

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0525/01

Listening

General Comments

This paper produced a wide spread of marks and it was pleasing to note that there were more candidates in the upper than in the lower ranges. Nearly all candidates coped well with the first section, after which performance tailed off gradually, especially in those exercises where written answers were required. Answers in German are not assessed for quality of language but candidates do need to communicate their answers in a meaningful way. It is also helpful if the candidates' handwriting is clear and readily decipherable.

Candidates had obviously been well prepared for the examination and were familiar enough with the format for there to be no rubric infringements.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1 – 8

All material in this part of the examination is drawn from the Defined Content vocabulary which is readily accessible to Centres and candidates.

Most candidates scored full marks on this task, where they are required to choose the image which best answers the question. There were some problems with the time in **Question 1**. The first floor in **Question 7** was perhaps too demanding for this exercise as this caught even strong candidates out.

Exercise 2 Questions 9 – 15

This listening task was about a forthcoming School reunion.

In **Question 9** some candidates lost the mark because they chose the place rather than the event, others failed to distinguish between *Schule* and *Schüler*.

Question 10 required 30 as the answer, which was frequently recorded as 13.

Question 11 was mostly correct, as was **Question 13** where both *nichts* and *nicht* were acceptable as answers.

Question 12 was generally well done. There was some uncertainty about the spelling of *Musik*.

Question 14 required candidates to convey the spelling of *lutreffen*. This was generally well done. The most common error was to replace the *u* with *o*.



Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16 – 23

This task required candidates to identify the correct and incorrect statements by listening to the conversation with Frau Meier. Candidates found this task rather difficult and only the best candidates got full marks. There was no discernible pattern to the errors.

Exercise 2 Questions 24 – 28

This interview about the relationship between parents and their children posed some problems for weaker candidates, as it was rather abstract and they seemed to find it difficult to show by their answers that they had clearly understood the points made.

In **Question 24** many candidates seemed unclear about who did what to whom. Was it children respecting adults or vice versa? Some transcribed *Viele Eltern finden es sehr schwierig, ihre Kinder zu erziehen* as the answer to part (i) which could not be rewarded as it did not answer the question.

Question 25 required only a one word answer. Most candidates correctly opted for *Eltern / Erwachsene* but the incorrect *Kinder* also appeared.

In **Question 26** candidates again lost marks as they did not answer in such a way as to show understanding. This was especially the case with *Sie wollen, dass die Kinder sie lieben*. It was often reduced to *sie lieben die Kinder* which makes no sense as the answer to the question. Similarly *keine Konflikte* was not enough to merit a mark.

In **Question 27 (i)** there were difficulties in formulating an answer that made sense but part (ii) was much more successfully answered.

In **Question 28** many candidates felt the need to elaborate on the answer because they heard more information than was required. This sometimes led to them invalidating what would otherwise have been a perfectly adequate response.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 29 – 34

Most candidates coped quite well with this account of Paul's year abroad. There was no discernible pattern to the errors.

Exercise 2 Questions 35 – 43

This task proved to be beyond the weaker candidates, who failed to grasp what was going on in this interview about space travel. There were, however, some excellent answers from able candidates who seemed to enjoy the opportunity to show what they could do.

In **Question 35** most candidates managed to convey the idea that she had wanted to do this since childhood.

In **Question 36** it was difficult to give a full answer in the space available although many attempted to do so. Since Richard Branson (any spellings accepted) seemed to be the key, *von* or *durch* Richard Branson was enough to get the mark.

Some candidates were not able to gain a mark in **Question 37** by omitting to include *über* with the number.

Question 38 was perhaps the one most successfully answered in this exercise.

Question 39 was poorly done. *Joggen* did not seem widely known. *Gewichte heben* rarely appeared as a possible answer, probably because it is a less well known item of sport vocabulary. Although *gut essen* would have been enough to earn a mark, many candidates tried to reproduce *Diät*.



Questions 40 and **41** were sometimes confused by weaker candidates. For **40** the notion of next year was more important than the fact that it was at the start of the year. In **41** writing two and a half as 2.5 was acceptable but not as 2.30. *Stunden* was a necessary part of the answer.

In **Question 42** most candidates picked up on *spannend* rather than *Angst*, which was correct as long as it was preceded by *sie findet es...*

Question 43 was answered well by those who understood *Sorgen*. *Ewig* was clearly not widely understood but was not necessary for the answer. Weaker candidates tried to construct an answer round *akzeptiert*.

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Paper 0525/02

Reading and Directed Writing

The Paper was tackled well by the majority of candidates. A very few weak candidates omitted **Question 16** and a few more omitted **Question 24**, the more challenging writing task. In a few cases poor handwriting made the tasks difficult to read and candidates should be aware that this may be to their disadvantage.

Question Number

1-5 These were well done by the majority of candidates, although there were more errors than anticipated in this section, which is intended as a test of basic, common vocabulary.

Apart from **Question 1** which was often incorrectly answered [A was the most popular incorrect response and occasionally C or D], there was a fairly even sprinkling of incorrect answers in this section. In **Question 3**, candidates commonly did not see the inappropriateness of eating in a hotel's kitchen rather than in its dining room. There did not seem to be any greater frequency of A or D answers to **Question 2** which would have implied a misreading of the words *ersten* and *links* respectively, or of B in **Question 4**, where the bread rolls might just have been mistaken for the chocolates.

6-10 This task was dealt with well by the majority of candidates.

11-15 The *Dritte Aufgabe* seemed straightforward, and the combination of 'Ja' and 'Nein' answers suggested that candidates had tackled the question thoughtfully.

16 This written exercise was tackled well with most candidates scoring full marks for the communication aspect of this task. Occasionally the spelling of *Samstag/Sonnabend* was too incorrect to reward. In very isolated cases, candidates seemed to have interpreted the picture prompts as invitations to cite any day of the week/mode of transport/etc. rather than to convey in writing precisely what they saw in the illustration. Candidates appeared to pay least attention to or failed to understand the word *zurück* sometimes suggesting that they meet or leave at this time. Dubious spelling, poor handwriting and incorrect verb forms meant that some scored less well for Language.

17-23 This first element of the *Zweiter Teil* was typically approached in a very straightforward manner. Where there were two elements to the answer in **Questions 19, 21** and **22**, candidates sometimes included both correct elements on one line, but credit could only be given for both aspects in this situation when the second line was left blank. For **Questions 21** and **22** candidates sometimes wrote generalities about the availability of work or for **Question 21** that Johannes wanted to enjoy city life or live near/with his cousin.

24 This task was approached in a variety of original ways, with very good examples of phrases and vocabulary associated with the topic. Many candidates started with phrases such as "*Ich bin gerade in ...*". In some instances candidates failed to write about how they had reached their destination. Many weaker candidates misunderstood the Question and wrote about a future event or misunderstood *Urlaub* and wrote about a general event. However, it was within the compass of the majority of candidates to achieve high communication marks for this question. The ability to use accurate language and syntax correct verb forms and straightforward subordinate clauses varied.

25-31 Just a few candidates seemed to take a statistical gamble and ticked either all of the 'Ja' boxes or all 'Nein'. When providing corrections to the incorrect assertions, some candidates were not attentive to the rubric and the need to avoid the use of *nicht* (and *keine*) in their answers. Justifications were not always credited, because they consisted of 'lifts', which, although identifying the correct point in the text, did not make sense as a response to the incorrect assertion.

Candidates frequently considered **Question 28** to be false and may not have understood *Ganztagsschule*.

32-40 Candidates occasionally disadvantaged themselves by invalidating their answers with extraneous information from the passage which ended up appearing to give an impression of alternative answers or lifting, so that the answer did not make sense e.g. in **Question 38** candidates often wrote: *Er/Der Bus produziert zwar Schadstoff*. Some clearly did not understand some Questions and either wrote irrelevant responses or copied large chunks of the text, perhaps hoping that they contained the answers.

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Paper 0525/03

Speaking

General comments

These comments are to read in conjunction with the **Teachers' Notes** for March – April 2010.

As in previous years the ability of candidates to communicate in German was impressive and there were many highly scoring performances. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and once again this year there was a wide range of performance from candidates, with the general standard being comparable to that heard in previous years.

Centres generally conducted the Speaking Test very professionally and most Examiners had prepared themselves thoroughly before the examination and prepared their candidates to do their best. However, in a number of Centres, Examiners were not well prepared for the Role play situations, which resulted in the candidates not being fully able to demonstrate their ability: sometimes certain Role play tasks were not asked or completed and some Examiners left candidates confused as the situation developed into unnecessary mini-conversations. Occasionally, some Examiners did not ask appropriate questions in the Topic and / or General Conversation sections of the test. Examiners must ensure that they are prepared to use the full range of time frames (present, past and future time) in these sections of the test by asking questions which will allow these time frames to be used: otherwise marks in category B (Linguistic Quality) may well be limited, as is explained on pp8 and 9 of the **Teachers' Notes**. Examiners must consult these instructions very carefully as there are still many Examiners who are awarding higher scale (**b**) marks to candidates who do not (or cannot) convey past and future meanings. Such candidates cannot be awarded above the satisfactory band (see **Teachers' Notes**, p8). Similarly, candidates whose topic or conversation is significantly curtailed cannot expect to be awarded full marks, if they do not have time to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structures. Most Examiners do seem to use a stopwatch or alarm to guide them with timings, but there are many tests, which are just too short. In a very few cases, some candidates seemed unaware of what was required of them for the Speaking Test and appeared uncertain when they were asked what topic they had prepared to speak on; in these cases an unsatisfactory and often rambling 'presentation' about 'Myself / My life' was produced, despite the advice offered on p8 of the booklet. In a small number of Centres this year it did seem that candidates had not prepared for the Role play exercises: some candidates indeed seemed not to have been given a preparation period immediately prior to their speaking test and were at a loss what to do with the requirements of the test (see p1 of **Teachers' Notes**: *Candidates should study the situation for fifteen minutes and then be prepared to act the roles assigned to them and respond to the parts played by the teacher/Examiner.*)

Most Centres forwarded the appropriate sample size for the Centre with clear recordings, in labelled cassette boxes or on CDs: some recordings however still remain of a poor quality. MS1 copies, or output from the equivalent electronic file, and Working Mark Sheets should be sent to the Moderator with the recordings. The cover sheet was not always included, but as this was the first year it has been required, that was perhaps to be expected.

Administrative work in Centres was generally good this year, but clerical errors of addition on the WMS still occur, particularly in Centres with a large number of candidates.

The recommended timings for each section of the test were usually observed, but some Centres did run together the Topic and General Conversation sections, which can make moderation difficult. There were also a small number of Centres where the Role play tasks developed into quite lengthy conversations, usually Examiner led, and others where the General Conversations were very brief and perfunctory.

The mark scheme was generally applied consistently and the order of merit within the Centre was usually accurate. Where adjustments were necessary, these were often the result of lack of time frames in the conversation sections or failure to complete Role play tasks adequately.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Examiners are reminded to encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task. If only one part of a task is completed, the full three marks cannot be awarded. The majority of candidates however were able to converse fluently in their Role plays and make use of natural and idiomatic German to complete their tasks. Examiners are reminded that they should adhere to the rubrics and printed stimuli of the Role plays and not attempt to add to or extend the set tasks, nor develop them into mini-conversations. Equally importantly, Examiners should be wary of feeding information to the candidates by giving them a choice of vocabulary, which cannot then be credited. Full guidance is given on p7 of the booklet, under **Structure of the Examination**.

Role plays A

Page 14, A1, 2, 3

This was a straightforward Role play and most candidates performed well. The information required was well known to most candidates. Where two parts were necessary for a full answer, these were readily completed by candidates.

Task 1: occasionally candidates had to be prompted to give items of food here, some were initially content with *ich will etwas kaufen*.

Task 2: often an individual drink was ordered, where a prompt for *Getränke* was necessary.

The other tasks were well attempted.

Page 15, A4, 5, 6

This too was a straightforward Role play and most candidates again performed well. The information required was equally straightforward and accessible.

Task 3: occasionally this task was not consistent with the requirements in **Task 1**.

Task 4: occasionally some candidates missed the idea of *wo?* and were not prompted.

The other tasks were well attempted.

Page 16, A7, 8, 9

This situation was also straightforward. Generally candidates had no difficulty with any task. **Task 3:** this task was sometimes amalgamated with the following task and many candidates did not express two separate ideas here.

Task 4: although it was expected that candidates would ask for some item of food or drink, many candidates took the wider view and wanted for instance *Kleidung*, which was of course acceptable.

The other tasks were well attempted

Role plays B

These tasks are more demanding, in that they require the ability to use a range of time frames and to give explanations, justifications and opinions where necessary. Centres are reminded that the longer tasks demanded in the candidate's rubric can be split by the Examiner; this is quite appropriate.

Page 17, B1, 4, 7

This Role play was well attempted generally with most candidates able to explain that they were looking for a job and offer suitable responses to the questions asked of them. The final task was perhaps less satisfactorily done, in that many candidates did not express an interest and were content with the incomplete answer *ich werde schreiben*.

Task 1: several candidates missed out the introduction (*Stellen Sie sich vor*); it needs to be stressed that it is a real task and not just an optional item; likewise, many did not give a reason and were content just to repeat the situation *ich will...*

Task 3: many candidates did well and combined the two ideas in one sentence.

Task 5: as mentioned above, there was some confusion here from both teachers and candidates, where perhaps the requirements had not been read carefully enough. Many teachers issued the statement and gave no opportunity for candidates to supply a time factor.

Page 18, B2, 5, 8

This Role play was accessible to most candidates. The split tasks were usually noted and responded to fully; the inclusion of *Nennen Sie 2 Punkte* being helpful.

Task 3: the *wo* element was often missed and, as mentioned in previous Role plays, unfortunately many teachers did not prompt.

Task 5: again some misreading of the precise wording and the result was often in the wrong person.

Page 19, B3, 6, 9

This was again an accessible Role play B, with a straightforward role for the candidate with full information about the situation given in the rubric.

Task 1: comments as above for the omission of the introduction (*Stellen Sie sich vor*).

Task 5: *Unterkunftsmöglichkeiten* threw many candidates and so many only scored a mark for the idea of the cost; again, teachers were reluctant to prompt for the item.

Topic (Prepared) Conversation

Examiners are asked to let candidates speak for approximately a full minute before interrupting, so that the exposition of the candidates' prepared material can be assessed.

As usual the Presentations ranged widely from monologues, where even struggling candidates were left to fend for themselves, to immediate general conversations with no initial candidate exposition. However, one must not lose sight of the many Examiners and candidates who do an excellent job by producing a natural and not too over-rehearsed presentation and subsequent discussion with spontaneous exchanges in a variety of time frames, and a full range of vocabulary and structure. It is the manipulation by candidates of their prepared material which will determine their marks.

The choice of topics was very wide; in some Centres candidates chose very challenging topics - there were very commendable expositions on the environment, problems of drug abuse and crime, religious intolerance and the role of women in society; many were able to speak at a very high and sophisticated level; in most Centres, candidates fared well with topics such as School, home life, future plans etc.

Candidate performance was generally very good on this part of the test with some fluent, interesting expositions and discussions. There is still a minority of candidates, who clearly do not prepare a topic as prescribed by the syllabus; they cannot be awarded high marks for scale **a**) (quality of presentation and preparation).

General Conversation

Overall, a good standard; there are not many in the 'weak' band, and what is always pleasing is that candidates will genuinely attempt to develop their response wherever possible. The result is normally a spontaneous and natural interchange.

The best performances from candidates in this section of the test were ones where they were encouraged to use a variety of time frames, relevant vocabulary and appropriate structures; many were able to demonstrate a high degree of fluency in their responses to the Examiner's questions. As usual, a good range of topic areas was tested, including School, holidays, family life, education, daily life, the environment etc. – all of which are entirely appropriate and all being topic areas where all candidates can reasonably be expected to have a suitable command of relevant vocabulary and idiom. A minority of Examiners do ask questions which are perhaps too sophisticated for the average candidate, thus denying such candidates the opportunity to demonstrate what they know or could offer with a more basic level of vocabulary and structure.

As has been said in the General Comments section, for both Topic and General Conversation, Examiners must ensure that candidates are offered the opportunity to respond in a range of tenses, otherwise marks above the satisfactory band on scale b) cannot be awarded. Similarly candidates whose topic or conversation is significantly curtailed cannot expect to be awarded full marks if they do not have the time to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structure.

General Impression

It was pleasing to see that the impression mark was consistently well used by the majority of Examiners, although sometimes the award of a particular mark seemed somewhat random, particularly in Centres with only one or two candidates (see p10 of **Teachers' Notes**).

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0525/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

A very good number of candidates produced accurate German of a high standard. However, there was also a small proportion of weaker candidates whose language was very poor and, at times, incomprehensible. In some instances, the writing of these lower-ability candidates was mixed with English/another language. Some candidates who had the ability to produce some excellent language had unfortunately not taken the time to re-read/check the accuracy of their work, and hence their writing frequently showed inconsistencies in spellings and grammar. Some very common words were often incorrectly spelt - e.g. *wie* for *wir*, *dan* for *dann*, etc. Genders were often not known. Many candidates failed to pick up ticks because they did not use capital letters on nouns (or their handwriting style was not clear enough to distinguish between small/capital letters); similarly, other candidates lost marks as a result of 'ich' being written with a capital letter. Word order was an issue for many candidates. Infinitives and past participles were often wrongly located, and so failed to gain credit. Subordinate clauses began with *weil* or with *dass* (often written as *das*) and whilst many candidates were successful in following with the correct word order, there were also many who were not. The concept of Time/Manner/Place was frequently not known, and the correct order of pronouns/nouns in different cases proved challenging. Similarly many candidates were confused in their use of adjectives.

As in previous years, there was a significant difference between the quality of German produced for **Question 1** and that produced for **Question 2**. The more directed style of **Question 1** seemed to result in accurate, flowing German, whereas the language produced for **Question 2** was often much less accurate. It would appear that candidates are being better prepared for the more directed/letter style and are receiving less preparation for the more creative/free writing required for **Question 2**.

Candidates continue to need reminding about the importance of clear handwriting: a number of candidates lost marks simply because their handwriting was not legible enough to convince the Examiner of their accuracy in grammar/spelling. Similarly candidates need to be reminded of the word count: 130-140 words. Examiners do not mark for either Communication or Accuracy after the 140th word and hence many candidates lose important marks because they go beyond the word count. With this in mind, candidates should also be sure to begin the task as set out in the rubric - too much preamble uses up valuable words and may result in marks not being gained later in the task, if important communication points are made after the word count has passed.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 is a guided writing exercise. Candidates choose between two options, **(a)** and **(b)**.

In this session, **Question 1(a)** proved to be significantly more popular than **Question 1(b)**. There were a number of whole Centres where every/almost every candidate chose this option. This may have been due to it appearing first on the paper (though last year **Question 1(b)** was the more popular). It may also be that the majority of candidates feel more confident about tackling the more formal letter option.

Question 1(a) *Nächstes Jahr möchten Sie und drei Freunde einen Campingurlaub in Deutschland machen. Sie schreiben einen Brief an den Manager des Campingplatzes.*

Many excellent letters were produced, and it was clear that many candidates are being well prepared for the skill of writing a formal letter. A very good number of candidates were confident in their use of the *Sie* form as well as in their production of appropriate phrases for the beginnings/ends of formal letters. However, even amongst the most able candidates, there were very few who were able to produce an accurate letter opening, e.g. *geehrter/geehrte* was rarely spelt/used correctly. Some candidates addressed the Manager inappropriately as *du* and others mixed their use of *du/Sie* throughout the letter. Less able candidates used phrases that were too familiar for a formal letter (e.g. *Hallo! Wie geht's? Bis bald! Schreib zurück!* etc.)

- Almost all candidates were able to convey at least 2 of the 3 elements in the first task, though a few had misunderstood/misread the fact that three friends would be coming on the trip and referred instead to one or two friends or to a family member.
- There were many and varied reasons expressed for wanting to visit Germany and these were largely successful.
- Most candidates were able to convey length of stay correctly, though a number of candidates were inaccurate in their use of dates
- *Bitten Sie um Auskunft über den Campingplatz und die Gegend.* This point was the most challenging for candidates. Many seemed not to understand the word *Auskunft* (often confusing its meaning with the meaning of the word *Unterkunft*) and made inappropriate use of the word in their own answer. However, a good number of candidates worked round their answers successfully by asking a series of direct questions relating to the campsite/area, e.g. *Gibt es Duschen?* / *Was kostet eine Nacht?*, etc. whilst others used phrases such as *Ich brauche mehr Information über.../ Könnten Sie bitte...?* (though inappropriate use of *Kannst du...?* was also used by some and could not be credited). A few candidates asked irrelevant questions about hotel-type accommodation or meals, suggesting a lack of knowledge about campsites. Unfortunately there were many able candidates who had written very good answers to this task but who failed to gain the communication point because they had already exceeded the word count of 140 words.

Question 1(b) *Ihr deutscher Brieffreund / Ihre deutsche Brieffreundin möchte Sie in Ihrem neuen Haus besuchen. Sie schreiben einen Brief an den Brieffreund / die Brieffreundin.*

This letter was often the preferred option for able candidates and there were some very impressive answers produced. The more personal aspect appealed to the candidates who chose this question, the tasks were easily accessible and often resulted in varied, interesting and creative answers.

- As in **Question 1(a)**, most candidates were able to convey length of stay correctly, though a number of candidates were inaccurate in their use of dates. Some candidates gave detailed reasons for their friend visiting at a certain time/for a certain length of time, but then omitted to give the answer to the other element in the task.
- Candidates often wrote lengthy descriptions of the new house but sometimes failed to mention whether or not they actually liked it.
- Many candidates misread/misunderstood this task and wrote generally about their new school but did not mention how they actually travel there.
- Generally this task was completed well, though some candidates wrote at length about possible activities available in the new house/area but forgot to ask their friend what he/she would like to do. Unfortunately, as in **Question 1(a)** there were again candidates who had written very good answers to this task but who failed to gain the communication point because they had already exceeded the word count of 140 words. Candidates who had chosen to write a lengthy introduction to their letter, expressing social niceties but not actually addressing any of the tasks set, were thereby disadvantaged.

Question 2

Eines Tages arbeiteten Sie mit ihren Eltern im Garten und Sie fanden dabei einen goldenen Ring. Beschreiben Sie:

- *Ihre Reaktion, als Sie den Ring fanden*
- *Was Sie mit dem Ring gemacht haben*
- *Was danach passierte*

Most candidates made successful attempts at this task and there were many examples of impressive and creative answers. The introduction this year of the guidance bullet points helped to give candidates a structure to their writing and, in most instances, helped to prevent candidates from writing off-topic.

However, many candidates were disadvantaged by their lengthy descriptions of the scene before the ring was found. This resulted in Communication points falling after the word count and hence being lost. Candidates are reminded that they should begin their account as the rubric sets out, in this case at the point of finding the ring.

A number of candidates tried to avoid the use of a past tense, either by using a conversation style, or simply by writing in the present tense. Some candidates were successful in including a limited amount of direct speech.

There were very few examples of candidates who had misunderstood the situation entirely, though a few candidates were confused over who had actually found the ring and wrote about their mother/sister instead of themselves.

Though there were a number of imaginative stories produced, generally the narratives fell into a limited range of story development, often with the ring being taken to the police station, being discovered as their grandmother's long lost treasure, or being sold in return for a large sum of money which was then spent on a range of desired items. A small minority of candidates used the guidance phrase *Was danach passierte* as an opportunity to describe anything at all and this resulted in a few cases of irrelevancy.

There were many examples of candidates failing to copy spellings correctly from the rubric, or failing to manipulate language given, e.g. *einen goldenen Ring* was often copied incorrectly or inappropriately - either with incorrect spelling of the accusative form, or with correct spelling of the accusative form but used for a subject case. The verbs *arbeiteten/fanden* in the imperfect tense were frequently adapted incorrectly for use with another pronoun (e.g. *ich fandte*).