

GERMAN

Paper 8683/01
Speaking

Key Messages

- Presentations (**Section 1**) should be firmly rooted within the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where German is spoken. Candidates who make no reference to such a country will have their marks for Content halved, or, if there is very little reference, reduced. Native speakers of German should not assume a listener realises that they are speaking about their homeland and should also give specific details and references. It is not acceptable to make a presentation about the country of domicile, unless this occurs as part of a comparison, where information about the German-speaking country should still predominate. General presentations on such topics as "Global Warming" are often unsuitable, as it is hard to fit them into the above-mentioned form.
- Both in the Topic Conversation (**Section 2**) and in the General Conversation (**Section 3**) candidates must engage in a dialogue with the Examiner and ask him or her some questions. It is not acceptable to include these questions in the Presentation, except perhaps one at the very end to introduce the Topic Conversation, nor is it acceptable to ask a large number of questions at the very end of **section 3**, having previously asked none at all. If no questions are asked within either of the sections, no marks may be awarded for Seeking Information in that section. To obtain a mark of 4 out of 5 in a section at least two questions must be asked. The maximum mark is three if there is only one question.
- Please adhere to the timings specified for this examination. In particular, the Presentation should not be allowed to be too long. An Examiner should interrupt with a question after about four minutes, and three and a half minutes would be a more appropriate length. **Section 2** and **section 3** conversations should be of approximately equal length, say around eight minutes. It is difficult to achieve a high mark for Providing Information or Responsiveness if one section is cut too short. There is no point in allowing the examination to last more than 20 minutes in total as no extra marks can be gained and a candidate might tire after this length of time.
- A quiet and perhaps relatively small room should be chosen to conduct the examination in. If machinery is operating, or if there is loud traffic or people talking in the background, or even an echo in a large space, candidates will not have optimum conditions. For preference record onto cd rather than tape, as sound quality is notably better, and please place the microphone or recording equipment where both Examiner and candidate are audible to a listener/Moderator.

General Comments

There was a good range of candidates and nearly all were correctly entered at this level. There was a big improvement in recording quality this year as the majority of Centres are now recording onto cd, and the labelling and general admin surrounding the recordings was also excellent. Nearly every Centre included the correct paperwork, namely MS1, working mark-sheet and attendance register, which was a great help with moderation. The standard of marking was generally very good, though sometimes a little optimistic with regard to the mark-scheme. Specific examples of marking criteria will be mentioned in the final section of this report. Some Centres with native speakers of German were a little harsh on them with regard to their feel for the language, their accuracy and their ability to provide information. It should be remembered that the mark-scheme refers predominantly to non-native speakers, and that the majority of native speakers will, therefore, score nearly maximum marks on these criteria. However, this will not necessarily be the case at all with regard to Content in their presentations, nor to Seeking Information and Opinions, or even Responsiveness.

Specific Comments on the sections of the examination

Some of the comments above will also be relevant to this part of the report but will not be repeated here.

Section 1 (Presentation)

- The manner of delivery of the presentation should be taken into account. Only award nine or ten marks for Content if the delivery is lively and confident rather than stilted and hesitant, in addition to including the ideas and opinions stated in the mark-scheme.
- For a mark of five for Pronunciation a candidate does not have to be a native speaker. "Hesitation", though mentioned in the mark-scheme, should not really figure highly when considering Pronunciation, but perhaps more so when considering delivery of the presentation or the Language mark.
- A well-prepared presentation by a correctly entered candidate should be able to access at least 4 marks for Language, as the criteria mention a "reasonable range" of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary, delivered "fairly fluently", and provided there is no ambiguity of meaning.
- There was a good range of interesting Presentation topics, of which the following are just a selection: Jugendkriminalität, Rassismus, Oktoberfest, Online-Einkaufen, Schweizer Berge, Basel, Schumacher, technologische Innovation, Magersucht, Ein- und Auswanderung, Hunde in Deutschland, Stress, Regierung in Bonn/Berlin, Bildungssystem, deutscher Fußball, Tourismus.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- The important issues about the marking criterion "Seeking Information", the marking of native-speakers and non-native speakers, and timing of this section are mentioned above.
- If a candidate has memorized his material entirely or predominantly, a mark from the "Satisfactory" box should be awarded as a maximum, as it cannot really be claimed that he or she is responding to "unexpected questions".
- Similarly a mark from this box should be awarded if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but not more complicated ones.

Section 3 (General Conversation)

- There should be a clear distinction made by the Examiner to introduce this section, an announcement for the benefit of the recording, the candidate, and the Moderator, and a complete change of topic.
- Personal details such as the candidate's future and his or her interests should feature briefly but should not necessarily form the main element of this discussion. It is better to move fairly swiftly on to more complex or wider issues to enable the candidate to access the higher marks for "Comprehension & Responsiveness" or "Providing Information and Opinions".
- Open questions by the Examiner are more effective in drawing the required kind of response from a candidate than closed ones. Remember that little questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* can be particularly useful in this regard. It should not be expected that the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the Examiner, perhaps a topic of current affairs, or even necessarily have an opinion about it. If this is the case, it would be better to switch quickly to a different topic.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/02
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- The rubric instructions for the vocabulary exercise **Question 1** indicate between which lines of the text synonymous answers can be found. There is no need to look beyond the given area.
- For **Questions 3, 4 and 5**, attention must again be drawn to the requirement that candidates use their own words in their responses. Extended lifting of textual material cannot receive credit. The guidance *ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben* is highlighted in the instructions to **Questions 3 and 4**. Comprehension is not necessarily shown simply by the mechanics of German word order requirements, which would not be applicable to various other languages. Where imagery, idioms and key vocabulary are used to suggest or convey ideas in the texts, candidates should expect to show their understanding of these in their own words.
- An answer which begins, for example, *Der Text/sagt/behauptet* etc., *dass.....* does not show convincing understanding of the question. Such phrasing is also logically and grammatically inaccurate in German, and must impact on the overall Quality of Language mark.
- The paragraph indicators given at the end of each sub-question, show where the answer material is to be found, making it necessary that candidates indicate their understanding of the content, and also of the force of the question asked. It is not acceptable that candidates simply include all the content of the relevant paragraph in their answer. This shows an inability to select and to relate to the demands of the question, and the Examiner, when faced with a choice of possible answers, must assume that the candidate is unable to decide and therefore does not know.
- Candidates should be made aware of the relation between the number of points expected and the number of marks shown in brackets in questions 4 and 5.
- Some answers to **Question 5 (a)** were too long, and candidates did not heed the word-limit stated. This is an exercise in summary skills. The response to parts **(a)** and **(b)** of this question should together not exceed 140 words. (See further guidance below). Time management for this paper should therefore take account of the need to plan an answer to this final question.

General comments

Both texts this year on the theme of animals in circuses were clearly accessible to a considerable majority of the entry. Whilst the overall range of marks was again very wide, a significant number of papers showed excellent comprehension and were of a high standard linguistically.

Weaker candidates tended to rely on the identification of certain words in the questions in order to produce answers from the paragraphs indicated - e.g.: *die Tierschutzorganisation Peta* (**Question 3b**); *Kritik* (**Question 4a**); *die strengeren Regelungen* (**Question 4b**) This usually revealed a lack of understanding of the focus of the question concerned, and/or an incomplete understanding of the textual passage. Questions which did not specifically target factual material, but rather interpretation, were found more difficult.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 (*Erster Teil*)

Question 1

- (a) This was found difficult, with *örtlichen* being the more frequently offered answer.
- (b) This was mostly answered correctly. Occasionally *Botschaften* or *Logos* were offered.
- (c) This was mostly answered correctly, with very occasional difficulty.
- (d) This was mostly answered correctly. Very occasionally *Zirkus* was offered.
- (e) This was mostly answered correctly. The answer *grausam* is not a direct synonym.

Question 2

This exercise in grammatical manipulation was found more challenging by weaker candidates.

- (a) This was often answered correctly. Some candidates inappropriately retained *als* in their answers, sometimes with *bezeichnet*.
- (b) This was usually answered correctly.
- (c) Some candidates were not familiar with the adjectival noun requirements. A number of responses did not capitalise the noun, however a small letter was tolerated here as a minor spelling error.
- (d) This was often answered correctly. There was some difficulty with the formation of the passive. A correct future formation was also accepted.
- (e) This was often answered correctly. Occasionally the passive infinitive requirement with *werden* was not recognised.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to manipulate the language of the text effectively, and produce 'own language' answers, but there was some reluctance to move away from key language items and text sequencing. As stated above, the simple reproduction of a section of the text by way of an answer does not confirm comprehension and cannot receive credit.

- (a) There was sufficient scope here for most candidates to gain the two marks available. However, it was noted that a number of answers did not include the mention of 'no animals'.
- (b) The two different aspects of *Peta's* reaction to the activists were not always differentiated and correctly explained. Further details about *Peta* that were irrelevant to the question were sometimes given.
- (c) Candidates were usually able to provide one of the two answers for *warum* here, for one mark, but did not always separately identify the desire to ban circuses with wild animals. Occasionally it was suggested that the ban was already in place.
- (d) Some answers did not recognise the different factors (i.e.: *Berlin*; circuses *mit Wildtieren*), which were required for the first mark. There was also some over-reliance on and misuse of *sperrn*. The basic reason given by the *Umweltsenatorin* was sometimes misinterpreted as relating to 'animal rights'. This could not be credited.
- (e) This question was generally found very accessible, and three marks were quite easily gained. However, some candidates forfeited marks by copying out the text.
- (f) There was some difficulty in separating the elements and rephrasing in own language; however most candidates were able to gain at least two of the 4 marks available here.

Section 2 (Zweiter Teil)

Question 4

This exercise, as should be expected, was a little more demanding, and candidates coped variously with it. Again there were problems with extensive text reproduction, which tended to be more marked in this second set of comprehension questions in line with previous years. Some candidates may find it difficult to manage their time appropriately by this stage of the Paper.

- (a) Some candidates found the relation of the question to the paragraph difficult, and it is possible that *üben* was taken more generally, unrelated to *Kritik*. The notion of extremism was often recognised for one mark, but this was not always applied to the *Tierschützer*. Candidates found it more difficult to relate the remaining text information to the extremism of the *Tierschützer* in order to secure the second mark.
- (b) More able candidates were able to relay the points here in their own words correctly. Some answers did not show a grasp of the significance of an *externer Tierarzt* and the wording of the text was quite heavily relied upon. It was not always made clear for the third mark that *Krone* was, in outcome, above reproach.
- (c) Some candidates found it difficult to extract the relevant points here from within a lot of information, and there were attempts to work on the details regarding *Krone*'s staffing and costs. However, most candidates were able to pick out three of the elements by which *Krone* demonstrated its attention to the animals' welfare, for three of the four marks available. The fourth element, the declaration of commitment at *Krone* in terms of time and effort was less frequently identified.
- (d) Weaker candidates experienced difficulty here in summarising in their own words.
- (e) This question required candidates to justify from the text the continuing general appeal of wild animals in circuses, and not to give the specifics of the particular show described. Two of the four marks available were frequently gained, however. Fewer candidates made reference to the typical smells of the circus, which give it the traditional atmosphere.

Question 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 list of points is not an appropriate essay format. It is clearly important to read the question carefully. Both texts should be referred to, but candidates are required to use their own words; they 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. This year a summary as presented in the texts of the current issues regarding animals in circuses was asked for.

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 initially by re-stating the outline of the task, without moving forward. 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 advance practice in the skills of summary, which require more than just repeating elements in the texts. It is recommended that candidates draft a plan before writing up their answer, which will help them to organise their delivery. It is good practice and helpful also to provide a word-count, as many candidates have found; however this should be an accurate one.

There were plenty of points to be made again this year, and many candidates were able to earn some six of the ten marks available for this summary part of the question. With regard to text two, there was some tendency to generalise inappropriately details that were specifically stated for *Zirkus Krone* – e.g.: *Tierarzt / Tierärzte, Altersheim*, etc.

Most candidates evidently prefer to address **Question 5** in two distinct parts and indicate **(a)** and **(b)** accordingly in their response. If preferred, candidates are at liberty to write a 'combination' essay, but in this case must be sure to make their personal views clear in relation to, but distinct from, points made from the

texts. Marks of two and three out of the potential five for part **(b)**, 'personal response', were quite common, and most candidates were able to demonstrate a clear stance on the topic.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Question 5** are for the Quality of the Language, and for most candidates marks here were broadly comparable with those awarded for **Question sets 3 and 4**, as might reasonably be expected. Where responses fall significantly short of 140 words, the language mark must be restricted.

It must be said, however, that a good number of candidates were able to write both fluently and impressively, and their responses frequently made excellent reading.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/03

Essay

Key Messages

On the essay paper candidates achieve marks for content and language. In order to score highly, candidates are required to produce detailed, relevant and well illustrated as well as coherently argued and structured essay content. Their language should be generally accurate with a good grasp of grammar and a varied vocabulary to score on the higher bands.

General Comments:

The essays were much more evenly distributed between the topics this series than in previous years. As always there was the complete range of responses: from thoughtful, well-structured essays to those where the candidate struggled for ideas and the means to express them.

Many candidates have an excellent command of German and achieve marks for Language 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 have a wide ranging vocabulary but still have difficulties with rudimentary grammar and make basic errors in areas such as word order and subject verb agreements. If possible, it is a good idea to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for careless language errors. Help offered in the titles, for example key words and their gender, is often overlooked.

It was pleasing that most candidates wrote within the prescribed number of words (between 250 and 400), as a longer essay does not necessarily increase the number of marks either for Content or Language. Nearly all candidates are aware of the need to provide an introduction and a conclusion and use paragraphs well. It is important that candidates study the essay question carefully so that they are clear about what they are being asked to write. Those who had read one or two vocabulary items in the title and then made false assumptions about what was required were limited to low band marks. The same was true for those who wrote an essay on the topic area which failed to address the specific title. 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 the points they are making are relevant. Some thinking time before starting to write is very beneficial, as an essay with considered arguments makes a better impression than one with a number of very superficial observations. Those candidates who consider both sides of the question tend to produce better essays because they have more ideas to work with and are less likely to be repetitive.

Question 1

„Für viele Kinder wäre das Leben besser, wenn man sie sofort nach der Geburt von ihrer Mutter wegnehmen und sie zur Adoption freigeben würde.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

This question was chosen by a good number of candidates. There were a few thoughtful responses about the importance or otherwise of being brought up by one's biological parents but *sofort nach der Geburt* was sometimes overlooked which led to discussions about children asking to be adopted, which were not really relevant. Aspects such as cultural or racial differences between children and their adoptive parents were rarely addressed.

Question 2

Warum stellen kriminellgewordene Kinder Ihrer Meinung nach ein besonderes Problem für die Gesellschaft dar?

This essay title was chosen by a minority of candidates, many of whom failed to point out that children cannot be held responsible or be punished for their criminality. Some went on to make thoughtful points

about the number of years such children would cause problems in society, others transformed the *Kinder* into *Jugendliche* which meant that some of their ideas were not pertinent to the question.

Question 3

Der Profisport – fördert er die Fitness von allen oder nur das Geldverdienen von einzelnen Sportlern? Was meinen Sie?

Sport was a popular topic and well within the experience of most candidates. Football was obviously often quoted in support of *Geldverdienen* but some overlooked *von allen* in the fitness element of the question and talked about the need for footballers to be fit. Many dwelt too long on the health advantages of sport. Others seemed to be unclear about what exactly *Profisport* is but made some relevant points anyway.

Question 4

„Heutzutage ist irgendeine Arbeitsstelle besser als keine.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

Many candidates chose this essay topic but it was a minority who grasped the meaning of *irgendeine* and who also addressed *heutzutage*. Most candidates seem convinced of the benefits of work but by no means all. There were a number of very simplistic essays which went little further than: a job means you have a lot of money, no job means you have no money.

Question 5

Halten Sie Webseiten zur Bildung sozialer Netzwerke sowie Facebook, My Space, usw. für einen Fluch oder einen Segen?

Not surprisingly this was a popular choice of question as social networking is very much a part of many candidates' lives. There were some vehement essays denouncing Facebook but most found the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. A number of candidates chose *Fluch* or *Segen* in their introduction and addressed only one side of the argument. Some had sufficient ideas to write quite a successful, if one-sided, essay, others ended up repeating themselves. Many candidates borrowed *sozialer Netzwerke* seemingly unaware of the case in the title and did not pick up the gender of *Fluch* and *Segen*.