers in the appropriate boxes.

There follow some examples of responses which could not be credited:

On the positive side: *es gibt vier Universitäten* (without any qualification as to what makes that an advantage?), *man kann viel lernen für Jugendliche* (addition of incorrect information negates an otherwise correct response) *Linz bietet viel Kultur* (this was the example)

On the negative side: *Linz eine Industriestadt die Luft ist sauber auf dem Land nicht finden* (candidates presumably latched onto the negative connotation of *nicht* without understanding the whole sentence)
Linz braucht mehr Hotels (i.e. no inclusion of *einfache*)
Nicht allzuviel zu tun (without reference to *Jugendliche*)

Question 7

Some candidates struggled to give the correct % for A and B but enjoyed success on the remainder of the question.

Question 8

Ailments represent an accessible topic. Most candidates were very familiar with the lexis and consequently fared well on this question.

Question 9

A small minority of candidates continue to answer the English questions in German and thus sadly debar themselves from scoring at all. Clearly candidates' use of English should be unambiguous. On the whole, candidates found this text accessible.

- a. *Münster* was mistaken for *Munich* and *in der Nähe* was understood to mean *in the north*. Most candidates scored the mark for *in the country(side)*.
- b. This was well done, although surprisingly, some candidates gave the wrong number of brothers and sisters.
- c. Examiners were presented with a wonderful range of exotic animals here as well as the more common cats and dogs. A significant number of candidates were misled by *schicken* to suggest a *chicken* as a pet and similarly by *egal* to suggest *eagles*. Those candidates who remembered that *Meerscheinchen* is in fact a *guinea pig* were thwarted by the English spelling and Examiners saw versions such as *gini pig, ginni pig, guinnie pig etc*
- d. Almost everyone got this right!

Question 10

The first 3 parts of this question were answered most successfully. A significant number of candidates struggled with parts d) and e)

- d. This caused a few problems presumably because candidates did not understand the word *Kellner. an Bord* led to quite a few guesses about sailing - despite the visual clues provided by the aeroplane bullets.
- e. Vague answers such as *servicing people* were popular, but could not be accepted.

In general examiners felt this paper was fair and had enabled candidates to demonstrate their true ability. They also felt that the topic areas covered were of interest to a wide spectrum of candidates.

Paper 3H - Higher Reading and Responding

As with the Foundation paper, the overwhelming majority of candidates had been correctly entered for Higher tier. Examiners felt that all questions were appropriate in terms of level and discriminated well. The content of the texts was perceived to be well pitched to have interest value to candidates.

Question 1

Comments on the crossover Q1 are the same as for Q3 of the Foundation paper.

Question 2

Comments on the crossover Q2 are the same as for Q4 of the Foundation paper.

Question 3

Success here relies on candidates being familiar with common synonyms and paraphrases. Candidates must be able to connect the e.g. *drei Monaten* in the text with the *Vierteljahr* in the answers and Centres would be advised to devote some time developing this awareness or skill in their candidates. Weaker candidates tended to focus on the wrong aspects. There were pleasingly few examples of candidates unfamiliar with the demands of this test type.

Question 4

More able candidates coped well with the requirements of this higher grade question. Careful and detailed reading of both the text and the answers is essential, since candidates are required to demonstrate the ability to understand globally.

Question 5

This question targeted Grade B and discriminated accurately. Here again, more able candidates who read both the headlines and the texts carefully were able to achieve a good score. Examiners were encouraged by candidates' performance here.

Question 6

Comments on the crossover Q6 are the same as for Q8 of the Foundation paper.

Question 7

Comments on the crossover Q7 are the same as for Q6 of the Foundation paper.

Question 8

This question targeted grade A and differentiated extremely well, allowing the stronger candidates to show their understanding. Candidates had to decide whether each person found sport in school a good or a bad thing and then substantiate that decision. The answers were consequential, so if a candidate identified a valid reason but chose *gut* (or *schlecht*) incorrectly (s)he could not score a mark. It was thus essential to understand whether the standpoint was positive or a negative and give the appropriate justification. A significant number of candidates gave just one word answers in the *warum* column. Candidates should be reminded that it is unlikely at Grade A that such a short response can really hit the nail on the head.

- i) *Boris* This was generally answered successfully, although some candidates missed the idea of *brauchen* and so mistakenly thought that schools already have young sports teachers, which they then felt is positive.
- ii) *Karin* Students did not always qualify what was meant by *diese Sportarten*. A popular response here was, predictably perhaps, *Lehrer nichts wissen*. Many candidates mistakenly thought that more unusual sports were on offer and so gave this as positive.
- iii) *Maria* This could have been either positive or negative and a substantial number of candidates picked this up and offered both with the appropriate substantiation.
- iv) *Paula* Many wrote too little here, often referring to homework but without explaining its significance in this context. *Gesundheitlich* on its own was a popular, but meaningless, answer.
- v) *Sören* candidates often misunderstood here, thinking that the discipline mentioned was either something positive or that it implied the pupils' lack of discipline was a problem.

Question 9

This question with answers in English targeted A* and sorted out very definitely the better candidates.

At this level candidates must be able to pinpoint the exact information required, although examiners are very tolerant and sympathetic in their approach. A* candidates answered the questions in a coherent, detailed and accurate manner. On the other hand weaker candidates often failed to attempt all parts of the question or wrote irrelevant statements based on their own opinions and experiences of Croydon or Torquay. A personal evaluation of the difficulties of learning languages which were not substantiated by the text could not score any marks. Examiners were often presented with vague, unconnected ideas when the questions required precise, connected ones.

More able candidates had clearly understood the gist of the text but were sometimes unable to organise the knowledge in a way that would gain them marks. There were, for example, references to languages being learnt live (which forms part of Andrea's take on Language holidays) being attributed to Judith.

Andrea:

- a) Examiners were pleased to note that a good number of candidates knew *Dolmetscher*, although this was not essential to gain the point. At Grade A and above, the QCA criteria for Reading require candidates to "show an ability to understand unfamiliar language and extract meaning from more complex language". This sentence (*Ich möchte Dolmetscherin werden*) allowed more able candidates to do precisely this and thus discriminated well between those who are A* candidates and those who are not. If candidates recognised that Andrea needed English for her future career/job, they were awarded the mark.

Surprisingly few demonstrated understanding of the advantage expressed of learning languages live. There were frequent references here to prior experiences of a *friend* (presumably a misunderstanding of *Fremd-?*).

- b) Only the very best students included *various/many free time activities* or *numerous/lots of excursions*. Candidates should be reminded of the need for precision if they are to score here: this is an A* question. Predictably, perhaps, weaker candidates gave answers connected with *flights*.
- c) *Jüngere* was wrongly conveyed as *young* and even *boys*. Again, the importance of careful reading cannot be stressed too often here. Some candidates were misled by *die Programme* into thinking this section was about television and programmes being inappropriate for young people.

Judith:

- d) Correct responses were relatively few and far between here.
- e) The overwhelming majority of candidates were able to score one mark here for stating that the group was too big. However, some weaker candidates negated their response by misinterpreting *Unterrichtsgruppe*. Only stronger candidates scored a second mark and a common misconception here was that *the host family spoke German*.
- f) Surprisingly, perhaps, *nett* was largely unknown and was not infrequently rendered as *nice* or just omitted, but *having fun* on its own was not detailed enough to score a point on an A* question.
- g) *Noten* was not commonly known, and references to *notes* and *written work* were frequent. Vague answers such as *her English improved* were not accepted, since the text details this improvement in the context of her school work.

Clearly, many answers indicate that candidates are not reading the texts carefully enough. For those candidates aiming at a higher grade it is imperative that they pay attention to the actual content of the texts and not make assumptions. Candidates should ensure that what they have written is relevant to the question and can be supported by the text.

Candidates should also be encouraged to keep their answers as concise as possible. It is not advisable for candidates to put down everything they have understood as this may lead to their losing the mark if they hedge their bets or negate their answer.

The space given for the answer is deemed adequate for a full & complete answer. For the first time in many years, Examiners struggled to read some scripts: some candidates used very faint ink and there were scripts where the quality of the handwriting was extremely poor. Candidates should be reminded to use black ink and to write as clearly as possible.

Paper 4 - Writing

PAPER 4F (Foundation)

Question 1 - LOST PROPERTY

This offered foundation level candidates an easy start to the paper. Most were able to write at least six words in German. Candidates tend to stick to the pictures and must be reminded that these are only suggestions at this stage in the paper. *Handy, Schuhe, Fußball* and *Jacke* were probably the most common words attempted.

Question 2 - HOLIDAY

This still taxes all foundation level candidates. Few score full marks, although many manage a mark of 8, thwarted only by their failure to write *schläft* correctly. The icons as always are open to various interpretations and the mark scheme allowed for this. Especially in sentence (c) candidates were not penalized if they did not realise that this was supposed to be a market stall. Other interpretations were accepted. Candidates should be reminded that the verbs in this questions should be conjugated in the present tense, third person singular.

Question 3 - A NOTE FOR A FRIEND

Although there was no stimulus in German for this question, the resulting answers were reasonably good. Many were able to convey that they had gone out for some reason and that there was something for breakfast. The idea of where and when to meet was less successful.

Question 4 (a) - SCHOOL EXCHANGE

This more popular of the crossover questions allowed candidates to rely on material that was very familiar and many wrote copiously giving a long description of their school and varied opinions about teachers and subjects. It is important in this type of question to read the stimulus carefully and to produce responses to all bullet points. It was quite common for the means of getting to school to be omitted which reduced the mark for Communication and Content. More able candidates are able to produce good responses to the familiar task of saying what next weekend has in store. However, it was noted that clear use of the past tense evades many.

In the crossover question it is possible to score full marks by writing a well structured paragraph of about 70 to 80 words in German. This response could be expected from top level GCSE candidates:

Meine Schule liegt nicht weit von meinem Haus. Normalerweise gehe ich zu Fuß dorthin, aber wenn es regnet, fahre ich mit dem Bus. Die Schule gefällt mir, weil die Lehrer freundlich sind. Leider bekommen wir manchmal zu viele Hausaufgaben. Letzte Woche in der Schule war toll - wir haben am Montag keine Schuluniform getragen und Geld gesammelt. Nächstes Wochenende werden wir einen Ausflug nach London machen, um die Sehenswürdigkeiten dort zu besichtigen. Und am Sonntag können wir uns entspannen. (78 Wörter)

Question 4 (b) - WHERE YOU LIVE

This was another familiar topic, although fewer candidates chose this option. The same pattern emerged as with the previous question. Candidates wax lyrical about their home town or village and forget to look carefully about what is required by the bullet points. In addition, particularly at foundation level, they are unable to produce a solid example of the past tense, often resorting to *ich bin gehen* or *ich gegangen*.

PAPER 4H (Higher)

Question 1 (a) and 1 (b)

See comments on foundation level paper.

Question 2 (a) - TASCHENGELD

This was by far the more popular question. Presumably candidates were familiar with the topic from their preparation for the oral examination. However, they were also able to draw on vocabulary from housework and the world of work. Such a question is designed to give candidates an opportunity to use learned vocabulary and structures. Thus, many were able to deal with the first bullet point extremely well and there few problems with candidates unable to write how they spent their money. A significant proportion misinterpreted the third bullet point, saying how they would spend their money next week rather than how they would get more. Those who interpreted it correctly tended to give confident answer about washing the car or helping grandparents or working a shop.

The last three bullet points stretched candidates to their limits and asked for opinion and justification as required by the specification. There were some very impressive performances at the top of the scale with candidates able to write such sentences as:

- *Junge Leute brauchen Taschengeld, damit sie lernen, mit Geld umzugehen.*
- *Ohne Taschengeld können Teenage nicht selbstständig sein.*

Weaker candidates struggled to communicate well at this stage in the paper, but were often able to produce a reasonable sentence about Marianne's situation such. What she ought to do produced split opinions. Those who thought it right that she should speak to her parents and demand her rights were balanced by those who thought she should get a life and a job and deal with the situation herself.

Question 2 (b) - MEIN LEBEN

Although less popular, some excellent responses were seen to this question. Using the three part structure which directed them towards use of three tenses, they tended to write more coherent essays rather the rather disjointed essay which were seen on pocket money.

Essays tended to suggest that while childhood was a blissfully innocent experience, adolescence was a troubled time with the dangers of drugs and alcohol and the endless task of completing homework. However, most looked forward to a rosy future with high salaries and a cleaner environment.

As with the coursework option, there is a wide spread of ability evident in the language produced in the terminal writing papers. Most candidates are entered at the appropriate level, although some would fare better on the foundation level paper rather than struggle to communicate successfully in the two higher level questions.

COURSEWORK OPTION - 4C

Moderators reported that most centres' administration is excellent and the sample of work is submitted in such a way as to make the process of moderation straightforward. Problems arise and the process is held up in the following instances:

- if the candidates' folders are submitted by teaching group rather than in candidate order.
- if the centre has not standardised the work of various teaching groups. It is sensible to have one person in charge of this. Where, say, a less able group has been marked too leniently and a more able group marked correctly, the latter marks could well be affected adversely when the moderator's marks are submitted.
- if candidates have not signed the CF1 frontsheet. This means that valuable time is lost while the centre is contacted.
- if a candidate has submitted two units of work from one main topic area. This still happens in a few cases. Only the higher of the two marks is accepted.

Tasks set

Many centres play safe and set tasks which are largely based on text book material. This is of course acceptable and in many cases the best sort of task to set for candidates in the mid to lower end of the range of ability. However, it can be a problem for more able candidates who may well not be stretched by the task which has been set. To access the top mark band for Communication and Content the work must display originality and coherence. This is often not the case when a whole centre of able candidates presents work which is virtually identical. There is a fine dividing line between using the text book as a resource and plagiarism at GCSE level. While moderators recognise that many candidates need to rely heavily on the teaching and stimulus material, in some cases it is clear that mere copying has taken place. Few instances of the use of online translators were reported, although one candidate had managed to produce *Fischpanzer* for fish tank!

Another less common fault is for tasks to be set which are in effect cloze tests where the candidates are merely entering individual words into a framework essay. Where this is identified the work has to be marked at the lowest level in the mark range. Centres should ensure that candidates are given every opportunity to produce original work.

Standard of work

In the vast majority of cases the work submitted for moderation remains pedestrian. At the lower end of the range, however, few candidates produce simply a list of words, for example on a poster, and manage to write at least several simple sentences albeit with errors and mother tongue influence. Candidates often achieve marks of 20 or below merely because they have failed to submit three units.

In the middle ability range, work is characterised by repetitive structures, unambitious vocabulary and a narrow range of verb forms. *Es gibt* and *er/sie ist* are used too frequently by some candidates who, it seems, might be able to vary their syntax more with modal verbs or a variety of past tense forms. Thus, for example, in a description of healthy living habits a weaker candidate will write:

Mein Vater ist dick. Es gibt zu viel Fett in seinem Essen. Er ist faul.

On the other hand, the better candidate will produce something along the lines of:

Ich glaube, dass mein Vater zu dick ist und dass er abnehmen sollte. Während ich gern Salat esse, isst er zu viel Fett. Weil er so faul ist, geht er nie zum Sportzentrum. Diese Woche habe ich schon dreimal Sport getrieben ...

Of course, these extracts would not be accurate in a genuine submission, but they serve to illustrate the differences between the unambitious and the original piece of writing.

At the very top end of the range there are some outstanding essays with evidence of a wide range of structures including *damit*, *obwohl*, *anstatt/zu*, modal verbs in abundance, the occasional relative clause, the conditional tense with *wenn* and perhaps even a passive form, although this last structure is not expected at this level.

Statistics

Paper 1F - Listening and Responding

| Grade | Max. Mark | C | D | E | F | G |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 34 | 28 | 22 | 17 | 12 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 59 | 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 |

Paper 1H - Listening and Responding

| Grade | Max. Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 36 | 30 | 24 | 19 | 13 | 10 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 90 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 35 |

Paper 2F - Speaking

| Grade | Max. Mark | C | D | E | F | G |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 27 | 22 | 18 | 14 | 10 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 59 | 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 |

Paper 2H - Speaking

| Grade | Max. Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 40 | 34 | 28 | 23 | 17 | 14 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 90 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 35 |

Paper 3F - Reading and Responding

| Grade | Max. Mark | C | D | E | F | G |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 36 | 29 | 23 | 17 | 11 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 59 | 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 |

Paper 3H - Reading and Responding

| Grade | Max. Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 34 | 29 | 24 | 19 | 2 | 8 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 90 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 35 |

Paper 4F - Writing

| Grade | Max. Mark | C | D | E | F | G |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 35 | 29 | 23 | 17 | 11 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 59 | 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 |

Paper 4H - Writing

| Grade | Max. Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 39 | 34 | 29 | 25 | 19 | 16 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 90 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 35 |

Paper 4C - Written Coursework

| Grade | Max. Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 60 | 51 | 45 | 39 | 33 | 27 | 21 | 15 | 9 |
| Uniform Boundary Mark | 90 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 |

Overall Subject Boundaries

| Grade | Max. Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|--------------------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| Total Uniform Mark | 360 | 320 | 280 | 240 | 200 | 160 | 120 | 80 | 40 |

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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