

GERMAN

Paper 8683/01
Speaking

General comments

The same comments apply to the range of entry for this syllabus as for Syllabus 9717. There were predominantly small groups of candidates at each Centre, perhaps two or three. Some had learnt German at School, some had a German-speaking parent and others were themselves native German speakers. There were some interesting Topic Discussions and General Conversations whatever the candidates' backgrounds and the standard was usually high, though some discussions lacked sufficient depth, some lacked pace and a few were conducted at too hectic a pace.

Many Centres were obviously well aware of the requirements of the syllabus and conducted the tests well and marked them accurately. In a few cases there was a degree of optimism or generosity in the marking, but this was not a major problem. Not all marks were filled in accurately on the WMS (Working Mark Sheet) and sometimes only a global mark per section was entered, instead of a mark for each of the criteria. Please always enclose the MS1 mark-sheet and a WMS, as otherwise moderation of the marks becomes more difficult. Please label the boxes and the c.d. clearly and keep AS and A level candidates separate.

The following aspects need to be addressed by some Centres in future years:

- Please adhere to the recommended 20-minute time limit for the examination. It does not provide any advantage to the candidate to exceed this, as some Centres did, sometimes greatly.
- Please ensure that the Presentation relates to a German speaking country, as the content mark can be halved if this is not the case. A candidate, especially perhaps a native German-speaker, should, therefore, not talk exclusively about the country where he or she happens to be living, but is obviously free to make some sort of comparison if desired, as long as the target country provides the main focus.
- The candidate must ask at least two questions of the Examiner to seek information and his or her opinions in both the **Topic Conversation** and **General Conversation**. If this does not happen, even after a reminder, no marks can be awarded and a maximum of ten marks are, therefore, lost. If only one question is asked per section, the maximum mark each time is 3 out of 5. Questions should be as varied as possible and be reasonably substantial: "Und du?" is not really sufficient. Examiners should keep their replies brief, as these attract no marks for the candidate.
- Please announce to the candidate quite clearly when the switch is to be made to **General Conversation** so that the two sections can be clearly distinguished. This will also make moderation of the criterion "Seeking Information" more straightforward.
- Please do not ask any questions during the Presentation, as the candidate is being judged on his or her ability to speak uninterrupted for about three minutes. Make a clear distinction between the Presentation and the Topic Conversation that follows and announce this for the recording.
- Please encourage thorough preparation of the Presentation, as some sound rather vague and unspecific, though most were well prepared this year.
- Please note that in the current version of the mark scheme there is a requirement in the conversation sections for candidates to "defend their point of view", amongst other criteria, in order to achieve maximum marks for Responsiveness. This implies that some challenging questions should be put from time to time.
- Individual Centre Reports will have highlighted any further issues.

There are no further comments on specific sections of the Speaking test.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

The subject matter of this year's Paper (Online Social Networks) was clearly both accessible and appealing to a considerable majority of this year's candidates. A significant number of papers were of a very high standard linguistically, but overall the range of marks achieved was wide, as has been the case in previous years. Some errors appeared to arise from an imprecise or over-hasty reading of the questions, which may perhaps have been the result of a certain over-confidence as regards the topic. This sometimes created a difficulty also with answers to the Exercise 5 summary task, where candidates did not restrict themselves for part (a) to the advantages and disadvantages *presented in the two texts*.

For Exercises 3, 4 and 5, attention must also again be drawn to the requirement that candidates use their own words in their responses. Substantial lifting of textual material cannot receive credit. The guidance ***ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*** is highlighted in the instructions to Exercises 3 and 4, and comprehension is by no means necessarily communicated simply by the mechanics of German word order requirements. Given that paragraph indicators are provided at the end of each question in the Comprehension Exercises 3 and 4, showing where the answer material is to be found, it is clearly necessary that candidates indicate their understanding of the content, and also of the force of the question asked. An answer which begins, for example, with *Der Text/der Autor sagt, dass.....* will not necessarily show understanding of the question at all. Where imagery, idioms and key or heightened vocabulary are used to suggest or convey ideas in the texts, candidates should expect to show their understanding of these in their own words.

The standard of difficulty of the Paper as a whole was considered very comparable with that of 2009.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 [Erster Teil]

Exercise 1

- (a) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (b) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (c) This was mostly answered correctly, but there was occasional difficulty. One or two candidates offered *weg* as the synonym. This was not awarded.
- (d) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (e) This was mostly answered correctly, although in some cases *wegen* was not seen as a preposition.

Exercise 2

This exercise was clearly found challenging by weaker candidates. It should also be noted that this is an exercise in grammatical manipulation, not interpretation, and the meaning of the statements should not be changed.

- (a) This was usually answered correctly. However, a change of tense was not appropriate.
- (b) This was often answered correctly. However, the dative 'n' on *Nutzern* was not routinely recognized.



- (c) Some candidates attempted to reinterpret this statement, without using *attraktiv*. This took their answers too far from the original. There was also some difficulty with the dative after *von*.
- (d) This was often answered correctly. Again, there were some attempts to replace *mühe* with approximate or inexact ideas. Some answers offered *Mühe* without a verb.
- (e) This was often answered correctly. However, (*weil sie nicht mehr*) *allein sind* - present tense completion on its own – gives a different message.

Exercise 3

Many candidates were able to manipulate the language of the text effectively, and produce ‘own language’ answers, but, as already indicated, there was some reluctance to move away from even simple key language items and text sequencing – e.g.: *intimste Dinge mit einem großen Freundeskreis teilen können*. (Text 1, line 16) - to show genuine understanding. A few candidates answered in note form, where lifting from the original material was predictably more often in evidence. Whilst full sentence answers are not an absolute requirement for comprehension marks, note-form answers should nevertheless follow the demands of the question concerned. Short phrase answers may also omit important detail. Candidates should further recognize that their ‘quality of language’ marks may be compromised by note-form answers. Most importantly, the simple reproduction of a section of the text by way of an answer, without manipulation or recognition of the question, cannot receive full credit.

- (a) Most candidates gained the one mark here.
- (b) Few candidates seemed to think in much depth about the implications of *Bühne*, but were nonetheless often able to earn 3 of the 4 marks available from the text material which followed this.

Despite having provided a correct answer to the preceding **Question (a)**, a number of answers for this **Question (b)** went on to include details about the second *Mitgliedergruppe* as exemplified in the remainder of the paragraph.

- (c) (i) One mark was usually gained here easily. A number of candidates appeared to overlook the word *anfangs* in this question, and found subsequently that they had to re-arrange their answers to parts (i) and (ii). Careful first reading of the questions for differentiation is always to be recommended.
- (ii) Two marks were usually gained here easily. Occasionally the implications of Künast’s 2200 *Freunde* were not further developed.
- (d) Answers here were not always well considered, and ignored what the sociologist actually said.
- (e) This was often answered correctly, but some weaker candidates assumed that the answer was to be found in the quotation.
- (f) Answers to this last question were often able to earn the 3 marks. References to the posting of good photographs, however, were often not interpreted.

Section 2 [Zweiter Teil]

Exercise 4

This exercise, as should be expected, was a little more difficult in the main, but candidates often coped well, possibly finding some of the material more concrete, and easier to relate to some of the questions.

Again there were problems with extensive text reproduction. Weaker candidates clearly tend to find it more difficult to ‘keep going’ and may therefore start to rely more heavily on text-lifting. They may well also find themselves with insufficient time remaining.

- (a) Many candidates were able to gain 2, if not 3 marks here. There was occasional free interpretation of *mindestens*, which should not be conveyed as *unter* or *über*.
- (b) This was mostly answered correctly, but some weaker candidates focused on *Kinder und Jugendliche* in line 11.

- (c) (i) This did not prove difficult. Most candidates were able to earn the 3 marks here.
- (ii) This was answered well, often with some excellent and elaborate 'own language' versions.
- (d) Not all candidates appeared to understand the text of paragraph 4, and there was some difficulty in relating it to the *wie genau...* of the question. That it was teachers who could abuse the information accessed was not always appreciated.
- (e) (i) The first part of paragraph 5 caused some difficulty: *viele Profile schnell angeklickt* was re-interpreted as *ein Profil oft angeklickt* by some candidates. This is clearly quite a different point, and incorrect.
- (ii) One mark was easily gained for this last question. The second difficulty in respect of the *Attraktion* of such networks was not always clearly conveyed.

Exercise 5

In their responses to this task candidates are required to summarise the issues and arguments presented in the two texts in their own words in the form of a mini-essay. A simple list of points is not an appropriate format. However, it is clearly important that they read the question carefully. This year a summary as presented in the texts of the advantages and disadvantages of social network sites was asked for. This is not the same task as a summary of the two texts themselves. Some of the factual details given were therefore not always appropriate. Both texts should be referred to, and candidates should expect to present a meaningful overview of the main features, and how they relate to each other, ideally by means of contrast and comparison. It was pleasing to note that many candidates had worked on a plan before writing up their answer, and this is evident good practice.

It should be made very clear to candidates in preparation for this Paper that the word limit of 140 encompasses both parts of the question, and that therefore the conciseness and effectiveness of their writing is likely to have a bearing on achievement. Some candidates wasted words by re-affirming the question in full. Candidates who wrote at considerable length, without apparent regard for any word limit, invariably forfeited marks for the 'personal response' part of their answer, because they left this too late. The marking of this exercise must cease at the end of the sentence after 140 words, with an absolute limit set at 150 words, and teachers should ensure that candidates are aware of this. As a general point, candidates would undoubtedly benefit from focused practice in the skills of summary, which amount to more than just picking out elements in the passage(s). There were plenty of points to be made again this year, and many candidates were easily able to earn six or seven of the ten marks available for this summary part of the question.

Most candidates evidently prefer to address Exercise 5 in two distinct parts and indicate (a) and (b) in their response. Accordingly, personal views are then best omitted from part (a), the 'textual summary', which may perhaps not support the candidate's views. If they prefer, however, candidates are at liberty to write a 'combination' essay, making their personal views clear by commenting additionally on points made in the texts.

Marks of two and three out of the potential five for part (b), 'personal response', were quite common, but there was some simple repetition of text material, and relatively few 'own' ideas.

A small number of answers were significantly shorter than 140 words, and candidates should also recognize that this will limit the language mark available. It is clearly practical for candidates to provide a word-count, but a significant number this year were far from accurate.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Exercise 5** are for the quality of the language, and for most candidates marks here were broadly comparable with those awarded for **Exercises 3 and 4**, as might reasonably be expected.

It is worth reiterating, however, that a good number of candidates wrote both fluently and impressively, and their responses made for some excellent reading.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/03
Essay

General Comments:

This paper produced the full range of responses: from thoughtful, well-structured essays to the unclear or unfocused work of weaker candidates, who were very much in the minority. The language produced was equally diverse.

There are a number of candidates of native speaker standard who write very articulately. Some are semi-native speakers: although they write quite fluently, they often make phonetic spelling errors, such as: the confusion between *das* / *dass* and *ä* / *e* sounds. There also appears to be a rather relaxed attitude to the use of capital letters for nouns and to punctuation, especially commas.

Many non-native-speaker candidates have an excellent command of German and achieve marks in the Very Good category. They have an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific and are ambitious in their use of structure. There are some candidates who are over-ambitious; they preface almost every sentence with a complex construction, which detracts from the clarity of their writing and often becomes incongruous when a banal statement is prefaced by an elaborate introductory phrase.

Many candidates seem to feel that it is obligatory to write up to the limit of 400 words. This can have an adverse effect on their marks for Language, because there is a greater potential for error and the candidate has less time for re-reading and checking for avoidable mistakes. As far as the Content is concerned, greater length does not automatically equate to more marks. A succinct, well structured but shorter essay creates a much better impression than a rambling, repetitive one. Time spent planning what to write is never wasted.

Candidates need to answer the question set; those who wrote an essay they had prepared on that particular topic, rather than responding to the question on the paper, were limited to low band marks. It would seem good practice for the candidate to copy out the question before starting on the essay and constantly refer back to this title to ensure that what he or she is writing remains relevant.

Question 1

Wie haben sich die Beziehungen zwischen Männern und Frauen in der letzten Zeit geändert?

This question was chosen by a minority of candidates. There were a few excellent responses. Some essays would have fitted better in the topic area *Chancengleichheit* because the candidates wrote about the changing situation of men and women in the workplace and the home. The fact that they did not go on to discuss how this affected the relationships between men and women meant that they had not fully addressed the title.

Question 2

Ist die Lebensqualität besser auf dem Lande als in der Stadt? Was meinen Sie?

This was by far the most frequently chosen essay title. Although the title is straightforward, it is also very wide and therefore deceptively simple. Few defined what they considered *Lebensqualität* to be, but most candidates had given some consideration to the structure of their essay. Many of the ideas expressed were relevant but often simplistic – especially concerning life in the countryside. Most candidates managed to write adequately on the subject, but there were few really well-argued, detailed and insightful essays.

There was clearly a need to express the notion of "facilities", which is not that easy in German: many candidates referred to *Infrastruktur*, which was a good solution, unless they tried to make it plural. Some candidates ignored the help offered in the title and used *in* as the preposition with *Land* and the wrong

gender for *Lebensqualität*. Following English rather than German usage, *Leben* often lacked a definite article.

Question 3

Alle Drogen sollten verboten werden. Wie stehen Sie dazu?

This was the second most frequently answered question. There were some thoughtful essays, which discussed the difficulties of banning drugs, but many wandered off at a tangent. A number of candidates wrote a general essay on the effects of drugs on individuals and society, which failed to address the question. The better essays took the trouble to define what they understood by *Drogen*: some chose to include medicines, which was quite legitimate, as was the view that alcohol and cigarettes should also count as drugs.

Question 4

Wenn man körperlich behindert ist, muss man eine erfolgreiche Karriere ganz ausschließen. Was meinen Sie dazu?

There were too few responses to this question to make general comment appropriate.

Question 5

„Der Umwelt zuliebe fliege ich nicht mehr.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

This was the third most popular question and generated some very good essays, although most candidates appeared to have little knowledge about aircraft pollution. No one could envisage abandoning air travel and some seemed genuinely shocked at such a proposition. A significant number of candidates found it difficult to manipulate their knowledge to respond to the statement in the title: having written *Umwelt* as their title, they described pollution and deforestation and their detrimental effects on the environment without once mentioning flying or planes, thus gaining very few marks for Content.