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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In German (1GN0)

Paper 3H: Reading and understanding in German
Higher Tier

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Introduction

The GCSE German Higher Reading paper is worth 50 marks and is divided into three sections, A, B and C. The first 6 questions, Section A, are set in English. Questions 7-9, Section B, are set in the target language. Section C, Question 10, consists of a translation from German into English. Candidates are assessed on their ability to understand written German in texts drawn from different themes and incorporating different styles of language. Texts use familiar language in unfamiliar contexts and include two literary texts. These consist of short extracts which may have been adapted from the original to make them appropriate for this level. On the whole candidates entered for this paper were quite successful on the questions set in English requiring knowledge of vocabulary listed in the specification. However, many candidates found questions requiring a modicum of deduction or the ability to draw conclusions rather more taxing. Unsurprisingly, performance on questions set in German was much more varied. Examiners were heartened to note that performance on those test types, introduced last year for the first time, is improving.

Question 1

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 Q01(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 Q01(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 Q01 (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 2

Candidates had to read a longer and more challenging literary text with more advanced vocabulary and structures and answer English questions on the content. Q02(a) was well answered by many, who correctly realised that the garden was turning green. Again Q02(b) was successfully answered by many candidates who knew that Effi was looking forward to swimming or walking on the beach. For Q02(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 Q02(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 3

Q03 required candidates to read a challenging passage about the ambitions of a young woman and to answer five questions in English. This question produced a wide range of performances. More successful candidates were able to score close to full marks whilst others often could only be credited for a few correct answers. In Q03(a) candidates rarely scored the two marks available. Candidates knew bezahlen but often not Studium. Although finanzieren was understood, Ausbildung was often not, with many students believing it referred to an apartment or a building. For Q03(b) there were many possible answers and most candidates scored well here. In Q03(c) many knew that Elisabeth would be going on holiday although some thought that she

would buy a gift. In Q03(d) Traum was clearly well known with many candidates correctly answering that becoming an actress was Elisabeth's dream.

Question 4

In Q04 candidates were required to read an extract from a literary text and then choose a correct statement from a bank of four options in English. In Q04(i) most candidates were able to match streets with Straßen in the text. Similarly, in Q04(ii) a pleasing number of candidates knew that friedlich was peaceful. Many candidates found Q04(iii) and Q04(v) tricky but in Q04(iv) many were able to correctly link stay with bleiben in the text.

Question 5

Q05(a-d) required candidates to read a series of personal opinions about Charity events and then to allocate four statements to the correct person. Candidates then answered two English questions on the same texts. Many candidates were able to make the links between the German texts and the English sentences successfully, with many candidates scoring highly on Q05 (a-d).

Q05(e-f) Only the most successful candidates were able to answer Q05(e) correctly. Frequently encountered incorrect answers often referenced Dennis being happy helping in the stadium, or even being happy in the stadium as he loved sport. To be credited with a mark for Q05(f) candidates needed to mention the fact that playing the violin on the stage, or in front of others was what made Nicole nervous. Some candidates simply wrote the violin, which unfortunately could not be accepted.

Question 6

In Q06 candidates had to read a passage on learning a language and then select the three correct sentences from a given list of seven statements. The second part of this question required candidates to answer two questions in English. The majority of candidates were able to score at least 2 marks on Q06(i). Answers (B) and (D) relied on the understanding of key items of vocabulary and negatives. Answer F on the other hand required global comprehension of the third paragraph rather than knowledge of one or two specific words, although the final sentence in the second paragraph contained the key information.

Answers to Q06(ii) had to reference life or work being easier abroad with a language to be credited. Less successful candidates often included one element but not the other and so these answers were incorrect. Another possible answer was that you can have more fun abroad if you speak another language. Some candidates had understood the word fun but incorrectly thought that it was speaking another language that would cause amusement to others.

In Q06(iii) most candidates were able to correctly answer that Sven's tip was to have a learning partner. Some candidates incorrectly wrote about a training partner and this could not be accepted.

Question 7

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 Q07(i) successful candidates were able to work out that Anton worked in a city, but in Q07(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 Q07(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 Q07(iv). In Q07(v) more candidates were able to successfully connect Kurzturlaub with holidaying for a weekend

Question 8

Candidates had to read a blog about success at school and then match a number of German statements to the correct person. 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 Q08(b) it was simply necessary to recognise Spendeaktion or Taschengeld gegeben as synonyms for Geld gesammelt and in Q08(e) das nächste Schuljahr for im kommenden Jahr. The other questions all required a level of deduction. In Q08(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 Q08(d) Heinz's success in sport is indicated by him winning a prize in sailing - and in Q08 (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 9

In Q09 candidates read a more challenging text on Rafting and then had to answer five questions in German on the content of the passage. Full sentences were not required and candidates were allowed to make targeted lifts from the text in order to answer the question. Incorrect spelling or grammar was not penalised as long as the meaning was unambiguous. Although this question was targeted specifically at candidates aiming for the highest grades it was encouraging to see the proportion of candidates who managed a good score on this question. Q09(a) was answered correctly by many candidates who were able to correctly answer Schulgruppen. For Q09(b) many were able to identify the correct part of the text but some incorrectly answered that the Salzach was the only river in Austria, rather than the only river suitable for rafting. In Q09(c) many knew that during thunder and flooding rafting would not be possible, although some incorrectly assumed that the answer was during bad weather. Q9(d) was found to be the most challenging part of this question. In Q09(e), however, many candidates were able to formulate an answer that correctly stated that you would get your money back in the case of bad service. Some errors were made where candidates had written Geld but not included zurück.

Question 10

The translation proved a challenging exercise for many candidates, although the vast majority were able to score something for their version. Candidates had to show an ability to transfer meaning accurately into English in a passage that contained a wide range of tenses, structures and vocabulary. Many candidates were able to score more than half marks on this exercise and it was pleasing to see a number of near faultless translations from non-native speakers of German. Candidates are reminded to attempt as much of the passage as possible even if they do not know a key word. The penalties for leaving out a phrase or sentence are greater than for using an incorrect word or omitting just the unknown word. As the sentences gradually increased in difficulty throughout the passage it was not uncommon to see scripts where the first half was largely correct but where the last sentence did not make much sense. Words that proved problematic to many included Österreich (sometimes translated as Australia) Gegend, Herbst and dunkel. Most candidates correctly identified the past tense verbs in the third sentence. However although the future was correctly

identified and translated in the final sentence it was not uncommon to see inaccurate translating of the complex structures in this last sentence.

Paper Summary

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

- It is important to be familiar with all the vocabulary listed in the specification under both Foundation and Higher Tier.
- No credit can be given for answering questions in the wrong language.
- It is important to leave sufficient time to answer the last two questions properly as they are worth 12 marks.
- Candidates are reminded that questions set in German will often require the identification of common synonyms.
- Other questions will involve deduction or the drawing of simple conclusions.
- Questions are only set on the content of the texts. No general knowledge is expected or tested.
- At the end of the examination candidates should read through their answers carefully to check that they have answered the questions set.

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