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FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

Once again this year candidates' work demonstrated a broad range of attainment on this paper. The paper is in two sections, with two passages in the first part. **Question 1** tests candidates' ability to select, compare and summarise specific information from both passages; the second question here invites a response to the passages in a variety of forms, e.g. a letter, a report, a speech, a script of a conversation or broadcast, a continuation of a story, an expressive development of an idea in the passage etc. The second section of the paper tests candidates' ability to use and develop information given, in a specified form, a magazine article for example. The vast majority of candidates had something to write in response to every question, with just a few leaving an exercise out altogether. Success depended both on the ability to understand and produce written German, and on close reading of the questions to work out what type of answer was required. The best candidates had clearly understood the texts and the questions and had been able to structure their responses effectively. They also produced varied and interesting answers in their own words.

The overall standard ranged from excellent to very weak; many candidates coped adequately with **Question 1** and could produce an article for **Question 2**, which showed a sense of readership in content and register. **Question 3** was tackled successfully by most candidates, the content of their responses offering evidence of insight and a capacity to develop and present information in an appropriate style.

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

- Adjectives, comparatives and superlatives, e.g. *mehr sachlich* should be *sachlicher*.
- Referring back to a noun previously used, e.g. *Der Artikel handelt vom Skateboarden. Es ist spannend geschrieben* should be *Er ist spannend geschrieben*.
- Prepositions e.g. *in dem Artikel handelt es sich über* should either be *In dem Artikel handelt es sich um* or *Der Artikel berichtet über*; *ein Überblick von* should be *ein Überblick über*; *von verschiedenen Ländern* should be *aus verschiedenen Ländern*.
- Frequent misspellings e.g. *findet Stadt* instead of *findet statt*; *nännen* instead of *nennen* and other words where ä replaced e.
- Adjective and noun combinations preceded by an article, e.g. *der Deutsche skater* should be *der deutsche Skater*; *das Aufregende rennen* should be *das aufregende Rennen*.
- Adjectives used as nouns should have capital letters.
- The distinction between *das* and *dass* was very often not made.
- Punctuation was generally quite good, the major area for improvement would be the use of commas in sentences with relative clauses.

In addition to the above list it needs to be pointed out that legible handwriting is a distinct way of avoiding unnecessary mistakes, with endings for example being easier to read.

Candidates should take care when handing their papers in to ensure that they are in the right order and correctly attached as in the instructions on the front of the examination paper. In some cases papers were in the wrong order or attached together in a way which made marking them difficult.

On the whole, the language used in the answers was encouragingly idiomatic and some essays showed a very good grasp of sayings and "*Geflügelte Worte*".

Comments on specific questions

Section One

Question 1

Most candidates found both texts accessible and there were only a few misunderstandings. Only one candidate left this question out altogether and most answers were of the correct length. The quality of the summaries varied; some candidates produced excellent, well structured summaries containing succinct comparisons between the texts, whereas others compared the texts primarily through linguistic analysis, omitting important aspects of the summary that was required. Personal opinions were often added at the end of the first task, although this had not been asked for and could not gain any points.

In some cases, candidates quoted at length from the original texts to support their analysis, but this was not productive, as a summary in the candidate's own words was asked for.

In a few instances it was evident that the candidates had not read the texts carefully enough: the interviewer was confused with the interviewee in the second text, and Ben Kukartz, a visitor to the world skateboarding championship was wrongly identified as a contender.

A number of summaries missed out points like the atmosphere in the Westfalenhalle, the age of the skaters and the visitors and the fact that the competition in the previous year had been won by a Frenchman.

Points from the second text that were missed out in some summaries were: the prize money Stefan Lehnert did not receive, the fact that the image of skaters has got better because of the *Inline-Boom* and the fact that skaters often form friendships quickly when in foreign cities.

Question 2

Answers to this question were very good generally and just two candidates left it out altogether. Most candidates showed imagination and had a clear idea who the targeted readers were, although in some cases the article produced by candidates merely repeated the two articles given in the first instance.

Good articles were characterised by a fairly relaxed style, clearly addressed a younger audience (ihr, each etc.) and contained many skater-relevant terms.

In a number of cases candidates produced information which went well beyond the two stimulus texts and made for a piece that was interesting to read. At times, however, this extra information was given instead of important information from the two texts, meaning that the content of the article was less relevant than it could have been.

In some instances the word count revealed that the article was too short, often by around 20%, so an opportunity to include more information was missed.

Clear paragraphing and a definite beginning and end were also missing in some cases.

The best candidates used rhetorical devices and skater-specific vocabulary very well in order to produce well structured and interesting articles.

Section Two

Question 3

On the whole this task was very successful and many varied answers were produced. A few candidates omitted the task while some candidates wrote shorter answers than required; often this resulted in there being no formal ending to the essay.

Good paragraphing enhances the structure of candidates' written work, and candidates should bear this in mind.

It was very good to see most candidates have at least a good stab at imitating the style of the original text. A number of candidates drew extensively on their own imagination, at the same time as producing essays that were relevant and to the point: indeed, local tourist authorities would do well to consider employing some of the candidates as advertisers for their locality!

<p style="text-align: center;">Paper 0505/03 Continuous Writing</p>

General comments

Candidates on this paper are being tested on their skill in continuous writing. There is a selection of nine titles, calling for an imaginative, narrative or argumentative response in an appropriate style, from which candidates choose one topic to write about.

This year's candidates again demonstrated a good command of German generally, producing work that was enjoyable to read and demonstrating a most encouraging capacity to incorporate personal opinion and response in what they wrote. Candidates are directed to write between 350 and 500 words though some nonetheless wrote essays that were over-long: 720 – 900 words! A number of candidates also submitted essays without any indication of the title. It is helpful for candidates themselves in particular to write out in full the title of the essay they are tackling as this focuses their mind on the nature and detail of the topic they have chosen.

Careless mistakes continued to overshadow more imaginative writing in particular: capital letters were often overlooked, punctuation (commas and speech marks) was frequently not applied correctly, and a number of candidates had difficulty selecting the correct tense to use. There were signs of confusion between 'das' and 'dass', and 'man' and 'mann', and some candidates' grasp of word order was shaky.

Overall control of structure and presentation were generally of a fairly high standard, although poor presentation still had an impact on candidates' performance in some cases.

Only a few candidates submitted papers where there was clear evidence that they were in fact second language candidates, with numerous errors, some less and some more serious (*Vernatiker*, meaning *Fanatiker*, *Kreps*, meaning *Krebs*, *Ältern*, meaning *Eltern*, *hatt* and *vohr*, meaning *hat* and *vor*, *lehrnen* and *verlohren*, meaning *lernen* and *verloren*, *Trennen*, meaning *Tränen* etc.).

It is as ever essential that candidates address such simple errors as early on as possible.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

Wie wirkt sich die Technik auf das tägliche Leben, die Gesellschaft oder die Kultur aus? Erörtern Sie die Vor- und Nachteile.

This question was the most popular essay title.

Most candidates submitted essays showing a strong sense of conviction, as well as being linguistically accurate and enjoyable to read. Arguments were clear and concise.

Only a few candidates submitted essays where their range of language and ability to develop this topic were not adequate to the task.

Question 2

Ein Leben ohne festen Wohnsitz

Candidates, who submitted this essay demonstrated a good command of German generally. Their interpretations of the question ranged widely from descriptions of life on the run to largely positive accounts of life as an expatriate.

Question 3

Zu allem und jedem muss man heutzutage eine Meinung haben – meine Gedanken dazu.

These candidates submitted essays of a confident nature, showing competence in vocabulary and selecting innovative ideas.

Question 4

“Bleib doch noch!” Bauen Sie diese Worte in eine Geschichte ein.

This was the second most popular essay title. Candidates who chose it took the opportunity to use their imagination and to have a genuine attempt at writing a story.

The strongest candidates submitted a linguistically superb, highly developed and consistent treatment of this title.

Among weaker candidates the number of mistakes of a quite basic nature, made in simple language, was high.

In trying to express their emotions, some candidates' language became a little confused:

... rammt die zugeschlagene Tür durch das Bewusstsein der Frau.

... gibt ihm verfließenden Halt!

... denn meine Eltern kamen von ihrem Trieb zurück.

Question 5

“Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm!” Was ist Ihre Meinung zu diesem Sprichwort?

The few candidates who chose this title tended to write reflective pieces, demonstrating good command of relevant vocabulary. Beginnings and endings were well developed and a convincing structure maintained throughout the piece.

Question 6

Wer spielt die wichtigste Rolle in Ihrem Leben und warum?

This title saw a wide range of performance from candidates, who identified many different important people in their lives including themselves. Answers ranged from the slightly irrelevant to the highly insightful.

Question 7

Angst ist ein wichtiger Teil unseres Lebens! Meinen Sie das auch?

Candidates who chose this title demonstrated good control generally of vocabulary, syntax and grammar. They sought to express their thoughts and opinions convincingly.

Question 8

Wir jungen Leute haben es schlechter als unsere Eltern. Stimmen Sie damit überein?

Most candidates were able to write relevant and sensible answers. While some were rather limited in scope, omitting the broader aspects of the question, others showed sophisticated development of ideas, producing confident, well structured essays.

Question 9

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

“Ein unnütz Leben ist ein früher Tod” (Iphigenie, J.W. von Goethe)

This title proved least popular, some candidates perhaps deterred by a more philosophical theme. Those that did choose it nonetheless did very well on the whole, with examples of excellent idiomatic usage, variety of expression, a range of tenses and a high standard of accuracy.