

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2011

GCSE

GCSE German (5GN02) Paper A

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Paper 2A - Speaking in German

General

This was the second assessment opportunity for the new GCSE specification Controlled Assessments in Speaking. Entries were modest but moderators were impressed by the level of performance and achievement of the candidates entered. Once again, there was a definite sense of a natural conversation with evidence of interaction and spontaneity. Teachers are to be congratulated on managing the process so effectively and clearly putting their candidates at ease during the orals.

Tasks

Centres have a choice of 3 tasks: a picture-based discussion, a presentation and discussion and an open interaction. Each candidate must undertake at least 2 of these 3 task types but only one has to be recorded and submitted, although in the moderation sample centres should submit recordings of the different task types for which they are submitting marks across the whole centre cohort.

In this session, the majority of centres opted for the picture-based discussion and presentation and discussion, but there was a substantial minority who undertook the open interaction. Centres are advised that there is no 'general conversation' task type (as there was in the legacy specification). The open interaction task type is essentially an unscripted role-play in response to a stimulus which candidates have prepared under supervision ahead of the test.

Centres create their own tasks for the picture based discussion and the presentation and discussion - there are no Edexcel set tasks for these two options. Where a candidate engages in a picture based discussion, centres should note that the specification states (on page 16) that the picture is intended to be used as a 'prompt to discussion'. The discussion should therefore start from the candidate's picture. The spirit of this task type is that students will bring in their own picture, rather than all being given the same one. Most centres who attempted the open interaction created their own stimuli and tasks, generally customising one from the Edexcel bank in order to develop tasks that suited the strengths of their own candidates, thus allowing them to perform well. Teachers are reminded, however, that the stimulus in the open interaction task should not exceed 70 words.

Themes

Centres and candidates are free to choose their own themes for the orals: four popular themes have been identified by Edexcel (as listed on p9 of the Specification) but these are not prescriptive. Candidates may undertake both tasks on the same theme. Themes chosen for this session included holidays, hobbies, local area and school.

Conduct

In the presentation and discussion task type candidates must give a presentation which should last between 1 minute minimum and 3 minutes maximum. Some presentations were too short. Presentations which fall short of the one minute minimum time allocation will incur a penalty of -2 on the Content and Response grid. The other two task type options might be more appropriate for students who are unable to give a presentation lasting a minimum of 1 minute. Centres should be reassured that 1 minute really is long enough for the presentation part of the task - long presentations could mean less time for the more interactive, spontaneous part of the task. It is not in the spirit of the examination for all candidates in a centre to learn the same presentation off by heart. Nor should a presentation be followed by the same sequence of questions which in turn lead into shorter 'mini-presentations' - within the constraints of an assessment, we are looking for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions.

For the picture based discussion, candidates may give a presentation (maximum of one minute) but they do not have to. Practice varied. Some students clearly find giving a presentation gives them confidence for the rest of the oral, others feel more comfortable going straight into the discussion. Either approach is acceptable. We are also listening for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions in this task type.

There is an expectation in the open interaction that candidates will ask the teacher-examiner questions. All Edexcel produced open interaction tasks (i.e. in the Sample Assessment Materials and in the live tasks) make this very clear in the rubric. Where centres created their own open interaction tasks, they made candidates aware of this expectation. However, not all candidates asked questions during the course of their oral. This omission will have a negative impact on the marks which can be awarded for Content and Response: where questions (i.e. more than one) are required by the task and candidates ask one question only, 1 mark will be deducted from the Content & Response score. Where no questions are asked, 2 marks will be deducted.

In general, the orals were well conducted and allowed candidates to achieve their best. Skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher-examiner afforded candidates the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria. However, it should be stressed that candidates who learn off by heart their responses to a pre-set list of questions will struggle to fulfil the assessment criteria for Content and Response.

Timings

Each oral task should last between 4 and 6 minutes - this range affords flexibility to suit different candidates. Moderators were pleased that in this session the majority of orals conformed to the timings requirements. Looking ahead, centres should be aware that moderators will stop moderating after 6 minutes to ensure an even playing field for all candidates. In any case, prolonging the oral rarely, if ever, brings any advantage to the candidate - often the reverse is true. At the other end of the time scale, we have recognised that 4 minutes may represent too long a time for some candidates and we are willing to accept orals which last 3 minutes 30 seconds - so some considerable leeway. However, anything less than this will be considered short and there will be an automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid. Centres should consider this guidance when awarding marks themselves.

Recordings

Just one recorded exemplar per candidate for moderation should be sent to moderators. Centres should not send any more than one oral per candidate. This session centres submitted their recordings on cassettes, CDs and USB sticks (with orals recorded as both mp3 files and music/audio files). Whilst we will continue to accept cassettes for the next few sessions, it is undoubtedly the case that orals recorded digitally and saved as mp3 files greatly facilitate for centres the selection process for the moderation sample. The quality and clarity of the recordings are also better in comparison with cassettes. All recordings will be returned to centres. Please label cassettes, CDs or USBs carefully - centre number, candidate name and number, language and series details should be clearly given. It would help moderators tremendously if the task type were indicated next to the candidate's name. It also avoids confusion if these details are announced clearly at the start of each oral. Centres should send only those recording which are to be moderated.

Marking

There were a number of centres whose marks were adjusted.

Content and Response: Centres tended to overvalue their candidates' performance here. It should be remembered that the assessment criteria are applied globally on a best-fit basis and that the ability to interact well with the teacher and respond spontaneously to unpredictable questions is necessary to attain marks in the higher mark bands. Pre-learnt mini-monologues or conversations which consist of a question and answer session but lack interaction cannot be rewarded with top marks.

Accuracy and Range of Language are largely dependent on the amount of German conveyed by the candidate and it is unusual for a candidate who scores in the lower ranges for Content and Response to score highly in these sections since there is not the breadth of language required. Tenses other than the present must be used in order to have the opportunity to access the 5 mark band for Range of Language. It is also important when awarding the mark for Accuracy to note that the mere lack of error does not mean the candidate will score highly. The candidate must attempt to use more complex structures to reach 5 marks and there must be generally good pronunciation and intonation.

Administration

While many centres provided the required documentation correctly, a number failed to do so. Centres are advised that, following feedback from Summer 2010 and to reduce the amount of form-filling for you, a new combined mark sheet/authentication form* (Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 2: Speaking) for the speaking unit has been produced that differs to the one produced in the specification.

The Administrative Support Guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments) 2011 has details of what centres are required to send their moderator and the copies of the new forms to be used are held within the appendices. The Administrative Support Guide is available on our website at <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/spanish/Pages/default.aspx> under 'Exam Materials'.

Below is a checklist of materials to send to your moderator.

For each candidate in the sample:	✓
Task/stimulus	
Form CA2 (Candidate Notes Form)	
(Updated) Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 2: Speaking - signed by <u>both candidate and centre-assessor</u> . Any candidate unable to provide an authentication statement will receive zero credit for the component.	
Recording of task 2A ONLY. Please do not send any 2B recordings.	
For your centre:	✓
The OPTEMS middle copy (yellow) or printout of marks submitted on Edexcel Online for 2A ONLY.	
The work of the highest scoring candidate and lowest scoring candidate, <u>if not already included in the sample</u> . For any asterisked candidates which are absent or scored zero, replacement candidates must be supplied to meet the required number of candidates in the sample.	
A mixture of task types - (ie Open Interactions / Presentations / Picture Based Discussions)	

OPTEMS:

The top copy (white) of the OPTEMS is sent to Edexcel to record the centre marks or printout of marks submitted on Edexcel Online.

The bottom copy (green) is retained by the centre.

*If you have already completed the previous forms for the speaking unit, it is still possible for you to submit these this summer only. The new forms should be used for all future controlled assessment submissions.

- The CA2 pro forma *Candidate Notes Form - Speaking* (available as an appendix in the ICE booklet) for each sampled candidate. On this pro forma, candidates may write up to 30 words of notes which should be in either bullet point or spidergram format. For these purposes, a word is exactly that - a word. Thus *es gibt* will be 2 words, *in der Schule* 3 words. These notes may include conjugated verbs such as *ich habe gegessen* (3 words), but there should be no coding e.g. *i b l K g* (short for *ich bin ins Kino gegangen*). In addition, candidates may make up to 5 small drawings (i.e. not pictures from a

magazine or similar) if they would find these useful. If a candidate declines access to the CA2 form during the oral test, this should be noted in writing and this information sent to the moderator. Alternatively a blank CA2 form could be submitted. It is important that the moderator is able to verify that the relevant controls were observed.

- A copy of the stimulus and task for each sampled candidate. For picture-based discussions, a photocopy or **full** description of the picture can be provided instead of the original.

It is not necessary to submit the *Student Checklist Form* with the sampled work although these should be retained securely in the centre until 30 September. It is also not necessary to submit the individual students' *Controlled Assessment Mark Recording Sheet (Speaking)* since teachers will have transferred the marks from these to the Authenticity record sheet.

The sample of submitted recordings should reflect the full range of task types attempted in the centre. Therefore, if a centre is submitting marks for all three task types across the full cohort, exemplars of all three task types must be included in the sample. In this case, it may be necessary to include recordings additional to the stipulated moderation sample to accommodate this. In all cases it will be necessary to send recordings of at least 2 task types since all candidates must undertake 2 different tasks.

Centres are requested not to send to the moderator any details relating to the 2B task.

Support

Centres are reminded that the GCSE 09 German web page offers a wealth of support to teachers on the Controlled Assessment in speaking. The *Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book - speaking* is an invaluable resource with many FAQs. The *Controlled Assessment Exemplar Materials* include exemplar orals, tasks and moderator commentaries. For those wanting a brief overview, there is a Podcast <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/podcast-mfl.aspx> and you can ask and answer queries and exchange ideas via the MFL Online community <http://community.edexcel.com/forums/22.aspx>

We would recommend that teachers sign up for email alerts for the GCSE 09 German web page. In this way, an email will be received whenever anything new is uploaded to the web page. Any teacher with a specific query about any aspect of the CA process should send an email to one of the Senior Examiners for German at Ask the Expert. A reply will be received within 48 hours (often sooner). Alternatively, teachers may like to email their query to LanguagesSubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk. There will also be a programme of trainings events - both face-to-face and online.

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