

# FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

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Paper 0505/01

Reading

## General comments

This is the first session of the revised IGCSE First Language syllabus. Paper 1, the Reading paper (formerly Paper 2) now consists of two extended passages (formerly there were three passages on this paper). Candidates answer comprehension questions on the first passage, new for this paper, then write a summary of both passages.

On the whole, candidates responded well to this paper. Most responded with interest and enthusiasm to the texts provided and managed to answer the majority of questions correctly in the first part of the examination. Most candidates used their time well and there was little evidence of haste and incomplete responses. Presentation was generally of a satisfactory to good standard.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

- (a) About half the candidates answered correctly this initial question about when the graffiti artist or sprayer had begun to paint: two years ago. Four years was not correct as *Spuren* could just mean scribbles and not proper, colourful pictures.
- (b) This question was answered correctly by the vast majority of candidates. The notion that the sprayer had been influenced by his colleagues/surroundings was clearly easy to deduce from the text.
- (c) Out of two marks available most candidates managed to score at least one, namely that graffiti was forbidden/illegal. Some candidates thought that the walls or other available surfaces themselves were attractive to the sprayer whereas the notion of there being room or a big space in which to express himself was what he was enthusiastic about. A brief answer: *der Platz und weil es verboten ist* would have gained the full two marks.
- (d) There were just a handful of students who missed the point of this question, that the sprayer enjoyed spending more time on his artistic work.
- (e) The two elements needed to gain the two marks available here in response to the question how to avoid being discovered by the police: not to spray in spaces that are illegal – and busy with people passing to and fro. Most candidates added that you had to stick to the rules or to spray legally if you were not to get caught. These latter points scored no marks, but none were deducted either.
- (f) This question was a good differentiator between candidates who could interpret the information given and those who simply quoted the text or even took it literally. An appropriate lift from the text scored one mark, but a good explanation that witnesses changed their minds about what they saw gained two marks. One example of a good answer: *Die Zeugen ändern ihre Meinung und erkennen vor Gericht Sprayer wieder, die sie gar nicht richtig gesehen haben.*
- (g) Most candidates could again gain one mark for writing that sprayers were not deterred by the police because they had found their passion of a lifetime; only the better candidates mentioned that good sprayers were impossible for the police to catch.

- (h) Some candidates did not pay enough attention to the wording of the question as to what the purpose of graffiti ought to be for most people, in order to gain the mark for this question. The fact that graffiti is annoying for some people is not a *Funktion*; the broadening of people's horizons through this art form is. Again, a short answer like *Graffiti soll den Horizont von Leuten/der Gesellschaft erweitern* did suffice to gain the mark.
- (i) This was clearly one of the easier questions where most candidates scored all three marks: Girls were afraid (to be caught), sprayers are *Macho-Typen* and girls lack the stamina to join the graffiti spraying youths. One or two candidates missed out the macho aspect and one person mentioned that the girls were afraid of the boys.
- (j) The last question proved to be the main differentiator in this part of the examination as intended: many candidates gave their own opinion as to why Graffiti was *Verrückt, gewagt und cool* or wrote a paragraph about the legal consequences if sprayers got caught. Answers which were correct contained any of the following points for one mark each:  
the fact that graffiti is illegal or that you have to escape the notice of the police;  
the feeling of power that it can give you;  
the macho attitude of the boys;  
the fact that graffiti can broaden society's horizon or provoke a reaction from it.  
the fact that pictures produced, or that sprayers may be better today or that the pictures are daring.

The fact that graffiti is the best hobby some youngsters have or may even be the passion of their lives counted for one more mark. That you can gain respect in sprayer circles was another point to be credited.

## Question 2

While there were some excellent summaries that scored full marks, some candidates clearly still found summary writing technique difficult.

Common faults were:

- Writing a commentary rather than a factual summary. Candidates are not expected to express their own opinion in this exercise. The answer should consist only of the relevant facts drawn from the two texts.
- Producing a stylistic analysis, referring for example to stylistic features such as *Hypotaxen and Parataxen*. Again this is not part of the requirement for a summary
- Copying out whole phrases and sentences from the original.
- Writing extended introductions and conclusions. Ideally, answers should start with a sentence which draws on the wording of the question.
- Overlong pieces of work, which reiterate points already made or include own opinions. This limits the marks available in the mark scheme for style and organisation.
- Quoting from the text as if writing a literary commentary. Quoting and copying at length from the text can lead to lower language marks, as there is little evidence of language the candidate has produced on their own.

It is clear from the above that the summary is a skill that requires careful and focused preparation.

In addition, on the content side, candidates did not always include sufficient detail to cover all the relevant points. A successful attempt at the summary could have looked as follows:

*Beide Texte handeln von Graffiti. Während Text eins sich mit einer persönlichen Erfahrung auseinandersetzt, werden im Text zwei die Geschichte und die Hintergründe von Graffiti erklärt.*

*Die Bezeichnung „Graffiti“ kommt aus dem Italienischen und bedeutet „das Gekratzte“. Heute bezeichnet der Begriff Wandbilder und Schriftzüge, die mit Sprühfarbe oder Filzstiften an Wände gemalt oder in Glas geritzt werden. Graffiti wurde in New York von einem Postboten erfunden, der seinen Namen an die Wände malte. In Deutschland wurde Graffiti in den 80 ern populär – mit Hilfe eines Dokumentarfilms und eines Buches.*

*Graffiti soll dort gemalt werden, wo es am meisten auffällt und stellt oft eine Präsenz der Maler in einem bestimmten Gebiet dar.*

*Die meisten Graffiti-Maler sind Jungen und sind zwischen 13-21 Jahren alt. Sie wollen Ruhm und Respekt erringen und lieben das Machtgefühl, das sie beim Sprayen erhalten. Für manche ist der Nervenkitzel fast wie eine Sucht und viele Sprayer sehen in Graffiti die Leidenschaft ihres Lebens. Innerhalb der Szene gibt es wenig Gewalt und das Gefühl von Vertrauen und Zusammenhalt ist für die Jugendlichen ein Grund, bei der Szene mitzumachen. Die meisten Sprayer werden nicht langfristig kriminell, aber viele Sprayer wissen nichts über die rechtlichen Konsequenzen ihrer Arbeit: Sie können hohe Geldstrafen bekommen, vor Gericht landen und bis zu 30 Jahre Schadenersatz zahlen müssen. All dies kann zu sozialen Problemen führen.*

*Ausserdem ist Sprayen eine Umweltverschandlung, auf die viele Leute negativ reagieren, auch wenn die Sprayer nur den gesellschaftlichen Horizont erweitern wollen mit ihrer Subkultur, die sich ständig weiterentwickelt.*

The more successful candidates managed to exceed the total of 15 points for content in this part of the examination and often achieved 16 or 17 ticks for the summary as a result generally of having structured their work systematically.

# FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

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Paper 0505/02

Writing

## General Comments

First of all it was pleasing to see that virtually all candidates completed two essays as required on the revised syllabus. As expected, some candidates proved to be more comfortable with creative topics than factual topics and vice versa.

On the revised syllabus candidates need to be able to demonstrate their ability in both of the above styles of writing. It is more than ever important that they take sufficient time to study all the titles and ensure they choose those that best match their skills and knowledge. Many of the candidates produced plans; this tends to lead to a better structured, more coherent result. It is helpful to candidates to write out in full the essay title they have chosen as a means of focusing their mind on it. Some candidates failed to give any indication of their chosen title.

All responses to the titles in both sections were expected to be at a level of sophistication in terms of content consistent with 16/17 year olds prepared for the First Language German examination.

The goal of a discursive essay, for example, is to convince the audience of a conclusion. It is important for candidates to be clear about their conclusion. They are advised to give their argument a logical structure, setting out the advantages and the drawbacks of a particular position, leading up to a convincing finish.

On the language side, it is recommended that candidates build a good standard vocabulary in their first language, correctly spelled and appropriately used, rather than attempting to be over-sophisticated. Such an attempt can lead in fact to inaccuracy in spelling and to use of language that may not be fully understood.

Examples of the above included use of "Denglisch": *disipliziert* – if uncertain of spelling the candidate could have used a noun here;  
*Phycologen* – could have been replaced by:  
*Experten* or *Spezialisten*.  
*volviert* – the candidate appears to have meant: *sich damit befassen*

At the same time, candidates may be credited for varied, appropriate and interesting use of language and are encouraged to extend their range once a sound base is in place. The over-use of words like *machen* for example does not represent a good style!

As regards tense use, the imperfect is expected in written style – the over-use of the present perfect reflects the spoken style.

## Comments on specific questions

### Erster Teil

**Question (a)** *Sind die meisten Menschen heutzutage höflich – oder erlebt man eher das Gegenteil? Was meinen Sie dazu?*

This was a reasonably popular topic. Most candidates proved able to express their opinions concisely and relevantly. Some candidates showed better understanding of the issues involved and were more successful in putting their views across.

Example: ... *allgemein gültige Höflichkeitsregeln, die für alle Kulturen gelten, lassen sich meistens nicht finden...Eine gerade nicht distanziert-kühle Höflichkeit wird oft als „Herzenshöflichkeit“ bezeichnet.*

Some weaker candidates tended to go off at a tangent, and found it difficult to keep to the title.

**Question (b)** *Jeder zweite Jugendliche hat einen eigenen Computer in seinem Zimmer. Viele Lehrer und Eltern betrachten diese Entwicklung mit gemischten Gefühlen. Wie denken Sie darüber?*

This was the most popular essay in this category with over half of candidates choosing it.

Some weaker candidates produced essays that were irrelevant with a tendency to tell a story rather than engaging with the question in the title. Such essays were quite often basic in form, lacking complex structures:

Example: *...jetzt war ich dran zu antworten: „ich habe meine Gründe und jetzt hör auf mich zu drängeln und iss weiter“ ... Meine Tochter stopfte sich beleidigt Nudeln in ihren Mund und ich erhielt mehrere böse Blicke.*

The better candidates presented their argument clearly, making several distinct points. Material was often well-structured and many candidates expressed themselves with real flair:

Example: *geregelte Computerzeiten, aufgestellt von den Eltern, verhindern den Suchtfaktor und das Wochenendprogramm mit der ganzen Familie lässt auch die frische Luft nicht zu kurz kommen!*

A number of candidates expressed very strong views and were able to construct a convincing argument around them.

Example: *...da man nie sicher sein kann, ob die nette Susi mit der man gerade chattet, wirklich nur zwölf Jahre alt ist, gibt es dort einige Gefahren.....*

*... einige Pädagogen gehen sogar so weit zu behaupten, dass die Kinder und Jugendlichen sich durch das vorm Computer Sitzen sozial abkapseln würden!*

**Question (c)** *Mehr Freizeit – Vorteile, aber auch Probleme! Diskutieren Sie die Vor- und Nachteile.*

This was a reasonably popular title, on which stronger candidates demonstrated complete command of the subject matter.

Example: *...im grossen und ganzen bin ich der Ansicht, dass mehr Freizeit allein auf die Reife einer Person ankommt; wenn ein Jugendlicher begreift, dass er trotz erhöhter Freizeit arbeiten muss, dann sollte ihm diese Erhöhung gewährleistet werden. Wenn er aber nicht so denkt, sollte ihm das Privileg noch vorenthalten werden, bis er diese Einsicht bekommt.*

There were some examples of careless misspelling and poorly constructed sentences.

Example: *...durch diese Vor- und Nachteile sieht mann das viel Freizeit gut sein kann, aber mann sollte Abwächslung schafen, das einem nicht langweilig wird.*

**Question (d)** *Viele Jugendliche wollen nicht mehr mit ihren Eltern in Urlaub fahren. Welche Position beziehen Sie zu diesem Thema? Begründen Sie Ihre Meinung.*

This was another relatively popular title.

The goal of this discursive essay is to convince the reader of a particular conclusion. Stronger candidates had clearly planned the essay before writing it. Their introduction led clearly into the argument and many were able to produce fluent and polished language that had benefited from checking for accuracy.

Example: *... wenn zum Beispiel frühreife Kinder noch sehr jung alleine verreisen wollen und einige unverantwortungsbewusste Eltern das erlauben, haben sie keine Eltern, die auf sie richtig aufpassen.*

Some weaker candidates tended to ramble and failed to get to the point.

**Zweiter Teil:**

**Question 2 (a)** *Eine neue Umgebung, eine völlig unbekannte Situation. Erzählen Sie, wie Sie sich einmal fremd fühlten.*

This was the most popular title in this category.

Very good candidates provided plenty of specific descriptive details. Their work was well organised and structured, adding to its effect.

Candidates showed evidence of imagination and combined concrete and abstract ideas to produce work that was lively and natural and refreshing in tone. The Examiner could visualise the images depicted and gain a real sense of the emotions felt.

Example: *...schon der erste Blick aus dem Fenster verriet, dass diese Stadt anders sein würde; statt der verlassenenen Wüstenlandschaft, die sich hinter dem überaus verstaubten Teheraner Flughafen erstreckte, konnte man hier in der Ferne schon die hoch hinausragenden Skyline entdecken.*

Weaker candidates tended to put too much detail into their description and seemed unaware of how over-use of clichés could make their work seem somewhat laboured.

Example: *...obwohl ich eigentlich von Geburt an Deutscher war (meines Passes wegen und weil meine Eltern beide Deutsch sind) dauerte es bis ich mich mit der eher etwas unfreundlichen Deutschen Mentalität anfreunden konnte.*

The maxim, "Show – do not tell!" is a useful one to bear in mind in writing a descriptive essay.

For example:

Telling: I grew tired after dinner.

Showing: As I leaned back and rested my head against the top of the chair, my eyelids began to feel heavy, and the edges of the empty plate in front of me blurred with the white tablecloth.

**Question (b)** *Eine aufregende Entdeckung. Erzählen Sie davon.*

This was a popular title. Stronger candidates started with an exciting or dramatic first sentence .

Example: *...„Yipeeh!“ schrie ich vor Freude, als ich hörte, das wir in den Sommerferien zu einer einsamen Insel mitten in der Karibik fliegen werden.*

These candidates appeared to have taken time before starting to write; a consistent conclusion is likewise crucial.

Example: *...wir freuten uns alle tierisch und waren uns sicher, dass wir diesen Urlaub nicht so schnell vergessen würden.*

Weaker candidates produced essays in which spelling and grammar mistakes (*laufte, fangte, angeruft, ferreisen*) had a clear impact on the overall mark for style and accuracy.

**Question (c)** *Lügen haben kurze Beine! Sind Sie schon einmal bei einer Lüge erwischt worden?*

This was a reasonably popular title. Several candidates produced essays that were fun to read, presented clearly, demonstrated accurate manipulation of the language and real creativity.

**Example:** *...wenn Lügen kurze Beine hätten, wäre ich ein Zwerg! Die Tatsache ist jedoch, dass jeder einmal einer Lüge verfällt, wie etwa die verlorene S-Bahn Fahrkarte bei einer Kontrolle oder aber auch der versprochene Traum-Urlaub nach einem vergessenen Hochzeitstag!*

Some candidates appeared not to have the imagination needed to respond effectively to this question: the importance of taking the time to choose a title matched to their knowledge and abilities should not be underestimated.

**Question (d)** *„Der Klügere gibt nach!“ (Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach). Welche Gefühle, Eindrücke oder Ideen erweckt das Zitat bei Ihnen?*

The small number of candidates who chose this essay demonstrated a good command of the language and were able to express their own opinion in a clear and individual way.

Example: *...Menschen sollten lernen, doch mal nachzugeben, besonders wenn sie wissen, was für Konflikte aus so etwas entstehen können. Man sollte dann einfach nachgeben und wissentlich der Klügere sein!*