



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GERMAN
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2010

Statistical Information

This booklet contains summary details for each unit: number entered; maximum mark available; mean mark achieved; grade ranges. *N.B. These refer to 'raw marks' used in the initial assessment, rather than to the uniform marks reported when results are issued.*

Annual Statistical Report

The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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GERMAN
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2010
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

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Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
GN1A	1054	60	46.7

Grade Ranges

A	50
B	45
C	41
D	37
E	33

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
GN1B	640	60	47.6

Grade Ranges

A	50
B	45
C	41
D	37
E	33

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

GN1 Oral examination

GN1A Tests conducted by visiting examiners

Examiners found it helpful this year to contact centres quite early in order to arrange suitable dates and work out an examinations timetable for each day that suited the centre's general timetable, so that long, noisy break-times could be avoided. It also gave an opportunity to air any questions that teachers or students may have had. The accommodation was usually good with easy access between the preparation and examination rooms. Occasionally examiners rearranged the furniture to make room for all the paraphernalia that go with the job of oral examining.

It was nearly always possible for examiners to talk to the candidates as a group before the commencement of the first session. It helps to allay fears and enables candidates to ask general questions and get some idea of the examiner speaking German. All candidates were aware of the format of whichever exam they were sitting, but it probably helped to hear it again from the examiner.

Dealing the cards caused no problems. In some centres it was possible to lay out the cards on a table and let the candidates choose. It also made it easy to replace the cards in different places so as to ensure that cards would be chosen in a random order. Where examination room and preparation room were some distance apart, examiners arranged the cards in a pack and let the candidate draw two at random from the pack. Although this is not a requirement, some centres provided supervision, usually because there were other candidates in the same room preparing for other exams. That is, of course, a perfectly acceptable arrangement.

Part One

In the card-based conversation, examiners generally asked the questions in the order in which they appeared on the cards, with some supplementary comment in between that would follow on from the candidates' responses. It is important to realise that the pattern of a 'natural' conversation is established right at the beginning, and the initial questions are not intended to initiate a straightforward question and answer session or, worse still, a session of mini-exposés carefully drafted during the preparation time. If candidates pre-empted in those mini-conversations the answer to a later question, then that question would, of course, not be asked again. Examiners usually mentioned that in their initial briefing session.

All the cards worked reasonably well, and there was no evidence that one was significantly more difficult than another – given that there will always be some variability owing to personal interests, preferences and experience which can not be eliminated. None of the cards was ambiguous or caused confusion, and virtually all candidates started off with some meaningful comparisons.

Card A2 prompted the majority of candidates to talk very knowledgeably about the environmental implications of using one mode of transport rather than another. Although this is not an AS topic it does demonstrate that candidates are quite happy and even prefer in some cases to talk about themes that are closer to their hearts than those prescribed.

Card A3 (traditions) was coped with far better by some candidates than others. Maybe it was best handled by those candidates who have an appreciation of their own traditions.

In the conversations based on Card B1 (*Was soll ich werden?*) most candidates were very much pro lawyer. Unsurprisingly in this materialistic age, money was the major argument, but also the peculiarly British disrespect of applied-skills professions. Not all made the point that both professions require qualifications, but of a different type. One or two candidates did, however, say that they were likely to need the services of a mechanic more than those of a lawyer. Food for thought.

Card B2 was well coped with, because it relates well to candidates own experience. Some who had taken part in a school exchange commented on the classroom layouts they had seen in a German school.

Card B3 (*Was ist Mode?*) was interesting in that it revealed that many of the candidates are relatively conservative in their attitudes. Most scorned the tattoos and dress style of the Goths and the second picture was rarely seen as school uniform, but often as an example of smart dress. Is that telling us that we make assumptions about youth culture which are essentially from an adult perspective, and that our candidates may not have the knowledge of various youth cultures that we think they have? However, given that so many youngsters wear tattoos one wonders how genuine those arguments were.

Card B4 (*Jungenschule, Mädchenschule oder gemischt?*) led to some interesting discussions. Most candidates agreed with Karen that girls are harder working, but felt that the social arguments outweighed this when considering types of school.

Card B5 proved difficult for many candidates to understand, but after the nature of "*die Tafel*" had been explained during the exam, they were able to express relevant opinions.

Card B6 (*Berufspläne*) again prompted most candidates to favour money, and few focused on the interest one needs to sustain a job for life. However, some had not overlooked (like most) the phrase *Zuerst gehe ich in ein Dritte-Welt-Land* and felt that there is a place for money as well as for personal development and altruism, but needed some help to express this.

The names of the speakers in the dialogues sometimes caused gender confusion, but this was not really important and occasionally provided humorous touches to the conversation for both candidates and examiners. More relevant was the continuing difficulty with the use of possessives: *Sein* and *ihr* were often confused, possibly caused by the different usage learned in French.

Part Two

The unstructured conversation was once again generally well prepared. Most candidates were able to adjust to varying levels of communication and engaged in sometimes quite lively discussions. The ability of the candidates to depart from their prepared issues and discuss related topics clearly varied and examiners adapted their approach accordingly.

Since candidates sometimes comment that the examiner had interrupted or curtailed their answers and not allowed them to complete what they wanted to say it is worth reiterating a comment made many times before. The examiner's job is not to sit and listen to what candidates have prepared but to provide a realistic platform where candidates can demonstrate how well they can apply their linguistic abilities in a given situation, not in a situation that they themselves define. A lengthy prepared statement does not give us a clear indication of that ability. It only shows that, given time, the candidate is able to construct, learn and recite sentences in German.

If I ask a straightforward question such as *Was machst du denn diesen Sommer?* then I do not expect a philosophical treatise on the merits and demerits of structuring one's leisure time, stating that *In meine Meinung [sic!] ich finde es sehr wichtig, daß ich mich in den Ferien entspanne. Ich muß in der Schule viel arbeiten, und wir haben viele Hausaufgaben; also denke ich, daß man in den Ferien...* etc. etc. Nobody says that in real life, and it is not appropriate in an examination either. Responses of that nature will invariably be intercepted and the examiner will try to get an answer to the question he or she actually asked. Candidates must be advised that the examiner will try to generate as much interaction as possible in order to be able to award high marks for communication and spontaneity. Recitals do not attract high marks, and candidates should not expect a formal, structured and to some extent predictable questioning session but a lively two-way conversation or discussion. Examiners will always try to engage candidates fully and give them every chance to respond spontaneously in a realistic linguistic situation, and that is invariably in the interest of the candidates. That also means limiting relatively undemanding presentations of prepared statements, which do not attract high marks for spontaneous conversation (cf. marking scheme).

As far as assessment is concerned, half marks were used this year for communication before doubling the mark to one out of 20. This change from previous practice was generally welcomed and it was felt that it has made the exam fairer and easier to assess. All in all I think GN1 is a fair exam which enables the candidates to demonstrate their linguistic skills.

GN1B Tests conducted by teachers

The majority of centres produced very good quality recordings, either on cassette or CD. One centre seemed to have difficulties – at the start of each candidate's test, the first few utterances were almost inaudible before the microphone seemed to readjust and normal volume was resumed. As this happened with each candidate, it was obviously not just a case of the microphone being disturbed. This isolated case nevertheless demonstrates the importance of checking that the equipment is capable of making good quality recordings each time.

An increasing number of centres are using CDs for their recordings. These are not always capable of being played on any sound equipment. Occasionally, and depending on the recording equipment used, CDs need to be 'finalized' to get over this problem. Where examiners mark these orals on a computer it is also useful if the name of each candidate appears on the screen along with the length in time of the oral. Several centres used this facility.

There were a few problems with the labelling of CDs. Not all centres put the candidate names and numbers on the CD. Where there is not enough space on the CD itself a complete list must be included in the case and clearly referenced.

Most centres kept to the correct timings. One or two centres allowed some candidates to talk for only 2 minutes each on the cards which is not sufficient for an unequivocal assessment of this task.

In the card-based conversation, most candidates coped well with the topics suggested by the cards. Care must be taken, however, to remain broadly speaking within the topic area, and not to go into more personal detail, which belongs in the general conversation. Some examples of this occurred with the *Urlaub und Reisen* topic. Also, *Vor- und Nachteile* and *Wie wichtig sind Reisen und Urlaub ...?* were sometimes dealt with too briefly and the examiner rapidly advanced in some cases to a detailed description of the candidate's last holiday.

Obviously there is going to be some overlap, and this will contribute to a natural conversation, but a balance has to be struck between the two distinct tasks. For example, when discussing *Freizeit* in the General Conversation, the phrase *Erzähl mir etwas über deine Freizeit* is best avoided, since it invariably leads to a longish pre-learnt monologue and thus spoils the live conversational atmosphere. An immediate two-way conversation is a far better approach.

Further examples came up with the sport topic. If the candidate launches into a description of his or her prowess in the football team, it is quite easy to postpone this description with a phrase such as *Darüber können wir später sprechen*.

At a few centres there was evidence of candidates still being encouraged to launch into “prepared” responses or mini presentations, often after a heavy-handed prompt from the teacher. For example, in the discussion about classroom teaching *im Kreis* or *in Reihen* (B2), one teacher suddenly asked “*Was sind die Unterschiede zwischen dem englischen und dem deutschen Schulsystem?*” which prompted a rapid default lecture. There were a number of similar examples: One teacher asked all the candidates the same questions in a very slow, deliberate manner, expecting prepared answers and allowing for virtually no interaction. Another teacher asked weaker candidates a series of closed questions or offered alternatives, which meant that the candidates replied with *ja/nein* or simply repeated what was in the questions; e.g. “*Was für Hobbys hast du: Fernsehen, Lesen oder Sport?*” More able candidates might have used these as a springboard to expand on the matter under discussion, but weaker ones did not. At one centre candidates were even allowed to read their lengthy preparation notes exactly as written. This was clear from the notes that were sent with the recordings.

In all these cases the assistant examiner marking such tests has no option but to award low marks for communication and spontaneity according to the marking scheme. It is up to the examining teacher to provide a platform for candidates to demonstrate what they are capable of, and that requires candidates to be presented with reasonably challenging questions rather than being invited to recite learnt statements.

However, having said that it needs to be emphasised that for the most part interaction between candidates and teachers was good or very good. Most candidates obviously enjoyed the experience and were able to demonstrate their linguistic skills.

There did not seem to be any problems with any of the cards, text or picture. In the majority of cases this was a quite positive experience for candidates, teachers and markers.

GN2

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
GN2	1781	98	62.5

Grade Ranges

A	77
B	68
C	59
D	50
E	41

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

GN2 Listening, Reading and Writing

There were no significant differences between the standard achieved last year and in 2010. The paper posed no major difficulties, but yet again, most marks were lost in **Aufgabe 3, Teil 1** where students had to choose from the box and insert the correct words in the slots provided, and in the translation section **Aufgabe 5**.

Even though **Aufgabe 1** only carries eight points students should resist the urge to complete this exercise too quickly. A number of candidates lost marks since they failed to read the questions carefully enough; e.g. “*interessant*” cannot answer the question *Was findet Anja so toll am Bäckerberuf?* Some more humorous answers such as *Torsten riecht immer gut und hat freche (!) Brötchen* cheered the examiners up but, alas, marks for entertainment value cannot be awarded. There are still candidates who transcribe longish passages from the tape or CD and hope that the examiner might extract and acknowledge the relevant information. In many cases a very short and straightforward answer fits the bill much better than a longish one. For example, *eine eigene Bäckerei* is a perfectly acceptable, full answer to **question 5** *Was möchte Torsten später gern einmal haben?* whereas *eine eigene Bäckerei zu verkaufen* resulted in the loss of a mark. A fair number of candidates failed to focus on the Verb **haben**. Answers such as *Brötchen im eigenen Laden verkaufen* or *eigene Kuchen und Brötchen backen* may be correct information but failed to answer the question as set. **Question 6** posed the greatest difficulties. In many cases it could not be established who was expected to bake a cake. Answers such as *Sie will Torsten eine Torte backen, sie will Torsten eine Torte zu backen* or *sie will ihm eine Torte backen* were not uncommon. Candidates were not aware that this English construction has no direct equivalent in German. *Eine Torte backen*, thankfully, remained an isolated case. Many candidates did not know *Brötchen!*

Aufgabe 2

On the whole candidates coped well with this exercise, though some did not recognize *sprechen* as a strong verb. Every year inflected forms of *sein* leads to confusion since candidates cannot differentiate between *sein* as a possessive pronoun and a verb.

Aufgabe 3, Teil 1

Some candidates seemed to have no method for tackling this question, while others clearly analysed the words in the box before starting and used the language indicators in the text. Unfortunately too many candidates treat this exercise as a stand-alone exercise and fail to refer back to the text. In many cases choices were made on the basis of associations such as *Geld* and *investieren* (instead of *sparen*), *Frau* and *attractive* (instead of *junge*), or on the basis of stereotypes or wishful thinking e.g. *Am Ende heiratete sie ihn*. If the “romantics” had referred back to the text they would have realized that the young girl had no intentions of marrying the film producer but left him instead.

Aufgabe 3, Teil 2

A good number of candidates scored high marks on this task probably because the test obliged them to analyse the text carefully. Only *f) Die Schule bildet nur Schüler aus, die Abitur machen wollen* and *g) Nur ein kleiner Kreis der Schüler erhält eine Profiausbildung* carried a high error rate.

Aufgabe 4

A good proportion of students scored high marks on this task, with many achieving at least one point for each sentence. Careful checking of answers, however, is to be recommended since marks were lost by omitting words such as *mehr* or *zusammen* or by combining the adjective *kurzer* with *Autofahrer*, which on closer inspection, should have been dismissed as nonsensical. In many cases *Mitfahrer* was not identified as the subject and surprisingly some students failed to identify the infinitive construction in *zusammen eine Fahrt nach Florenz zu machen* and placed *zu* in front of *Florenz*. The words *begeisterte* and *berichteten* caused considerable confusion with candidates unsure whether these were a verb, and adjective or an adverb. This resulted in some very contorted phrases such as *berichten immer wieder Mitfahrer begeisterte* or *begeisterte Mitfahrer immer wieder berichten* or *berichten Mitfahrer immer wieder begeisterte*.

Aufgabe 5, Teil 1

A number of candidates struggled with both translation tasks. Their difficulties stemmed partly from a lack of vocabulary. For example, *heißt* was frequently translated as *hot* even though no reference of temperature could be found in the text. *Von der Arena entfernt* was understood to mean *from the entrance of the arena*. Hardly anyone translated *Gesamtschule* as *comprehensive school* even though the *education system* is taught in all schools. Some candidates assumed that *Danach* was a name even though no other characters apart from Marvin and Norbert Elgert feature in the text. It seems that students fail to check their answers carefully and fail to re-read the sentences in the context of the passage. The last sentence of Teil 1 posed problems since students failed to see the difference between a temporal and a conditional meaning of the conjunction *wenn* in German. By far the greatest problems arose with *Gelsenkirchener dialect* even though the headline of the text *Die Fußball-Eliteschule "Berger Feld" in Gelsenkirchen* made it quite clear that *Gelsenkirchen* is a place. Translations such *church dialect, Latin word, catholic church* were, therefore, quite surprising.

Aufgabe 5, Teil 2

The major stumbling blocks here were *nachholen*, *Nachhilfeunterricht* and *Fahrdienst*. Very few candidates scored full marks, even very good candidates missed the point of *nachholen*. Quite often students fail to use their common sense when completing this exercise. Various students for instance wrote *there is always a teacher around to do their homework*. The most unusual translation, however, was this: *There are also bikesheds for players who do not live in the school*.

Aufgabe 6

A fair number of candidates were able to achieve high marks with well reasoned essays written in clear fluent language, showing sound command of the grammar. In many cases those candidates had written a detailed essay plan in German which helped them to organise their thoughts and to concentrate on essential aspects of the topic.

Even though a high proportion of candidates managed to score high marks in the word order exercise, many essays were still full of word order mistakes which could have been avoided if the candidates had re-read their essays at the end of the exam. It is even more disconcerting that some sentences were completely without a verb.

What did strike examiners this year was the high number of students who do not know how to use personal pronouns or possessive pronouns. Sentences such as *viele Jugendliche wollen nichts mit deinen Eltern unternehmen* (why should they spend time with people they have never met?) occurred in many of essays. Even very basic past participles were not used correctly.

The majority of students chose essay title d), with some students using the opportunity to let off steam about their parents. However, some young people also showed real appreciation for their parents while others deemed their parents to be more important than friends predominantly for financial reasons.

The second most popular title was a). Some misunderstood “*Reisen*”, and wrote an essay – often pre-learnt – on “*Urlaub machen*” instead. While many did refer to “*Kultur erfahren*”, fewer actually developed that point and were able to talk about appreciating the views of others, experiencing different ways of life, becoming more tolerant and grateful for their own lives. Some students used this essay title as an opportunity to expand on “*Umweltverschmutzung*” without sufficiently linking it to “*Reisen*”. Some seemed unable to decide whether they agreed or disagreed with the premise; “*Zum Schluss möchte ich sagen dass reisen gut ist aber auch nicht so gut für viele Gründe aber überall finde ich dass gut ist.*“

Essay title c) generally elicited a poor response. Candidates tended to focus on the word *Jugendkultur* but without explaining what they understood by it. Some candidates used the title to present their pre-learnt essay on young people’s problems, the drug and alcohol scene, without in any way linking their ideas to *Jugendkultur*. Without exception they ignored the phrase *weil sie nur provozieren wollen*, and many came to the conclusion that *Jugendkultur* was not *llanweilig* (the church of *Sant Weilig*?) without, however, providing any evidence.

Only a small minority of candidates chose essay title b). Even though some essays showed original thought, the majority were quite superficial with some candidates merely talking about their Christmas routines.

GN3

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
GN3	954	60	46.6

Grade Ranges

A	53
B	47
C	41
D	35
E	30

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

GN3 Speaking

The apprehension felt on all sides prior to this first round of examinations under the new specification was unwarranted: Everything went very smoothly and no major problems were encountered, neither in the orals nor in the examination paper.

The general response to the new format of oral examinations was overwhelmingly positive. Candidates were well informed about the new exam. In any case, changes from the previous format related to content rather than practice.

Examiners found it helpful this year to contact centres quite early in order to arrange suitable dates and work out an examinations timetable for each day that suited the centre's general timetable, so that long, noisy break-times could be avoided. It also gave an opportunity to air any questions that teachers or students may have had. As in the past, centres had made every effort to provide suitable premises for these tests to take place, which was again very much appreciated.

Examinations were usually arranged in two sessions of five tests each per day though that could vary depending on the centre's lunch break, students' travel arrangements and other circumstances. The tests were run at 25 to 30 minute intervals, which gave examiners sufficient time in between tests for administrative duties, reorganising the cards, changing tapes, handing out a card to the next candidate without undue haste, and exchanging a few friendly words before each test.

Structured discussion

The number of cards had been increased to eight, four from each topic area. But again, that had no bearing on the conduct of the structured discussion as such. The texts were reasonably well balanced in their demands, accepting however that there will always be some variation and absolute parity is impossible to achieve. For one, personal interests will always make a topic appear easier or more difficult to one candidate rather than another. However, the cards all served well as a springboard to exploring the respective topics more widely and allowed candidates to present their own views. Occasionally, however, the content of some cards perplexed some candidates one or the other card had an unexpected twist. For example, *Weg mit der gelben Tonne* was not the endorsement of the present system of *Mülltrennung*, which candidates might have expected and sometimes assumed, but an advocacy of its abolition. In *Polareis schmilzt seit 150 Jahren*, "moderne Methoden" could be taken to refer to modern technology as well as the use of ancient sources. But that is all part and parcel of a genuine discussion where there will always be an element of the unexpected or unpredictable, which is the essence of a genuine test of spontaneity in a realistic situation. Other candidates were equally perplexed and felt unease at discovering that they are exposed to surveillance cameras in the UK more than in any other European country (*Jeder Bürger 300 mal am Tag auf Kamera*), or that airport security scanners can virtually show them in the nude (*Flughafen ist keine Peepshow*). But candidates had no problems coping with such unexpected concepts and generally entered into the spirit of the discussion. Candidates who chose the cards entitled *Ein Projekt zu Integration und Toleranz* or *Abenteuer Ausland* could most easily identify with the sentiments expressed. Candidates were usually able to cope with the wider conversation based on any of the cards, especially in the area of environment. Social issues proved a little more demanding for some.

Oral Exposé

The exposés were generally well prepared and well researched, and most candidates spoke about interesting aspects of the book, film or region of their choice, which offered a sound basis for further discussion of the book, film or region as a whole. This was particularly important in large centres where some students had studied the same item, and exposés needed to reflect different aspects. However, it was also quite common for each student to have chosen a different item.

The majority of candidates had chosen films for their exposé, quite a few from the set list but also many more chosen freely, reflecting the wide variety of films that have come onto the market in recent years and had caught the students' imagination. It was obvious that many of the students had, indeed, chosen the films for themselves, which is a very welcome departure from traditional practices when it was the teacher who would choose a book for the whole class.

Teachers and students in most centres commented on how much they had enjoyed doing the films. Many centres had watched two or more films initially and then allowed their candidates to choose for themselves. Most candidates had watched the film quite a few times and virtually all had watched it again the previous night. Several centres had each candidate offering a different film. On the whole, the exposés were very good. Very few simply recounted the story, and virtually all discussed the themes they wanted to talk about. In centres where all offered the same film, with one exception, the areas chosen for discussion were all different aspects of the film.

Girls in particular seemed to enjoy *Jenseits der Stille*. *Das Wunder von Bern* was popular especially with boys, but a couple of girls also chose it.

The following films and the aspects discussed is just a small selection of the wide variety of films offered:

Jenseits der Stille (a popular choice with girls in particular): Die Rolle der Hauptfiguren, Lara und die Welt der Musik, Die Verhältnisse im Film; *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*. Freundschaft und Liebe; Freundschaft und Veränderungen; Menschlichkeit; Kapitalismus und soziale Gerechtigkeit; Gewalt; Sind sie Terroristen? *Lola rennt*: Eskapismus und Zufall; Gewalt; Symbole im Film; Charaktere und die Botschaft. *Goodbye Lenin.*, Christianes Ausbruch; Lügen; Ostalgie; Komödie/Tragödie; Aspekte des Alltagsleben vor und nach der Wende; Alex und seine Mutter; Wer ist schuldig an Christianes Tod? *Das Leben der Anderen*: Das Ende der Christa Maria; Wieslers Charakter; Wieslers Sinneswandel; Die Stasimitarbeiter; Methoden der Stasi; Wer sind die Anderen? *Das Wunder von Bern* (a popular choice with boys): Das Bild von Deutschland in den 50er Jahren; Heimkehr des Vaters; Wie es zum Wunder kam; Die Trümmerfrauen. *Spohie Scholl – die letzten Tage*: Verständnis für die Widmung; Geschichte; Technik. Außerdem: *Die Welle*, *Die Fälscher*, *Keinohrhasen*, *Sonnenallee*, *Der Untergang*, *Barfuß* – and many more.

A much smaller number of candidates had studied a book for the exposé, that in contrast to the GN4 essay where interest in literary texts has, in fact, increased. However, that was to be expected: It is of course easier for students to study a film under their own steam, as it were, and more guidance is required for the study of literary texts. The choice of books reflected a variety of texts, some from earlier reading lists, others less common and including Böll's *Irisches Tagebuch*, Inge Scholl's account of *Die Weiße Rose*, Pausewang *Rosinkawiese*, König *Ich fühle mich so fifty-fifty*, Ossowski *Stern ohne Himmel*, and Sabine Kuegler's memories of her childhood as a *Dschungelkind*.

Regions were the least popular choice and tended to be chosen by German exchange students who were spending a year in Britain or by students with a strong German background who wanted to get an A Level qualification *nebenbei*. They were usually very familiar with the region of their choice, had chosen an interesting aspect to talk about, and were able to relate their particular viewpoint to other characteristics of the region as intended by the specification. British students tended to stick to just one or two factual reports usually gleaned from websites or personal holiday visits. Those tended to be quite limited in scope and did not reflect the kind of familiarity with the region as a whole that one would expect of students who had studied a book or a film and are expected to know those very well. Students who looked at a region from a wider perspective fared better. For example students, who had chosen Bavaria, might discuss the region from a variety of angles such as economy, culture, history, social infra-structure, landscape and resultant forms of habitation and everyday life were more able to sustain an interesting discussion of the region overall.

GN4

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
GN4	960	98	68.0

Grade Ranges

A	79
B	69
C	60
D	51
E	42

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

GN4 Listening, Reading and Writing

Many candidates proved themselves well able to cope with the demands of this new paper and the following comments are not intended to be negative but to highlight pitfalls to be avoided by those following in this year's pioneers' footsteps.

This new paper is divided fairly equally between a linguistic part designed to test individual language skills and the essay which carries more weight than in the past. It is therefore even more important to reflect on the demands of the question very carefully and to plan and structure the essay well. The three hours allocated to this paper allow enough time for that; but the evidence is that many students did not make the best use of the available time, either by spending too much time on part one (*Aufgaben 1-3*) or by not planning and organising their thoughts before writing their essay.

Aufgabe 1

This task presented no great problems for the majority. Most wrong answers derived from general knowledge rather than the information given in the *Hörtext*. A surprising number were unable to express themselves unambiguously in English. In **question 1**, for example, the point was that they all dressed differently (from one another) but candidates frequently stated that *they did not dress like other Muslim girls* or *they were not wearing Muslim clothes*. In answer to **question 2** some candidates wrote that the girls *all came from different countries, had Turkish parents, or were foreign*. One wrote: *Their parents were gas workers*. Some did not read the question properly and considered *Most were born in Germany* to be a satisfactory response to *What do all these girls have in common?* **Question 3** about the causes of harassment prompted stereotype answers such as *they are different, they are not seen as German, they are not German*. In answer to **question 4** some candidates had the girl strangely transfigured: *She suddenly becomes German*. Candidates must be advised that their answers must satisfy the questions as set, and the question here was: "How do people respond...?" **Question 5** produced a number of guesses: *Her parents could not speak German, would not speak to her, would not allow her to go out*.

Regarding the length of their answer, candidates should be guided by the mark scheme and the amount of space provided. Some filled every line and even the empty space between questions.

Aufgabe 2

This was also quite well done by most, *Teil 2* rather better than *Teil 1*. Although this type of task is familiar to candidates and many clearly tackled it using their language 'forensic' skills, some still seemed to approach it with complete disregard for even obvious clues such as genders: *In der Winter wachsen die Pflanzen ...* The most common errors in **Teil 1** included *Projekt* for gaps (1), (2) or (3), *gut* instead of *anders* (7), and *Supermarkt* instead of *Winter* (5). In this latter case the reading text provided the negative information (*In Supermärkten ... würden sie nie einkaufen*) and the exercise itself provided the definitive information: *Wir wollen Tomaten und frisches Obst auch im ... kaufen. Also werden sie unter Glas angebaut*. Incidentally, *anbauen* was the word required in the translation – and used by less than 5% of all candidates!

Although detailed contextual understanding was required and none of the statements resembled the basic text, **Teil 2** was done very well indeed and demonstrated sound reading comprehension. Candidates are urged to be guided by the mark scheme. Ticking more than the required number will not increase their chances of gaining more marks since one mark will be deducted for every box ticked in excess of the required number.

However, that was not the case in **Teil 3 and Teil 4** which demanded full answers to the comprehension questions. Once again it has to be pointed out that these questions are specific and that the interrogatives need to be addressed directly. **Question 1**, for example, leaves little scope for elaborate answers: *Was will Permakultur verhindern? – Die Zerstörung der Natur; or: Sie will verhindern, daß Industrie und intensive Landwirtschaft die Natur zerstören.* To state that *Industrie und Landwirtschaft manipuliert (sic!) die Natur und zerstört die natürlichen Zyklen* may be correct information, but it does not answer the question. In other words, lifting from the text in part or in full does not provide a correct answer, and some manipulation of the language is always required e.g. ...*zerstört die Natur* becomes *die Zerstörung der Natur*. Candidates are also reminded that it is highly unlikely that a question can be answered successfully with a straight lift from the text and that the same piece of information will be asked for in different questions. Thus if they used 'Rad' in qu.2 (which was not quite the answer anyway), they should return to this question after answering qu. 3 and look for more information.

The English comprehension questions in **Teil 4** were done slightly more successfully. Here, too, the number of marks and the space provided indicate the amount of information needed. Again some felt compelled to write as much as they could, almost inviting the examiner to choose whichever piece fitted best. A typical example of 'overwriting' and rendering a right answer wrong was **question 3** *She had money left over to give to other people.* Another fairly frequent answer was that she did not have to buy food – which may have been one of the reasons but did not answer the question 'What shows...?' Others failed to give enough information, e.g. **question 2** 'Some offered her a plot in their garden'. This rather sinister statement needed 'for her tent' or 'to camp' to gain the point. Some candidates stated that people offered Svea a patch to grow her own food or a place in their tent to kip down for the night. In **question 4** Natural Sciences and Earth Sciences were not considered adequate renderings of *Umweltwissenschaften*.

Aufgabe 3.

Although the quality of translations had improved in recent years there was certainly no evidence of that this year. The translation proved to be the most difficult part of the Paper and showed up many shortcomings even in basic German. At this level candidates must be expected to deal adequately with passive and infinitive constructions and to use all tenses accurately as appropriate to the situation. Many candidates managed to get nothing correct except the first main clause sentence, and even that was not always without errors (...*mehr dann 50 Jahren alt*). The reading text uses the term *zis-Studienstiftung* in the genitive or dative. Predictably therefore the word *Stiftung* (...*ung* !) was masculine for the vast majority of candidates (*der zis-Studienstiftung* or *der zis Foundation*) and became neuter in the very next sentence: *Es gibt...* Indeed, that whole phrase *it has been giving grants* was beyond all but a select few, and while most rendered the meaning intelligibly the sentence structure was hardly ever without errors. All tenses were used except, perhaps, the future tense. The word 'grant' (AS topic!) was translated correctly by very few candidates indeed and was frequently rendered as *Geld* or *Geldbeutel*, even though the word *Reisestipendium* occurred as early as in the second line of the reading text and then again further down and was generally understood in both instances. Candidates could and would perform significantly better here as in all parts of the paper if only they could be coerced into exploring the reading text more intelligently as a piece of writing that actually hangs together instead of using it simply as a quarry to extract bits of information here or there and frequently at random.

The passive construction *she was given* proved equally difficult although it would have been very easy to produce an active sentence and avoid the problem altogether: *Sie bekam, erhielt / die Stiftung bezahlte ihr, gab ihr /man hat ihr... gegeben* usw. – all simple basic constructions that only very few candidates managed.

“Svea was lucky” was invariably translated as *sie war glücklich*; “alive” as *lebend, im Leben, berühmt, bekannt, die Idee besteht noch* but hardly ever *lebendig!* “...who prefer to grow their own vegetables” as *lieber zu waschen/wachsen sein einiges [sic!] Obst*; “to have one's own allotment” as *sein eigenes Dach* or *Balkon* or *Platz außen dem Stadt (!)* etc. (“allotment” was given in the reading text), “Rousseau's slogan” – *der Sagen der Rousseau; das Gespräch von dem Rousseau* (only a few used *Slogan*); “back to nature” – *zurück nach Natur, hinter zur Natur*; “...is not dead” - *ist nicht gestorben/ gesterbt, ist nicht getöten worden; ist nicht der Tod* etc. Altogether this was not a satisfactory experience, and a great deal more attention needs to be paid to basic German grammar and common, basic vocabulary.

Aufgabe 4

As there are 54 possible essay titles, it is a basic courtesy to the examiner for the candidate to write down the section **and** question number, missing on quite a few scripts. Whilst on the subject of courtesy to the examiner, presentation must be mentioned. Ample space is provided as well as continuation sheets so candidates can space their work, giving them the room to make clearer alterations and allowing the examiner a fairer chance of deciphering the idiosyncratic handwriting of too many, definitely an area where their basic communication skills need improvement. Continuation sheets must be physically attached to papers, not neatly and unobtrusively tucked loose in the back. It even happened that more than one candidate chose to delete his/her Aufgabe 1 and Aufgabe 2 Teil 2 answers and give no indication that these answers had been written elsewhere on an ‘invisible’ continuation sheet.

It is advisable for candidates to write the title out in full to help them maintain focus on their chosen title. Some gave the impression that they did not reread the title after their initial selection as there was frequently a tendency to wander off the point after a good start and then to omit one or more aspects of the multi-faceted questions.

Familiarity with the mark scheme will show candidates the inadvisability of launching straight into the essay without planning. It is not possible for candidates at their stage of linguistic development to make logical arguments well backed up with evidence from their chosen film, book or region **and** simultaneously demonstrate their full range of vocabulary and structures **and** pay close attention to accuracy **without** a proper plan. Too many seem to feel that such time spent **not** writing is time wasted, which could not be further from the truth.

Many chose to write a rough draft first, which is fine; but it must be made clear which version the Examiner is supposed to mark! Many candidates wanted to use pre-learned complex structures, which again is absolutely fine; but they need to be discriminating as to how they incorporate them seamlessly, rather than use them as a glaring bolt-on. ‘*Es wird oft gesagt, dass sie ziemlich erfolgreich wäre*’ fails to enhance or impress. The same goes for quotations: Unless they are relevant to the argument presented and do, indeed, underline the point made they should not be used. Chances are that students learn lots of quotes which may not be suitable for the question set in the paper but will then be used nonetheless and may even distort or falsify an otherwise quite reasonable essay. If in any doubt about their relevance in the specific context of the question set, **DON'T USE QUOTES**.

A large number of essays were well-judged, showing a logical progression of arguments, and well documented with evidence. That clarity of thought was often complemented by the fluency of their language. Unfortunately, others became bogged down in straightforward description with no point being made. This tended to result in repetition, ‘wooliness’ of thought and lack of focus. Such candidates would benefit hugely from a proper plan, not just jottings.

Of the three options, *The World of Cinema*, *The World of Literature* and *Regions of Germany*, the film option was the most popular by far with over twice as many takers as for literature. The distribution was roughly 8:4:1. That is, in fact, also an excellent result for literature which in the past was taken up by only 20% of all candidates and now it is something approaching 35 %. Regions was the least popular option and, alas, the least successful. While most of the essays on films or literary texts made at least some attempt to analyse, indeed many of them very successfully, the essays presented on aspects of the regions were largely descriptive and did not go much beyond presenting facts about some aspect of the region.

Whatever the candidates' choice may be, there is one common denominator that is so often ignored: The essays must address the questions head-on, and marks are awarded relative to the success in answering the question **as set**. There was again ample evidence that candidates arrive with prepared or semi-prepared essays that very often do not satisfy the demands of the question. Few candidates drafted anything like a plan, and those who did generally fared a great deal better. Some wrote their plan in English, which then caused linguistic problems when writing up the full text. Others started to write without reflecting on the demands of the question and produced oblique answers, others again wrote general introductions that might have fitted any question or that amounted to a rewording of the question, as if the setter had not quite understood what the demands were. Such strategies only waste time and add to the limited word count without adding to the substance of the essay. 400 words might look like a 'long' essay, and time is short. However, candidates very often have time to write out the entire essay twice, with rough work hardly different from their fair copy, or to write two or three essays (in error!). That time would be much better invested in reflecting on what the question is really about and to jot down a few aspects and structure the essay appropriately. A question on Zachanassian's motives, for example, is not asking for an account of **what** she does but **why** she does it. On the other hand, questions also need to be concise. A number of essays exceeded the stipulated length and could only be awarded a mark lower than they would otherwise have warranted.

The World of Cinema

Here *Good Bye Lenin* was the most popular film. A greater proportion of candidates opted for **question a** which, arguably, seemed more accessible, asking for an evaluative comparison between East and West Germany. However, quite a few candidates overlooked the precise wording of the first part of the question which was "*Welches Bild der DDR skizziert der Film?*" and launched into a general comparison, based to a large extent on general knowledge, and without much reference to the portrayal of the GDR in the film itself. The question demanded a political insight and understanding of the situation in 1989 which the better candidates were able to analyse. Others, while presenting the events very well drew a very limited picture of West Germany by comparison. The best answers mentioned the techniques used by the director; the worst only presented a series of unconnected scenes.

Candidates who opted for **question b** fared better on the whole and were more likely to analyse the dilemma that the children faced. They debated to what extent Alex re-creating a mini-GDR in his mother's flat was primarily to protect his mother, or to hang on for his own sake to his memories of what he thought the GDR was or should have been; while Ariane, on the other hand, had broken with the GDR and wanted to look ahead rather than back.

Die Fetten Jahre sind vorbei was the next most popular choice. **Questions a** and **b** were equally well done. Most candidates were able to identify with the young people from various viewpoints and well understood the different motives for their actions, differentiating clearly between political and personal motives. Some answers to **question b** focused their discussion on Hardenberg as well as the three protagonists, asking to Whether or not they themselves were capable of change. Less successful were those essays that had obviously been discussed in English which meant that the candidates' linguistic competence was lacking. Using the English title throughout and referring to the young people as "*die Edukators*" is obviously not conducive to scoring high marks.

Films dealing with the more introverted psychological dispositions of growing-up youngsters such as *Jenseits der Stille* and *Crazy* also prompted some very perceptive essays, as did *Vaya con Dios* and *Alles auf Zucker*. Answers to *Die Weiße Rose* concentrated on what Sophie or the other members did rather than on the difficulties and dangers they faced in their active yet clandestine opposition to the Nazi Regime.

The World of Literature

Students who had studied *Der Besuch der alten Dame* virtually all chose **question a**. While there were some well structured answers demonstrating that candidates had thoroughly understood the meaning of the play and were able to draw relevant conclusions, there was also a large number of essays that failed to differentiate between Zachanassian's declared aim and her motives – which was, of course, a prerequisite for this question. Here as elsewhere candidates would be well advised to take some time and reflect on the question before putting pen to paper.

Schlink's *Der Vorleser* remains a very popular text, and the answers were equally balanced between the two questions. Surprisingly few candidates opted for Brecht's *Mutter Courage* or Kafka's *Die Verwandlung*.

The Regions of Germany

While the Guided Studies Options of German films or literary texts appear to have revitalised A-Level German, the same cannot be said of Option 4C. Many answers suffered from a superficial approach and read like little tourist brochures which had been pre-learnt but were not adapted to answer questions that assumed detailed study of the wider infra-structure, economy, geography and culture of the region as a whole. A few candidates analysed the cultural and economic interrelationship between Berlin and Brandenburg (*Berlin ... der größte Magnet für die ganze Region*), but such essays were the exception rather than the rule. Most others focused on just one aspect which might have had some tentative connection with the question but did not meet its demands. As a result, many answers were very disappointing and one had the feeling that candidates thought this was the easiest option that did not require too much preparation.

Language Skills

In many papers the level of German was not what one would expect at this level. It is simply not acceptable for candidates to confuse *fliehen* with *fliegen*, *lügen* with *liegen*, *sterben* with *töten*, *fragen* with *bitten*, *Western* with *der Westen*; *Ostern* with *der Osten* or to not know the German equivalents for very common verbs such as to spend or to grow. Tenses were a major problem, and in the translation in particular there was no consistency in the use of tenses. Modal verbs with infinitive + *zu* caused frequently recurring mistakes, and the use of the passive voice was mastered only by the best.

Adjectival endings were often incorrect. There was confusion of *eigenes*, *einziges* and *einiges*; also of *jeder*, *jemand*, *jedermann*, *alles* and *alle*; of *anders*, *unterschiedlich*, *verschieden*. Hardly anybody knew how to decline *man* with *einem*, *einen*; *der* and *wer* were used indiscriminately in relative clauses, as was *dass* and *wie*. Possessive pronouns *seine*, *deine* and *ihre* got confused which affected the meaning when candidates were talking of relationships, as for example in essays on *Good Bye Lenin*, *Jenseits der Stille*, *Crazy* or *Alles auf Zucker*. Prepositional adverbs such as *daran*, *damit*, *dadurch* und *dafür* were widely unknown and usually replaced by *mit das*, *durch das* etc.

Syntax was shaky in many cases, especially word order and the English accusative-cum-infinitive construction which needs to be represented by a *daß*-clause in German. That led to scores of mistakes of the type: *I want you to open the books* > *Ich will euch die Bücher öffnen* [“Oh, thank you very much; very kind of you!”] or *Alex wollte sie wieder gesund (zu) werden* instead of *Alex wollte, daß sie wieder gesund wird*. Only the best candidates had a decent grasp of grammar.

Spelling was generally very careless, with capital and lower case letters being used quite indiscriminately, as were diacritics for umlauts. There was also widespread confusion of *ie/ei* as in *Ziele / Zeile*, *Ziegen / zeigen*, *Wiese / Weise* and, of course, *schießen*...



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