

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

There was a wide range of ability among the candidates and although, occasionally, candidates omitted a task, the vast majority of candidates wrote a response to every question. Their success depended on both their ability to understand and write German, and their ability to answer the question effectively. The majority of candidates were able to prove that they had understood the texts and the questions.

Many candidates coped well with **Question 1** and were able to provide an appropriate dialogue in **Question 2**. In **Question 3** only the strongest candidates were able to use an appropriate register, but most candidates were aware of beginnings and endings of such letters.

Grammar (e.g. tenses - including Imperfect tense forms of strong verbs e.g. *rufte*, use of prepositions, adjectival endings, subject-verb agreement) spelling (e.g. capitals on nouns; use of *ss* and *ß*) and punctuation created problems in a number of essays. The language used in the answers was often idiomatic, but candidates appeared to have problems with the structure and tone of their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates found both texts accessible and there were few misunderstandings. A number of candidates produced excellent summaries and proceeded to write in-depth comparisons, finishing with a short paragraph in which they offered their personal opinions. However, many candidates did not provide the required summary. The best comparisons were those which made a linguistic point, provided an example from the text and described the effect on the reader. Marks were lost when candidates did not adhere to the rubric. Candidates should be aware that colloquialisms and informal language should be avoided in summaries, unless quoted from the text.

Question 2

Generally, the answers to this question were good. The best dialogues showed a clear understanding of the differences between Gaby Hauptmann and Anna Wimschneider (e.g. in age and background). Some answers combined fact and fiction creatively and successfully.

Section B

Question 3

This question produced a reasonably good response. Most candidates were aware of the structure of such a letter and included appropriate beginnings and/or endings. Paragraphing did, however, cause a problem for some candidates. The best letters were written in a formal style with a well ordered outline of the points they wanted to make. Candidates should be aware of letter styles and ensure they use the points made available to them in the stimulus. A few candidates misunderstood the source of the information that was meant to trigger their letter, believing that the article had been published by the *Kultusministerium*, which caused problems in their responses.

General comments

There were some excellent essays submitted which demonstrated a good understanding of grammar, a sound knowledge of vocabulary and a developed style.

Recurring mistakes include:

- the incorrect placement of inverted commas when writing spoken language in German;
- forgetting to position an Umlaut above the corresponding vowel;
- exclusion of capital letters, where necessary;
- basic spelling mistakes (for instance: substitution of *f* for a *v* in the preposition *vor*);
- lack of preparation. Candidates should try to plan a basic structure for their essay;
- past/present and future tenses were incorrectly spelt, and often the wrong tense (esp. *preterit*) was chosen;
- poor presentation. Essays must be well presented and legible.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This topic proved to be the most popular. The essays dealt with the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones.

Much of the content was excellent, but a few submissions contained basic spelling mistakes (e.g. *leich* instead of *leicht*) and incorrect punctuation.

Das and *dass* caused confusion with most candidates.

This topic question proved quite difficult for some, as some candidates' passion for mobile communication sometimes determined the content of the entire essay. With a question that needs discussion of pro's and cons, candidates must evaluate both disadvantages and advantages from a neutral stance and include their own personal beliefs in the conclusion.

Question 2

All candidates who chose this subject did well.

Many candidates wrote *eine gute Schulausbildung ist wichtig weil* which is incorrect.

Spelling errors occurred quite frequently, (i.e. *Lorbären*). Capital letters and commas were used incorrectly and *das* and *dass* caused confusion.

All candidates must keep to the number of words stipulated.

Question 3

Rauchen, Alkohol und Drogen – meine Gedanken dazu. provoked some very good arguments.

A number of candidates did not concentrate on the title and provided more information than was required, whilst others concentrated on one item (e.g. drugs) and did not refer to the other two items.

Speech marks, commas and capital letters were frequently forgotten or used incorrectly. *f* and *v* were often confused. Tenses were also confused and incorrect prepositions were often used.

Common spelling errors were: *poldidiger* (*Politiker*), *beschtechliche* (*bestechliche*), *diller* (*Dealer*), *fater* (*Vater*).

Not all candidates made essay plans and therefore some compositions lacked structure.

Question 4

Candidates showed fantastic imagination in this exercise. A number of candidates used a wide variety of vocabulary, complex strains of German grammar and some very advanced sentence structures. All the candidates did well on this topic.

Occasionally, the future preterit and preterit tenses of various verbs were confused or spelt incorrectly, in particular with *werden* and *mögen*.

The genders of certain nouns were also confused, *der Flugzeug...das Insel...die Sand*.

Candidates must ensure that their work is clear and legible.

Question 5

This question provided some interesting and unique answers, but punctuation and spelling errors were consistently made.

Question 6

This essay title is one, which should be easily accessible, but very few candidates attempted it. The candidates who did showed a high standard of German, both with language context and the use of grammar/punctuation. Most essays were precise and straight to the point, highlighting some very important aspects.

Das and *dass*, however, caused confusion.

Question 7

An excellent selection of essays was produced for this question.

The verb *machen* tended to be overused, however. Candidates should try to use a different verb in its place.

Question 8

Only a few candidates attempted this question, which produced essays of widely ranging standards.

All candidates accompanied their essays with good essay plans. However, a number of essays had very little content that was relevant to the question. Many were grammatically weak.

Question 9

Excellent grammar and a very wide range of vocabulary were used which showed a thorough understanding and control of the German language.

Prepositions caused confusion with *vor* being replaced by *for* and spelling mistakes were common, e.g. *schreitnen* (*Schritten*).

Speech marks and commas were often ignored or positioned in the wrong place.