

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0677/01

Listening

General comments

This paper produced a wide range of responses but it is pleasing to note that the majority of candidates showed evidence of good understanding of spoken German. The final section of the paper was challenging for those candidates in the lower mark-ranges. Although responses that require an answer in written German have to be recognisable, they do not have to be grammatically accurate. The candidate does, however, have to provide a direct answer to the question. It is also essential that candidates make an effort to write legibly and in the tick box tasks make their intentions clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Task 1 Questions 1 - 8

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

Most candidates performed well in this introductory series of questions. A number of candidates failed to listen carefully enough to **Question 5** and gave **C** as the answer. It was notable how many candidates had changed their minds and corrected their answer to **A**, presumably on the second hearing. Some candidates were not sufficiently familiar with clothing vocabulary and provided the incorrect answer to **Question 7**.

Task 2 Questions 9 - 16

This task concerned publicity for a holiday, and was accessible to almost every candidate.

The tick box answers were for the most part correct, although some overlooked the *nicht* in **Question 11** and a few did not connect *Rufen Sie uns an!* with the telephone in **Question 16**, even though it was reinforced by *sprechen* in the following sentence.

There were a few errors in the figures: some candidates wrote *viele* instead of *vier* in **Question 10** but *Mai* was widely understood and communicated effectively.

Section 2

Task 1 Question 17

Candidates were required to identify 6 correct statements from a choice of 12 by listening to four interviews about young people and pets. Although many candidates identified all 6 statements correctly, the increased level of complexity in this section meant that 4 or 5 was a more common mark. The incorrect statement most commonly ticked was **(c)** and the correct statement most commonly identified was **(e)**. A few candidates inserted either too many or too few ticks which meant that they could not obtain full marks. The rubric suggests ticks but crosses are equally acceptable to indicate the answers, as long as the candidates make it very clear which boxes are their final choice.

Task 2 First Part Questions 18 – 22

This is a new task to this examination bringing it into line with the equivalent examinations in other languages. There seemed to be no misunderstanding amongst candidates about what they were expected to do, which was to replace the crossed out, incorrect word with a correct one. Some candidates wrote out

the whole sentence again, but this is unnecessary. Except for **Question 19**, where *drei* was the only possible response, the Mark Scheme allowed for alternative answers as long as they showed understanding. This was particularly true of **Question 20**. Most candidates achieved at least 4 out of the 5 possible marks.

Task 2 Second Part Questions 23 – 27

Candidates clearly understood the gist of this interview with Valentin and most answered the questions appropriately. The marking was generous with the varied attempts at *es schmeckt ihm nicht* in **Question 23**. Most managed to identify one detail, although *Käse* was frequently misspelt and, if it appeared as *Kasse* or *Kaiser*, was disallowed on communication grounds. **Question 25** and **Question 26** were generally well answered, but there were a couple of difficulties with **Question 27**: firstly, the question asked *Was macht ...?* and therefore required a verb in the answer. *Er isst Fleisch* was sufficient to gain the mark. Secondly, those candidates who attempted to reproduce exactly what they had heard sometimes wrote *Gericht* as *Bericht* and failed therefore to communicate the correct information.

Section 3

Task 1 Questions 28 – 33

Although it is multiple choice, the complexity of the text in this last section combined with the four option format makes this a challenging task. Once again it discriminated successfully between candidates. In general **Question 28**, **Question 31** and especially **Question 32** were answered correctly. The incorrect options of **A** in **Question 29** and **B** in **Question 30** were often chosen, as was **C** in **Question 33**.

Task 2 Questions 34 – 42

The factual elements of Tobi's conversation with Marion were generally understood but some of the reactions to his epic cycle ride were only grasped by a minority.

Question 34, **Question 36** and **Question 42** required straightforward factual information and should have been accessible to most candidates. It is worth reminding those candidates who feel that **Section 3** is beyond their competence and who do not even attempt to provide an answer, that it should be possible for them to pick up at least a couple of marks here if they keep listening.

Question 35 was the least well done as very many candidates did not put down enough information to answer the question meaningfully. In **Section 3** candidates are required to interpret attitudes, emotions and opinions which are not always adequately conveyed in a single word or phrase.

Question 37 was well done by those who understood the question: *hält* seemed to be a slight stumbling block.

Question 38 was generally correctly answered as *soo müde* was not only emphasised but supported by *total kaputt*.

Many candidates lost a mark on **Question 39** by simply writing *billig(er)* and to provide an answer to the question it was essential to make it clear what was cheap(er). *Herausforderung* was certainly a challenging piece of vocabulary at this level and not known by many, although there were some (mostly unsuccessful) attempts at transcription. However there were three options for the two marks and *sie wollten etwas Besonderes machen* is well within the capabilities of a good GCSE candidate.

A pleasing number of candidates gave the correct answer to **Question 40** which required an understanding of the emotion the boys felt at the end of their ride.

Question 41 was answered satisfactorily by only the best candidates. This was partly because many gave the answer to the question "How did they react?" when the actual question was "Why did they react in this way?"

The general standard of comprehension of spoken German demonstrated by candidates in this GCSE examination was impressive.

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0677/02
Reading and Directed Writing

Key message

In Section 1

The candidate needs to understand simple messages, signs advertisements and a short text and to write a short message all dealing with everyday life.

In Section 2

Exercise 1 the candidate is required to locate information in a straightforward passage. Text rephrasing is not required, but the answer should be unambiguous. In Exercise 2 of this Section the candidate is asked to write a short guided essay on a topic relating to his/her everyday life.

In Section 3

In this Section the candidate is asked to respond to Questions requiring both gist and detailed understanding. Whilst selective lifting may be appropriate to answer some Questions, mere location and transcription indicating vague understanding is not. Exercise 1 requires candidates to decide whether statements are true or false and to justify the false ones. In **Section 2** the candidate is required to answer open questions.

General Comments

The Paper was tackled well by the greater majority of candidates. Just one or two weak candidates omitted **Question 16** and also **Question 27**, the more challenging writing task.

Question 1-5

These were all very well done by the majority of candidates.

Question 6 -10

Most candidates had no problems with this second exercise, although for some **Questions 6** and **7** posed a problem, suggesting that *Erdkunde* and *Geschichte* were not known.

Question 11-15

The *Dritte Aufgabe* was tackled well by most candidates. For **Question 14** some candidates answered that all the children slept at the top of the house; they may have benefited from studying the text and the multiple choice options more closely.

Question 16

This written exercise was tackled very well with most candidates scoring full marks for the communication aspect of this task. Some candidates did not know the word *Bäcker* or *Bäckerei* and produced a range of alternatives, not all of which were comprehensible. Many candidates were unable to spell *Bäckerei* correctly. Dubious spelling, poor handwriting and incorrect verb forms meant that some scored less well for Language.

Question 17-26

This first element of the *ZweiterTeil* was typically approached in a very straightforward manner with many candidates scoring full marks. **Question 17** was answered appropriately by almost all candidates. Answers to **Question 18** generally communicated well, but on occasions answers were ambiguous with candidates' answers conveying that the family had wanted to go to England for a long time, which could not be credited. **Questions 19 - 22** were very well answered. For **Question 23** some candidates wrote *Er kommt gut mit seinen Schulkamaraden*, which could not be credited. **Questions 24** and **25** were generally unproblematic. For **Question 25** some candidates referred to both uniform and tie rather than just the latter.

Question 27

Almost all candidates seemed to find this task accessible and very many scored full marks for Communication. In some cases candidates omitted task **(b)** or **(c)**, which meant that the maximum they could score for Communication was 9, and just few candidates omitted to write about both of these, which meant that the maximum possible for Communication was 8.

Candidates wrote predictably, but appropriately about the amount of pocket money they received and whether or not this was sufficient for their needs. Some seemed to receive extraordinarily large amounts of *euros*, which suggested that they had no concept at all of this currency. For task **(b)** some candidates clearly did not understand *verdienen* and wrote, sometimes at considerable length, about all the things on which they spent their money. Although Task **(c)** did not always produce a properly formed past tense, candidates not only referred to the purchase/activity, but frequently gave an opinion here too. Many candidates scored full marks for Language, but in a significant number of cases the Language was very repetitive with no attempt to vary verbs or sentence patterns.

Question 28 -34

A very few candidates seemed to take a statistical gamble and ticked either all of the 'Ja' boxes or all 'Nein'. When providing corrections to the incorrect assertions, a few candidates were not attentive to the rubric and the need to avoid the use of *nicht* (and *keine*) in their answers. Candidates occasionally disadvantaged themselves by invalidating their answers with extraneous information from the passage which ended up appearing to give an impression of alternative answers or lifted, so that the answer did not make sense.

A few candidates left answers blank in this Exercise. Some candidates decided that the statement of **Question 30** was false; this suggested that the *beibrachten* in the text may not have been understood and led to the candidates' confusion. For **Question 34** some candidates stated that Sunita's purpose for visiting England was to visit her friend. The remainder of the Exercise proved to be straightforward.

Question 35-43

Although there were many good responses to Questions in this Exercise, there was a tendency to respond with information that did not answer the Question being asked at all; some candidates would be well advised to look more closely at the interrogative, so that they provide the information requested. On occasions for **Questions 35** answers showed that the candidate had located the information in the text, but the rendering was either ambiguous or so poor that it could not be credited. For **Question 36** some candidates did not seem to read the Question closely enough and wrote about where information could be found **and** photos seen etc. rather than specifically answering the Question. **Questions 37** and **38** were generally unproblematic. **Question 39** posed a problem for many candidates, suggesting that they may not have understood *Zweck*. **Question 40** was well answered by most candidates. In the case of **Question 41** candidates often located the information correctly, but supplied a poor lift, which could not be credited. There were many good answers to **Question 42**. **Question 43** was answered well by many, but again some candidates did not score a mark, because of a poor lift, which did not actually answer the Question.

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0677/03

Speaking

General comments

These comments are to read in conjunction with the **Teachers' Notes** for March – May 2012.

It is always a privilege to moderate the work of candidates from all over the world and, as in previous years, their ability to communicate in German is highly impressive. There has been a big increase in entries from GB Centres this year. There were many highly scoring performances, which showed that the candidates had worked hard, prepared themselves thoroughly for the examination and were able to score very high marks. The full range of marks was available to all candidates, but inevitably there was a wide range of performance overall, 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 small number of Centres Examiners were not well prepared for the Role Play situations, which resulted in the candidates not being fully able to demonstrate their ability; often candidates were confused as the Examiner allowed the situation to develop 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 so that candidates can produce their best under examination conditions and Examiners must ensure that they are prepared to use the full range of time frames (present, past and future time) in these sections of the test by asking the sort of questions which will allow these time frames to be used: otherwise marks on scale **(b)** (Linguistic Quality) may well be limited, as is explained on pp9 and 10 of the **Teachers' Notes**. Examiners should consult these instructions very carefully as there are still many who are awarding higher scale **(b)** marks to candidates who do not (or cannot) convey past and future meanings. Such candidates cannot be awarded above the satisfactory band (see **Teachers' Notes**, pp above). 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, but there remain many tests, which are simply far too short; there are very few that are longer than the recommended times for the two conversations however. In a very few cases, some candidates seemed unaware of what was required of them for the Speaking Test and seemed rather perplexed when they were asked what topic they had prepared to speak on; in these cases an unsatisfactory and often rambling 'presentation' about 'Myself / My life' was produced, despite the advice offered on p9, **2(b)**, of the booklet.

Most Centres forwarded the appropriate new sample size for the Centre (outlined on pp3 and 4 of the **Teachers' Notes**) with clear recordings, in labelled cassette boxes or, as is now more common, on CDs; a pleasing trend is the use of computer files. Only a few recordings remain of a poor quality. MS1 copies and Working Mark Sheets for all candidates should be sent to the Moderator with the recordings, yet some Centres failed to do this. The cover sheet was not always included. Occasionally Centres sent the complete set of recordings of all candidates, rather than a sample, as is instructed on pp3 and 4. Where Centres had requested permission from the Board to use more than one Examiner to conduct and assess the Speaking examination for their candidates, extensive and helpful notes on Internal Moderation (as detailed on p7 of the notes) were usually submitted; most of these were exemplary.

Administrative work in Centres was generally good this year, but clerical errors of addition on the working mark sheets (WMS) still occur, particularly in Centres with a large number of candidates; a CW/AMEND form has to be issued as a result. The transfer of marks from the WMS to the MS1 forms was not always completed accurately. Many Centres had however completed a cover sheet, showing that these additions and transfers had been checked at the Centre!

The recommended timings for each section of the test were usually observed, but some Centres did run together the Topic and General Conversation sections, 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 General Conversations were very brief and perfunctory.

The mark scheme was generally applied fairly consistently and the order of merit within the Centre was usually accurate. Where adjustments were necessary, these were often the result of lack of time frames in the conversation sections or failure to complete Role Play tasks adequately.

The majority of Examiners conducted the examinations very well. The best performances were from Centres whose Examiners followed the Role Plays as set out in the booklet, kept to time in the conversation sections, allowed the candidate to present his / her topic before beginning the discussion and asked questions from a range of topic areas in the General Conversation. In particular, good performances needed to include enough questions offering an opportunity for the candidate to produce past and future tenses. This year (in comparison with previous years) there were fewer examples of Examiners who seriously disadvantaged their candidates as a result of poor examining. However, there does remain a number of Examiners whose conduct of the examination prevented their candidates from achieving their best, e.g. those who did not carry out the Role Plays as prescribed, those who did not allow the candidate to present the topic for 1 - 2 minutes before asking questions, those who had not thought sufficiently about the type of questions which would be appropriate to ask, and so wasted time and opportunities, those who did not keep to time (this year, the incorrect timings were usually examples of Examiners cutting the conversation sections too short, hence not allowing the candidates long enough to talk), those who talked too much themselves, not giving the candidates enough of a chance, etc. The most frustrating of these were the Examiners who failed to ask any or enough questions to prompt the candidates to use the past or future tense in the General Conversation, and hence caused their candidates' performances to be moderated at no more than 6 on scale (b).

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. In such cases candidates should be prompted to give them the opportunity to attempt the missing task and work for the marks.

In Role Plays A the tasks of greeting and thanking the interlocutor are important; failure to address these parts of the task will result in an incomplete message, with a maximum mark of 1 (as in the mark scheme on p12). One task in Role Plays A will always be a **greeting + rephrasing of the rubric**; a further task will always be **expressing thanks + asking a question**; two tasks will be the expression of **one piece of simple information** each, where the response may very well be brief, but can be worth the three marks (see p.12, para. 3 of the notes); in addition there will always be a task where the candidate **chooses from an option offered by the Examiner**.

In Role Plays B **greetings and thanking** are equally important as expressed above; in addition, one task is structured to demand a **reaction** from the candidate in addition to a piece of information; this was set out on the candidates' card in such a way as to make this clear. A lack of **reaction** was marked again this year with very many candidates only able to score a maximum of one mark for that particular task for an **incomplete** response. One further task on Role Play cards B will demand that the candidate **replies to a question asked by the Examiner but not printed on the card**: this will always be cued as **Beantworten Sie die Frage**. Remaining tasks will expect the candidate to **ask a question** and to offer **two pieces of information in reply to a question from the Examiner**.

Overall the Role Plays were completed well by most candidates this year. Many candidates made very good efforts with them, and almost all candidates managed to attempt at least some of the tasks; there were very few who struggled to find some answers. Overall this year, Examiners seemed to have prepared the Role Plays well and there were fewer examples of Examiners failing to conduct them properly (e.g. by creating their own additional tasks within the Role Play and hence confusing the candidates, or in a few cases missing out entire tasks). As last year, one common problem with the Role Plays was where candidates missed out one of the two elements in a task. This was often as a result of Examiners failing to insist on the second element of a task being completed by a candidate. Hence many candidates at moderation had their mark for such a task reduced to 1. In Role Play B, most candidates had been prepared for having to respond with a reaction, and most candidates achieved this successfully. However, many candidates struggled with phrasing a question correctly, in the final task of the Role Play B.

The majority of candidates therefore were able to converse fluently in their Role Plays and make use of natural and idiomatic German to complete their tasks. Examiners are however 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. 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 on p8 of the booklet, under **Structure of the Examination: Role Plays**.

Role Plays A

Page 15, A1, 2, 3

This was a straightforward Role Play and most candidates performed well. The information required was well known and straightforward for most. There were however often errors of pronunciation with the verb *schließen* in the final task.

Page 16, A4, 5, 6

This too was a straightforward Role Play and most candidates again performed well. The information required was equally straightforward and accessible. Some tasks could be answered briefly and single word responses were awarded full marks here. There was a variety of responses to task L.3 (what was in the packet) – including *einen Hund!*

Page 17, A7, 8, 9

This situation was also straightforward and most tasks were well attempted, though there was some confusion over when and the times of the film showings in tasks 2 and 3. The final question (which the candidate has to ask) also presented a number of difficulties, usually of pronunciation.

Role Plays B

These tasks are more demanding, in that they require the ability to use a range of time frames and to give explanations, justifications and opinions and a **reaction** where necessary. Centres are reminded that the two-part tasks demanded in the candidate's rubric can be split by the Examiner; this is quite appropriate. It is of course assumed that candidates are fully aware of the *Sie* form of address and its possessive.

Page 18, B1, 4, 7

The context presented some difficulty; a number of candidates seemed confused by *Schwarzwald*. The final task (where the candidate is required to ask a question about arrival time) was a challenge for many candidates.

Page 19, B2, 5, 8

The word *Skigebiet* presented a pronunciation challenge for many candidates – even though many Examiners had used the word in their introduction to the situation. The final task (where the candidate is required to ask a question about accommodation) was a challenge for many candidates.

Page 20, B3, 6, 9

Some candidates had difficulties understanding their role, not having fully understood the rubric and getting confused about who was to visit whom. However, the majority were helped back into the correct situation by a sympathetic Examiner. Again, the final task (where the candidate is required to ask a question about phoning parents) was often a challenge. Some candidates had difficulties with the possessive pronoun and were therefore confused about who was to telephone whom.

Topic (Prepared) Conversation

As usual the Presentations ranged widely from monologues, where even struggling candidates were left to fend for themselves, to immediate general conversations with no initial candidate exposition. Examiners are asked to let candidates speak for approximately a full minute before interrupting, so that the exposition of the candidates' prepared material can be assessed (p9, 2(d) of the notes). Occasionally candidates did rush through their prepared material; sometimes over ambitious topics were chosen, which at times overstretched their capabilities, making it difficult to ask open-ended questions appropriate to the level of this examination. However, one must not lose sight of the very many Examiners and candidates who do an excellent job by 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 structure. It is the manipulation by candidates of their prepared material and the quality of their response to the Examiner which determines their marks.

The choice of topics was very wide; in many Centres candidates chose very challenging topics; there were some very commendable expositions on the environment, problems of drug abuse and crime, religious intolerance, the role of youth and women in society and many detailed comparisons between life in Germany and the home country; many were able to speak at a very high and sophisticated level; in other Centres, candidates were happier with less complex topics such as holidays, 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 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).

General Conversation

Overall, a good standard; there are not many in the 'weak' band, and what is always pleasing is that most candidates do genuinely attempt to develop their response wherever possible. The result is often extremely spontaneous and natural from the better candidates.

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 wide range of topic areas was tested, including School, holidays, family life, education, daily life, the environment etc. – all of which are entirely appropriate and all being topic areas where all candidates can reasonably be expected to have a suitable command of relevant vocabulary and idiom. A minority of Examiners do ask questions which are perhaps too sophisticated for the average candidate, thus denying such candidates the opportunity to demonstrate what they know or could offer with a more basic level of vocabulary and structure.

There were a few Centres whose Examiners did not make clear the distinction between the Topic and the General Conversations, though again this was less of a problem this year, as compared with previous years.

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 conversation is significantly curtailed cannot expect to be awarded full marks if they do not have the time to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structure.

General Impression

It was pleasing to see that the impression mark was generally well awarded by the majority of Examiners in the larger Centres, although sometimes the award of a particular mark seemed somewhat random, particularly in Centres with only one or two candidates.

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0677/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

This session resulted in a very good number of candidates producing excellent German of a very high standard. It was a pleasure to read the work of those candidates who demonstrated a thorough grounding in the language and an awareness of the complexities of German grammar. A number of candidates this year produced near flawless German. However, the full range of marks was seen, from 0 - 50. A few candidates handed in blank scripts and a few simply copied out the rubric, extending it only slightly. As in previous years, spelling errors affected candidates across the ability range. A number of common words were wrongly spelt. Some of these were used very often, e.g. *danach* which appeared on the majority of scripts, but very often with incorrect spelling, also *dass*, which frequently was without an *s*, even though candidates often used the word order correctly with it. In **Question 2** *war* was often spelt as *was*. Candidates need to take care with the genders of their nouns, especially as an incorrect gender can also affect language ticks for use of associated adjectives. As has been noted in previous years, in order to gain credit for the use of nouns, candidates should be sure to use capital letters on nouns (or to adjust their handwriting style such that small/capital letters are easily distinguishable); similarly, candidates should avoid writing *ich* with a capital *I*. It is important that candidates pay attention to the tense of each verb they use. A wrong tense can affect both Language ticks and Communication marks. In **Question 1** candidates should look carefully at the tense required by each bullet point, and in **Question 2**, candidates must demonstrate accurate and consistent use of the past tense. A significant number failed to do this in **Question 2** and this impacted on their scores. It was pleasing to see a good number of candidates who were successful in their use of more complex sentences. However, there were also many candidates who used conjunctions without the correct word order. Candidates should also be reminded that infinitives and past participles must be correctly located, if Language credit is to be given.

In this session, the quality of German produced by a candidate for **Question 1** was frequently comparable with the quality produced by the same candidate for **Question 2**. However, there were still a number of candidates who were better prepared for the more directed/letter style of **Question 1** and seemed less well-prepared for the more creative/free style of writing required for **Question 2**.

This year there were still many candidates across the ability range who had failed to observe the word count: 130-140 words for each question. Examiners do not mark for either Communication or Accuracy after the 140th word. Candidates giving too much preamble use up valuable words and may find that they do not gain marks later in the task, if Communication points are made after the word count. Even the most able of candidates can lose Communication marks this way and should be reminded that the word limit is crucial. Candidates should also be reminded about the importance of clear handwriting: a few candidates produced work which was very difficult to read.

Comments on specific questions

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

In this session, **Question 1(a)** and **Question 1(b)** were roughly equal in popularity, though a few more candidates chose **Question 1(a)** over **Question 1(b)**. This may have been simply because it was first on the paper, though the subject matter for **Question 1 (a)** was very accessible to all and most candidates responded to the task confidently. Answers were usually full in content even if they sometimes lacked originality. Some candidates were perhaps a little too familiar with the topic area and this may have encouraged some of them to digress unnecessarily into subtopics that were not required (e.g. descriptions of uniform, etc.). The subject matter for **Question 1 (b)** also seemed accessible to most candidates. Responses to this question were usually more varied in content and demonstrated a more extensive use of vocabulary.

Question 1(a) *Seit einem Monat besuchen Sie eine neue Schule. Sie schreiben einen Artikel für ein Jugendmagazin über das Thema Schule.*

There were many excellent responses to this question. Candidates were generally able to write in detail on the topic of school, though there was a minority who used this as an opportunity to write more generally on the topic, rather than responding to the specifics of the tasks set. It is important to remind candidates that they should not pre-learn set essays on a given topic; they need to address the particular tasks, as set out in the rubric. Overall most candidates had the necessary language at their disposal, though there were some common words whose spellings were often not known (e.g. *Lieblings, Lehrer/Lehrerin, etc.*) and this was especially the case with some common plurals needed for this topic (e.g. *Lehrer/Lehrerinnen, Fächer, Schüler/Schülerinnen*). A number of candidates wrote passionately about their own experiences on a first day at school. Some clearly had personal experience of school life in Germany and were able to write fluently on the subject.

- Most candidates were able to communicate effectively on this first task and there were many good, varied and interesting responses. Some candidates, however, lost the Communication point by failing to use the past tense and there was a minority who had not understood '*seit einem Monat*' and who had written about today as the first day at the school.
- Almost all candidates were able to communicate details of their favourite subject and many also gave good reasons, though there were a few who failed to gain the Communication point because they omitted to give a reason for their choice. Some Language ticks were lost because candidates became confused as to whether they were talking about favourite subjects in the singular or the plural, and so lost ticks on their nouns and/or verbs.
- Generally this task was answered well, and there was a huge variety of interesting responses given for break time activities. Unfortunately a significant number of candidates talked about what they had done at break time on their first day, rather than talk generally about what they now do. A present tense response was required here, hence a response in the past could not gain the Communication point.
- Most candidates responded well to this task and communicated clear opinions of their teachers. The phrasing of the question helped avoid too many physical descriptions being given and candidates were able to write successfully about how they find their teachers to be competent/kind/helpful/strict, etc. A number of candidates who had written well on this task failed to gain the marks because they had already reached their word limit.
- The final task proved the most challenging for candidates. Many misunderstood the task and talked about their activities after school each day, rather than referring to their future plans. Others wrote about their holiday plans after this school year. A careful reading of the question would have avoided these misinterpretations. Those who had understood correctly often talked about future jobs. However, this sometimes resulted in the inappropriate use of an article with a word for a profession/job, and the verbs *bekommen* or *machen* were sometimes used where the candidate should have used *werden*. As with the previous task, there were also some candidates who had written very good answers but were prevented from gaining the marks because they had already exceeded the word count of 140 words.

Question 1(b) *Sie waren vor kurzem auf Urlaub in Deutschland und haben bei Ihrem deutschen Freund/Ihrer deutschen Freundin gewohnt. Sie schreiben einen Brief an Ihren deutschen Brieffreund/Ihre deutsche Brieffreundin.*

There was a wide variety of responses to this question, many of which were highly impressive in both content and language. Most candidates were able to write well on the holiday topic, and many evidently drew on their own experience of visits to Germany. Overall, most candidates dealt well with the letter format, they liked the informal style that was required, and many were well-prepared with appropriate starts/ends to their letters. Candidates should, however, be careful not to have too much preamble at the start of a letter as this takes away valuable words from the word count. Most candidates had the vocabulary needed for this topic area, though the distinction between *gehen* and *fahren* was not always known, and these verbs were often used incorrectly with *haben* as the auxiliary in the perfect tense.

- Almost all candidates were able to communicate their thanks to their penfriend; however, very few used the correct grammatical structures required with *danken/sich bedanken*. A small minority described their holiday without actually thanking their penfriend, and therefore were not able to gain the Communication point.
- Most candidates had clearly understood the requirements of this task and many were able to answer successfully. There were a significant number who referred to specific places/particular monuments etc. in Germany, implying a firsthand knowledge of them. However, many failed to express their likes/preferences/reasons in the past tense, and so were not always able to gain the Communication point. Others could not gain the Communication point because they had omitted to give a reason for

their likes/preference. Many candidates struggled in their use of the impersonal verb *gefallen*.

- This task seemed to be the most challenging for candidates. Many candidates failed to achieve the Communication point because they had misunderstood the rubric (which asked what they had been doing since being back home) and wrote instead about what they had done at their penfriend's house in Germany; others gave a physical description of their own house. There were various language errors as a result of confusion in how to use the structures *seit/seitdem*.
- Candidates responded well to this task and most communicated their future holiday plans clearly and effectively. However, a number of candidates had already passed the word count and so could not gain any marks. Others were unsure in their use of the future tense.
- Many candidates were successful in asking the penfriend about his/her holiday plans. Some were creative and invited him/her to join in with their own plans.

Question 2

Als Sie eines Abends mit Ihrer Familie im Restaurant waren, ist plötzlich eine berühmte Persönlichkeit ins Restaurant gekommen. Beschreiben Sie:

- *Ihre Reaktion, als Sie die berühmte Persönlichkeit gesehen haben*
- *Was danach passierte*

Question 2 is an open-ended task but the guidance bullet points give candidates a structure to their writing and aim to prevent candidates from writing off-topic. In order to gain all Communication marks, candidates need to ensure that they address both bullet points.

Many candidates understood the task well and made successful attempts at a response. These were characterized by accounts of scenes in a restaurant where the candidate named, described and reacted to the famous person, then met him/her, usually had a photo or obtained an autograph and sometimes helped the celebrity in some way before being rewarded with a gift of e.g. tickets to the next concert/match/film showing. There were some examples of impressive and creative answers produced and these were a pleasure to read. A few were particularly lively and were characterized by excellent development of the story, and fluent German. Such examples often included humour, with the candidate going off to marry the celebrity, or waking up to find it had all been a dream. On the whole, though, the accounts were relatively straightforward.

The most difficulties were experienced by the weaker candidates, some of whom had misunderstood the phrase *berühmte Persönlichkeit* and went on to describe an encounter (sometimes in a restaurant, sometimes not) with e.g. a criminal/a friend/a long-lost relative. In such cases, the misunderstanding prevented some of the Communication points from being awarded. Some referred to an encounter with the *berühmte Persönlichkeit* but gave no specific details, leaving the Examiner wondering whether the candidate had understood or not. Many tried to express a reaction of shock but were unable to spell *schockiert*. Others struggled to write coherently in the past tense and so lost marks. A number of candidates tried to avoid the use of a past tense, either by writing in dialogue form, or simply by writing in the present tense. Some candidates were successful in including a limited amount of direct speech and/or a few descriptive sentences in the present tense. However, in essence, this question requires the use of the past tense and hence any attempts to avoid the past tense usually resulted in significantly fewer marks being given overall. Similarly, candidates who alternated between tenses often did not communicate the development of the story effectively and this again resulted in fewer marks being awarded. It is important that candidates remember to answer this question in a past tense, and to do so with consistency.

Some candidates were disadvantaged by their lengthy/detailed descriptions of the restaurant scene in their narrative before the arrival of the celebrity. This resulted in Communication points falling after the word count. Candidates are reminded that they should begin their account as the rubric states, in this case at the point of the celebrity's arrival.

A small minority of candidates used the guidance phrase *Was danach passierte* as an opportunity to describe another event entirely, and a very small minority had pre-learnt parts of essays practised from previous exam papers, which they reproduced. Such examples resulted in a few cases of irrelevancy. Although creative and imaginative accounts are encouraged, candidates should be reminded to keep to the specifics of the situation that is given, in this case the encounter with a famous person in a restaurant.