



GCE Examiners' Report

German
GCE
Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
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Executive Summary

This year, candidates have demonstrated that they are familiar with the format of all five Units. The vast majority of candidates attempted all questions on all Units and good attempts were made at all question types. There remain some candidates who do not attempt any questions, leaving them blank and forfeiting marks.

Centres have coped well with the transition to the teacher-examiner conducted speaking assessments for Units 1 and 3 over the last few series. Centres are to be commended on the conduct of the assessments and the processing of the associated administration documents.

Overall, Principal Examiners were pleased with the performance of candidates across the qualification. There is evidence of sustained attainment across all units comparable to previous series. Overall, the quality of language presented in the Speaking and Writing elements of the assessments was high, and the vast majority of candidates managed to express themselves in German.

In the writing elements (Unit 2 and Unit 5), it should be noted that many candidates used English/Welsh essay phrases and directly translated these, rather than using idiomatic German phrases, which affected the fluency of the candidates' writing.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Time management – candidates should allow time to attempt a response for all questions in a written paper.	Past papers	Past papers available on the subject pages or secure website
Essay writing and film/novel-specific vocabulary	OER exemplar CPD materials Guidance for teaching	Materials all available on the subject pages

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UNIT 1 SPEAKING

Overview of the Unit

For this unit, candidates complete two tasks – an argument task and a discussion task based on a stimulus text. AO1, AO3 and AO4 are tested in the first task, and AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4 are tested in the discussion task. Cards A1 – A3 featured regional culture and heritage in German speaking countries. Cards A4 – A6 concentrated on literature, art, film and music in the German-speaking world. The three B cards which concentrate on “Being a young person in German-speaking society” were all answered well by most candidates. Overall, candidates managed to cope well with the demands of the exam. Candidate performance is comparable with last year’s exam.

Comments on individual questions/sections

All A cards were chosen, but A2, A4 and A5 proved most popular with candidates. With respect to A2, candidates had the opportunity to talk about *Weihnachtsgebäck*. More able candidates were able to reference the relevance of these cultural features in modern day Germany, giving relevant examples to strengthen their arguments. Card A4 offered the opportunity to discuss German music. Most candidates were able to reference popular music movements in Germany, including both classical and modern music. Music festivals and individual songs such as ‘*Für immer Frühling*’ were also referenced. Many candidates were able to convey interest in German music due to the variety of genres, and cultural and historical relevance. For card A5, candidates argued whether or not there is much to learn from German films. Most candidates were able to reference German films such as ‘*Barfuss*’, ‘*Das Pferd auf dem Balkon*’ and ‘*Goodbye Lenin*’. More able candidates were able to reference a wider variety of films, providing robust examples where one can learn from the film mentioned. The more able candidates linked the historical significance of films such as ‘*im Westen nichts Neues*’ and ‘*das Leben der Anderen*’ and were able to analyse the types of lessons learnt from the films.

Cards A1, A3 and A6 were chosen by a minority of candidates. A1 proved difficult for candidates as some struggled to analyse the significance of a *Schultüte* and relate it to modern day Germany. A3, which required discussion of regional languages, was often not discussed in sufficient detail. Card A6 was answered well by few candidates who attempted it, and the better candidates were able to give relevant examples of modern and classical literature in order to convey their points.

Most candidates had learnt effective phrases to reply to the opinions presented by the teacher such as: “*das stimmt, aber*”, “*du hast vielleicht Recht, aber..*”, “*ich bin damit einverstanden*”, “*ich bin der anderen Meinung*”. Many teacher examiners were able to maintain the exchange of opinions and to support the candidate at the same time, prompting where there are misunderstandings, or a lack of evidence given by the candidate. Most teachers engaged sensitively and supportively with their candidates, allowing them sufficient time to formulate their argument.

All three B cards posed no major difficulties for the candidates, as they could relate to the problems of relationships, digital learning and understanding in school, and the prospect of travelling abroad to be an au pair.

More able candidates were able to present a balanced viewpoint of romantic relationships for B1. For B2, many candidates demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of technology in Germany and how it affects young people. B3 provided the opportunity for candidates to explore ways travelling and working in foreign countries, and many candidates were able to present thought provoking issues that could arise from being an au pair.

A few candidates gave superficial answers to the stimulus questions rather than concentrating on the text. Candidates are advised to use the text as a basis for their answers to the first two questions, and to make this evident in their answers, so that they do not lose AO2 marks. Most teachers were skilled at prompting candidates to ensure they had answered as fully as possible. The majority of teachers were able to provide support to the candidates by volunteering examples when candidates appeared to hesitate or stop. This support enabled the majority of candidates in this situation to ascertain their understanding and continue to make valid points. There were some weaker candidates who provided less information as the conversation continued.

Generally speaking, candidates were well prepared for the challenges regarding AO4 and AO2. Many teachers asked questions that were rooted in German culture for the discussion the B card task, which ensured the candidate gave relevant answers in order to gain marks at A04. A number of candidates struggled with the AO3 demands of this exam, and issues such as verb agreement, tense and word order meant that a number of candidates lost marks for accuracy. Pronunciation and intonation were generally very good.

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UNIT 2 LISTENING, READING, TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

Overview of the Unit

This unit tested the candidates' listening, reading, translation and writing skills. The essay topics related to set films. The exam posed no major difficulties, most marks were lost in the listening and essay section. The candidates' performance is comparable to last year with an improved performance in the translation task.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** This listening task about "*Meine Mutter ist meine beste Freundin*" was completed well by most candidates this year. Most candidates ticked the correct boxes for 1. and 2. Few candidates chose (c) for 3. mixing up *Junge Menschen* and *Eltern*. 6. and 7. were mostly answered correctly. With regards to 8. many candidates chose (b) *werden Kinder erwachsen*, whereas the text said *der Druck heute ist starker als früher* which refers to option (c).
- Q.2** In Q2 candidates were required to identify incorrect statements related to a text and correct them. As in previous years, some candidates identified a statement as being wrong, but failed to provide a correction, which led to a loss of the mark. In (a) most candidates identified that the statement was incorrect and the majority corrected *vor dem Abitur* with *nach dem Abitur*. For (b) very few candidates simply negated the given sentence and could therefore not be awarded the mark. The alternative to *in einem Kindergarten* was *bei der Kirche*. Simple spelling errors were overlooked but answers such as *Köche* could not be accepted due to a change in meaning. (c) was a correct statement and mostly identified as such. For (d) a range of answers was accepted because Andreas did several activities in his job. Weaker candidates mixed answers together e.g. *ein Büro geleistet* which were ambiguous and could not be awarded marks. (e) and (f) were answered mostly correctly but few candidates misunderstood *Ich habe 195 Euro Taschengeld und mein Fahrgeld bekommen* as getting pocket money at home. Many candidates ticked the correct box for (g) but were unable to give the right reason. They answered with a range of subjects that one can study e.g. *Technologie* instead of *Theologie*. (h), (i), and (j) were answered consistently correct with very few exceptions.
- Q.3** Most candidates scored at least 3 marks in the gap-fill task, but weaker candidates struggled to understand the words in the given list and sentence structures in the text. For gap (2) *Spaß* was accepted as an alternative answer because it captured the meaning of the text and fitted grammatically. In (5) *spülen* was frequently inserted, which results in a grammatically correct sentence, but does not comply with the text. It is good practice to check the answers against the text carefully.
- Q.4** The majority of candidates found the reading text on *Beethoven-Rundgang* very accessible, and most of them gained at least 4 marks out of 5. Weaker candidates matched up words from similar groups e.g. (c) *QR-Codes* and (10) *funktioniert das Smartphone besser* which did not correspond to the meaning of the text.

In (e) the -s in *Beethovens Spaziergängen* was overlooked, and several candidates chose answer (7) incorrectly instead of (1).

- Q.5** This year candidates scored very well in the translation into English/Welsh. The first part in (1) was translated correctly by all candidates but many struggled with *freiheitsliebend* and *erfolgreich*. The structure *schon als junger Mann* was also challenging for several candidates, and some translated *schon* as beautiful (*schön*) (2) appeared to be the hardest part of this translation and many candidates lost some marks. A challenging part was *feierte er erst in Wien*. Weaker candidates did not know that Wien was Vienna. Many candidates found it difficult to translate *erst* correctly, but the last part of the sentence was usually well translated. Some candidates were not precise enough when translating *künstlerisch* as *art* instead of *artistic*. (3) was mostly well translated and only few candidates missed out parts of the sentence i.e. *die längste Zeit*. It is important that candidates check their answers to ensure that nothing is omitted. In (4) most candidates scored full marks and only the weakest found this part challenging. (5) was a short sentence that most candidates translated very well, and only the word *Einblick* was found difficult to translate by some candidates. Answers were often too vague to gain the full 4 marks and *taste, peak, and overview* were not accepted.

- Q.6** Most essays were completed on “Das Pferd auf dem Balkon”, with a similar number of candidates having chosen title a) and b). A select number of schools had chosen “Barfuss”, and the majority chose title (b).

AO3:

The quality of language was good overall with some candidates writing outstanding essays using a wide range of lexis and structures with very few errors. Most candidates used language appropriate to the theme, but weaker candidates lacked film specific vocabulary. Few candidates appeared to write pre-learnt sentences that did not fit the question but lead to ambiguity. The majority of essays were well structures with a clear introduction and conclusion, and most adhered to the given word count of appr.300 words. As in previous years, a few candidates lost marks for AO3 because they failed to pay attention to word order and verb endings. In some cases, verbs and nouns were missing. Frequent serious errors and limited range of lexis and structure impeded understanding in some essays.

AO4:

All candidates appeared to know their chosen film well, only weaker ones were unable to express their ideas and views clearly, mostly due to a lack of German language skills. Excellent candidates' essays had a clear structure. Arguments were made, developed and justified. Conclusions were draw with evidence from the source material. Most candidates used the given bullet points for each title, and they structured their essays around these suggestions.

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UNIT 3 SPEAKING

Overview of the Unit

This was the second year in which teachers conducted the unit 3 exam. The unit consists of an individual research project completed by candidates on a topic of their choice. The exam consists of a two-minute presentation in German, followed by a discussion of 9-10 minutes with the teacher examiner. Most teachers approached this in a skilful manner which was sensitive to the needs of candidates. The presentation section of the oral examination tests AO2, AO3 and AO4. The discussion section also tests AO1. Most candidates were well prepared and performed well in the actual exam. The performance overall is comparable to last year.

Comments on individual questions/sections

With regard to the presentation, candidates chose a diverse range of titles, some of which were relevant to modern society, and some which clearly related to personal interests. Here is a selection of titles:

- *Inwiefern sind die Themen in 'Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo' noch relevant für die Stadt Berlin?*
- *Ist Deutschland immer noch das Endziel für Migranten?*
- *Warum sind Autos so wichtig für die deutsche Gesellschaft?*
- *Welchen Einfluss hatten die Renaissance und der Barock auf Deutschland und was hat Deutschland in diesen Epochen erreicht?*
- *Wie hat die deutsche Frauenfußballnationalmannschaft Menschen dabei geholfen, sich für den Frauenfußball zu engagieren?*
- *Gibt es noch eine psychologische Barriere zwischen Ost und Westdeutschen?*
- *Inwiefern können sich jüdische Leute in Deutschland zu Hause fühlen?*

Most candidates managed to structure their presentation well and stay within the two minutes stipulated for the presentation. Some candidates, had to be stopped by their teachers when they went over the time limit. A minority of teachers allowed their candidates to continue presenting past the two-minute limit. Teachers and candidates are reminded that the time limit should be adhered to as closely as possible to ensure fairness. Most candidates had researched their chosen topic in detail, and had phrased their title as a question, which meant that sufficient analysis featured in the presentation and in the discussion. In most cases the language was either consistently accurate or very accurate.

For the discussion, a small number of candidates interacted poorly, which was partly due to a lack of language skills, and partly to a superficial understanding of their chosen topic. A few candidates had rehearsed potential responses, which means that they lost marks for AO1. Over-rehearsed responses sometimes caused candidates to hesitate, which meant that the overall point was lost. Candidates are advised to learn topic-based vocabulary thoroughly and to ensure that they are able to produce language accurately, rather than very detailed responses off by heart. Candidates who did this often lost marks for AO3, as the intonation was inaccurate. Most candidates, however, conveyed a genuine interest in their topic and sounded like experts in their chosen field.

Most teachers asked relevant questions which promoted candidates to demonstrate their research and analytical skills. In a minority of cases, teachers followed up with superficial questions, asking, for example, if the candidate would like to travel to Germany. Teachers are advised to familiarise themselves with the mark scheme before conducting the exam, so that they can guide their candidates as effectively as possible. The AO3 performance for the discussion was often lower than for the presentation, which is to be expected due to the length and intended spontaneous nature of the discussion section. In order to improve their performance candidates are well advised to immerse themselves as much as possible in a German context, by watching German films, engaging with German-speaking social media, or following news items of interest.

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UNIT 4 LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

Overview of the Unit

This paper consists of three sections: Listening, reading and translation into German. Section A is made up of questions based on three listening passages and is worth 30 marks. Section B is worth 50 marks and the questions are based on three texts in German and finally section C, is a translation of at least 100 words into German, worth a further 20 marks.

Many candidates this series answered all the questions on this paper, but a few left some sub-questions blank, especially on question 6 and a very few left whole questions unanswered, meaning they automatically forfeited 10 marks. Many candidates were able to complete this paper within the allotted time, but some were either unable to finish question 7, the translation into German, or had completed it in a rush. Most candidates found questions 6 and 7 challenging and some candidates also struggled with question 3.

Some candidates gave alternative answers to both verbal and nonverbal questions and in some cases, these candidates lost marks.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1 was a multiple-choice question and the first of the listening passages. It was generally very well answered, and most candidates scored between 9 and 10 marks. If candidates made a mistake on this question, it was very often with sub-question 9 (answering b instead of c) or to a lesser extent question 4 (answering b instead of a). A few candidates also found question 8 problematic. Some candidates wrote alternative answers beside the boxes. This practice should be discouraged as only the answer in the box will be considered.

Question 2 was also generally well-answered, and many candidates scored between 7 to 10 marks for the second listening passage. This question required candidates to match up the beginning of a sentence with the correct ending, so their understanding of German grammar and sentence structure were tested as much as their comprehension skills.

Sub-question 1 was the most common error on this question. Many candidates opted for k, which was grammatically correct but did not mirror what was said in the passage. Others opted for e, which was grammatically incorrect. Sub-questions 6 and 5 were also common errors but there were no discernible patterns to answers. Weaker candidates seemed to have chosen their answers more randomly as often the choices neither mirrored the text nor made sense grammatically.

Question 3 required written answers in German and although some candidates found this question challenging, many candidates achieved at least 7 marks overall. Marks for this question are awarded for comprehension only (AO2) and not for quality of language (AO3). Sub-questions a, c, e, f and g were mostly correctly answered.

Not all candidates were, however, able to give two correct details for b and many struggled with d, some answering with *Geld* perhaps because they heard *Spenden* and *gespendet* in the passage. Some candidates only answered with *Spenden*, which was insufficient detail for a mark. Many candidates seemingly did not understand the meaning of *Stoff*, *nähen* or *Schals*.

Question 4 was the first in the reading section and was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of ten comprehension questions in German and part 2 was a gap fill. Many candidates performed well in this second part, achieving at least 3 out of 5 marks. The gaps which caused issues were 1, where some candidates opted for *Kosten* instead of *Aufgaben* and 3, where some candidates answered *vermieteten* instead of *kooperiert*.

Answers to part 1 were more varied and some candidates found this section very challenging. Sub-questions a, c and e were generally well-answered, and most candidates were able to give at least one correct detail for b. Many candidates did not, however, understand the reference to the Stasi in relation to Christian's position as professor. Equally, not all candidates understood that Christian's daughter had been raised by another couple. Many candidates answered with *er hatte eine Fotografie von seiner Tochter* or referred to *eine Musikerehepaar in Leipzig* but not explaining the significance. The question word *wer* in d also caused some issues as some candidates wrote *aus dem Ostblock* or *in einem Kinderheim* as answers to *wer sollte auf dem Schloss leben?*

Question 5 was divided into three sections of 5 marks each. Many candidates scored 9 or above on this question. Section 1 was an exercise on synonyms and many candidates scored at least 3 marks. The words, which caused the most difficulty were c *bekommen* and d *ungünstig*. Many candidates wrote *wenig* for the latter instead of *negativ*.

Many candidates were able to match up the sentence parts correctly in section two and most scored at least 4 marks. Sub-question 1 confused some candidates but for the most part, these candidates chose options a or f, which were at least grammatically correct.

The third section proved to be more problematic and performance overall, was far more varied. Sub-questions 2 and 3 were, however, common mistakes. Some responses in this section appeared to be random choices.

Question 6 was a series of twelve questions in German, which proved to be challenging to many candidates but overall, differentiated well. However, many candidates left blanks, which was disappointing. Some candidates also gave alternate answers, which meant that they lost the mark.

A significant proportion of candidates wrote correct responses but to the wrong sub-questions. It was obvious that some candidates only partially understood the text and that some weaker candidates, did not understand the text at all.

Sub-questions a, c, f and k were generally well-answered, and many candidates were able to give at least one correct detail for j and l. Some candidates gave incomplete answers for sub-questions a or g so were not awarded a mark.

Some candidates lifted whole chunks of text without manipulating them. This was particularly true for sub-questions b, g and i. Sub-question b and d were frequently misunderstood and candidates often reverted to copying out random sections of the text.

No marks were awarded if *Sindbad* or *das Meer und den Wind* were mentioned for b.

Not many candidates understood *fanden Proben statt* so sub-question e was often incorrect. Few candidates were able to give the correct nouns for h (*Freunde, Trauer*) but the use of adjectives in a sentence were, however, credited. Many candidates quoted the text and gave answers such as *Tränen, blutende Smileys* or *kraftloses Gesicht mit dünnen Mund...*, which did of course not answer the question *welche Rolle haben Bilder gespielt?*

Equally, not all candidates realised that the special feature about the play was the fact it was nonverbal, the musicians received the drawings and that by taking part, Samir finally began to feel at home in Germany.

Question 7 was attempted by most candidates, although not all translations were complete. Some had words or sections missing or the passage had not been finished on time. Most candidates scored fewer than half marks.

Common mistakes with vocabulary included *Frage* for *Umfrage*, *Apartment* for *Wohnung*, *Rent* for *Miete*, *überall* for *insgesamt*, *haupt* for *Haut*, *ein in vier* for *ein Viertel*, *nicht ein* for *kein*, *das* for *dass*, *sein* for *ihr* (their), *wenn* for *als* (in the past), *Rassismus* for *rassistische*, *deutsche Bevölkerung* or *Leute* for *Deutsche/deutsche Bürger*, *wann* for *wenn* (present tense), *Angst* for *Probleme* and *Personal* for *persönlich*. Many candidates did not know the following words: *befragen*, *erfahren*, *berichten*, *Bewerber*, *herausfinden*, *einige* (which was very often omitted), *Aussehen*, *richten*, *Farbe*, *Nachbarschaft*, *Einstellung*, *Bewusstsein* or *resultieren*. Some candidates were also inconsistent in their use of capitals for nouns.

Common grammatical mistakes included: simple word order and especially word order after common subordinating conjunctions *als*, *dass* and *weil* and the correct position in the sentence of separable prefixes. The use of the imperfect or forgetting the auxiliary verb in the perfect tense. The use of the weak masculine noun *Name*, making verbs plural (*gesucht hat* for *gesucht haben*) and the correct use of prepositions *gegen* and *wegen*, correct use of adjectival endings and cases.

Some candidates tried to translate literally or stuck pretty much stuck to English or Welsh word order. Some on the other hand, knew they had to adapt the word order but got so bogged down, their sentences no longer made sense. It was also obvious that not all candidates had either read the text in its entirety before beginning to translate or that they had really understood the meaning of the source text.

The more successful candidates had a better knowledge of vocabulary, were able to write more straight forward but correct German sentences or were able to convey the meaning of the text in a different way, avoiding pitfalls or difficulties. They were more adept at using synonyms or alternative expressions effectively. They also had better time management as they had allowed sufficient time to translate the passage and proofread their work.

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UNIT 5 CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

Overview of the Unit

AO3 and AO4 are tested in this unit. Only two of the four set texts were chosen by candidates in this examination session. “Die Physiker” und “Zweier Ohne” were each selected by approximately half of the candidates. There were no centres that opted for the other two works, “Der gute Mensch von Suzuan” or “Das Fundbüro”. As in previous examination sessions, the AO3 mark tended to be lower than the AO4 mark because candidates found it challenging to manipulate the target language accurately.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Each candidate’s essay included an introduction, often clearly focused on the chosen essay topic, and a concluding paragraph. Almost all essays were well structured, offering distinct paragraphs in which candidates advanced their respective lines of argument. The more successful candidates explained in the introduction what they were going to investigate, developed a focused argument that expanded throughout the main body of their essay, and referred to the set text before ending with a summary of the main points and a final link to the essay topic in the conclusion.

It was pleasing to note that there were only a few cases where candidates “retold the story” or delivered contextual detail that was not directly linked to their chosen essay topic. Candidates’ handwriting did not present any issues in this examination session. It was noticeable, however, that although the majority of candidates had made genuine efforts to employ good lexical items, their syntax and punctuation were sometimes challenging and often rather anglicised.

Concerning “Die Physiker”, the majority of essays addressed title b) *Dürrenmatt nennt sein Stück eine Komödie, inwiefern stimmt das?* All candidates were able to explain the ironic elements of the play and to give examples its comedic detail. However, only the more able candidates succeeded in addressing the precise title and in evaluating the extent to which Dürrenmatt’s play is comedic, or why it is often referred to as a tragicomedy. In several cases, candidates’ spellings of the lexical items they wished to use in the target language was challenging, e.g. *Tradischkomödie* instead of *Tragikomödie*.

With regard to “Zweier Ohne”, title b) *Wie wichtig sind die Selbstmörder deiner Meinung nach in dem Roman?* was by far the more popular choice, being selected by more than half of all candidates across the entire allocation. Many candidates pointed out that as the novella starts with a suicide and ends with a presumed suicide, this theme defines the friendship between the characters Ludwig and Johann. More successful candidates were able to link the defining theme of suicide to other topics in the novella, e.g. Ludwig using news of subsequent suicides to manipulate and isolate Johann and to coerce him into making immoral choices. Some candidates also debated Ludwig’s intention of his presumed suicide at the end of the novella, suggesting it served as an intended punishment for Johann’s relationship with Vera.

As in previous examination series, word order mistakes continue to be prevalent in essays across the whole ability range. Most noticeable were sentence starters with anglicised punctuation such as '*Erstens, ...*'. Although these do not usually impede understanding of the written content, candidates should perhaps be made aware of the syntactical differences between the target language and English as correct usage would drastically improve their written responses. Several essays demonstrated difficulties with regard to possessive adjectives, the correct use of high frequency reflexive verbs such as *sich entspannen* and prepositions, with constructions such as *auf diesem Grund* rather frequent. Dative and accusative cases continue to be challenging for candidates, resulting in constructions such as *dass das Essen die Jungen hilft*.

It would also be helpful if candidates were made aware of English phrases and sentence structures that do not apply in German, Constructions such as *das meint, ..., nahe am Ende des buches, er wird bequem mit der Idee* or *in seiner Meinung* could then be avoided by candidates, regardless of which essay topic they choose. It was pleasing to see that many candidates had made efforts to acquire and correctly employed essay vocabulary such as *Es ist nicht zu leugnen* or *Man könnte sagen*.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

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