Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In German (1GN0)
Paper 3F: Reading and understanding in German
Foundation Tier

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Introduction

This paper was worth 50 marks and was divided into three sections, A, B and C. The first 6 questions, Section A, were set in English. Questions 7-9, Section B, were set in the target language. Section C, Question 10, consisted of a translation from German into English. The examination proved to be a fair test of candidates' ability, providing a suitable level of challenge for more successful candidates whilst also providing questions which were accessible to all candidates. The majority had clearly been well prepared for the translation, the questions in the target language, and for the questions on literary texts and coped well with these questions.

Question 1

Candidates read a blog about events and were required to identify key items of vocabulary, matching statements to the correct person. This question proved a highly accessible start to the examination. The vast majority of candidates scored highly on this question, many attaining full marks. The least well answered part was Q01(e) where some candidates failed to make the connection between Hanna saying Ich mag Events im Fernsehen that this meant she liked events on TV. Many of the questions here could be answered by focusing on just one key word.

Question 2

Candidates read an advert for a job in a restaurant. They were then required to identify key ideas and words, completing five English sentences with words given in a box on the paper. There were at least two plausible options for each question but only one correct answer. Most candidates scored highly on this question. Q02(a) proved most challenging with many candidates not knowing that Schloss meant castle and not market. Q02(b) required knowledge of the adjective fleißig, and it was not known to all. Q02(c) proved a challenge to some candidates, requiring recognition of numbers, and to know that elf meant 11 and not 8. There were, however, rather more correct answers on Q02(d) as most candidates knew that rufen meant to call. In Q02(e) the majority of candidates knew that Woche meant week and not month.

Question 3

Q03 required candidates to read an email about holidays and to answer five English questions. Candidates were not expected to answer in full sentences; indeed all questions could be answered quite acceptably with a single word. In Q03(a (i)) a substantial number of candidates incorrectly assumed that Anna and her family were going to Spain and not the Alps as they had not understood that the question was about this year. Some candidates also wrote "Die Alpen" in German. In Q03 (a (ii)) a surprising number of candidates did not know the meaning of the word geschlossen, despite it featuring in the minimum core vocabulary, with many candidates offering the incorrect answer "broken". In Q03(a (iii)) examiners accepted a variety of answers such as walking, hiking or rambling. Many candidates answered question 3(b)

more successfully with most knowing the meaning of toll in 3(b(i)) and a pleasing number understanding an die Küste fahren in 3 (b(ii)).

Question 4

Candidates had to read an extract from a Grimms' fairy tale and then choose the correct option from a series of 4 alternatives. Q04 (i) was correctly answered by a large number of candidates who knew that drei Söhne meant the old woman had three sons and not two, four or five. Q04 (ii) was not found to be so straightforward by many candidates who did not know that Wald meant forest and not either lake, town or seaside. Q04 (iii) surprisingly also caused problems for many candidates who did not know that Saft meant juice and not milk, tea or water. In Q04 (iv) more candidates were able to correctly answer that the man had a grey beard. In the more challenging Q04 (v) many candidates were unable to match the phrase "dann habe ich selbst nichts zu essen" with the correct choice.

Question 5

 Candidates were required to read a slightly longer text about a new type of school and to answer three English questions on the content. Even though the text was longer it was still possible to give short answers to each of the three questions. In Q05(a) some candidates could not work out the significance of the 8 hours to the time difference to the school day and thought it began at 8. Some answered from their own knowledge and assumed that all German schools are finished by the afternoon. In Q05(b) many candidates correctly answered that homework could be done in school, although some misunderstood the idea and thought the question was to do with homework not being done and detentions. In Q05 (c) many candidates understood that Luisa said the new schools were better for most families, although some incorrectly wrote that they were better for Luisa's family.

Question 6

 Candidates had to read a longer and more challenging literary text with more advanced vocabulary and structures and answer English questions on the content. Q06(a) was well answered by many, who correctly realised that the garden was turning green. Again Q06(b) was successfully answered by many candidates who knew that Effi was looking forward to swimming or walking on the beach. For Q06(c) there were many possible answers. Sometimes the less successful candidates overlooked the simple options describing the ball as big, or pretty and then were not able to correctly navigate the more complicated pretty dancers or exciting music. In Q06(d) the correct answer was at night, which should have been simple enough but many candidates were unable to find the cue in the text and give a correct answer.

Question 7

Candidates were required to read a text about a Christmas market and to complete five sentences with the correct German words chosen from a given list. This test type is the same as for Q02 with the crucial difference that the sentences and possible answers are all in German, thereby increasing the question difficulty. The question also required some deduction, albeit at a very basic level. Successful candidates knew for Q07(a) that regionale was the same as Gegend in the text. Less successful candidates frequently chose internationale or one of the other words, despite the fact that these did not make grammatical sense. In Q07(b) less successful candidates failed to realise that Oma was the same as Großmutter in the text. Q07(c) required candidates to draw the conclusion that if a woolly hat was bought this was clothing. However, this link was made only by a small minority of candidates. In Q07(d) rather

more candidates associated draußen with im Freien. Q07(e) required candidates to understand die Kleinen and link this with a theatre show being for Kinder. Although the majority of candidates gained at least some marks on this question there were a number of scripts where candidates clearly had not understood the questions and/or text and had chosen the words for their answers completely at random. This test type will continue to feature in future years and merits careful practice

Question 8

Candidates read a blog about tourism in Saarbrücken and had to choose the correct answer from 4 possible choices. This question type is very similar to Q04 with the crucial difference that the sentences and possible answers are all in German, thereby increasing the question difficulty. In Q08(i) successful candidates were able to work out that Anton worked in a city, but in Q08(ii) few were able to deduce that he had contact with foreigners through his work as a tour guide. More candidates were able to answer Q08(iii) correctly, that tourists found the city beautiful. It was a surprise that only a few candidates were able to successfully link Tierpark with Zoo in the text in Q08(iv). In Q08(v) more candidates were able to successfully connect Kurzurlaub with holidaying for a weekend.

Question 9

 Candidates had to read a blog about success at school and then match a number of German statements to the correct person. This is one of the most demanding tasks on the Foundation Level paper and proved taxing for all except a small minority of candidates. This question required the ability to recognise some synonyms in German and candidates needed a thorough understanding of the text in order to choose the correct answers. In Q09(b) it was simply necessary to recognise Spendeaktion or Taschengeld gegeben as synonyms for Geld gesammelt and in Q09(e) das nächste Schuljahr for im kommenden Jahr. The other questions all required a level of deduction. In Q09(a) candidates needed to link repeating a school year with needing to learn a lot. This involved understanding the words wiederholen and lernen, both words featuring in the Foundation Level vocabulary list but certainly not universally recognised by Foundation Tier candidates. In Q09(d) Heinz's success in sport is indicated by him winning a prize in sailing – and in Q09 (c) Adelheid's improvement in class is shown by the fact that she has got good marks this year- as opposed to last year.

Question 10

The translation into English gives candidates the opportunity to show how accurately they have understood a German text and how precisely they can convey the meaning in English. The sentences gradually increase in difficulty throughout the passage. Most candidates were able to translate the text accurately enough to score some marks. The more successful candidates were able to translate the past tense sentences appropriately. In the first sentence very few candidates were able to translate Sprachen correctly, with speaking being a common misconception. In the second sentence the precise translation of diese was often missed, however more successful candidates were able to deduce the meaning – for example we have it 3 times a week. The third sentence was well translated by many candidates with some even being able to give meine Freundin Susie as my female friend or my girlfriend. Most candidates manged to correctly translate the fourth sentences although some struggled to understand the plural of friends in German or at least to convey this idea into English. The final sentence, while complex, was also correctly translated by

many candidates with many different versions being acceptable, such as "I went with my class to Berlin last year", "My class and I went to Berlin last year", or "We had class trip to Berlin last year."

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper candidates are offered the following advice:

- It is important to be familiar with all vocabulary in the minimum core vocabulary as all questions are based on this.
- It is crucial to answer questions in the language required. If candidates answer questions in German when English is required or vice versa their answers cannot be credited.
- When completing gap fill exercises candidates must ensure that their answers correspond to what is written in the text rather than just inserting words that at first sight might seem plausible.
- Candidates should be aware that if they give several answers for a one-mark question only the first can be credited.
- Candidates should beware of over-long answers where a subsequent detail negates a previously correct answer.
- A knowledge of grammar is essential when completing gap fill exercises in German, as it enables candidates to eliminate some answers immediately before even reading the text.
- Some questions will require candidates to make simple deductions, draw conclusions or identify synonyms for vocabulary from the specification.
- It is advisable not to leave gaps in the translation as omitted phrases are likely to limit attainment to a mark of 3 or 4.