

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

<p>Paper 0525/01</p>

<p>Listening</p>

General Comments

Candidate performance in June 2009 was similar to that achieved in previous examination sessions.

The majority of candidates coped very well with all three sections of the paper, many scoring full or nearly full marks. Candidates had obviously been well prepared by Centres and were familiar with the layout of the paper and the general demands of this examination.

Exercises which required multiple choice answers, ticking or matching of items fared particularly well.

Answers in the target language were assessed on communicative intent, not on accuracy, and failed to score only if lack of accuracy obscured meaning.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1- 8

All material in this part of the examination is drawn from the Defined Content vocabulary which is readily accessible to Centres and candidates.

As usual, candidates coped well with this exercise, most scoring full marks. It was pleasing to see that even a question relating to telling the time was better handled than at previous examination sessions. Somewhat surprisingly, candidates who went on to score very well later in the question paper occasionally failed to score on **Question 1**, reflecting perhaps a certain nervousness on their part at the start of the examination.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-14

Candidates hear a news item about a music festival and are required to fill in gaps in a message about it. In answer to **Question 9**, figures giving the dates required would have been sufficient, although many candidates wrote the numbers out in full, in some cases giving the figures as well.

Question 11, where candidates needed to provide the word *frei* or equivalent in the phrase: *Der Eintritt ist* was generally answered correctly. A very small number of candidates wrote *free*; it should be noted that the use of English is not rewarded in any part of the examination.

Most candidates gave the correct answer to **Question 13**, although the spelling of *Schiff* caused problems for some. The only absolutely correct spelling required in the examination was for *karlsruhe* – testing candidates' knowledge of the alphabet - and all but a small minority got it right.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 15-22

The majority of candidates scored well on this exercise. Where incorrect answers were given this usually involved **Questions 18** and **19**. In both these cases candidates may have responded with what they thought was the expected answer rather than listening closely to what was actually said. The answer to **Question 18**: *Daniel meint, junge Leute sind genau so, wie viele Menschen denken* was to be found in the phrase in the recording: *Ich meine, wir jungen Leute sind doch wirklich besser als viele Menschen denken*, so: *Nein*. In the case of **Question 19**, the important point for candidates to note is that the group that Daniel belongs to

helps a variety of people, including but not especially the elderly. There was no other clear pattern to responses given.

Exercise 2 Questions 23-27

As the level of difficulty rises in the course of the examination, it was pleasing to see the majority of candidates gave a creditable performance on this exercise, where candidates are required to answer in German. Just a small minority gave no response to some questions.

In answer to the second part of **Question 24** – why did Notebooks fall out of favour after the initially enthusiastic response to them? - *schwierig* which some candidates gave instead of *schwer*, i.e. because they were too heavy, was rejected as it gave a different meaning entirely.

With regard to **Question 26**: *Welche technischen Probleme gab es mit den Notebooks?*, Examiners were sympathetic to a variety of spellings of *Anschluss/Anschlüsse*.

In answer to **Question 27**, some candidates appeared to have problems with the plural of *Schüler*. It needed to make clear that the problem as far as homework was concerned was that students without internet access *zu Hause* needed to stay at school to do it.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-33

There was no discernible trend in mistakes made on this multiple choice exercise, involving a survey about problems affecting young people. Candidates acquitted themselves well generally.

Exercise 2 Questions 35-41

It was pleasing to see so many candidates scoring well in this, the most difficult exercise on the paper, although it was clear that a relatively small number had difficulty with the interrogatives used here: *wer*, *was*, *warum*, affecting their responses.

In answer to **Question 34**: *Wer hat Frau Tabrizi zur „Frau der Woche“ ernannt?* just the name of the magazine *Brigitte* would have been enough to gain the mark.

In response to **Question 37**, the incorrect use of possessive pronouns, i.e. *sein* for *ihr*, was disregarded if the meaning was clear despite this.

A surprising number of otherwise good candidates gave the incorrect number of hours worked in **Question 38** (15-16 instead of 50-60 hours).

Overall, however, candidates acquitted themselves well and virtually all candidates attempted all three sections of the paper, allowing them access to the full range of marks available.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0525/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

The range of performance at this session was slightly wider than last year, with most candidates achieving a good standard as at previous examination sessions. The majority of candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the layout of the paper and of the tasks demanded of them. A fair number achieved full or nearly full marks. Candidates had clearly been well prepared by Centres and trained to read questions carefully, and thus coped well with the set tasks. Scripts were legible and the level of presentation was – apart from a few isolated examples – good.

The first section of the paper is based on the Defined Content syllabus, which is readily accessible to Centres.

Accuracy in German was credited in the extended writing exercise in Section 2 of the paper. Elsewhere, where answers were required in the target language, accuracy was not taken into account unless meaning was obscured. Answers in any language other than German were not rewarded.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Most candidates scored fully on this multiple choice exercise. Any errors usually involved **Questions 2 or 5** which tested candidates' range of vocabulary, based on the Defined Content vocabulary list.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This was a matching exercise, requiring candidates to match holiday activities to people's statements about themselves. Most candidates scored well and there was no perceptible trend to any wrong answers.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This short reading exercise caused few problems. Where candidates had difficulty it was in recognising that *Ja* was the correct answer to the statement *Nicht ganz die Hälfte der Klassenkameraden sind dabei* which corresponded to *fast die Hälfte* in the text.

Exercise 4 Question 16

In line with the task set, candidates needed to communicate arrangements for meeting a school friend by email, specifying where and when and suggesting what they might do. Most candidates achieved full marks for communication and accuracy marks. A small minority omitted part or all of the written and pictorial rubrics and so failed to achieve full marks. Please see the detailed mark scheme for the allocation of marks.

Section 2

Questions 17-23

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise. Some candidates had trouble with **Question 17: Welche Kinder besuchen eine Kindertagesstätte?** Candidates who simply replied *diejenigen Kinder* could not be credited, as their answer was incomplete. Some candidates confused *Was?* and *Warum?* In response to **Question 19.**

However, taking into consideration that candidates' answers to this exercise had to be given in the target language, a pleasing level of achievement was found.

Question 24

This more extended writing exercise: *Sie wollen bei dem Schülerwettbewerb „Klimawandel – Was können wir tun?“ mitmachen* (80–100 words) was potentially quite challenging at this level, and Examiners took due account of this in allocating marks for communication points in particular. The concept of *die Umwelt* is included in the Defined Content vocabulary list and in fact, apart from a small handful of candidates who misread *umweltfreundlich* as meaning simply *freundlich*, or those who thought that *Klimawandel* was an organisation that one could apply to join, the majority of candidates gave a pleasing and wide-ranging array of sensible answers.

The first two bullet points in the question – *Stellen Sie sich vor* and *Sagen Sie, wo Sie wohnen* – were quite straightforward although, oddly, some high-scoring candidates forgot to introduce themselves or failed to say where they lived.

In the case of the third bullet point – *Sie sind umweltfreundlich, geben Sie zwei Beispiele davon* – examples given by candidates included: *Müll trennen; mit dem Rad fahren anstatt mit dem Auto; Wasser sparen; das Licht ausmachen*. The fourth bullet point asked candidates to identify two problems that can arise as a result of climate change, and this too elicited a range of interesting answers, for example: *Das Ozonloch wird größer; die Erde wird heißer; das Eis kann schmelzen; Leute können krank werden*. Candidates produced a number of possible ways of improving the situation in response to the fifth bullet point, including: *Alle müssen mithelfen; man kann Schilder und Werbung machen; man braucht umweltfreundliche Maschinen*.

A quality of language mark (out of 5) is awarded using a banded mark scheme. (Please see the detailed mark scheme for the paper.)

Section 3

Questions 25-30

In this true/false exercise, one mark is given for ticking the correct box and in the case of *Nein* answers a further mark is awarded for providing the correct answer. If the answer is *Ja*, nothing needs to be written but candidates are not penalised if they do so.

Candidates have become increasingly familiar with this format and this year's candidates proved to be no exception. Most candidates scored well on this exercise, on the subject of the varying experience of children starting school around the world. There was no perceptible trend to any wrong answers.

Questions 31-37

This last exercise on the question paper is the most demanding, both in terms of the level of difficulty of the text and of the need to answer in the target language. It was pleasing to see that virtually all candidates attempted the exercise, on the subject here of a device to deter potentially rowdy teenagers, even if there were some who did not respond to every question.

Question 31, leading in to the text, was usually answered correctly.

Question 32, on the problems that had led to the installation of a device to deter young people from gathering at a water ski facility after hours was answered correctly by most candidates. Some candidates overlooked the reference to *nachts*, which was when the problems relating to noise and alcohol consumption were occurring, and limited their response to mentioning that the area was only open during the day.

A number of candidates had some trouble with **Question 33**: the reason for the device's widespread use in Britain was that it was produced there.

Question 34 not infrequently elicited the response that the device looked like a loudspeaker and was easy to put up. This did not however answer the question about how it operated: *Wie funktioniert das Mosquito-Gerät?* and could not be credited.

Question 35 asked candidates to spell out the difference in approach to the use of such a device in Britain and in Switzerland. *Ordnung und Sicherheit* on its own was not enough in response to the first part of the question, where the point was that the emphasis in Britain was on maintaining public order while the approach in Switzerland was to seek dialogue with young people.

Question 36 on young people's understanding of the reasons for installing such devices – which the author of the article found surprising - was generally answered correctly.

A number of candidates understood **Question 37** on the advantages of having a sound that is audible to young people only for a mobile phone ring tone but failed to specify in their answer that this meant that their teacher could not hear when their phone went off in class, writing *er kann den Ton nicht hören* instead of *der Lehrer kann den Ton nicht hören*. This was unclear and could not be credited.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

<p>Paper 0525/03</p>

<p>Speaking</p>

General comments

These comments should be read in conjunction with the **Teachers' Notes** booklet for March – April 2009.

As in previous years, the ability of candidates to communicate in German is impressive and there were many highly scoring performances. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and once again this year there was a wide range of performance from candidates, with the general standard being comparable to that heard in previous years.

Centres generally conducted the Speaking Test very professionally and most Examiners had prepared themselves thoroughly before the examination and prepared their candidates to deliver their best. However, in a number of Centres Examiners were not well prepared for the Role play situations, which resulted in their candidates not being fully able to demonstrate their ability; a small number of candidates were confused as the situation developed into an unnecessary mini-conversation; sometimes, certain Role play tasks were just not asked or completed.

Occasionally, some Examiners did not ask appropriate questions in the Topic and/or General Conversation sections of the test. It is essential that thorough preparation for these sections takes place too so that candidates can produce their best under examination conditions and Examiners need to ensure that they are prepared to use the full range of time frames, present, past and future, in these sections of the test by asking the sort of questions which will allow these time frames to be used. Marks for linguistic quality in scale **(b)** of the relevant mark scheme may well be limited otherwise, as is explained on p.7 of the Teachers' Notes. Candidates who do not (or cannot) convey past and future meanings may not be awarded marks above the Satisfactory band on scale **(b)**. Similarly, candidates whose topic or conversation is significantly curtailed cannot expect to be awarded full marks if they do not have time to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structures. Most Examiners do seem to use a stopwatch or alarm to guide them with timings, and this is good practice. There are nonetheless too many tests which are short, and just a few that are longer than the recommended times for the two conversations.

Candidates generally are well prepared for the Speaking test. In a very few cases, however, candidates seemed unaware of what was required of them and were rather nonplussed when they were asked what topic they had prepared to speak on; in such cases an unsatisfactory and often rambling 'presentation' about 'Myself / My life' was produced, despite the advice offered on suitable topics for the Topic Conversation and General Conversation sections on p.6 of the Teachers' Notes booklet. In a small number of Centres this year it did seem that candidates were not well-versed in the art of Role play: some candidates indeed seemed not to have prepared the Role play cards in the time allotted before the test and were at something of a loss what to do.

Most Centres forwarded the appropriate sample size for the centre with clear recordings, in labelled cassette boxes or on CD, the latter a pleasing trend; some recordings, however, do remain of a poor quality. It is important that all Centres send computer printed mark sheet copies (form MS1) and Working Mark Sheets to the Moderator with the recordings, as specified in the syllabus. Occasionally, Centres sent the complete set of recordings of all candidates, rather than a sample. One Centre sent its sample on a tape which was recorded at twice the normal speed; another recording was so slow as to be unintelligible. Centres should ensure that the sound quality of their sample is satisfactory before it is sent in for moderation.

Administrative work in Centres was generally good this year, but clerical errors of addition on the Working Mark Sheets do still occur, particularly in Centres with a large number of candidates.

The recommended timings of each section of the test were usually observed, although some Centres did run together the Topic and General Conversation sections of the test, which can make moderation difficult. There were also a small number of Centres where the Role play tasks developed into quite lengthy

conversations, usually Examiner led, and others where the Topic and General conversations were brief and quite superficial.

The mark scheme was generally applied consistently and the order of merit within Centres was usually accurate. Where adjustments were necessary, these were often the result of lack of time frames in the conversation sections, failure to complete Role play tasks adequately, lack of evidence from Topic and General conversations that were too short.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Examiners are reminded to encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task. If only one part of a task is completed, the full three marks cannot be awarded. The majority of candidates were able to converse fluently in their role plays and make use of natural and idiomatic German to complete their tasks. Examiners are reminded that they should adhere to the rubrics and printed stimuli of the Role plays and not attempt to add to or extend the set tasks, nor develop them into mini-conversations. This can be distracting for candidates and result in insufficient time being available for later parts of the test. Equally importantly, Examiners should be wary of feeding information to the candidates by giving them a choice of vocabulary, which cannot then be credited. Full guidance is given, under the heading **Structure of the Examination** on p.6 of the booklet.

Role plays A

Page 13

This was a straightforward Role play and most candidates performed well. The information required was well known to most candidates, although occasionally *die Umgebung* needed some clarification. Where two parts were necessary for a full answer, these were readily supplied by most candidates.

Page 14

This too was a straightforward Role play and most candidates again performed well. The information required was equally straightforward and accessible.

Page 15

This situation was also straightforward. Generally candidates had no difficulty with any task, but they had to remember to offer a suitable response to the second part of Task 4: *Sagen Sie, was Sie von der deutschen Schule halten, und warum?*

Role plays B

These tasks are intended to be more demanding, in that they require the ability to use a range of time frames and to give explanations, justifications and opinions where necessary. Centres are reminded that the more complex tasks to be fulfilled by the candidate may be split up by the Examiner. This can indeed be quite appropriate.

Page 16

This Role play was well attempted generally with most candidates able to explain that they were looking for a job and offer suitable responses to the questions asked them. The final task was perhaps less satisfactorily done: *Sagen Sie, dass Sie noch Interesse an der Stelle haben, und wann Sie schreiben werden.* Many candidates did not express their continued interest in the job, and contented themselves with the incomplete answer *ich werde schreiben.*

Page 17

This Role play was accessible to most candidates, and was a well-rehearsed situation. The split tasks were usually noted and responded to fully. Task 4 was a potentially difficult task: *Sagen Sie, welche Fortschritte Sie in der deutschen Sprache gemacht haben.* Candidates responded well though, if simply, with *ich kann besser verstehen, etc.*

Page 18

Again, an accessible Role play B, with a straightforward role for the candidate and full information about the situation given in the rubric. Tasks 4 and 5 required the candidate to frame questions. Asking questions

seems to be an overlooked skill and a useful one to practise as well, of course, as the skill of giving answers.

Topic (Prepared) Conversation

This section is intended to be a conversation between the teacher/examiner and the candidate on one topic of the candidate's choice. Examiners are asked to let candidates speak uninterrupted for 1 – 2 minutes before following up with relevant questions arising out of the presentation. In this way the candidates' exposition of their prepared material can be properly assessed, as well as their responsiveness and use of language in the discussion of the topic that follows the presentation.

Presentations as usual covered a wide range. Many Examiners and candidates did an excellent job, producing a natural and not too over-rehearsed presentation and subsequent discussion, with spontaneous exchanges in a variety of time frames, and a full range of vocabulary and structures. At the same time, some candidates had to fend for themselves in an extended monologue, while for others the conversation moved on straightaway to a more general exchange with no initial exposition of the topic by the candidate. The manipulation by candidates of their prepared material determines their marks in this section and it is important to ensure that appropriate evidence to assess this is available.

The choice of topics was as wide as ever: in many Centres candidates chose topics that were challenging: there were some commendable expositions on the environment, the problems of drug abuse and crime, religious intolerance and the role of women in society. Many candidates were able to speak at a high and sophisticated level. In other Centres, candidates were happier with less complex topics such as school, home life, future plans etc.

Candidate performance was generally very good on this part of the test with some fluent, interesting expositions and discussions. There is though still a minority of candidates who clearly do not prepare a topic as prescribed by the syllabus; they cannot be awarded high marks for scale **(a)** (quality of presentation and preparation) and have limited scope for demonstrating a range of language in use.

General (Unprepared) Conversation

The best performances from candidates in this section of the test were ones where they were encouraged to use a variety of time frames, relevant vocabulary and appropriate structures; many were able to demonstrate a high degree of fluency in their responses to the Examiner's questions. As usual, a good range of topic areas was tested, including school, holidays, family life, education, daily life etc. – all of which are entirely appropriate, being topic areas where candidates can reasonably be expected to have a suitable command of relevant vocabulary and idiom. A minority of Examiners do sometimes ask questions which are perhaps too sophisticated for the average candidate, thus denying them the opportunity to demonstrate what they know or could offer with a more basic level of vocabulary and structure.

As has been said in the General comments section, for both Topic and General Conversation, Examiners must ensure that candidates are offered the opportunity to respond in a range of tenses, otherwise marks above the satisfactory band on scale **(b)** cannot be awarded. Similarly, candidates whose Topic or General conversation sections fall significantly short of the 5 minutes specified cannot expect to be awarded full marks if they do not have the time to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structures.

General Impression

It was pleasing to see that the impression mark, which relates to candidate performance across all three sections, was consistently well used by the majority of Examiners, although sometimes the award of a particular mark under this heading seemed somewhat random, particularly in Centres with only a small number of candidates.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0525/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

Many candidates this year produced accurate and stylish German of a good standard, while the written German of a small number of weaker candidates was quite poor.

Few candidates produced faultless German, as even very able candidates with a good 'feel' for the language wrote German which would have sounded fine if spoken but contained spelling and grammatical errors. It was to some candidates' disadvantage that they did not always use capital letters appropriately; they were sometimes omitted for nouns, even in some very fluent scripts. Conversely, **ich** was written with a capital **I** throughout some scripts.

Many candidates handled basic German syntax well and wrote flowing, idiomatic German. Handling of more complex syntax and structures was less consistent. The majority of candidates limited themselves to a few subordinate clauses and almost all of these began with **weil** or **dass**, the latter sometimes written **das**. In sentences with modal verbs the infinitive was often incorrectly located and so could not be credited.

Lower-ability candidates frequently mixed English or other languages with German. Word order was sometimes very convoluted. While such candidates could score reasonable content marks, they did not tend to score much for language because of an inability to produce whole units of correct language. Vocabulary, though appropriate, tended to be repetitive and unadventurous.

Careful checking is advised to eliminate frequently recurring errors such as: missing umlauts off words; misspelling - *schell* for *schnell*, *normaleweise* for *normalerweise*. Some candidates had problems with comparatives: *mehr gesund*, for example, was common. Genders were often incorrect and sometimes nouns changed gender seemingly arbitrarily within the same piece of work.

There continues to be a marked difference on a significant number of scripts between the standard of German of **Question 1** and that of **Question 2**. Some candidates, who seemed to be accomplished letter writers, and produced idiomatic and accurate German in **Question 1**, produced German of a lower standard in **Question 2**. This would suggest that while letter writing is rigorously prepared to good effect, essay writing may still be receiving less attention.

Several candidates produced work that was almost illegible. Occasionally there was so much crossing out or the handwriting was so minute that parts of the script were indecipherable. Candidates should be aware that poor handwriting can be to their disadvantage. Candidates in some cases might be better advised to write on alternate lines.

Some candidates, including very good candidates wrote in excess of the required number of words. This can deprive candidates of potential communication marks. Candidates are reminded that for each question the requisite length is between 130 and 140 words; material in excess of this is not credited for accuracy or communication.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 is a guided writing exercise. Candidates choose between two options, **(a)** and **((b))**.

At this session, **Question 1(b)** proved to be more popular than **Question 1(a)**.

Question 1(a) *Ab Januar fährt Ihr Schulbus nicht mehr durch das Dorf, wo Sie jetzt wohnen. Sie schreiben einen Brief an die Schuldirektorin.*

Although there were fewer candidates for this question, they performed comparably with those who tackled **Question 1(b)**. The reluctance to opt for a formal letter seems regrettable given the importance of the **Sie** form in German. Candidates are well advised to examine the requirements of the tasks in the formal letter and to be aware that they are unlikely to sacrifice marks by choosing to tackle it.

There were many very good letters and it was clear that most candidates were thoroughly versed in this skill and familiar with the range of vocabulary. The matter under discussion – how to preserve a school bus route under threat of closure - posed no real problem.

Letter openings were generally correct, although there were some incorrect renderings e.g. *Liebe Dame Schuldirektorin*. Less able candidates did not read the instructions carefully enough and introduced their letter inappropriately, e.g. *Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren*.

Some candidates addressed the headteacher inappropriately as *du* throughout the letter, whilst others mixed *du* and *Sie*.

- Many lower-ability candidates did not understand *hin-und herfahren* in the rubric, and reproduced this phrase inappropriately in their answer.
- Future, sometimes complicated and lengthy travel arrangements were expressed without difficulty. Transport vocabulary was well used, and using the future tense posed few problems.
- Candidates of all abilities missed the significance of *... was Sie von der Situation halten* in the rubric, and did not supply material to cover this point. Others wrote of their irritation or sadness and some explained that the turn of events was disastrous as they would no longer be able to attend school.
- *Erzählen Sie, wie Ihre Mitschüler und Mitschülerinnen auf die Situation reagieren*. The precise significance of this point was lost on some candidates, leading them to say that other candidates sympathised with their situation, rather than explaining how they were helping in finding a solution to the problem..
- More able candidates tended to come up with ingenious suggestions for what the headteacher might do to help, whilst others just demanded or asked for her assistance.

Question 1(b) *Dieses Jahr versuchen Sie und Ihre Familie alle fit zu werden. Sie schreiben einen Brief an Ihren deutschen Brieffreund/ Ihre deutsche Brieffreundin.*

This letter was well done by almost all candidates who attempted it. The topic appeared to be one which captured the mood of the moment and candidates could write readily on issues relating to weight, health and diet.

Candidates should avoid wasting words on an overlong introduction to their letter for which they cannot be credited. Few marks can be gained, for example, for over-long, chatty greetings and social niceties. The expression *fit zu werden* was frequently reproduced inappropriately from the rubric, e.g. after *wir möchten*. Having read *welche neuen Aktivitäten* in the rubric, many candidates retained the adjectival ending in their essay, resulting in many instances of *viele neuen Aktivitäten*.

- Reasons given for undertaking the fitness regime varied. Amongst them there were those who wanted to look attractive for a beach holiday, others were supporting an overweight father who needed to lose a few kilos, others had been inspired by a documentary on healthy lifestyles.
- Most candidates wrote at length about their activities. Unfortunately some forgot to refer to the second part of the bullet point, which asked candidates to say how often they engaged in the activities mentioned.

- Many candidates wrote at some length about what they ate, but then forgot to mention what they drank. The few who did write about what they drank seemed not to know *Getränke* but used *Trinken* instead. A sizeable minority referred to what they used to consume previously, rather than to their new diet.
- Many candidates retained the word endings from the rubric when writing, e.g. *Ich mag dieser neuen Routine, weil...* Some wrote about the advantages of the new lifestyle instead of what they found difficult.
- The Principal Examiner was pleased to note that most candidates asked a question and indeed in some cases more than one, in attempting to complete the final task; *Bitten Sie Ihren Freund/ Ihre Freundin zu erklären, wie er/ sie sich fit hält*. However the last content point was frequently lost by an inability to manipulate *sich fit halten* appropriately. Others misunderstood the instruction and urged their pen friends to follow their example in trying to keep fit.

Many candidates failed to score marks for the last or even the second to last content points, because they had exceeded the 140 word limit.

Question 2

Als Sie eines Abends den Bahnhof erreichten, um nach Hause zu fahren, erfuhren Sie, dass der letzte Zug schon abgefahren war. Erzählen Sie, was weiterhin geschah.

It was clear that the situation was accessible to candidates: all appropriately entered candidates wrote relevant if sometimes rather predictable responses and vocabulary used was appropriate. Some candidates did though seem unaware of the word limit and wrote in excess of 200 words.

Candidates across the ability range wasted time, words and potential marks by re-stating what was written in the rubric and writing at length about events **before** the missing of the train. Candidates are reminded that they should pick up the story at the point where the rubric leaves off.

Some candidates avoided the necessity of using a past tense with a range of strategies that included writing a playlet, conducting a conversation that lasted for the whole essay or by writing the essay in the conditional: "what I would do if I missed the last train home". This was not to their advantage. Whilst a small amount of direct speech may be appropriate at times, candidates are reminded that a narrative in an appropriate **past** tense is what is required here as indicated by the rubric: *Erzählen Sie, was weiterhin geschah*.

Stories were generally appropriate and included most frequently: a walk home, sleeping at the station or persuading a family member to come to the rescue. Some candidates appeared to forget all they had been taught about being wary of strangers and accepted a lift from a passing motorist, who sometimes became the candidate's new boy/girl friend. The most able candidates produced some superb stories, some with an unexpected twist, including being whisked away by a passing vampire. Middle-range candidates produced some reasonable stories. However, their use of the past tense was limited, including at times an unlikely mixture of perfect and imperfect tenses. Stock phrases such as *Ich wusste nicht, was ich machen sollte* and *Ich hatte keine Ahnung* could be put to good use in this context; however candidates should avoid over-reliance on these.

Lower-ability candidates confined themselves to the present tense. A few such candidates had not understand the rubric and described a journey home by the last train, or spent most of the essay describing what they did when they got home. Their resulting low mark reflected this.