

GERMAN

Paper 8683/01

Speaking

General comments

There was a wide range of entry, mostly from Centres with a small number of candidates, typically two or three. Some of the candidates had learned German at school, some had a German-speaking parent and others were themselves native German speakers. The overall standard was encouragingly high and there were some interesting Topic and General Conversations from candidates across the range of entry.

The majority of Centres appeared to be well aware of the requirements of the syllabus and conducted the tests well and marked them accurately.

The following points need to be addressed by some Centres at future sessions.

- It is important to adhere to the recommended 20-minute time limit for the examination. There is no advantage to be gained for the candidate by exceeding this as some Centres did, sometimes greatly.
- The Presentation making up the first part of the Speaking test needs to relate to a German-speaking country as the content mark can be halved if this is not the case. A native German speaker should, therefore, not talk exclusively about the country where he or she happens to be living, but is obviously free to make some sort of comparison if desired.
- The candidate must ask at least two questions of the examiner to seek information about his or her opinions in both the Topic Conversation and General Conversation. If this does not happen, even after a reminder, no marks can be awarded and a maximum of ten marks are therefore lost. If only one question is asked per section, the maximum mark each time is 3 out of 5.
- The transition between the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation should be announced clearly to the candidate so that the two sections can be clearly distinguished.
- Individual Reports to Centres will have highlighted any further problems.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

The level of difficulty of the Paper was similar to last year's. The entry included fewer weak candidates this year. It was pleasing to note an improvement in the standard of German on the scripts.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 [*Erster Teil*]

Exercise 1

- (a) This was usually answered correctly.
- (b) The answer to **Question (c)** was sometimes written for this question.
- (c) The correct answer *erscheint* was not often given.
- (d) This was usually answered correctly.
- (e) The correct answer was *schrittweise*, although a number of other words were offered instead.

Exercise 2

Most candidates performed as well on this exercise as on Exercise 1. On the whole, knowledge of German grammar was fairly sound.

- (a) The separable prefix *ein* was occasionally omitted at the end of the sentence.
- (b) This was usually answered correctly.
- (c) Some candidates omitted the phrase *auf den Markt*, making the resulting sentence meaningless.
- (d) As in **Question (c)**, some candidates omitted the phrase *auf den Markt*, which made the sentence meaningless.
- (e) Although this was a complex sentence, starting with a subordinate clause and ending with a main clause, many candidates wrote it correctly.

Exercise 3

There were two major reasons why candidates lost marks in this exercise: not mentioning enough 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.

- (a) Candidates usually gained two or three marks out of the four allocated to this question. There were five points that could have been made, although the following were not often given:
Sie ist leicht in der Hand zu haben;
Die kurzen Texte sind für Menschen geeignet, die nicht viel Zeit haben, (für Menschen,), die sich nicht lange konzentrieren können.

- (b) Candidates often scored at least two marks out of three. There were four points available, but the following were less often given correctly:
über (TV-Live-) Sendungen/Sportveranstaltungen, die in der Nacht enden (die in der Nacht enden being omitted);
Man kommentiert die Schlusskurse der Wall Street (der Wall Street being omitted).
- (c) There were two points available:
Man kann die Zeitung (nicht im Abonnement, sondern) nur am Kiosk erhalten;
Sie wird zu spät gedruckt, um per Post zu Abonnenten geschickt zu werden.
 Many candidates made only one of these two points appropriately.
- (d) This question proved to be quite difficult, with few candidates achieving full marks and many gaining at the most only two out of four. There were five possible points, but the following were rarely given correctly:
Es kostet viel Geld, die Zeitung herauszubringen;
Das Angebot der Zeitung ist komplett.
- (e) This was also difficult. Few scored both marks, and a fair number had no marks at all.

Section 2 [Zweiter Teil]

The main reason for the loss of marks was copying phrases from the text instead of using original wording. The rubric to Questions 3 and 4 makes it clear that candidates need to use their own words in their answers here: *Beantworten Sie diese Fragen **auf Deutsch**, ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben.*

- (a) Most candidates gained two marks but omitted the key point for the third mark:
Am nächsten Tag sind die Informationen in der Zeitung schon zu alt.
- (b) In both parts of this question a number of candidates merely lifted expressions from the text for at least one of the points.
- (c) Many candidates scored at least two points out of the four available. Some common failings were: not distinguishing between *Debatten* (irrelevant to this question) and *Talkshows*; thinking that *Talkshow* participants talked about illness; believing that these participants made fun of other people.
- (d) This question proved to be quite difficult, with few candidates achieving both marks and many gaining no mark at all owing to a tendency to copy the text.
- (e) The same comment applies as for **Question (d)**.

Exercise 5

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. Many candidates were able to make at least seven valid points, but some gave generalised answers lacking in precise detail and so forfeited summary 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. This year, quite 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, 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 Paper overall, 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, perhaps because they wrote their answer to this final question a little hurriedly.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/03

Essay

General comments

All questions were attempted. By far the most popular topic was *Technologische Innovation*, **Question 6**, attempted by nearly half the candidates. The questions on *Die Jugend* and *Das Leben in der Stadt und auf dem Lande* drew an equal number of the remainder of the candidates, with a small number attempting the remaining questions.

There were a number of candidates who appeared to be native speakers of the language. While these candidates were generally accurate in the use of grammar and displayed a good range of vocabulary, there was, nevertheless, more than a little incidence of poor spelling and punctuation (a general disregard for the proper use of the comma, in particular), little regard for the proper use of upper and lower case letters, and the usual problems with *das/dass*. It was also noticeable that these candidates, whilst generally attempting to see that there were arguments to be made both for and against in addressing the question, often adopted a rather conversational tone which was inappropriate to a discursive essay.

Of the non-native candidates there were a good number who showed excellent command of the grammar and syntax of the language, as well as good topic specific vocabulary and an ability to produce a reasoned argument, looking at various aspects of the question before coming to a conclusion. Inevitably, there were also a number of candidates whose limitations in expressing themselves in German made it hard for them to produce a coherent essay.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Welche Wege gibt es zu einer besseren Nutzung der Energieressourcen in einem deutschsprachigen Land, das Sie kennen?

This question was attempted by a limited number of candidates. A fair range of suggestions were made. In order to answer the question satisfactorily, candidates needed also to focus on a particular German-speaking country.

Question 2

„In der Jugendzeit gilt es, den Rahmen für das spätere Leben festzulegen.“ Ist das auch Ihre Meinung?

A good number of the candidates answering this question focused, perhaps understandably, on teenage years as a preparation for further education and the world of work. On the whole, the essays tended to be rather superficial, lacking in detail on the variety of influences on young people that shape their lives and determine their choices.

Question 3

Die Frauenkriminalitätsrate liegt weit unter der der Männer. Wie erklären Sie dieses Phänomen?

The very small number of candidates who answered this question were generally clear on the biological and social factors which might help to explain the statistic. The essays tended to be rather generalised, failing to provide real evidence from different areas of criminal activity and remaining at the level of expressing an opinion.

Question 4

„Zeige mir wo Du wohnst, und ich sage Dir, wer Du bist.“ Welche Bedeutung hat dieses Sprichwort für das Wohnen in der Stadt oder auf dem Lande?

This proved, along with **Question 2**, to be the second most popular choice. One candidate, brought up in a bustling city and currently being educated in a quiet, rural environment, was able to offer an interesting personal view. The majority of candidates, however, offered essays which were too generalised and failed to make a convincing case with concrete examples. This was also the question which seemed to attract some of the candidates who were linguistically weaker. Amongst typical errors were the attempt to use *Leben* in the plural, an inability to be more specific than *Leute* or *Dinge* (though not confined to this question only), and a failure to pick up on the help offered in the question (*im Stadt* or *auf dem Stadt* were not uncommon).

Question 5

„Jede Mannschaft möchte gewinnen, und dies um jeden Preis. Fair Play und humane Verhaltensweisen stellen auf dem Weg zu diesem Ziel nur große Hindernisse dar.“ Nehmen Sie Stellung zu dieser Aussage.

This question was answered by a small number of candidates who argued their case with some conviction. What the candidates lacked, as observed in a number of other questions, was detail in evidence to support an opinion. Few individual sportsmen/women, let alone teams, were cited in the essays.

Question 6

„Das Leben heute ist ohne Mobiltelefon nicht mehr vorstellbar.“ Sind Sie auch dieser Meinung?

As noted above, this was the question that attracted by far the most answers, including the majority of the candidates with native speaker German background. The majority of candidates were generally accurate in their use of the grammar and varied in their vocabulary, although some candidates had problems with genders and plurals of key vocabulary such as *Telefon*, *Problem*, *Haus*, *Arbeit*. Problems with distinguishing between *das* and *dass* and *man* and *M(m)ann* were more apparent here and *Umfall* for *Unfall* was not uncommon.

The majority of candidates sought to see some problems with mobile 'phones as well as the wide range of useful functions, though detail and supporting evidence were often lacking. A small number of candidates started by concluding that life without a mobile was indeed unimaginable and merely extolled its virtues.