

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0677/01

Listening

General comments

It is pleasing to note that the majority of candidates showed evidence of good understanding of spoken German. The candidate needs only to demonstrate in their answer that they have understood what is being said, their written German does not have to be grammatically accurate to gain the mark. The candidate does, however, have to ensure that what he/she has written provides a direct answer to the question. It is essential that candidates make an effort to write legibly and, in the tasks where they are required to tick boxes, to make their intentions clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Task 1 Questions 1 – 8

All material in this section 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. Just a few candidates failed to identify *D Ferienhaus* in **Question 6** and even fewer *in die Berge* in **Question 3**.

Task 2 Questions 9 – 16

This task concerned a week's events in a German secondary School. The multiple choice answers with visual options proved to be accessible to almost all the candidates. The three questions requiring a word or figure as an answer were less commonly correct. In **Question 9** many different spellings were accepted for *März* as long as there was a phonetic or visual similarity to the word. Many candidates were clearly not familiar with the correct spelling. **Question 11** requires *Pause* and was generally correct. Those candidates who wrote *Pause kaufen* were also credited with a mark but those who wrote *Pausekaufen* as one word failed to demonstrate that they had understood. In **Question 16** the easiest option was simply to write the figure 60 but many candidates attempted to write the word out, although they were unsure how to spell it. A surprising number of candidates opted for 6 or 16.

Section 2

All material in this section is also drawn from the Defined Content vocabulary.

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 their attitudes to fitness. Many candidates (but by no means all) identified all 6 statements correctly. The incorrect statement most commonly ticked was **(a)** and the correct statement most commonly overlooked was **(h)**. A very 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 the second appearance of this type of task in this examination which brings it into line with the equivalent examinations in other languages. Most candidates understood that they had to replace the crossed out, incorrect word with a correct one. In **Question 19** and **Question 22** some candidates added

superfluous material which invalidated their answer. Those who wrote out the whole sentence again with the correct word were not penalised, but this is unnecessary. *Abenteuer* in **Question 21** caused candidates the most problems but many successfully transcribed the answer even though they were not entirely familiar with this item of vocabulary.

Task 2 Second Part Questions 23 – 26

Candidates clearly understood the gist of this interview with Olaf about his attitude to the computer and the Internet. Most questions were answered appropriately. Some candidates who failed to understand *an der frischen Luft* in **Question 23** answered incorrectly that he played on the computer. Most gave the correct answer to **Question 24** but many had difficulty coming up with two correct advantages in **Question 25**. In **Question 26** most candidates identified *etwas Aktives* as being part of the correct answer and gained a point.

Section 3

The vocabulary for the tasks in **Section 3** is drawn from the Defined Content List but the content of the Listening texts may include words that do not appear there.

Task 1 Questions 27 – 32

Although it is a multiple choice task, the complexity of the text in this last section combined with the four option format makes it challenging. The candidate is required to listen for details which are often quite subtle so it was pleasing that many candidates scored well. This year's interview concerned a female professional footballer – a fact which most candidates recognised in **Question 27**. In **Question 28** some candidates overlooked *musste* and incorrectly chose **D**. **Question 29**, which concerned the attitude of Ayla's Turkish father, was the question most frequently incorrectly answered but there was little evidence of a pattern in the distracters chosen. **Question 30** and **Question 31** were generally well answered but **Question 32 C** proved to be an effective distracter.

Task 2 Questions 33 – 42

This final interview with a fictitious rapper was challenging for weaker candidates. It required detailed understanding to answer the questions satisfactorily. Nevertheless, it is worth reminding those candidates who feel that **Section 3** is beyond their competence and who do not even attempt to provide answers, that they will not be penalized for a wrong answer any more than for a blank line. It is always possible to pick up one or two marks in this section in the factual questions. This was the case in **Question 33** where most candidates gained a mark. **Question 38**, **Question 39** and **Question 40** were also accessible and were answered correctly by a good number of candidates.

Question 34 and **Question 37** required the candidate to demonstrate that they recognised that this information applied to the past. In **Question 34** *Er konnte nicht hören* did not adequately convey the meaning: it had to be *zuhören* to gain the mark. In **Question 37** *ohne Abschluss* was not widely understood nor was the alternative answer *keine Aussicht auf einen guten Job* so only the most able candidates gave a correct answer.

In **Question 35** few candidates seemed to grasp *Hintergrund* or at least include it in their answer, although as long as they correctly defined *Informationen* they were awarded a mark.

In **Question 36** there were several able candidates who impressed the Examiners by successfully converting *falsche Geschichten* into *Lügen*. Some candidates failed to gain the mark by omitting a reference to the media.

Question 38, **Question 39** and **Question 40** were generally well understood and answered successfully. *Auf Tournee* seemed to be understood but few knew how it was spelt and attempted a transcription with varying degrees of success.

Question 41 could be answered simply by *Mode* or *Kleidung* but many candidates in attempting to transcribe what was said invalidated their answers. Differentiation between *eigene* and *einige* is a challenge for many but a confusion between the two was not penalized here.

Question 42 was rarely answered correctly. *Laden* did not appear to be a familiar item of vocabulary for many candidates. Many made a guess at Switzerland, Germany and the Internet. Despite the question being *wo?* a number of candidates answered *Fans*, or *Kinder*.

Overall the standard of comprehension of spoken German demonstrated by candidates in this IGCSE 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** 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 observations:

The Paper was tackled well by the greater majority of candidates. Some weaker candidates omitted **Question 16** and also **Question 27**, the more challenging writing task. In some cases poor handwriting and crossing out made the tasks difficult to read and candidates should be aware that this may be to their disadvantage.

Questions 1-5

Most candidates performed very well on these early questions, with only a few not differentiating between *laufen* and *lesen* in **Question 4**.

Questions 6-10

Most candidates had no problems at all with this second exercise, and most scored full marks.

Questions 11-15

This third exercise generally did not cause many problems to candidates, except weaker candidates did tend to miss the point in **Question 15** and often gave answer (a) perhaps latching onto the word *Foto*, which appeared in the **Question** and text rather than (b).

Question 16

Many of the candidates scored high marks on this exercise. Those that appeared not to have read the rubric closely enough often wrote the whole task in the past tense, thereby invalidating their language score. Also, many of those candidates, who live near the sea tended to just mention the name of the town/coastal resort and expect that the Examiner would know that this meant that they were going to the sea without their explicitly saying so. There were some incorrect renderings of the time including 17 Uhr, none of which could be accepted.

This first element of the **Zweiter Teil** was typically approached in a very straightforward manner.

Questions 17-26

Question 17 was answered appropriately by almost all candidates. Those who failed to score for this question tended to have written *Australia* rather than *Australien*.

Questions 18 and **19** were generally answered appropriately.

Question 20 proved to be straightforward for the majority of candidates.

However some did fail to score here, because they wrote *Sie verstehen nicht* without saying what it was that they did not understand.

The remainder of the exercise was tackled well by almost all candidates.

Question 27

Almost all candidates seemed to find this task accessible and very many scored full marks for Communication; some very well written, informative pieces of writing were produced. Some candidates wasted time and effort introducing themselves and saying how old they were. Candidates are advised to restrict their writing to what is required by the rubric. In some cases candidates gave the name of their town or village e.g. *Ich wohne in Dexforth*, without saying whether this place was a town or in the country, which was not credited. Most said whether they liked where they lived and gave a reason/reasons for this. Candidates were clearly well versed in describing all the possible activities available to themselves and others in their locality. Candidates wrote predictably, but appropriately, about being able to go swimming, go for walks or visit museums etc. There was often little distinction between answering tasks **(b)** and **(c)** in their answers, but some candidates paragraphed their answer clearly so that there was no confusion. For task **(d)** most candidates wrote about where they wanted to live in the future, although there were some who wrote about what they wanted to do rather than where they wanted to live. Hoped for destinations included Australia, the USA and Germany amongst others, whilst others claimed that they would never wish to leave their current place of abode. Candidates sometimes wrote *ich mochte* when they ought to have written *ich möchte*, e.g. *Ich mochte in Deutschland wohnen*, which was not credited without mention of *in der Zukunft*, as it was ambiguous. 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.

Questions 28-34

As in previous years 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, some 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 were lifted indiscriminately, so that the answer did not make sense.

A number clearly did not understand some questions and either wrote irrelevant responses or copied large chunks of the text, perhaps hoping that they contained the answers. A few candidates left answers blank in this exercise. Some candidates chose **Question 31** to be correct and **Question 33** to be false.

Question 28 was answered correctly by most candidates, although there was sometimes strange word order in this justification, where *kam* came at the end of the sentence e.g. *Er oft zu spat in die Schule kam*.

Question 30 was generally tackled well, but candidates are reminded to write enough to make their answer clear: *über Frank* was not enough here. In the case of those who did write more fully, there was a wide range of past participles for *sprechen* including *gesprechen* and *gespricht*.

There were many good responses for **Question 31**.

Questions 35-42

Although there were many good responses to questions in this exercise, some candidates would be well advised to look more closely at the interrogative, so that they provide the information requested. Candidates are reminded that at this stage of the Examination, indiscriminate lifting is unlikely to demonstrate the required indication of genuine comprehension.

Getting the tense right for **Question 35** proved challenging for some, as they wrote simply, *Sie gingen auf die Uni*, which gave no indication of a future plan and so was not credited.

Question 36 was generally well done. Weaker candidates just copied out Martin's idea, which was an acceptable response on this occasion.

Question 37 was generally handled well by most candidates, but clarity was needed in some answers: *es war zu lang/800 Kilometer* on its own were not clear enough.

Question 38 proved challenging for a significant number of candidates, especially to score the two marks. Getting the people right, who was lending what to whom, in the first task caused problems, but even more so was that the two were travelling IN the car OF a friend. Many said the friend was driving, or that they were driving with a friend, but few expressed themselves clearly enough to score.

Question 39 appeared to be straightforward, if candidates understood *vormittags*. Those who did not understand or ignored *vormittags* supplied extraneous material, which invalidated their response.

There were many good answers to **Question 40**; those who may not have understood *Unterkunft* writing only or additionally about having sore feet did not score here.

Candidates' responses to **Question 41** fell squarely into two groups: those who understood the question and those who lifted directly from the text, because they read in the text *auf den Weg*.

For **Question 42** most candidates seemed to have understood the question and wrote about a beach holiday. However, the use of the incorrect pronoun was sometimes confusing and in these cases the answer was not credited.

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0677/03
Speaking

General comments

These comments are to be read in conjunction with the **Teachers' Notes** for 1 March – 30 April 2013. There continued to be many highly commendable 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. In the Topic and / or General Conversation sections of the test some Examiners did not ask appropriate questions to bring out the best in their candidates. 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 in response by the candidates: 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 contrary advice offered on p9, **2(b)**, of the booklet.

Most Centres forwarded the appropriate 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 with recorded 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 again this year, but clerical errors of addition on the working mark sheets (WMS) still occur too frequently, 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. Most Centres had however completed a signed cover sheet, stating that these additions and transfers had been checked at the Centre and were correct!!

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 opportunities for the candidate to produce past and future tenses. This year 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 (again 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. Again some Examiners this year 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, NB 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 stated 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 both elements 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, the lack of **reaction** demanded of the candidate was once again often apparent. Perhaps a technique of pausing after the first statement in each **L4** and allowing the candidate to react, before moving onto the actual question to be asked, might be considered by Examiners in future years. This year most candidates had little difficulty 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 again 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 occasional errors of pronunciation with the word *Bootsfahrt*; in the final task the formation of the question caused little difficulty.

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. The pronunciation of *Brötchen* was not always totally clear.

Page 17, A7, 8, 9

This situation was also straightforward and most tasks were well attempted, although the structure *wie komme ich am besten zu ...?* was not as well known as might have been expected.

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 contextualisation presented little difficulty, yet some candidates seemed to find the response to *'Wie war der Flug nach München?' (cued as K3: Beantworten Sie die Frage)* surprisingly taxing, often necessitating a repetition or rephrasing of the question. The formulation of the final question was well done by most candidates, but usually without the appropriate reflexive *uns*. As mentioned above, an appropriate reaction to L4 was rare.

Page 19, B2, 5, 8

For most candidates this task too was straightforward, although a minority sowed confusion with responses beginning with *ich habe ... gestohlen*. The response to *Und wie lange waren Sie im Wasser?* showed that many candidates confuse *Uhr / Stunde*. The formulation of the final question posed no difficulties for most. Again an appropriate reaction to L4 was rare.

Page 20, B3, 6, 9

Most candidates coped well with the contextualisation of this Role Play. The trend to a German version of the current 'I'm good, thanks' was apparent with many *Ich bin gut* responses to *Wie geht es dir im Moment?* The absence of an appropriate reaction was also apparent in L4, but the formulation of the final question was of little difficulty.

Topic Presentation / 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 one to two minutes uninterrupted, 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, very many Examiners and candidates did 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.

Candidates' performance was generally very good on this part of the test with some fluent, interesting expositions and discussions. There remains however a small 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 has been maintained in this section of the test; 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 conversations 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.

The use of 'closed' questions by Examiners does continue to be a problem at times, as it offers candidates little opportunity to speak at length; candidates too should be aware that the use of a simple *ja / nein* in response does not offer much in the way of fluency and responsiveness, nor does a monosyllabic or extremely brief response: candidates should be encouraged to produce as full a response as is possible to qualify for the marks in the higher bands of this part of the test.

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 some 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.

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 and, as in previous years, there were some candidates who were able to produce near flawless German. Many candidates demonstrated a thorough grounding in the language and an awareness of the complexities of German grammar. However, as in previous sessions, the full range of marks was seen, from 0 – 50, and there were evidently some candidates for whom the demands of this paper were too much. A few candidates handed in blank scripts and a few merely attempted to copy out the rubric.

Spelling errors continue to be a problem for candidates across the ability range. Candidates should check their spellings carefully, especially of key words which have been used in the rubric: this year there were a number of key words that were frequently misspelt by candidates. The use of capital letters continues to be a particular issue which results in loss of marks right across the ability range: many language ticks were lost this year as a result of uncapitalised nouns or, indeed, because of capitalised adjectives/adverbs/verbs/pronouns (e.g. *ich* written with capital *I*). It is essential that Centres address this issue. Candidates may need to adjust their handwriting style to ensure that small/capital letters are easily distinguishable.

It is important that candidates pay attention to the tense of each verb they use, as a wrong tense can affect both Language ticks and Communication marks. Candidates should also be reminded that infinitives and past participles must be correctly located, if Language credit is to be given to a verb in a particular tense. Some candidates show evidence of having been prepared to cover all 3 time frames in a given question. However, it is important that the candidates pay attention to when/where the different time frames are needed. 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. If present/future tenses are used where the past tense narrative calls for a past tense, then a significant loss of marks can occur.

This year there was once again a significant number of 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. It is often the most able and fluent candidates who needlessly lose Communication marks this way. The word limit is crucial and should be adhered to.

Candidates should also be reminded about the importance of clear handwriting and appropriate presentation: a few candidates produced work which was very difficult to read and many candidates submitted work with poor presentation, including multiple crossings out/insertions/writing in margins/use of arrows etc. This makes the work of the Examiner particularly difficult in working out the intentions of the candidate.

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**, resulting in the overall mark for **Question 2** sometimes being lower than that gained in **Question 1**.

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 amongst UK Centres. However, amongst the international Centres, **Question 1(b)** was favoured over **Question 1(a)**. The subject matter for **Question 1 (b)** was accessible to all and most candidates responded to the task confidently. Answers were usually full in content, though some candidates were perhaps a little too familiar with the topic area and hence may at times have digressed unnecessarily into subtopics that were not required (e.g. descriptions of the School/opinions of teachers, etc.). The subject matter for **Question 1 (a)** also seemed accessible to those who attempted this question but the topic of shopping/fashion may have appealed more to candidates from areas where there is a greater range clothes/fashion shops. Responses to this question were usually more varied in content than those given for **Question 1 (b)**.

Question 1(a) *Seit einem Monat gibt es ein neues Einkaufszentrum in der Stadt. Sie schreiben einen Artikel für ein Jugendmagazin über das Thema Einkaufen und Mode.*

There were many excellent responses to this question. Candidates who chose this task were generally able to write in detail on the topic of shopping. Weaker candidates this year seemed to struggle with the recognition of the *Sie* form in the rubric for both **Questions 1 and 2**, confusing *Sie* with *sie*, and hence misunderstanding the tasks set. However, in **Question 1(a)** this problem was less obvious and nearly all candidates who chose this option were able to answer the question well.

Overall most candidates had the necessary language at their disposal, though there were some common words whose spellings were often incorrect (e.g. *Einkaufszentrum*, despite this key word being in the rubric). Plurals were also often misspelt in answers where candidates chose to give a list of different shops in their shopping centre or a list of items they bought.

- Many candidates were able to communicate effectively on this first task, though names/spellings of words for particular shops proved challenging, particularly where plurals were chosen.
- Most candidates were able to describe the item(s) they had bought on their first visit, though, again, plural nouns sometimes presented a challenge. Most candidates also coped with the past tense requirement here. Some candidates did not read the stimulus properly and did not gain the point because they failed to mention what they had bought.
- Generally this task was answered well, with candidates describing their friends' opinions of the shopping centre. Unfortunately some candidates had misunderstood the use of the verb '*finden*' and thought they were being asked for directions to the shopping centre.
- Most candidates responded well to this task and explained when they were planning to visit the shopping centre again. Some 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 simply missed it out. Some had clearly not understood the word *Mode* and thought it referred to the name of a shop or to the Shopping Centre itself. Others stated whether or not they thought fashion was important but failed to give a reason for their opinion and so were unable to gain the Communication point. Those who did tackle the full answer often gave interesting and varied responses for their opinions and there were some very successful responses to this task. 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) *Es gibt seit ein paar Wochen einen neuen Schüler/eine neue Schülerin in Ihrer Schulklasse. Sie schreiben einen Brief an Ihren deutschen Brieffreund/Ihre deutsche Brieffreundin.*

There were many successful answers to this question. Most candidates were able to write well on the School topic, and some evidently drew on their own personal experiences of being a new candidate at School. There was, however, a minority who used this question as an opportunity to write more generally on the topic of School, 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 but should address the particular tasks, as set out in the rubric.

Candidates generally dealt well with the letter format and appeared to like the informal style that was required. Many were well-prepared with appropriate starts/ends to their letters, though candidates should avoid too much unnecessary preamble at the start of a letter as this takes away valuable words from the word count. Many had chosen to ask questions at the start of the letter, e.g. *Wie geht's?* or *Wie geht es dir?*

However these questions were often misspelt and so could gain no language ticks. Most candidates had the vocabulary needed for this topic area, though some candidates had misread *Schüler* as *Schule* and others had not understood the *Sie* form in the rubric, resulting in some confusion in the first 2 tasks.

- Many candidates were able to state when the new candidate had arrived. However, some merely copied out the rubric '*seit ein paar Wochen*', and there was often confusion between the use of *seit* and *vor*. Others referred to the candidate arriving at some time in the future and therefore were not able to gain the Communication point. A minority of candidates referred to themselves as the new candidate, and a few candidates referred to a new teacher.
- This task was answered successfully by the majority of candidates who made the most of an opportunity to give a personal description. However it may be that some candidates were over-confident with their use of language here as there were some frequent misspellings: *Haare* was often spelt incorrectly and many candidates wrote both *Haare* and *Augen* without a capital letter. A few candidates had misunderstood the task and described the School instead of the new candidate.
- Almost all candidates tackled this task well and many gave sensible reasons for why it may be hard for a new candidate at school, the most common reason given being the lack of friends. Candidates perhaps drew on personal experience here. The use of *man* in the rubric resulted in some confusion in candidates' answers and the adjective *schwierig* was often misspelt, despite it being in the rubric.
- Candidates responded well to this task and most were able to communicate their plans for what they would do in School next week. Some candidates omitted to make a link with School and wrote more generally on next week's plans and so were not able to gain the Communication point. A number of candidates had already passed the word count and so could not gain any marks. Most were confident in their use of the future tense. The adjective *nächste* was frequently misspelt, despite it being in the rubric.
- Overall the last task was not well handled. A surprising number of candidates understood *beschreiben* as *schreiben* and so asked their penfriend to write to the new candidate. Many candidates seemed to struggle in their recognition of *Ihr* (in the rubric: *Ihren Brieffreund/Ihre Brieffreundin*) and/or in their understanding of *seine/ihre Schulfreunde*, and this resulted in further confusion. Very few were able to convert this in their answers to *deine Schulfreunde*.

Question 2

Als Sie letztes Jahr Ihre Geburtstagsparty feierten, hat Ihr bester Freund einen Hund als Geschenk für Sie mitgebracht. Beschreiben Sie:

- *Ihre Reaktion, als Sie den Hund als Geschenk bekommen 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 the birthday party where the candidate was presented with the gift of a dog, usually had some sort of shocked/overjoyed/anxious reaction, then named the dog, and went on to play with it/feed it/take it for a walk etc., often with the other guests who were at the party, before finding it somewhere to sleep that night. There were some examples of more creative answers produced and these were characterized by more detailed development of the story. Such examples often included humour or fear/anxiety, with the dog eating all the food at the birthday party or the dog being stolen or lost, or a family member suffering from a terrible animal allergy and the dog being given away/given back or the relative ending up in hospital. On the whole, though, the accounts were relatively straightforward and some were rather too mundane, with many accounts of birthday meals in a restaurant or a birthday trip to the cinema and such accounts often failing to include much more reference to the new dog.

Less able candidates struggled with the use of *Sie* in the rubric and failed to understand who had given the dog to whom. Several described someone else's party at which they (the candidate) gave the gift of a dog to their friend. Some did not refer to the dog being given to anyone but merely talked about a dog coming with a friend to the party. Some candidates wrote a lengthy account of the birthday party but, since they were asked to give a reaction to receiving the dog and then describe '*was danach passierte*', they were unable to gain any Communication points until after the arrival of the dog. Candidates are reminded that they should begin their account as the rubric states, in this case at the point of the dog being presented as a gift at the candidate's birthday party.

Reactions to the gift of the dog were generally communicated clearly, though *schockiert* was often misspelt or written as another word. Candidates also seemed to confuse the verbs *danken* and *denken* when describing their reaction. Many candidates went on to explain how they had named the dog, but were confused in their use of *heißen/nennen*. *Danach* was frequently misspelt as *dannach*.

Question 2 requires the use of past tenses. Many candidates were successful in their command of the past tense and any present tense use was appropriate (e.g. in descriptions of the dog, etc.). However, some candidates wrote at length on what happens now with the dog (rather than what happened next), and so were unable to gain Communication points for this. Others tried to avoid using the past tense by using an excess of direct speech and hence recounting the story in dialogue form in the present. Since, in **Question 2**, Communication points can only be awarded for events which are described in attempts at the past, many candidates gained fewer marks than they might have done, had they at least attempted the use of the past tense. Candidates who did use past tenses were usually successful in their communication. The formation of the imperfect tense posed some problems and word order/choice of auxiliary verb presented some difficulties in the perfect tense. However, even where past tenses were not well formed, the intended meaning was usually clear enough for a Communication point to be awarded.

A small minority of candidates used the guidance phrase *Was danach passierte* as an opportunity to write an entirely different story, and a very small minority had pre-learnt parts of essays from previous exam papers, which they then 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 described in the rubric, in this case the gift of a dog at the candidate's birthday party last year.