



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE (NEW)
GERMAN
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2017

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UNIT 1: SPEAKING

Communication with centres was efficient as always, but in some cases it proved difficult to arrange oral examinations before Easter. As the centres had to cope with a new exam, they were keen to make the most of their time available prior to the exam to prepare candidates for the new challenges. Most centres communicated efficiently with the examiner in advance so that the suggested timetables could function smoothly. Some centres even provided a map or instructions for travel to the school beforehand and reserved a parking space, which makes all the difference when time is short. The majority of centres were aware of the change of regulations regarding the need for an invigilator. The accommodation provided was nearly always appropriate, away from noise as much as possible, with no disturbances outside the examination rooms, and preparation areas and toilets close by. Refreshments were kindly offered in nearly all centres. In most centres, examiners were able to meet the candidates for short briefing sessions prior to the day's exams. These meetings are particularly useful for explaining the new complex rules for the selection of A and B cards and for "breaking the ice", and for reassuring the candidates that examiners will try to support them as much as possible.

The aims are for students to demonstrate their knowledge of German-speaking countries, their ability to understand and respond to a text and their fluency and spontaneity in expressing views and opinions on selected areas of the specification.

Generally speaking, students were well prepared for the new challenges regarding AO4 and AO2. The majority of students succeeded in arguing their chosen point of view relating to card A by tapping into their knowledge of Germany. Some able candidates even managed to apply argumentative structures such as "Da haben Sie Recht, aber..." "Ich finde aber...", "Ja vielleicht, aber..." to good effect. At times students' knowledge of the country was superficial. They could for instance quote names of writers or artists or film directors but when they were asked to give more details they were often unable to do so. In the shortness of time available to teach the candidates it may be difficult to cover all the topic areas in depth. Approximately a third of marks are allocated for AO4 and therefore teachers will have to concentrate on imparting knowledge of the country, which might be at the expense of oral practice and teaching grammatical structures. A small number of candidates had a good or even very good knowledge of the country but found it difficult to express their ideas in appropriate German. As in previous years, students who had access to a language assistant fared better than those who lacked that chance. Furthermore, students who had been to Germany could more directly relate to the AO4 knowledge they had learnt in the classroom and could often refer to their own experience of the country e.g. refer to German museums/art exhibitions they had visited, German music they listened to, specialities they had tried or religious festivities they had experienced.

In many ways the B cards are similar to the ones in the legacy specification, but it has to be noted that, whilst previously the short text just served as a spring board for a general discussion on the topic, the candidates now have to demonstrate their understanding of the text. Frequently the examiners had to refer the candidates back to the text so that they were able to gain good marks for AO2. Admittedly, a number of candidates were aware of the necessity to demonstrate their understanding of the text and frequently employed structures such as: “der Text sagt”, “laut dem Text”, “wir lesen im Text, dass...”

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

Question 1

Question 1 was a non-verbal response question, which yielded a mixed performance. Most pupils could identify that Carla's mother's life was complicated as a result of combining family and career (Q 1.1) but did not recognise the vocabulary necessary to answer 1.2 (Bettinas Mann kommt normalerweise "erst abends nach Hause"). This could be use of the word "ab" to indicate from 18 Uhr. Q1.3 also posed difficulties. This question needed candidates to identify "sich ausruhen" and "sich entspannen" as synonyms. Q1.4 was more widely understood, with candidates identifying "Kinderbetreuung" and "Tagesmutter" to establish that Carla spends the morning with her nanny. Q1.5 was relatively well-understood and well-answered, with candidates recognising that Bettina had reduced her working hours to take care of Carla. Likewise, Q1.6 posed no obvious problems with candidates identifying the extra help that Bettina needed to work a full week. Q1.7 required candidates to understand either the use of the phrase "ihre Karriere auf Eis legen" or, more accessibly, "der Mann arbeitet weiter Vollzeit, die Frau weniger" in order to identify that approximately half of mothers work less than the fathers of their children. Q1.8 required candidates to recognise 25% and "ein Viertel" as synonymous. This question was well-answered.

Question 2

This was a non-verbal initial question, with candidates deciding whether a statement was true or false. They then needed to correct the incorrect statements without transcribing whole sentences from the text. This question also yielded a mixed performance. Many of the points that were lost in this question were as a result of the attempted corrections, rather than an inability to recognise whether the initial statement was true or false. Many candidates lost points for transcribing full sentences from the listening text, especially for question 2b, stating that "Snapchat hat bei jungen Nutzern Facebook hinter sich gelassen". Whilst this is indeed the case, the instructions inform the candidates that "you should use your own words as far as possible and you may use words (**but not whole sentences**) that you hear in the recording." Where candidates did this, they forfeited the point for that question. For this question, a simple statement such as "Snapchat hat mehr junge Nutzer als Facebook" was a simple and effective answer. In question 2g, the candidates were required to indicate that the use of Snapchat was *more* spontaneous than Facebook, and the answer needed a comparative in order to gain a point. "Bei Snapchat kann man spontaner sein" would have been an ideal answer here. The final incorrect statement was Q2i. The statement "Es ist kein Problem, wenn man ein Screenshot bei Snapchat macht" required candidates to point out that whilst you can do it, it is not the "done thing" or you "shouldn't do it" ("Es ein ungeschriebenes Gesetz"). "Man soll das nicht machen" or "Man soll kein Screenshot Machen" would have been ideal here.

Question 3

In this question, weaker candidates were confused by the use of Haus in the first sentence, and immediately plumped for “wohnt” for Q3.1. This shows that they had not made the link between the use of the past participle “umgezogen” in the first sentence and the imperfect form “zog” in the option box. Q3.2 also posed a problem for many candidates. They needed to identify “zu zweit” to match up with the information in the second sentences that “meine Mutter und ich haben lange Jahre alleine gelebt, nur sie und ich”. Q3.3 was well-completed by many candidates, but Q3.4 caused difficulty, with very few candidates being familiar with the expression “eng befreundet”. Q3.5 also caused problems for many candidates. Candidates needed to recognise the relationship between “die Welt war im Grunde ganz in Ordnung” and “Er war ganz zufrieden mit seinem Leben.”

Question 4

Question 4 was, on the whole, very well-completed. Many candidates scored well, showing a clear understanding of the text and the accompanying sentence-halves. A common error was to match (b) *Sankt Martin ist berühmt, weil er* with (9) *schon sehr bekannt*. This may well have been matching synonyms and not examining deeper meaning or checking for grammatical sense, as this cannot possibly be the correct answer. Another error for this question, was to match (b) to (6) *viele Kriege bei der Armee gewonnen hat*, although the only reference to success is the explanation that he became an officer.

Question 5

The performance on this question was mixed, with some grammatical items and vocabulary very clearly posing more problems than others. Very few candidates managed to identify “hungernden” as starving, although hungry was also accepted. Candidates could transfer the meaning of “frierenden” as freezing or cold. “Teilte” could have been translated as shared, split or cut, in order to represent the meaning of separating into two parts and giving one half away. A reasonable number of candidates accurately translated “Bettler” as “beggar”. The sentence “in der folgenden Nacht träumte Martin von dem Mann und glaubte, dass dieser Mann Jesus war” was very accurately translated by most candidates. Likewise, the sentence “Nach diesem Traum wollte Martin nicht mehr Soldat sein. Er verließ den Militärdienst”. For the final section, not all candidates were familiar with the irregular imperfect form “starb”, but were credited for accurately explaining that Martin lived to almost 80 years of age. Candidates should be reminded that all elements of the sentence should be translated and be encouraged to focus on “little” words like “als”, “fast” and “mehr”.

Question 6

By far the most popular films discussed in question 6 were *Das Pferd auf dem Balkon* and *Barfuss*. The most popular question addressed by candidates was Q2a *Welche Rolle spielt Freundschaft in dem Film?* Most candidates correctly identified a range of relationships within the film that represent friendship across genders, generations and species (Mika’s relationship with Bucephalus). Fewer were able to extend these descriptions to an explanation of their meaning for Mika’s development and the development of other characters throughout the film, which would have been the most logical next step. Only the best candidates were able to discuss the importance of Mika and Sascha’s relationship for Sascha as well as Mika in terms of a sense of responsibility. Although quite a few were able to discuss the importance of Mika helping Sascha to win money and “free him” from his obligation to the criminals in the film, considerably fewer were able to go on to suggest how the relationship with Miko and his mother might lead him to take responsibility for his actions and become more independent and reliable.

Q2b was a less popular choice for this film, although candidates produced some good, solid essays about the importance of truth in the film and the impact of lies. Throughout the film, truth leads to better understanding between the characters in the film and the development of relationships. It is also a very important way in which Tabak examines Miko's condition and how it affects him and those around him.

For the film *Barfuss*, question 4a "Wer rettet wen in dem Film?" was the most popular choice for candidates. Almost all candidates had a good understanding of how both the main characters save each other, with most giving relevant examples to back up their assertions. Only the best candidates were able to go on to use these examples to draw inferences about current society and attitudes and the message that Schweiger conveys. Equally, the essays addressing question 4b "Wie wichtig ist Ehrlichkeit in dem Film?" provided good examples of truthfulness and the lack thereof in the film, but stopped short of extrapolating these ideas further in order to produce a comment on current society.

A good number of candidates wrote well-reasoned essays in clear fluent language with a clear structure and a level of accuracy that achieved high marks.



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