

GERMAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0525/01

Listening

General comments

As it has in the past, this paper produced a good range of marks, with a number of candidates scoring highly. This pleasing level of attainment was found on both specific and general comprehension tasks. Overall, several factors helped make the paper more accessible to candidates:

- Careful vetting during preparation of the paper reduced the amount of writing the candidates had to do in the target language. Short responses were often enough to score a mark.
- Multiple choice selections were short and clear. Candidates thus needed to read and retain less material while listening for an answer.
- The emphasis throughout this component is on communication. Provided the message is clear, errors may be tolerated.

Most candidates had been well prepared by Centres and coped well with what was expected of them. Most candidates attempted all three sections of the examination **as all candidates will be expected to do from June 2007**.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1

Questions 1 – 8

This exercise produced full marks from nearly all candidates. The most frequent problems where they occurred were with **Questions 2 and 4**. A few candidates had problems with **Question 8**, although there has been a marked improvement at recent examining sessions in answering questions relating to time.

Exercise 2

Questions 9 – 16

Most candidates coped well with this exercise. **Questions 9 and 11** proved problematic to some. *Anfang* was not well understood in **Question 9**. The spelling of *Speisesaal* invalidated many answers to **Question 11**.

It should be remembered that all material for this section is drawn from the Defined Content Syllabus and ought not therefore to present any surprises.

Section 2

Exercise 1

Questions 17 – 24

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise. There was no predictable pattern for wrong answers. A number of candidates wrongly assumed from their reading of **Question 18** that only stars appeared on this show.

Exercise 2

Questions 25 – 30

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise.

Some candidates did not relate **Question 25** to Jan-Philipp Sendker and thus failed to score. In **Question 27**, some candidates seemed to think “womit” equated to “wo” and answered incorrectly that he had problems at the railway station.

Section 3

Exercise 1

Questions 31 – 36

There was no clear pattern to wrong answers; most candidates managed to score here. **Question 36** not infrequently and erroneously produced **A**, *das FBI* as an answer.

Exercise 2

Questions 37 – 45

Nearly all candidates attempted this, the most demanding exercise on the paper. The level of difficulty is deliberately high and candidates need to produce answers in the target language, although short, often one word answers would suffice to score fully.

Most candidates managed to score here; a minority seemed to have misunderstood the words *Firma/Firmen*, hearing *Film/Filme* instead, which then affected the rest of their answers.

GERMAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0525/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

Candidates' results overall on this paper were comparable with those achieved at previous examination sessions. Performance generally was good to excellent and it was clear that candidates had been well prepared by Centres. With rare exceptions, candidates tackled all three sections of the paper and managed to score in even the most challenging third section. **From June 2007 it will be compulsory for all candidates to attempt all three sections.**

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1

Questions 1 – 5

Full marks on this multiple-choice exercise were common. The mistakes that were occasionally made followed no distinct pattern.

Exercise 2

Questions 6 – 10

This exercise, too, resulted in full marks for nearly all candidates without a clear pattern emerging from the odd mistake.

Exercise 3

Questions 11 – 15

Most candidates scored full marks on this true/false exercise.

Exercise 4

Question 16

This short writing exercise, like the longer one at the end of Section 2, tests candidates' accuracy as well as their comprehension and ability to communicate a message in the target language.

All items, including the visual stimuli, in this first section of the paper are taken from the Defined Content and should not therefore present any surprises to candidates. It must be remembered, however, that the rubric states that candidates should refer to the questions **and** the visual stimuli. Some candidates lost marks by omitting any reference to *Campingplatz/ zelten* etc.; some candidates did not ask their friend to bring a sleeping bag or a related item such as a camp bed or a blanket, and asked instead for clothes, food etc. The majority of candidates though did achieve the full three marks for communication.

Two marks for accuracy were also available and were awarded in accordance with the mark scheme. Some errors were tolerated as long as they did not result in ambiguity and/or impede understanding.

Section 2

Exercise 1

Questions 17 – 23

Most candidates scored well in this exercise, involving a text about combining learning with fun activities. Some candidates confused *worüber* in **Question 18** with *wo* and subsequently answered incorrectly. **Question 19** also proved problematic for some who seemed to have overlooked the significance of *an anderen Schulen*.

Exercise 2

Question 24

In order to score well on this exercise as most candidates did, they need to focus on the precise list of tasks given. Failure to cover the elements required can affect marks gained. Ten marks can be obtained by covering all the necessary communication points: two items or one somewhat extended item per bullet point are required here. Centres should draw candidates' attention to this; more marks were lost by skimming or omitting reference to a bullet point than from the accuracy marks available.

Most candidates achieved the full five accuracy marks. Detailed explanations of the accuracy mark scheme are attached to the published mark scheme.

Candidates generally avoided irrelevant material, wrote the required number of words and presented their work well.

Section 3

As usual the majority of candidates attempted **Section 3**. **From June 2007 all candidates will be required to attempt all three sections.**

Questions set in this final section of the examination are intended to test general and specific comprehension. They may also require the ability to identify attitudes, emotions and ideas, the main points or themes, and to draw conclusions and make inferences. In order to do themselves justice in this section of the examination, candidates should be advised to:

- use the texts appropriately to answer the questions in such a way that the Examiner can see that the text and the question have been understood. Candidates cannot be rewarded for simply "lifting" sections of the text in the hope that the Examiner will pick out the portion that answers the question.
- ensure that answers are structured in such a way that they answer the question, e.g. for some questions a single word may clearly communicate the answer, but sometimes a single word will be ambiguous and something more will be required.

Exercise 1

Questions 25 – 31

In this exercise most candidates achieved maximum or near maximum marks. There were, however, a small number of candidates who still seemed unclear about the requirements of this exercise and were apparently unable to follow the demands of the rubric.

Candidates need only write a correction if the *NEIN* box has been ticked and valuable time can be wasted by expanding an answer when the *JA* box has been ticked.

One mark is still available if the *NEIN* box has been ticked correctly but the wrong explanation has been offered. No mark will be awarded if the incorrect box has been ticked.

Question 31 was problematic for some candidates who were unable to make the link between *clevere Geschäftsleute*, *kommerziell auf den Markt bringen* and *wollen Geld verdienen*.

Exercise 2

Questions 32 – 38

Good scores were achieved by most candidates. **Question 35** was perhaps the most taxing in this exercise. Candidates needed to convey the idea that Christian has no idea how much he owes, how much he has bought, does not read his bill/throws them away. A number of candidates simply listed bills, cars, mobile phones etc. without expressing that notion and thus failed to score.

Question 38 required candidates to refer to the need for young people to be more responsible about managing their finances (hence the involvement of schools); not all candidates were able to express this.

On the whole, most candidates acquitted themselves well in this the most demanding exercise on the paper involving answers in the target language.

GERMAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0525/03

Speaking

General comments

These comments are to be read in conjunction with the **Teachers' Notes** for October/November 2006.

As in previous years, the ability of candidates to communicate in German is impressive and there were very many highly scoring performances by candidates. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and there was a wide range of performance from candidates again this year. The cohort included candidates of native-speaker or near native-speaker standard and candidates whose language had been learned in a German-speaking country or at school.

Centres generally conducted the Speaking Test very professionally and Examiners had prepared themselves thoroughly before the examination and prepared their candidates to deliver their best. Some Examiners unnecessarily extended the Role plays into mini-conversations however or, in a few centres, some tasks in the Role plays were actually not completed. Most Examiners asked appropriate questions in the Topic and/or General Conversation sections of the test, and candidates seemed well-prepared for these sections. It should be stressed that thorough preparation for these sections can produce excellent performances. On the language side, candidates must be prepared to use the full range of time frames (present, past and future) in the Topic and General Conversation sections. Most Examiners do give ample opportunity to ask the sort of questions which allow these time frames to be used, but it must be noted that access to marks in Table B, scale **(b)** (linguistic quality) is limited if the candidate is not able to show this use.

There were just a few recordings of a poor quality. It should be stressed that the tape should run uninterrupted between sections in accordance with the instructions in the Teachers' Notes.

Administrative work in Centres was very good this November; there were few clerical errors of addition on the working mark sheets [WMS]. It would, however, be helpful if the Role play card number were indicated on the WMS for each candidate recorded and also on the tape in the appropriate place.

The recommended timings for each section of the examination were usually observed, although some Examiners did run together the Topic and General Conversation sections, which can make moderation difficult.

The mark scheme was applied consistently overall and the order of merit within centres was accurate where multiple candidates were entered. Where adjustments were necessary, the lack of time frames in the conversation sections or failure to complete all the Role play tasks were usually the issue.

Comments on specific questions

Examiners are reminded to encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task. If only one part of a task is completed, only one mark can be awarded. The majority of candidates were able to converse fluently in their Role plays and make use of natural and idiomatic German to complete the required tasks.

It is highlighted in the **Teachers' Notes** booklet (p4, 7(h)) booklet that a candidate's mistakes should not be corrected. As has been stated earlier, Examiners should adhere to the rubrics and printed stimuli of the Role plays and not add to or extend the set tasks, nor develop them into mini-conversations. Full guidance is given on p6 of the booklet, under **Structure of the Examination**.

Role Plays A

Arriving at a campsite in Switzerland

Most candidates did very well. The situation was quite straightforward and posed no problems. The two tasks requiring the framing of questions were found to be no more demanding than the other three tasks.

Providing information to a German tourist

Most candidates were able to play the role of the tourist official and offer suitable information about their own home town and area to the enquiring tourist in an appropriate form.

Making arrangements to meet a German friend visiting your country

Most candidates were able to handle this role play well and showed that the set task (making arrangements to meet someone) was one with which they were fully conversant.

Role Plays B

These Role plays were more demanding in that they required the ability to use different time frames and to give explanations, justifications and opinions where necessary. The set tasks tended to be longer and were often split by the Examiner, which is quite appropriate.

Interview for a holiday job in a supermarket in Germany

This role play task (a job interview) was well done by candidates: giving information about previous work experience and other relevant points was generally within candidates' scope.

Telephone call to check items on a lost shopping list

As usual, a range of time frames was necessary for full completion of the tasks, and this proved to be within the scope of most candidates. The need to explain a problem (a lost shopping list in this case) was handled well.

Discussing your stay in Germany with a friend of your host family

The majority of candidates proved able to handle a range of time frames as required in order to communicate the tasks successfully here. There were some pleasing and relevant reasons given for what candidates had enjoyed/ not enjoyed about their stay in Germany.

Topic (prepared) Conversation

A pleasing and wide range of topics was offered. The best examining in this section sounded natural and not too over-rehearsed. It gave rise to natural, spontaneous exchanges whilst encouraging the candidates to use a variety of tense, vocabulary and structure. Examiners are reminded to let candidates speak for up to a full minute before interrupting: in a few cases candidates were questioned as soon as the section started and this was often not helpful for the candidates nor did it allow them to demonstrate the quality of the preparation they had done.

Candidate performance was on the whole very good on this section and some fluent and interesting expositions and discussions were heard. As advised in the syllabus, candidates should avoid presenting "Myself" or "My life" as a topic as this can become too general and pre-empt the General (unprepared) Conversation section. Candidates generally presented a very wide range of prepared topics on subjects which were relevant or interesting to them personally; these are invariably more stimulating and can bring forth a whole range of descriptive individual language. Candidates who have prepared well in this way are then able to go on to the General Conversation with greater confidence, knowing that they will be able then to answer questions on a wide variety of personal issues. Candidates who clearly have not prepared a topic as prescribed by the syllabus cannot be awarded high marks under scale **(a)** of the mark scheme (quality of presentation of material in the topic).

In awarding marks for Language Examiners need to consult the Instructions to Teachers closely as candidates who do not (or cannot) convey past and future meanings may not be awarded above the satisfactory band under scale **(b)** of the mark scheme (see **Teachers' Notes**, p7). Similarly, candidates whose Topic or discussion of it is very brief cannot expect to be awarded high marks if they do not have time as a result to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structures.

It is helpful for candidates and for the Moderator alike for it to be made clear where the **Topic** section ends and the **General Conversation** begins.

General Conversation

Again, the best performances from candidates in this section of the test were ones where they were encouraged to use a variety of tenses, relevant vocabulary and appropriate structures and very many were able to demonstrate a high degree of fluency in their responses to the Examiners' questions. As in previous years, the overall standard of work heard in this section was extremely high. A good range of topics was discussed, with most Examiners covering at least 2 or 3 areas. Topics covered included school, holidays, family life, education, daily life, life in other countries, geographical surroundings and free time – all of which are entirely appropriate. Questions in a few cases proved too sophisticated for the average candidate and in just a small number of instances the General Conversation section was rather short.

General Impression

It was pleasing to see that the impression mark was consistently well used by the majority of Examiners.

GERMAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0525/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

The majority of candidates acquitted themselves well and there were relatively few weak candidates. There were some very good pieces of writing, remarkable for their style and accuracy and the inclusion of a wide variety of sophisticated constructions. The great majority of candidates demonstrated a sound grasp of basic German syntax and wrote flowing, idiomatic German, though with a more limited range of constructions.

Linguistic accuracy is crucial on this paper: candidates are advised to check their work carefully. Capital letters were not always used appropriately; they were sometimes omitted for nouns, even in some very fluent scripts and in a number of cases *sie* and *Sie* were confused. Genders were often incorrect and inconsistent, in some cases, within the same piece of work.

There was a marked difference on a significant number of scripts between the standard of German of **Question 1** and that of **Question 2**. Some candidates, who seemed to be accomplished letter writers, and who produced idiomatic and accurate German in **Question 1**, produced German of a much lower standard for **Question 2**. This would suggest that while letter writing is rigorously prepared to good effect, essay writing may be receiving less attention.

A few candidates produced work that was almost illegible; indeed occasionally there was so much crossing out that parts of the script were indecipherable. Candidates should be aware that poor handwriting could be to their disadvantage.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 (a)

There were many very good letters and it was clear that most candidates were thoroughly versed in this skill and familiar with the range of vocabulary required. Candidates are advised to note the requisite number of words on this exercise, namely 110 - 140; just a very few candidates significantly exceeded this, which was not to their advantage.

Most wrote an appropriate letter opening, although there were some instances of *Hallo, Wie geht's ?* Sometimes *du* was used instead of the more appropriate *Sie*.

- Most candidates introduced themselves appropriately. They explained without difficulty the reason for their writing.
- Candidates gave dates and/ or times of their flights, but some appeared either to have misread the rubric or task, or had perhaps misunderstood *wohin*, writing that they had landed in rather than flown from Düsseldorf.
- Candidates were able to describe their luggage without difficulty.
- Most candidates were able to say how they felt about the situation, although some tried to give excessively complicated explanations for their point of view, which resulted in poor German and made the letter so long that the final task could not be credited. The most successful candidates offered concise, straightforward descriptions of their feelings in the situation and the reasons for these, e.g. *Ich weiss, dass der Flughafen sehr gross ist, aber ich habe sehr lange gewartet. Jetzt bin ich böse, weil meine Kleider in dem Koffer sind. Ich muss jetzt alles neu kaufen und das ist teuer.*
- The majority asked appropriate questions, although some addressed the manager as *du*.

Some candidates concluded their letter inappropriately. *Alles Gute* and *bis bald* occurred on a number of occasions.

Question 1 (b)

- Candidates were able to state when the concert had taken place and to indicate whom they had gone with.
- The majority of candidates described where the concert had taken place and said how much the tickets had cost. Various locations were given for the concert including a football stadium. Some candidates merely said that the tickets were expensive and did not give the price.
- While candidates were able to give a description here they not infrequently described a male singer or indeed a group rather than a female singer as the task required. The description of the performance was usually well done.
- Very few candidates offered an opinion as they were asked to: *Sagen Sie, was Sie von dem Konzert gehalten haben und warum*; many candidates appeared not to have understood the task, owing to misunderstanding of the word *gehalten*. Some wrote of an incident, such as poor behaviour on the part of members of the audience, which had caused the concert to be halted.
- Suitable questions were asked by the candidate of their German friend about the last concert they had been to.

Question 2

There were some good answers, with generally relevant story lines. Candidates are reminded that they should not simply repeat the rubric: neither accuracy nor communication points can be awarded for this. A few candidates spent too long scene setting. In most cases candidates began their essays very well, indicating the source of the letter brought by the postman, e.g. an old friend renewing acquaintance, a relative announcing an inheritance or an organisation announcing that a prize had been won. Regrettably, many candidates then failed to follow the rubric and did not develop the storyline, but merely described the contents of the letter or described the long lost friend or benefactor, and consequently did not score many points for communication. Some then went on to write of their current feelings and future plans. Candidates are advised to note that this task requires the development of the story indicated in the rubric and that they are required to write an essay predominantly in the past tense: *Erzählen Sie, was weiterhin geschah*. Some candidates appeared not to have understood this and wrote in the present tense.

Candidates are reminded that essays should not exceed the requisite number of words as this can be to their disadvantage. Most kept within the word limit at this session of 110 – 140 words.