

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE German
(4GN0) Paper 2

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Reading & Writing

Most candidates coped well with the demands of both the Reading and the Writing tasks, although a broad range of ability was evident. Some candidates appeared unfamiliar with the format of certain task types and centres are reminded of the need to prepare candidates specifically for the demands of the questions so that they are confident with the actual format.

Section A Part One

Q1 Die Technologie

This question provided a gentle entry into the paper for most candidates. However, it was apparent that some candidates had found a couple of the icons confusing (B and C). Examiners responded to this by allowing more than one answer in the mark scheme for these parts, thus ensuring a positive outcome.

Q2 Essen und Trinken

Food and drink remains a popular topic and again most candidates fared well with this question. There was a need for closer reading (e.g. aber **kein** Fleisch) and those candidates anxious to progress swiftly to the more challenging questions sadly lost a valuable mark or two here. Candidates should be encouraged to allocate their time wisely to each question, rather than rushing through the seemingly easy ones.

Q3 Andelfingen: Ein Dorf in der Schweiz

This question targets grades D and C and most candidates were able to score 3 or 4 marks here.

- a. This was the most challenging part to this question. It was clear that very many candidates were unfamiliar with *Unterkunftsmöglichkeiten* and frequent incorrect responses here included *Verfügung*, *wunderschöne Landschaft* and *Freibad*.
- b. Candidates enjoyed huge success here.
- c. The majority was able to identify either *Galerie* or *Schloss*, but a few candidates were somewhat hasty and opted instead for *Geschäfte* and *Restaurants*.
- d. *Verkehrsmittel* was generally understood by stronger candidates and thus discriminated well across the target range.

Section A

Part 2

Q4 Beschreiben Sie die Gegend, wo Sie wohnen.

Examiners were pleased to read some original content here (e.g. *Großstadt – schlechte Luft, Kriminalität, die Leute dort...*), although there were many predictable examples of description which nevertheless fulfilled the content requirement. Some candidates sadly included irrelevant information (about e.g. their *Wohnung/Haus*, and *Familie* or where they might want to live in the future) or detailed rather too many activities which might be available in the area rather than a description of that area itself. There was a pleasingly low incidence of lifting from the *Andelfingen* text. Centres are advised to share with candidates the assessment grids on p13 of the Specification so that they understand the demands of this question.

Candidates demonstrated excellent written communication on the whole and confidently deployed a variety of structures and vocabulary.

Examiners felt that this topic afforded candidates the opportunity to write about something within their own experience using language they are comfortable with.

Section B

Part One

Q5 Schule

This question led to mixed fortunes. It targets higher grades (C and B) and proved to be a reliable discriminator. Candidates struggled with parts (i) and (ii) in particular. The task type relies on candidates' understanding of synonyms or synonymous phrasing and this would be an ideal area for development.

Section B

Part Two

Q6 Einradhockey

Question 6 targets grades B, A and A* and is therefore more demanding. It discriminated exceptionally well. Individual questions test a mix of factual understanding and the drawing of conclusions from information given. Close and careful reading is required – of both the text and the questions - and some scripts showed evidence of superficial skimming only. There was also some evidence to suggest that candidates did not wholly understand all question words e.g. in part (h) *wieso*.

On the whole, candidates were able to communicate their answers effectively, if not grammatically accurately. Answers are assessed first of all for communication of correct information, and then a global mark is awarded for the quality of the German.

Centres should be aware of the 'order of elements' rule. Thus, if one mark is available, one piece of information will be assessed – and this will be the first answer candidates give. There is a need for both precision and detail here.

- a. Candidates were usually successful here, and stronger candidates tried to express the notion in their own words using e.g. *angefangen*, *gegründet*, *geschaffen*. The vast majority answered with *Einradhockey-Liga* which was acceptable.
- b. This proved demanding. There were many answers which focused on balance and co-ordination but which missed the point about having to play two sports simultaneously (i.e. playing hockey at the same time as riding the unicycle) or the likelihood of falling over.
- c. Many candidates enjoyed success here. Weaker candidates were often unable to come up with the correct perfect/imperfect verb forms – so examples such as *er hat/ist ein Einrad bekam/gebekommen/ bekommen* were not uncommon, but these did not affect the mark for communication of the answer. A surprising number of candidates understood Emil to be female and thus used *sie* or *ihr* etc. Again, no marks were withheld for this.
- d. Although many candidates enjoyed success here, a significant number conveyed the message that it was raining in the flat (e.g. *in der Wohnung war schlechtes Wetter*) or that the weather was better in the flat. Unfortunately, there was some lifting of *bei schlechtem Wetter* on its own with no amplification and this was not enough to answer the question.
- e. This was a challenging question which differentiated extremely well. Stronger candidates could access the relevant section of the text and had the level of language needed to convey the information required. Weaker students often simply lifted indiscriminately from the text – therefore without success.

- f. Examiners were looking for two different reasons for the two marks available. There were in fact several reasons for candidates to choose from and a substantial number of candidates managed to pick out two. Others were clearly on the right lines but just fell short of giving enough information to earn the mark e.g. *nicht wie z.B. beim Eishockey oder beim Football* with no explanation of the competitive element (or lack of it). It was possible to lift a correct answer from the text e.g. *nicht jeder sie spielt*, and weaker candidates took advantage of this but this was then reflected in the mark they could score for Language.
- g. This question part differentiated well: with weaker students lifting an irrelevant chunk from the text e.g. *er trainiert ein- oder zweimal wöchentlich* without conveying the idea of *not enough time*. Some also lifted *wie viel Zeit ich habe* with no manipulation or amplification.
- h. Pleasingly, most candidates seemed to understand *gefährlich*. Here again it was possible to lift an answer *gibt es öfters gebrochene Beine oder blaue Flecken*, although stronger candidates preferred to express the dangers in their own words. Some candidates did latch on to the *Knieschützer* sentence but did not expand on it to explain why wearing these might be a good idea.
- i. Almost universal success here!

The scores for Knowledge and Application of Language were variable, as might be expected, but only in rare cases was communication hindered by poor and inaccurate language and a significant number of candidates achieved at least 3 or 4 marks.

Section C

Option (a) proved by far the most popular –well over 50% of the entry chose this question– with option (c) the least popular. All titles offered candidates some guidance in the structuring of their writing via the bullet points - options (a) and (b) – and the statistics in option (c). Whilst many candidates were able to demonstrate the ability to communicate a wide range of ideas, weaker candidates struggled to convey all the specified information. It is essential that candidates make sure they cover all the bullet points as these determine the content. Any omissions will be reflected in the mark for Communication and Content.

To access the top marks, candidates should be able to link the concepts within their essay so that it forms a coherent whole rather a sequence of disparate episodes. It is also important to use a range of tenses and verb forms, show evidence of a confident use of a variety of more complex structures and lexis. High scoring responses were typified by this but in general, the range of language used and the levels of accuracy achieved were variable. Examiners identified word order, gender of nouns and adjectival endings as areas for development in this regard. To achieve a

coherent essay, candidates should be encouraged to use linking words such as *außerdem*, *jedoch*, *leider* more confidently: for the most part there was an over-reliance on simple sentence structures and any attempt at subordination involved the use of *weil* with the verb *ist*. Use of a range of vocabulary was also variable.

Candidates should observe the word count for the essay: those who submit shorter responses will not be able to access the full range of marks since the mark grids are assessing responses of 150 words. Essays which exceeded 150 words were not penalised but there were, in fact, some long and at times repetitive essays which were self-penalising as the quality of language tended to deteriorate after the 150 words.

- a) Most successful answers were well structured and covered all the bullet points in a logical order – some linking paragraphs and ideas very successfully.

Bullet 1

Many just gave an amount of money as acceptable in terms of *Taschengeld* – whereas stronger candidates explained that the amount would depend on parents' income, how well teenagers are doing in school, jobs that teenagers are being paid for etc. Others detailed how much pocket money they themselves received but gave no opinion on how much young people in general should be given – which is what this bullet point required of them. Conversely, there were several opinions on what young people should do to earn pocket money, but this was not one of the points.

Bullet 2

Reference was frequently made to *Alkohol*, *Zigaretten*, *Drogen* and *Fastfood* – indeed, there were many fervent expressions of the dangers of these which centres had clearly covered well. Many also maintained teenagers should not pay for uniform, school items, clothes etc. Unfortunately, there were essays in which this bullet point had been ignored.

Bullets 3 & 4

Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates took the *Sie* as referring to teenagers rather than themselves and listed various things that teenagers usually buy with their money or for which they might save their money. Candidates should be reminded that the conventions throughout this paper are in the polite form. Some candidates also missed the significance of *neulich* and the *perfect tense* and wrote instead about what they buy in general. Very many candidates are currently saving for university or a car.

- b) *Freizeit* was occasionally confused with *Ferien*.

Bullet 1

Many candidates explained why young people need free time by pointing out the balance between school and free time and then linking it to their own experiences *Ich zum Beispiel* Stress at school was frequently

cited as a reason for needing leisure time. More pedestrian answers focused little on this first point and tended to list lots of activities.

Bullet 2

Again as in option a) above, some candidates misinterpreted *Sie* and wrote about *sie* referring to *junge Leute*. Similarly, some failed to understand the significance of *neulich* and the perfect tense and wrote in general terms about what they do in their free time.

Bullet 3

This was often intertwined with bullet point 2 and Examiners often struggled to identify any positive aspect(s) amongst all the description of what candidates had done in their free time.

Bullet 4

Their plans were at times quite far reaching, such as planning a trip around the world, but more commonly involved saving for a new computer, paying for their driving licence or buying a first car.

- c) This task appealed to more able candidates and the content was thoughtful and detailed and levels of accuracy were impressive. Candidates related the various statistics to their own personal experience and went on to give free rein to their opinions about reading and the necessity thereof. Interestingly, no candidates queried the veracity or reliability of the statistics. Examiners felt that this task allowed candidates to express their own ideas on this topic both freely and fully.

Where weaker candidates attempted this task, they did not always add sufficient detail of their own and relied more on copying from the stimulus with little language manipulation and extension.

Examiners felt the paper reflected the interests of young people and offered all candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in German.

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The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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