

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCSE

GCSE German (1231)

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Paper 1 (Foundation) Listening and Responding

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, scoring rather better than in previous years. 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. The quality of candidates' handwriting remains an issue. If examiners are unable to decipher what candidates have written they are unable to award marks.

Questions 1-5 (Schulfächer)

Most candidates scored well on this question which tested familiar items, all contained within the minimum core vocabulary. Although *Religion*, *Kunst* and *Mathe* were accessible to virtually all students there was a substantial minority who did not know *Chemie* or *Erdkunde*.

Questions 6-10 (Sport)

Candidates coped well with this accessible question which tested a very familiar topic. Many scored full marks, although there were problems for some candidates with *ich fahre Rad* and *ich gehe reiten*.

Questions 11-15 (Wetter)

Most candidates scored well on this question as it is a familiar and much tested topic. The icons used seemed to cause few problems, which has not always been the case on previous papers. Most items of vocabulary were well known, particularly *heiß*, *kalt* and *sonnig*. However, weaker candidates had some difficulties with *Schnee*, and especially *bewölkt*.

Question 16 (Hobbys)

This crossover question proved relatively accessible to many better Foundation tier candidates. Most candidates coped well with this new question type, although a minority crossed more than the required five boxes, which was penalised on the mark scheme. Although Lisa's hobbies were well understood, many Foundation tier candidates were not familiar with *spazieren* (a word that was targeted last year) and often selected the distracter (phoning).

Question 17 (Kino)

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. Even the weakest candidates gained a mark for *Donnerstag* but the other parts of the question proved more demanding. As always, times and prices caused some difficulties for weaker candidates, *20.15 Uhr* often became *20.50 Uhr*. *€7,50* was often thought to be *€7,15* or *€57*. *Kostenlos* was beyond many, often becoming *kostet lots*. Imaginative candidates gained the mark by writing *€0* or *frei*.

Question 18 (Familienleben)

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 recognised the link between *Samstag/Sonntag* and *Wochenende* and also that between *Auto* and *Wagen*. Somewhat surprisingly *Haustier* was little known at this level and few candidates spotted the connection between *abwaschen/abtrocknen* and *hilft in der Küche*. 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 19 (Einkaufen)

This question was much better done than the equivalent last year, perhaps because the topic was a very familiar one. The average score was about 3 marks. Candidates were required to link specific vocabulary to generic categories. Almost all were able to place *Fußball* within the category *Sportartikel*. However, *Klamotten* was familiar only to a minority at this level. Somewhat surprisingly the link between *Obst/Gemüse* and *Essen* was recognised only by the better candidates.

Questions 20-24 (Angelas Haus)

These questions were targeted at Grade F and therefore proved well within the capabilities of most candidates. Questions 20, 22 and 23 were answered correctly by almost all candidates. *Erdgeschoss* proved beyond weaker candidates and a significant number were unfamiliar with *bügeln*.

Question 25 (Holidays)

As usual the English questions proved quite taxing for the majority of candidates, although most candidates realised that sunbathing was the main attraction of a beach holiday. Rather surprisingly many fewer recognised the meaning of *wandern*. Many candidates assumed that *Bauernhof* was in fact *Bahnhof*, assuming that cheap tickets were for sale at the station.

Question 26 (Future Plans)

This question proved a good discriminator. A significant minority of candidates scored almost full marks whereas many others only scored with *next summer* and a positive opinion of the Saturday job. Few candidates at this level knew *Briefträger* and many failed to realise the significance of *nicht* in the phrase *nicht im Büro*, assuming that the speaker was looking for an office job. *Kaufhaus* was frequently unknown, many candidates interpreting it as a coffee house.

Paper 1 (Higher) Listening and Responding

Many of the comments made last year still apply although it is true to say that candidates' scores were marginally higher this year. Throughout the 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. 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 and would have been better advised to sit the Foundation paper. 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 an increasing 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. The problems caused by the use of light blue ink still persist in a significant minority of scripts.

Question 1 (Hobbys)

This crossover question proved very accessible for Higher tier candidates, many scoring full marks. However, even at this level a number of candidates had difficulties with *spazieren*.

Question 2 (Kino)

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 Q17.

Question 3 (Restaurant)

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 in response to question 3e which involved linking *kann nicht leiden* with *hasst*. Many candidates heard the phrase *vegetarische Gerichte* but did not appreciate the significance of *ohne* in question 3c. Another common error was the assumed link between *am Strand* and *Stadtrand*, presumably because they sound similar.

Question 4 (Thomas Gottschalk)

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, for example *nachmittags* and *zwischen 14.00 und 16.00 Uhr*. At this level candidates are expected to be able to draw conclusions from information given. Encouragingly many were able to achieve this very effectively in this question.

Question 5 (Medien)

There were some very creditable attempts at this demanding question from stronger candidates but weaker candidates achieved very little. Although accurate spelling is not essential 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. Many weaker candidates did recognise the idea that buying newspapers is an expense. Candidates knew from their own experience that you can email via the internet but only the minority grasped the idea that you can forward interesting articles to friends, which was required to gain the mark. Only the very best understood that newspapers contain yesterday's news whereas the internet is right up to date.

Question 6 (Nassfeld)

This Grade B question proved rather more taxing than the equivalent question last year, although it was answered well by the most able candidates. It is important that candidates do not jump to conclusions too readily in this type of question. Many heard *Italien* as part of the phrase *in Österreich aber an der Grenze zu Italien* and assumed immediately that Nassfeld must be in Italy. In question 6d *feiern* was largely unknown. Candidates proved able to identify numbers correctly.

Question 7 (Familienleben)

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 Q18).

Question 8 (Einkaufen)

This crossover question proved very accessible to virtually all Higher Tier candidates. *Klamotten* caused problems for a sizable minority at this level. Somewhat surprisingly the link between *Obst/Gemüse* and *Essen* was recognised only by the better candidates, even at Higher tier.

Question 9 (Weather)

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 these questions than last year although they still differentiated well, only the very best scoring highly. Many candidates failed to appreciate the unusual nature of the weather, assuming that there was no snow, not grasping the significance of *nur im Süden gab es keinen Schnee*. Some recognised the danger from high water levels but failed to make the link to melting snow. When

describing how the weather differed from last October some candidates lost marks because they were unable to express themselves sufficiently clearly in English.

Question 10 (School Life)

This question proved rather more taxing than question 9 but differentiated very well between the very best and the rest of the cohort. Many candidates failed to realise that schooling was being reduced to 12 years and that as a result individual school days would be longer. Candidates' personal opinions were evident in the common answer that school days were too long and needed to be shortened. Few candidates were able to answer question 10c with sufficient precision to gain a mark. There were many examples of a negative world without the necessary *negative attitude to learning*. For others the world was going to end soon, presumably a misunderstanding of *ändern*.

Paper 2 (Foundation and Higher) Speaking

In the original examination booklet which was distributed to centres, the sequence of conversation topics at the bottom of the B rôle-plays was omitted. A reprinted version of the booklet was subsequently distributed to all centres. No candidate was disadvantaged if the second booklet was not received on time.

The overall standard of performance by candidates at both foundation and higher level was broadly in line with previous years. Most candidates are entered at the correct level, although a small but significant minority at higher level may have fared better at foundation level since they were often unable to attempt any of the C rôle-play.

In general, recordings were clear. However, centres are reminded to check that the recording equipment is in good working order and that candidates are being recorded as the series of tests goes along. In addition, it is advisable to keep a second recording in the centre.

Rôle-plays

It is imperative that teacher examiners do not stray from the script. The following problems caused a loss of marks through no fault of the candidates:

- Rephrasing of a question renders the candidate's response invalid no matter how good it is. For example, rephrasing *Wann möchten Sie bei uns essen?* to *Um wie viel Uhr möchten Sie bei uns essen?* may give a candidate an unfair advantage. Similarly altering *Wo kann man hier gut essen?* in C8 to *Was für Restaurants gibt es hier in der Nähe?* was not permissible.
- Occasionally, teacher examiners read out the candidate's response causing a loss of marks. This was particularly the case in rôle-play B2 (*Wo treffen wir uns?*).
- Unnecessary repetition of a question can lower the mark for a rôle-play. The question should only be repeated if the candidate has clearly not understood.

In the B and C rôle-plays and occasionally in the A rôle-plays, candidates are required to ask a question as indicated by the question mark. It was evident that this had not been practised in some centres. In the C rôle-plays, it was possible to ask a variety of questions as suggested by the bullet point. For example, in C8 the following responses were heard:

- *Gibt es Unterkunft?*
- *Was für Unterkunft gibt es?*
- *Haben Sie ein Zimmer für mich im Hotel oder muss ich meine eigene Unterkunft suchen?*
- *Wo werde ich schlafen?*

A rôle-plays

A1 This was largely unproblematic. Occasionally, candidates were unfamiliar with the interrogative *Wo?*

A2 *Briefmarken* was not well known and sometimes languages were given rather than countries.

A3 This was well done, although *zahlen* was not always known.

A4 This was accessible. Some candidates had difficulty with the opening question.

A5 This caused few problems. Most candidates asked for *Hose* or *Hemd*. There was less confusion with mispronunciation of *Kasse* than was noted in previous years.

A6 Similarly *Stadtplan* was better known than in previous years.

B rôle-plays

B1 This caused few problems apart from some inability to form *Möchtest du ... ?* in the fourth utterance. School subjects were well known.

B2 This caused few problems.

B3 *Müde* was occasionally not known and many candidates came unstuck in their attempts to phrase the question *Wann stehst du auf?*

B4 Marks tended to be lost here because of mispronunciation of *Boot* or inability to ask for four return tickets.

B5 This familiar topic area was accessible to most. Very occasionally the 24-hour clock caused problems.

B6 Many candidates who attempted this rôle-play were unfamiliar with *Blumenkohl*, *Kohl*, *Erdbeeren*, *Aprikosen* and *Birnen*. The mark scheme allowed for various interpretations and also for partial responses to the second response when a candidate managed to utter *fünfhundert Gramm*.

B7 The interrogative again caused problems. Otherwise this rôle-play was well done.

B8 *Ausgehen* was often unknown. Most candidates were familiar with *Konzert* or *Stadion*, but failed to put these in to the necessary question form.

C rôle-plays

In the C rôle-plays the full mark range can be accessed when a candidate gives an extended response to 3 bullet points. Some managed to respond imaginatively to all five and go far beyond the requirements of the scenario. In their preparation time, candidates should be encouraged to think themselves into the scenario and to imagine what would be said, were this a real situation.

C1 This was familiar ground for many. It was necessary to state a length of time in the third utterance, for example by saying *Ich kann vom ersten August bis Ende September arbeiten*. Many well prepared responses to the final unpredictable question were heard.

C2 Candidates were not penalised by failing to notice that the father had lost an item. Most commonly bags, coats, cameras or mobile phones were lost.

C3 Again candidates were on familiar ground here and school vocabulary was well known. Some good candidates were unable to form a question from the fourth bullet point.

C4 Most managed to deal well with this varied rôle-play.

C5 This caused few problems although some candidates failed to expand well enough.

C6 This familiar topic was well prepared. Kopfschmerzen, Halsschmerzen and Durchfall were the most common symptoms. It is important to give candidates the general openers for this type of scenario rather than just the specific details. Only the best were able to begin with statement such as: *Guten Tag. Ich möchte einen Termin ausmachen*.

C7 Asking for the problem to be solved was the biggest problem here. At a simple level *Können Sie das in Ordnung bringen?* was acceptable. Better candidates managed something along the lines of *Das ist alles unakzeptabel - wie werden Sie das in Ordnung bringen?*

C8 There were some excellent responses in this rôle-play. One imaginative candidate responded thus to the second bullet point: *Die Restaurants hier in der Stadt sind nicht sehr gut, aber Sie finden eine Imbissstube an jeder Ecke*.

Conversations

The essence of the second part of the speaking examination is that, after having been given the opportunity to give a short presentation about their chosen topic, candidates embark on as natural a conversation as possible with the teacher examiner based on two topic areas, one chosen by the candidate, the other by the teacher examiner.

In many centres this is exactly what happens and examiners listen to good examples of dialogues in which the teacher examiners put the candidates at ease by asking straightforward, open-ended questions and by developing the sequence of questions naturally.

The presentation by the candidate need not be long, indeed it need not exist at all. For more confident candidates, it is probably better to embark on the question sequence immediately with the opening gambit: *Du willst heute über (die Ferien) sprechen. Was hast du in den letzten Ferien gemacht?* Good candidates will have no difficulty in leading on from there and directing the conversation towards their strengths.

Weaker candidates will inevitably need more help from the teacher examiner. Many are adept at getting the best out of their candidates by asking carefully worded questions in a sympathetic tone and avoiding difficult areas.

Although the topics of Holidays and School tend to dominate the conversations, some candidates choose from more interesting subjects. Some talked quite eloquently about media and entertainment, perhaps describing a book or a film; others capitalised on a recent visit to a Christmas market, say, in Cologne. In such instances, the quality of language used is refreshing and original because they are talking about something experienced first hand.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- Candidates in each centre should never be asked the same series of questions.
- It is not necessary to ask all the suggested questions in the booklet in the order in which they appear. Also, teacher examiners should think carefully about which level of question to ask as a starter. For weaker candidates, *Wohnst du in einem Haus oder in einer Wohnung?* may be the best starting point, but for more able candidates a broader question would be more appropriate such as *Bist du zufrieden mit allen Sachen in deiner Schule?*
- Overlong tests will be timed and only a certain amount of each conversation will be marked. A stop watch is a good investment.
- In Conversation 1, the teacher examiner must ask more than simply two or three questions.
- To access the full mark range, candidates must be given the opportunity to speak using past, present and future and to express opinion.

The quality of language used by candidates is varied. At foundation level, many struggle to say more than just a few sentences and the language used tends to be repetitive and pedestrian. At higher level, some candidates fail to achieve more than 5/6 for Application of Language because they do not use any subordination. Only the very best manage to use subordinating conjunctions other than *weil*.

Administration

Many examiners report that the administration in centres is of a high standard with paper work in order, recordings clear, tapes securely packed and submitted on time.

Paper 3 (Foundation) 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.

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 final two questions in English (targeting grade E). 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 types of television programme offered candidates a gentle introduction to the paper and most did well here.

Question 2

As anticipated, the majority of candidates were able to match pictures of household tasks with the words denoting these tasks and found this question most accessible.

Question 3

This crossover question on school rules targeted Grade D. Examiners were encouraged that the vast majority of candidates attempted all parts of this question and fared very well.

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.

Fremdsprache: Most candidates understood the essential concept here and could identify the section of the text in which the answer could be found. Whilst many were successful in identifying *Italiensich* as the correct answer, others gave *Englisch* and so failed to score the point. Clearly, those who wrote *Italienisch aber kein English* were awarded the mark. Examiners saw *Deutsch* as an answer as well, although it is not clear why in relation to the text. A small number gave *Italien* which could not be rewarded since it does not correspond to the heading. Some candidates did not understand which concept word was being looked for and so gave random answers such as *Einzelkind* or *Stadtmitte*.

Arbeit der Mutter: This was almost always correctly answered. Occasionally, candidates added information about Georg's father or wrote something like *in einem Geschäft*, but on the whole this was rare.

Lieblingssport:	Predictably, perhaps, weaker candidates were misled into citing <i>Fußball</i> , but the majority gave the correct answer.
Haustier:	The majority of candidates scored the point for this question. Those who wrote <i>Meerschweinchen</i> had not read the text with enough care.
Zukunftsplan:	Again, most met with success here. Some candidates interpreted <i>Ich möchte ... ein Meerschweinchen</i> as a statement of future intent and gave <i>Meerschweinchen</i> as their answer. Whilst this was not considered to negate a correct answer, it was not awarded a mark in its own right.

Question 5

Examiners were surprised at candidates' performance on this question as ailments and parts of the body have proved popular and well understood topics hitherto. This year, however, candidates appeared unfamiliar with parts of the body and did not fare well on this question. Examiners would suggest this is a weak point and this should be borne in mind when planning revision topics.

Question 6

The overwhelming majority of candidates matched E with(ii), but candidates met with less success in the remaining questions.

Question 7

This crossover question (grade D) 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 or too few boxes crossed. Incorrect answers most commonly chosen were (b) and (h).

Question 8

Candidates on the Foundation paper struggled with this crossover question (grade C). Parts (e), (d) and (a) proved to be the most accessible - in descending order - but (b) and (c) presented problems. A common profile was 2 marks for parts (d) and (e).

Common misconceptions included:

- (a) *geschneit* or *schlecht*
- (b) *Hotel*
- (c) *Zelt* or *Schulen*
- (d) *Italien*
- (e) *schlecht*.

Many choices made no sense at all within the sentence, grammatically or otherwise. There were also a few candidates who ignored the list completely and copied chunks from the text. Candidates must be familiar with the demands of the different task types.

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. Candidates met with mixed fortunes here, which was again surprising since food is such a popular topic.

- a. Most candidates were able to score a mark with *salad*. Gemischt was not widely understood, but this did not debar candidates from the mark.
- b. Surprisingly, very few candidates indeed understood *Kartoffeln*.
- c. *Eis* was not infrequently misunderstood to mean *eggs*, and many candidates struggled to identify any desserts at all in the menu list.
- d. Examiners were once again surprised at the number of candidates who just did not know the days of the week. Virtually every year there is at least one question on the Foundation paper that requires candidates to demonstrate understanding of the days of the week in German, so opportunity for adequate practice is available. Yet, when faced with *Donnerstag* a significant number of candidates gave, perhaps predictably, *Tuesday* but, and less predictably, also *Wednesday*. The special offer - all pizzas at half price - also met with mixed fortunes and Examiners came across answers such as *2 for the price of 1* - which is not quite the same thing.

Question 10

The majority of students were able to score the marks in parts (a) and (e).

- b. Examiners were looking for *money* as an answer and indeed most candidates did not render *pocket money*.
- c. Very few candidates picked up that the Sports Day was a free event and answers varied between €20 and €200.
- d. A pleasing number did manage to score here, but predictably again, answers included *train*, *coach* and *ski lift*.

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 3 (Higher) 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.

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 question 1 are the same as for question 3 of the Foundation paper.

Question 2

Comments on the crossover question 2 are the same as for question 4 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. *anrufen* in the text with the *telefonieren* 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. Candidates most often met with success in parts (a) and (e), although *mitgehen* was a popular incorrect answer for part (e).

Question 4

This question differentiated well (it targets grade A) and only able candidates coped well with the requirements. Careful and detailed reading of both the text and the answers is essential. For incorrect answers there was no discernible, but parts (iv) and (v) were more often correct.

Question 5

Comments on the crossover question 5 are the same as for question 7 of the Foundation paper.

Question 6

Comments on the crossover question 6 are the same as for question 8 of the Foundation paper.

Question 7

This question targeted Grade B and discriminated accurately. Candidates must read all the options available before selecting their answer. The most frequent incorrect response was (i) in part (b).

Question 8

This question also targeted grade A and 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 9

This question with answers in English targeted A* and differentiated very definitely. There were, once again, some candidates who completed the grid in German, for which there are no marks available. In fact, some Examiners noted a distinct increase in this trend.

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 completed the grid in a coherent, detailed and accurate manner. In contrast to this, weaker candidates often failed to attempt all parts of the question or wrote irrelevant statements based on their own (seemingly negative) experiences of public transport which bore little relation to the text.

As in previous years where this task type has been used, very many candidates struggled to understand the difference between opinion and reason, yet in the speaking component candidates aiming for grade A and A* must express and justify opinions, so this is something with which they should be conversant. Thus, 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 was a strong feeling among Examiners this year that candidates simply do not read through their answers once written to make sure they actually make sense. *Should always take the u-bend* and *It is hard for public transport to go round the u-bend* were examples of answers which clearly made no sense at all - either with regard to the text or in fact in general terms. There were references to Oyster cards - but where do these feature in this reading passage?

Mario:

- Opinions There was a general lack of understanding of the word *U-Bahn* - so many candidates did not understand which method of transport was being discussed. *Praktisch* and *regelmäßig* were better understood than the concept of the town doing more for the safety of the passengers. *Fahrgäste* was often mistaken for tourists or visitors.
- Reasons: Many students understood the idea of *punctual*. The idea of *5 minutes* was also understood but more often than not candidates failed to link this with the idea of not waiting longer than 5 minutes for a tube train. Very few candidates indeed were able to interpret the comparative both here and elsewhere in the text. Thus, Examiners read answers suggesting it was *dangerous* (or *always dangerous*) in the evening, but this is not what the text stated. Candidates needed *more dangerous* to gain the mark. The need for precision cannot be stressed enough at this level.

Barbara

Candidates perceived this section to be the most challenging.

Opinions: Here also, candidates did not understand *Bahn* and *begeistert* was not a generally known word, so only a small minority were able to convey her sense of enthusiasm. The link was not always made with travelling *more* by train.

Reasons: *Wagen* caused difficulties and was often mistranslated as *car* or *caravan* and led to confusion about parking at the station. Only a fraction of candidates realised that bikes could go on the train. Many candidates also failed to pick out *jede* and assumed there was no room for bikes at all. Many mentioned high petrol prices and environmental damage without sufficient accuracy to score marks.

Jake

Candidates found this section the most accessible.

Opinions: A considerable number noted that Jake would want to invest in his own train when he had some money. A fair number understood that Berlin has better public transport than England, although *zu Hause* was often taken too literally. There were many references to traffic and traffic jams, as opposed to transport.

Reasons: Many candidates invented answers around money being stolen or Jake getting mugged on public transport. *Geld* had clearly been recognised, but its significance had not.

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. Candidate scripts are marked onscreen for this paper and this year again Examiners struggled to read a good number of 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. There were also scripts with much crossing out, making it difficult to establish which was the final answer.

Paper 4 (Foundation) Writing

The overwhelming majority of centres opt for coursework instead of the terminal examination. However, in both options, the full spread of ability is seen, with some excellent work both on Paper 4H and in written coursework.

Question 1 - Local Area

This proved to be a very encouraging start to the paper with most candidates scoring in excess of 7/10. Many scored full marks. The question allowed for a range of activities or sights and the mark scheme was generous in what was accepted. Most candidates wrote a list of sports or buildings, whilst some were more adventurous and managed to produce ideas such as *Kunst, Konzert* or *Klubben*.

Question 2 - School

Only the very best foundation level candidates scored well on this question which required correctly conjugated verbs in the present tense and a correct interpretation of the icons. Most candidates comfortably managed *Mathe* (or another school subject) and *Computer*. However, *Hausaufgabe, Freunden* and *Bibliothek* caused more problems, the latter often appearing as *librairie*. Again, the mark scheme allowed for a wide range of interpretations. Correct conjugations were seldom seen and *liest* was rarely correct.

Question 3 - Party

The expected outcome of this question was something along the lines of the following:

Ich habe Geburtstag. Meine Party ist am Samstag in meinem Haus. Dreißig Leute kommen. Kannst du mich anrufen?

Although there were some quite confident responses, the majority of candidates struggled to convey all points in clear German. While *Geburtstag* was well known, and indeed the most common reason for the party, some lost marks by omitting the venue or the time or by confusing *kommen* with *bekommen*. Most were able to give at least *Meine Telefonnummer ist ...*, although the accuracy was very variable even from candidates who scored well on the crossover question.

Question 4a - Environment

There were some spirited responses to this question at both levels. Candidates are clearly aware of a broad range of environmental issues from household waste to traffic problems to personal responsibility. Many wrote about their attempts to do without the car or to reduce water use or to compost as much as possible.

As always, the question is structured to direct candidates to using the required tenses and to give the opinions which will allow the full mark range to be accessed. The greatest problem was the inability of candidates at both levels to produce an unambiguous and correct past tense. *Ich bin fahren mit dem Rad* or *Ich bin nehmen eine Dusche* were not uncommon attempts. This confusion of tenses meant that many candidates are capped at around 6/10 for Communication and Content.

Nevertheless, some weaker candidates were able to write straightforward sentences about where they lived and to give a simple opinion about the *Umweltclub*.

Question 4b - A School Trip

This was the more popular of the two crossover questions, presumably because of the more familiar vocabulary required. Most candidates are able to manipulate *gehen*, *kaufen*, *essen* and *trinken*, though again the failure to produce a past tense without ambiguity stopped many from gaining a higher mark.

Many candidates drew on their own experience of visiting a German market and there were numerous accounts of interesting visits to Christmas markets in Cologne or Aachen.

In both crossover questions, it is possible to score full marks by remaining within the suggested word count. However, answers need to be carefully crafted to include a wide range of structures. Only the very ablest take the opportunity to redraft their answers within the time limit and the evidence suggests that many simply rush their answer.

Subordination tends to be limited to *weil* clauses, although a few manage to include *obwohl*, *als*, *wenn* and even *bevor* and *nachdem*. Modal verbs are infrequently used and infinitive clauses rarely appear.

Paper 4 (Higher) Writing

The overwhelming majority of centres opt for coursework instead of the terminal examination. However, in both options, the full spread of ability is seen, with some excellent work both on Paper 4H and in written coursework.

Question 1a - Environment

There were some spirited responses to this question at both levels. Candidates are clearly aware of a broad range of environmental issues from household waste to traffic problems to personal responsibility. Many wrote about their attempts to do without the car or to reduce water use or to compost as much as possible.

As always, the question is structured to direct candidates to using the required tenses and to give the opinions which will allow the full mark range to be accessed. The greatest problem was the inability of candidates at both levels to produce an unambiguous and correct past tense. *Ich bin fahren mit dem Rad* or *Ich bin nehmen eine Dusche* were not uncommon attempts. This confusion of tenses meant that many candidates are capped at around 6/10 for Communication and Content.

Nevertheless, some weaker candidates were able to write straightforward sentences about where they lived and to give a simple opinion about the *Umweltclub*.

Question 1b - A School Trip

This was the more popular of the two crossover questions, presumably because of the more familiar vocabulary required. Most candidates are able to manipulate *gehen*, *kaufen*, *essen* and *trinken*, though again the failure to produce a past tense without ambiguity stopped many from gaining a higher mark.

Many candidates drew on their own experience of visiting a German market and there were numerous accounts of interesting visits to Christmas markets in Cologne or Aachen.

In both crossover questions, it is possible to score full marks by remaining within the suggested word count. However, answers need to be carefully crafted to include a wide range of structures. Only the very ablest take the opportunity to redraft their answers within the time limit and the evidence suggests that many simply rush their answer.

Subordination tends to be limited to *weil* clauses, although a few manage to include *obwohl*, *als*, *wenn* and even *bevor* and *nachdem*. Modal verbs are infrequently used and infinitive clauses rarely appear.

Question 2a - Austausch

This more popular of the two higher level questions produced some interesting and original responses. A description of the house was usually well done even by the weakest candidates. Similarly the final bullet point caused few problems. However, the bulk of many essays was confused by ambiguity and lack of clarity. This often stemmed from a weak command of German and an inability to use known vocabulary and structures in an unfamiliar setting.

However, some candidates also found the whole situation difficult, perhaps missing the point of the title *Austausch*. A surprising number seemed unfamiliar with the word *Gegend* and resorted to a mundane *Die Gegend ist gut*, rather than take the opportunity to expand on a topic which many will have prepared for the speaking examination.

As always, the opportunity to use the past tense was missed by many. The best ideas about what had been organised for the family came in such sentences as:

- *Wir haben viel für die Familie gekauft.*
- *Wir haben Karten für ein Fußballspiel nächsten Samstag gekauft.*
- *Wir haben das ganze Haus für euch geputzt.*

However, these were rare.

As always, examiners are looking for a wide range of structures and vocabulary. These include a variety of verb forms including modal verbs, varied subordination, inversion and coordination, infinitive clauses and a sound command of case and gender.

Question 2b - Arbeit

The general standard of response to this question was better than question 2a. This may be due to the fact that the open-ended nature of the task gave candidates a freer hand in structuring their answers. The best answers included reference to personal experience of work, to the benefits of working, usually financial, to the need to balance school work with earning money and some good answers managed to take a truly discursive stance, weighing up the pros and cons of young people working. Weaker candidates tended to rely on a description of their own work experience, not irrelevant but not a complete answer to the question set.

Paper 4 (Coursework) Writing

The overwhelming majority of centres opt for coursework instead of the terminal examination. However, in both options, the full spread of ability is seen, with some excellent work both on Paper 4H and in written coursework.

Moderators reported yet again this year that the work carried out in centres to standardise marking and to complete the administration of the coursework on time was exemplary in most cases. They also notice that most centres marks are accurate.

Centres which require an adjustment for their marks have often awarded too generously for Communication and Content, giving full marks for work which is pedestrian, repetitive or even full of anglicisms.

Fortunately, the use of online translators seems to be kept to a minimum. As a general rule of thumb they should be avoided. The sentence *Ich fahre nicht mit dem Zug, weil es nimmt, um sich zu sehen* is an example of the gibberish that can be produced.

Stimulus material is often only a title, with the most common topics being *Freizeit, Urlaub, Schule, Arbeitspraktikum* and *Fitness*. When more lengthy stimulus material is provided for candidates, they can produce stilted monotonous work. However, the examples of best practice come from centres where the teacher has provided a carefully worded page of instructions reminding candidates what they need to do to score high marks but without a range of German which they might be tempted to copy.

As we approach the final year for this legacy specification, it is still worthwhile noting what to avoid in the coursework option:

- Crossover of topic areas should be avoided. The three units must come from three distinct main topic areas.
- Essays of more than 200 words each are unnecessary and often repetitive.
- Candidates must produce original work, they should not copy extensively from a text book or from each other.
- Stimulus material which offers too much support to candidates, for example in the form of a list of sentences structures, can limit the marks.

Despite these problems which crop up every year, a great number of candidates produce work of a good standard and are clearly motivated by their teachers to show off the best German they can manage.

Statistics

Paper 1F - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Boundary Mark	50	37	32	27	22	17
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	31	26	21	16	13
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	40	33	26	19	12
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	36	31	26	21	16	13
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	36	30	25	20	15
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	24	17	13
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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