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FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

There was a broad range of attainment in this year's paper. Although occasionally candidates omitted to perform a certain task, the vast majority of candidates had something to write in response to every question. Success depended in part on the ability to understand and write German, but also on the ability to read questions carefully and to work out what type of answer was required. The best candidates showed in their answers that they had not only fully understood the texts but also the questions and they were able to structure their responses effectively and express themselves well in their own words in an accurate, varied and clear way.

The overall standard ranged from excellent to very weak; many candidates coped adequately with **Question 1** and could produce a speech for **Question 2** which showed a sense of audience in content and register. **Question 3** was on the whole tackled successfully by the majority of candidates and allowed some interesting insights into their lives.

Candidates' attention is drawn to the following, relatively frequently occurring errors in:

- Imperfect tense forms and simple past forms of strong verbs, e.g. *Meine Geschwister zielten mich auf; Ich leihte ein Buch aus;*
- Use of conditionals, cases and verb agreements, e.g. *Es wurde euch wahrscheinlich besser gehen, da ihr ein gesunderes Lebensstil haben wurden;*
- the use of prepositions, e.g. *Text 1 und Text 2 haben gemeinsam, dass sie über die Tierhaltung hinweisen;*
- spelling, e.g.: capitals on nouns; use of ss and ß;
- punctuation: many candidates did not use any commas, some omitted several full stops and use of exclamation marks and question marks reflected some uncertainty;
- the use or non-use of Umlaute (ä/ü/ö) caused problems on occasions.

On the whole, the language used in the answers was encouragingly idiomatic, though some candidates mixed up some better known idiomatic expressions, e.g. *Ich wurde mit offenen Händen empfangen.*

The structure and style of their responses caused difficulty for many candidates. Problems with **Question 1** arose from inadequate summaries and a number of candidates providing in-depth linguistic analysis where what was required was a comparison of the two texts drawing inferences. Many problems with **Question 2** and **Question 3** arose from candidates' inconsistent use of the conventions of speech-making and letter-writing, as well as a reluctance to write in paragraphs.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates found both texts accessible and there were only few misunderstandings. No candidates omitted answering this question, although some answers were too short. On the whole the quality of summaries was patchy. Some candidates produced excellent, well structured summaries followed by in-depth comparisons, finishing with a short paragraph in which they offered their personal opinions. Some candidates went into too much detail rather than summarising the main points covered in the text, while a number omitted the summary altogether proceeding straight to an in-depth analysis of linguistic aspects. Whilst there are always some relevant and interesting points to be found, it is not really the task set and no points can be awarded.

A number of candidates again wrote *about* the texts without attempting to summarise, concentrating rather on their personal opinions in response to the texts. Strictly speaking, giving a personal opinion is not the objective of this particular exercise and no credit can be given to answers which consist solely of such opinions. Literal reproduction of content from the texts likewise resulted in loss of marks and part at least of a number of answers suffered from poor structure. Better candidates were aware of the correct register and understood that colloquialisms and informal language should be avoided in summaries.

Some candidates did not read the texts closely enough and insisted for example that Hera was a vegetarian rather than a vegan. In some responses lengthy quotes from the texts could be found, when candidates were required to write in their own words.

Question 2

The answers to this question were quite mixed. Some candidates copied out parts of the second text and produced a shortened version of the original dialogue. A few candidates started off by stating they could never be a vegetarian and proceeded to explain their reasons. This was not the task and did not attract many marks.

There was confusion among a small number of candidates about the differences between vegans and vegetarians, which indicated that the stimuli had not been fully digested. In many cases beginnings and or endings were left out, so it was not always clear why and for whom the text was written. Many speeches finished abruptly. Often candidates were not clear about the register and started off with *Sehr geehrte Mitschüler, heute werde ich Ihnen über Veganismus und Vegetarismus berichten*. This would be seen as too formal. Other problems with register arose where candidates used inappropriate idiomatic expressions such as *Ich bin gläubige Veganerin*.

Some candidates produced very good answers, including an introduction and an end to the speech and made excellent use of the stimulus texts. The best candidates were able to integrate some rhetorical devices into their speech-writing and used them to good effect.

Section B

Question 3

On the whole this task was very successful and many interesting answers were produced. A few candidates omitted the task while some weaker candidates left out beginnings and endings. There were some responses which were very good, but could not be rewarded as such because they were lacking beginning and end. Paragraphing was also a problem with some candidates not using paragraphs at all.

There was a clear difference between candidates writing from personal experience and some candidates using their imagination. Examples included: *Ein Jahr später zogen wir nach Thailand und zwar Hongkong.* or *Ich würde gerne in New York wohnen, weil das in der Stadtmittle liegt.*

The best answers were not necessarily those written from own experience, but those which remembered letter conventions and were coherent and well structured pieces about the advantages and disadvantages of life abroad. Some of the weakest examples were candidates omitting any indication that their piece was a letter and simply writing what could be seen as a diary entry in which they described their life in a foreign country, but without indicating any advantages or disadvantages.

<p>Paper 0505/03 Continuous Writing</p>

General comments

Performance on this component once again covered a wide range, from excellent to weak, with a generally encouraging standard of writing. Candidates' work offered clear evidence that they had been very well taught and had a thorough command of the German language, stronger candidates producing essays that were a real pleasure to read. Buffy the Vampire Slayer seemed to feature prominently in a number of stories written.

On the whole, it was pleasing to note a general improvement in accuracy (grammar and spelling), style (sentence structure, choice of language), beginnings and endings, paragraph links and in the level of detail and maturity of most essays. Candidates are reminded of the importance of clear presentation, including handwriting.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Fernsehen rund um die Uhr – welche Vor- und Nachteile gibt es?

This was by far the most popular essay title. Most candidates submitted essays reflecting strong convictions, accurately written with a clear sense of purpose and order, setting out the reasons for and against. Some candidates' scripts were though marred by inaccuracy, e.g. poor spelling, and faulty or absent punctuation, as well as simple language with little development. Relevance to the title was occasionally an issue.

Question 2

Was würden Sie nie werden wollen und warum nicht?

Candidates wrote confidently, demonstrating style and very good use of structures and producing essays that were enjoyable to read with few or no mistakes. Candidates demonstrated a good command of German generally, although grammatical inaccuracy on some basic points led in some cases to slightly weaker marks, e.g. *das/dass, man/Mann*, inconsistent use of commas, omission of a full stop.

Question 3

Ich öffnete die Zeitung und da stand es: ...Schreiben Sie weiter.

This essay title offered candidates scope to use their imagination and make a genuine attempt at writing a story. The strongest candidates handled this title superbly in essays that were invariably relevant and highly developed. A few candidates showed themselves to be highly competent in all areas – apart from accuracy, where there were still just too many careless mistakes. This tendency was even more pronounced at the lower levels.

Question 4

“Mach's doch selber!” Bauen Sie diese Worte in eine Erzählung ein.

Most candidates were able to write accurately, with a clear sense of purpose and order. Some candidates showed a sophisticated development of ideas, producing confident and well structured essays. However, at the other end of the spectrum, candidates introduced ideas that bore little relevance to the question. Their language and ideas tended to remain at a simple level, with problems relating to accuracy, e.g. grammar, spelling and punctuation. Overall structure was weak. Some candidates appeared to struggle with the title, e.g. with finding suitable vocabulary, suggesting that it was not the best choice for them.

Question 5

“Draussen sein” – Was fällt Ihnen ein?

This topic provided an excellent springboard for candidates to display their linguistic strengths and creative capabilities. In just a few cases candidates scored less highly as a result of careless mistakes.

Question 6

Bringen Sie in einer Form, die Sie selbst wählen, zum Ausdruck, welche Gefühle, Eindrücke oder Ideen das folgende Sprichwort bei Ihnen erweckt:

“Lügen haben kurze Beine.”

Essays in response to this question displayed a more conscious style, with well-chosen vocabulary, and judicious use of examples. Introductions and conclusions were carefully thought through and the whole piece well structured.

Question 7

Wie wichtig ist die Liebe zum eigenen Land?

Candidates produced a range of answers, from the slightly irrelevant to the very knowledgeable. The overall standard was pleasingly high.

Question 8

Ein Abend allein.

The majority of candidates wrote high quality, accurate German in response to this question. Their essays were realistic, both in structure and in choice of language, bringing a sense of drama and enjoyment for the reader.

Weaker candidates' content was fairly equally divided between story-telling, expression of feelings, and providing good advice. Their structure was clear, detailed, leading to a convincing ending. The language, though not particularly advanced was likewise clear and reasonably accurate.

Question 9

Verschiedene Leute rauchen aus verschiedenen Gründen

Most candidates demonstrated a strong command of German. Introductions and conclusions were highly developed and accurate. Candidates appeared to have taken the opportunity during their course to inform themselves about topical issues in Germany, reflected in topic-specific vocabulary and relevant ideas.

A few candidates had difficulty developing their ideas owing to inadequate vocabulary leading to some fundamental grammatical errors and some confusion in communicating their main points.