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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

GERMAN

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Papers 8683/01 and 9717/01

Speaking

General comments

There was a wide range of entry, from candidates who had a German-speaking parent or relative to candidates for whom German was a completely foreign language acquired at school. There were some very lively, interesting topic discussions and general conversations. The candidates who performed best sounded spontaneous, whereas there were some candidates who seemed to have over-rehearsed their topic and were awarded lower marks.

Teachers at Centres which have entered candidates for Speaking in the past seem now to be aware of the various requirements and regulations for this component, in particular the need for the candidate to ask the Examiner two questions in both the **Topic Conversation** and the **General Conversation**. On the whole, tests from these Centres were well examined and assessed.

There are two aspects which need to be considered by new Centres:

- The candidate must ask at least two questions in the **Topic Conversation** and in the **General Conversation**. The syllabus states: "Candidates are required to seek information and the opinions of the teacher." If the candidate fails to ask a question, no marks can be awarded under the heading "Seeking information and opinions". If only one question is asked, then the maximum mark is 3 out of 5. If no question is asked, then no mark can be awarded.
- All timings of the test should be adhered to. The **Sustained Speech** should last three minutes, the **Topic Conversation** seven to eight minutes and the **General Conversation** eight to nine minutes. At a few Centres, parts of the test lasted too long, and so the examination as a whole was allowed to run on much longer than the stipulated twenty minutes. At a few other Centres at least one part of the test was too short.

Individual Centre Reports will highlight any shortcomings.

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

Papers 8683/02 and 9717/02

Reading and Writing

General comments

The level of difficulty of the paper was similar to last year's. Candidates performed in a similar way, except that there were slightly more candidates whose written German was poor. Centres will find in this report some aspects of performance which need attention.

Comments on specific questions

Erster Teil

Exercise 1

This year candidates sometimes chose words which were outside the lines 1-9 indicated in the rubric.

Answers to (a), (c) and (d) were those that were most frequently correct. Candidates had less success with (b) and (e), particularly (b).

Common errors were as follows:

- (a) *Nachweis*, which, as a noun, was an incorrect part of speech for the adjective which was required (*sicher*).
- (b) *Abgangszeugnis* or *Abitur* (instead of the correct *Studierfähigkeit*).
- (c) There was a wide variety of incorrect answers to this question.
- (d) The verb *kennen*, again an incorrect part of speech for the noun which was required (*Kenntnisse*).
- (e) *Sogar mehr als die Hälfte*, whereas a single word (*erheblich*) was required.

Exercise 2

Many candidates had difficulty in rephrasing the sentences with correct grammatical constructions. Common errors were as follows:

- (a) Instead of the plural verb *sind*, a number of candidates wrote *ist*. Some added an "e" ending to *ausgeprägt*.
- (b) Quite a few candidates failed to turn the dative construction: *(mit) der deutschen Sprache* into the nominative: *die deutsche Sprache*.
- (d) Many used *trotz* as a conjunction: *Trotz ich mein Abitur gemacht habe*, whereas it should have been used as a preposition. Some of those who used *trotz* as a preposition did not use it with the genitive, or with the dative (which was allowed according to modern usage).
- (e) The correct answer was: *(Die meisten Schüler zweifeln, ob sie vom Gymnasium ...) auf das Leben vorbereitet werden*. Unfortunately, a number of candidates either omitted *werden* or put it in the singular: *wird*.

Exercise 3

There were three major reasons why candidates lost marks in this exercise: leaving some questions unanswered, mentioning irrelevant points and being unable to express the answers with original wording instead of lifting them from the text. The rubric for **Questions 3 and 4** states: *ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*. Where the candidate merely copies the relevant part of the text, no mark is awarded. Candidates of average to less than average ability in the language need more practice in the art of finding synonyms to express concepts. Good candidates were still able to make most points and to gain four or five marks for language in this exercise.

- (a) A major problem here was that some candidates took their answers from the second paragraph about university studies, whereas the question asks about *Arbeitsplatz*, which is discussed in the fourth paragraph. Candidates should be urged to read the question carefully and to locate the correct area of the text for the answer.
- (b) This question usually attracted a good answer.
- (c) The following point was often omitted: *Das Abitur soll einem Studenten nicht mehr reichen/soll nicht mehr genug sein, um einen Studienplatz zu bekommen*.
- (d) The following point was often omitted: *Die gleichen Kenntnisse würden für alle Studenten vorausgesetzt werden*.
- (e) A major misconception here was to suppose that employers rely on teachers' opinions. There were also quite a few irrelevant answers and some blank ones.
- (f)(i) These two points were not often mentioned: *Wenn alle Universitäten/alle Unternehmen ihre Studenten nicht durchs Abitur (1) sondern selbst/durch ihre eigenen Tests auswählten (1)*.
- (ii) This was correctly answered on the majority of scripts.

Zweiter Teil*Exercise 4*

The general comments made for **Question 3** above also apply to this question.

- (a) Many candidates thought that the parents of Moritz were convinced he would complete his *Abitur*, because Moritz was to become a *Jurist* like them. They failed to mention the real reason, namely that his parents had also taken the *Abitur* and expected their son to do the same.
- (b) The following point was often omitted: *Moritz will (jetzt) Journalist oder Arzt werden.*
- (c) The following point was rarely expressed satisfactorily in the candidate's own words: *sogar die höchsten (Wege/Berufe)/auf höchster Ebene.*
- (d) The following point was less often given: *Die Abiturnoten genügen.*
- (e) Many candidates were able to state correctly: *(Wolfgang Herrmann verlangt) den Lebenslauf des Studenten*, but some believed that *Lebenslauf* meant the student's life or daily routine. Few appreciated the other point, that students had to submit a written explanation for their choice of university.
- (f)(i) Few candidates were able to gain both marks and many scored no marks at all for this question.
- (ii) Some of those who attempted an answer in their own words thought incorrectly that the word *Billig* in *Billig-Abis* meant *preiswert* or *nicht teuer*.
- (g) Unfortunately, a fair number of candidates merely copied a part of the text in answer to this question.
- (h) Many candidates were able to state that the German *Länder* would have to accept national standards, but some failed to mention that the standards required had to be national ones. Few were able to make the other point: *oder die Bundesbildungsministerin/Edelgard Buhmann wird die Verfassung ändern.*
- (i) Most candidates realised that the *Abitur* would have to change but few recognised that it would be kept as a qualification.

Exercise 5

A fair number of candidates appeared not to have devoted adequate time to this exercise, either failing to answer it or writing a very short answer.

The essential task is to summarise the two texts with original wording, according to the question set. Ten marks out of twenty are awarded for this aspect, as is stated on the question paper. Some candidates merely copied large extracts from the texts in an incoherent fashion without attempting to answer the question. However, candidates who had understood the texts well were able to gain many content marks, and, in some cases, all ten marks.

After the summary, the candidate is asked to give his or her own opinions on the issue for five marks. Indeed, some very able candidates express their own views whilst summarising the texts, in order to avoid repeating details. A few summarised the passages very well but gave little personal response to the texts, thereby gaining only one or two marks out of five.

It is important to organise the response like a mini-essay in order to fit everything in to the stipulated 140 words. The answer is cut off at around 150 words or at the end of the sentence after 140 words is reached, and no further marks can be awarded for the remainder. This year, only a few candidates wrote at great length and failed to mention enough points in their first 140 words.

Finally, five marks are awarded for language. For candidates who had properly planned their response to this question, language marks awarded here were broadly comparable to those awarded in **Questions 3** and **4**, as these candidates maintained their consistency. Others made more errors than they had in previous exercises. Indeed there were a few candidates who wrote very inaccurate and sometimes incomprehensible German.

Papers 8683/03 and 9717/03

Essay

General comments

There was a marked preference among all candidates for essays on the topics *Der Generationskonflikt* and *Essen und Trinken*. Fewer candidates tackled *Chancengleichheit* and *Krieg und Frieden*. Only two opted for *Zeitgenössische Aspekte* and no candidates opted for essays on *Kulturelles Leben*. There was an exceptionally wide range of performance across the entry, from fluent, accurate and well-planned essays to work that was brief and highly inaccurate. It is clear that, for some candidates, writing a foreign language essay of this length on a serious topic is just too demanding. A list of the errors of the weaker candidates could serve little purpose in a report of this kind. Such a list would include all of basic German grammar. Regularly recurring errors are the same every year, e.g. the confusion between *weil* and *wegen* when wishing to find a German version for “because of”; the confusion in the use of *wenn* and *als*, or between *weil* and *als*; the misuse of *man*, either in an extended piece (*man weiss, dass er nicht wählen kann*) or in oblique cases; common use of verbs such as *helfen* without a following dative. Other errors (frequently referred to in previous reports) occurred with the use of the comparative (*mehr frei* rather than *freier*), and in confusions between the usage of *bevor* and *vorher*.

As regards the mark given for Content, the main criticism of many essays is that they fail to construct an argument that sets out the issues and arrives at a conclusion. There are still many candidates who state a firm view at the outset, e.g. *Meiner Meinung nach stimmt das*. Such certainty makes it difficult to develop a debate.

There is a tendency to rely on generalised statements which are not supported by evidence, or to write the essay the candidate had prepared, rather than the one actually set. This latter failing was particularly true of essays on the topic *Essen und Trinken*. The old advice to candidates remains true: read the title with care; draw attention to the key terms of the title in the opening paragraph; remind your reader of the terms of the title at key points in the essay, so that there can never be an accusation of straying from the point; provide evidence and example to support the argument; draw conclusions from the argument presented.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

Ist ein Einwanderungsstopp für Deutschland denkbar? Was ist Ihre Meinung?

The two candidates who tackled this topic drew attention to the background of *Gastarbeiter* in Germany but pointed out that in the global society more movement of workers was to be expected, (*“Globalisierung ist König der neuen Wirtschaft”*). In particular, modern society required technical skills which might need to be imported, so that a halt to immigration was not only impossible but undesirable.

Question 2

«Ein Generationskonflikt betrifft besonders die Jungen. Mädchen betrifft der Konflikt nicht so sehr.» Ist das auch Ihre Meinung?

There was a wide range of views on this subject. On the one hand were essays which took a traditional view of gender differences and saw boys as potential problems in the family whereas girls were obedient and prepared to be submissive. On the other hand there were a number of essays which drew attention to the ways in which society is changing, so that it is more often girls who now come into conflict with their parents because of changing social mores and the unwillingness of girls to accept the rigid boundaries laid down in the past. One candidate wrote *“In Gegensatz zu dem Vergangenheit haben sechszehnjährige Mädchen schon Freunde. Diese neue Haltung entsetzt viele Ältere.”* (sic) All such points of view are perfectly acceptable in an essay as long as the candidate argues a good case and supports the point of view taken.

Question 3

«Man sollte essen, um zu leben und nicht leben, um zu essen.» Was bedeutet für Sie diese Aussage?

The real problem here was to write on the subject set. A large number of candidates had prepared essays on the theme of healthy eating, avoiding fats and sugars, reducing calorie intake etc. It was possible to bring this range of topics within the terms of the question, e.g. "wenn man lebt, um zu essen, dann isst man nicht nur viel, sondern auch viel ungesundes Essen, weil es besser schmeckt." But too many candidates just ignored the question and wrote their own essay. The best essays drew attention to conspicuous food consumption in wealthy countries contrasted with near starvation in poor areas.

Question 4

«Eine Frau, die heutzutage keinen Beruf ausübt, hat das Gefühl, aus der Gesellschaft ausgeschlossen zu sein.»? Nehmen Sie Stellung zu dieser Behauptung.

These essays produced a range of views, mostly agreeing with the premise that staying at home had become an undervalued activity for women, at least in European societies. One candidate developed the following theme: *Jedoch ist der Beruf eigentlich nicht der einzige Anschluss zu der Gesellschaft.* The essay pointed out that modern information technology made it possible for women at home to be involved in other ways.

Question 5

Kulturelles Leben

No essays on this topic.

Question 6

Wie können wir den Krieg vermeiden, wenn wir nicht einmal mit unseren Familien und Freunden in Frieden leben können?

Not all candidates responded to the implications of the question that conflict is possibly innate and unavoidable for humans living together. But there was a general sense that war was inevitable, despite some, possibly rather naive, efforts to suggest that more discussion would avoid conflict, or that early training would improve matters, e.g. referring to *eine Welt ohne Streit*, one candidate wrote "Das kann man jedem schon im Kinderwagen zeigen, wenn man den Kleinen vermittelt, zu teilen und zu schenken. Aus diesen Kinder, denen das beigebracht wurde, wird bestimmt kein Politiker, der andere Länder angreifen will, wegen einem Koflikt zwischen zwei Ländern." (sic)

Papers 8671/04 and 9717/04

Texts

General comments

The weaknesses in candidates' essays were the ones that Examiners report on every year:

Focus on the terms of the question – in many cases candidates fail to engage with the terms of the question set and to focus on the issues raised by the question. Thus candidates often used passages and questions as a springboard for storytelling, but did not actually attempt answers to the questions set in the paper. Candidates should be reminded that essay titles are worded with the greatest care, and the first task when tackling an essay is to decide what is the significance of the words used.

Structuring the essay – an essay should be seen as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates start their essay by agreeing with the title, that is to say they begin with their conclusion, or the introduction is omitted completely. Other candidates do not provide a clear conclusion; their essay just stops. In some cases this happens, because the candidate has run out of time. Clear paragraphing also helps to structure a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make.

Storytelling – it is clear from the published criteria for marking the essay that simple retelling of the story gains low marks. Obviously, candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the story, but this must be tied in to the title of the essay, and evidence from the book must be *relevant* to the title. Candidates should be reminded that relevant points need to be backed up with detailed examples from the text.

Length – some candidates' answers were too short. In many cases what was written indicated that higher marks could have been achieved, if the candidate had carried on with their argument. Some candidates wrote only one or two essays rather than three or produced three half-finished answers. In a few cases candidates treated sub-questions (i) and (ii) in **Section 1** as two separate essays. In these cases candidates lost valuable marks.

Language – many candidates were lacking the ability to produce language suited to express an appropriate argument. Often the essays were difficult to follow because of weaknesses concerning lexis, punctuation and grammar.

Instructions to candidates – candidates should know before they enter the examination room what the demands of the question paper are. To remind themselves, candidates are advised to read the instructions on the front carefully. Three questions should be answered, one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and one other. Not all candidates were aware of these requirements. Copying the wording of the question at the top of their answer, might help to focus on the requirements of the chosen task, as a few candidates indicated that they intended to tackle **Question 1 (a)** for instance, but then went on to write an answer that was better suited to **Question 1 (b)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Böll – Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum

- (a) This book is still popular with candidates. Eleven chose this question and its implications are “How does Schönner come to be standing exactly where he is when he takes the photograph of Katharina Blum?” Candidates were expected to quote from the passage and give their own opinion about the intrusive nature of the press. There were opportunities to refer to examples elsewhere in the text. Not many candidates took full advantage of the scope of this task.
- (b) Fourteen candidates chose this question, which focused on the language used by the author Heinrich Böll. Very few responses referred to the substantial use of reported speech by the author, which he uses to distance himself from certain events in his story. Some candidates pointed out correctly that particular groups use distinctive language: the police, the press and some individuals such as Katharina herself and the Blornas. There is also one short passage where Katharina's aunt, Else Woltersheim, states her opinion to the police in no uncertain terms. This question provided candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge.

Question 2

Brecht – Der kaukasische Kreidekreis

- (a) The few candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the questions quite well. The three sub-questions were used well as pointers and references to the passages. Additionally other parts of the story were used to good effect.
- In (i) the situation that Grusche has to appear before a judge is paradoxical, because she did the morally right thing and now she has to account for it. The nature versus nurture argument was the right answer to (ii) and (iii) in the question on parallels between the passage and wider text. Candidates were invited to consider the whole story. Any lines of argument which were coherent and made detailed references to the text to back up points made scored well.
- (b) Nobody chose this question. Any major themes of the play would have been acceptable, including justice, the law, a critical analysis or the role of birth mothers, as well as pointing at other aspects of the play besides its themes.

Question 3*Richer* – Damals war es Friedrich

- (a) Only a few candidates tackled the text extract and they were not able to discuss the points raised in the questions well. Only very few candidates went beyond simply quoting from the text and story-telling. Herr Resch's reaction was not only typical for his character in the book, but also for the average citizen at the time. The extract marks the end of the book. Candidates might have commented on this. It becomes evident, from the events immediately preceding the extract and in the course of the passage that Friedrich is dead. Candidates' own opinions were welcome, as long as they analysed the text and the historical background.
- (b) Nobody chose this question. A range of different scenes from the book could have been used to show the population's attitude towards Jews at the time e.g. the incident with the ball, the visit to the swimming pool or the cinema, Herr Schneider losing his job, etc. This was an open question which would have credited any coherent line of argument candidates might have chosen to take, as long as detailed references to the text and analysis and evaluation were included.

Question 4*Langgässer* – Saisonbeginn

- (a) Nobody chose this question. Candidates would have been expected to give an indication of the context: a child celebrating her first communion day, when the alarm forces the family to take shelter. A good answer would have pointed out the contrast between the faith of the child and the parents' lack of faith. The cake symbolises the child's hope even in a devastating situation.
- (b) Nobody chose this question. Candidates were invited to analyse their favourite story from the collection and focus on issues that were important to them.

Section 2**Question 5***Mann* – Der Tod in Venedig

- (a) A popular text and question. Eighteen candidates chose to tackle this task. Many produced a well structured argument, which described and analysed the symbolism of the weather in the text. In fact the weather mirrors the atmosphere of the whole book, the development of the protagonist's health and is related to the spread of cholera in Venice. Most candidates successfully linked the weather to the appearance of the "Todesboten". Candidates were expected to make detailed references to the text.
- (b) Few candidates chose this question. Candidate's success depended on whether they understood the concept of "Wendepunkt". Good responses made detailed references to a number of turning points in the book (e.g. the meeting with the first "Todesbote"; the incident on board the ship, etc.) and gave their reasons for their particular choices.

Question 6*Storm* – Der Schimmelreiter

- (a) Several candidates chose this question, but the results were not all satisfactory. The question was often used for storytelling. A successful answer included the candidate's own opinion on "Tatsachen und Phantasie" with detailed references to the text. Candidates could have pondered whether one of the two might predominate and how they are linked. Much of the story appears to be authentic (i.e. "Tatsachen") – e.g. the description of people living their daily lives in difficult times. References to "Aberglaube" and "Gespenster" should have been included for "Phantasie".
- (b) This was the most popular question in the paper – twenty-three candidates chose to write a response and some very good essays were produced. Weaker candidates spent most of their time just retelling the story, but others constructed a good argument which showed a deeper knowledge of the text and an ability to compare the past with the present. A couple of candidates appeared to have read the book in English, as references to the text indicated e.g. "Jeder Zeit Theodor Storm schreibt 'ashtree' etwas vergleichbar happens."

Question 7

Ende – Das Gauklermärchen

- (a) Nobody chose this question. Candidates were invited to give their opinion with regards to the rhyming and to analyse why the author may have chosen to write like this.
- (b) Nobody chose this question. Candidates were given the opportunity to concentrate on two characters in the story. Any line of argument which was coherent and backed up with references to the text would have been acceptable.

Question 8

Schlink – Der Vorleser

- (a) Few candidates chose this question. Most responses took the reader on a well-structured journey through the book, avoiding storytelling, but concentrating on evaluation and analysis of the changing nature of the relationship for instance: mother/son; lovers; father/daughter.
- (b) Nobody chose this question, which concentrated on the distinctive structure of the story and the impact this has on the reader. Candidates were invited to agree or disagree, provided they could substantiate their opinion.