

# **Stage 2 German (continuers)**

2011 Assessment Report



Government  
of South Australia

**SACE**  
Board of SA

## STAGE 2 GERMAN (CONTINUERS)

### 2011 ASSESSMENT REPORT

#### OVERVIEW

Assessment reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

#### SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

##### Assessment Type 1: Folio

The number of tasks submitted for Assessment Type 1: Folio ranged from three to five, as required in the subject outline.

Many schools provided students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning in assessment tasks, which were carefully and deliberately designed according to the assessment design criteria.

Teachers are reminded to ensure that all folio tasks allow students to demonstrate their learning at the highest level.

##### *Interaction*

An interaction task should be designed in such a way that students can demonstrate their learning in relation to the assessment design criteria Ideas and Expression.

One of the features of expression (E3: Capacity to interact and maintain a conversation and discussion) should make it possible for students to interact spontaneously across a wide range of topics, to adjust or elaborate on comments or opinions in reaction to comments made by the interlocutor, and to demonstrate that they are capable of handling topic shifts and unpredictable elements, to achieve at the highest level.

Many of the interactions were designed in such a way that students could indeed demonstrate their learning as described above. However, some of the interactions assessed in folios were (or resembled) scripted role plays or well-rehearsed responses to previously provided questions. Students who took this approach were less likely to demonstrate their learning at the highest level because the scripted nature of the interaction made spontaneity, topic shifts, and elaboration in response to reactions and comments by the interlocutor impossible.

A number of interactions were presented as group interactions. While this is allowable, it can be difficult for moderators to establish the identity of the speakers.

For students to demonstrate their learning at the highest level in relation to E3, it is advisable for the teacher to take part in the interaction so that they can ask questions that elicit spontaneous and finely nuanced responses.

For students to demonstrate their learning at the highest level, they needed to successfully interact across a wide range of topics. In many interactions students were presented with many questions across a wide range of topics, but the 'closed' nature of the questions made it difficult at times for students to demonstrate depth and detailed and varied content. It is advisable to ask as many open-ended questions as possible, so that students can demonstrate elaboration on their opinions, ideas, and arguments. In the most effective interactions the teacher asked for clarification of a point or elaboration on something the student had said.

Only rarely did the interaction contain features of reflection, but when reflection did occur students were well able to demonstrate their learning in reflection outside the text analysis task or in-depth study. The following questions are examples of how reflection may be encouraged during an interaction:

- What have you learned during the study of this topic/book/film?
- What was new and challenging for you in this topic?
- Would you have reacted the same way as the characters in this film/story/text; why or why not?

A number of interactions followed oral presentations. In some cases the oral presentation was lengthy and the subsequent interaction very short. In an oral presentation only ideas, E1, and E2 may be assessed, not E3. Interaction must follow the oral presentation, within the prescribed time limit, for students to demonstrate their learning fully in relation to that performance standard.

### ***Text Analysis***

There were many carefully designed tasks which allowed students to fully show their text analysis skills.

Some tasks limited student achievement, especially in relation to IR2 (Analysis of the language in texts). Some tasks contained no questions about the functions of particular linguistic and cultural features, stylistic features (such as tone, register, and textual/organisation features). These tasks focused entirely on IR1 (Interpretation of meaning in texts). It is important to select texts that are rich in these features and to design questions that allow students to demonstrate their learning against this assessment design criterion.

More than half of all text analysis tasks (texts and questions) were taken from past Stage 2 examinations. Some of these texts are not entirely suitable for this type of task, which is part of the folio, because they are often very short and do not have enough language features. Students need to analyse sufficient text to show that they can perform at the highest level of the performance standards.

Some excellent tasks contained a number of texts about a certain topic. These texts generally had a variety of purposes (e.g. personal letter, an advertisement, a newspaper article) and had been written for a variety of audiences. As such, they contained many of the IR2 features, and carefully designed questions made it possible for students to demonstrate their analytical skills with relation to the analysis of language in texts. Some of these tasks asked students to make connections

between texts by comparing and contrasting information, opinions and ideas, and so allowed students to achieve at the highest level.

On the whole, there was limited evidence of reflection on how cultures, beliefs, values, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in text(s). IR3 was largely left to be assessed in the in-depth study, but it is good practice to select texts and design questions that make it possible for students to reflect on cultures, beliefs, values, practices, and ideas and to make connections to their own values, ideas, and opinions in this folio task as well.

### ***Text Production***

There were many interesting text production tasks as part of Assessment Type 1: Folio.

Most folios contained one or two text production tasks.

Not all task sheets indicated:

- a context, purpose, and audience
- the text type for production
- the kind of writing required (e.g. informative, imaginative, narrative, personal, persuasive, evaluative, or descriptive).

It is extremely helpful for students if these are indicated.

There is no word limit for this task. Students are assessed according to:

- Ideas
- Expression.

A few tasks were rather short, with word limits of approximately 250 words. In such a short piece it may be difficult for students to demonstrate I2 (Depth of treatment of ideas, information, or opinions) if this is the only text production task in the folio. This could prevent students from achieving at the highest level in this feature.

Some very good tasks allowed students to build a logical argument, elaborate their ideas and opinions, and support their ideas and opinions with examples and details (demonstrating learning against I2). These tasks mostly had a generous word limit or no word limit.

About half of all text production tasks were drafted and half completed under test conditions. The conditions for completion of a task should not influence the grade assigned to a task; that is, only the final product is assessed, not the circumstances in which it is produced.

Practical suggestions for the presentation of the folio materials include:

- Record CDs/DVDs in a format that is accessible by moderators.
- Ensure the volume of the students' speaking is audible.
- In a group oral interaction all students should be clearly identified at the beginning of the oral interaction.
- Students should identify themselves at the beginning of the interaction by stating their SACE number.
- Include texts for text analysis tasks.
- Include transcripts for aural texts for text analysis tasks.

- Provide task sheets that clearly outline the requirements of each task.
- An indication of the assessment decision for the assessment type according to the performance standards is helpful, rather than assigning a mark out of 20 without explanation.

## **Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study**

A wide range of topics was chosen for the in-depth study.

Many in-depth studies demonstrated research, careful design of the two responses in German, and critical reflection.

It is important that teachers help students in designing the three tasks, which differ in context, audience, and purpose. Some tasks were variations on the same topic and had similar content in both the oral presentation and the written response. Some information/examples/data may be appropriate for both tasks, but the response must be different. In some in-depth studies the oral presentation contained not only the same ideas but even some passages from the written response, which is not appropriate.

### **An Oral Presentation in German**

Teachers need to ensure that students limit themselves to the prescribed 3–5 minutes. It is also advisable for students to identify themselves at the beginning of their presentation, and to check that the recording has the correct format and is audible.

The oral presentation should have a clearly defined context, purpose, and audience. This helps students greatly in selecting an appropriate text type and the rhetorical and stylistic devices that enhance the quality of their presentation, particularly in I1 (Relevance).

Some oral presentations relied on reading rather than presenting. It is difficult, if not impossible, to engage the audience and create the desired impact (as stated in the A range of I1) if students read a prepared text, and so this approach does not allow students to achieve at the highest level in this feature.

Some oral presentations contained an interaction with the teacher. This is not necessary in this assessment type and is better left to the folio tasks.

### ***A Written Response to the Topic in German***

Many of the written responses in German were excellent. Many students chose appropriate text types and kept audience, context, and purpose in mind. Informative articles and essays were the most popular text types and allowed students to demonstrate ideas and opinions in relation to their in-depth study topic.

The large majority of students took full advantage of the prescribed 500-word limit. A few students wrote significantly less than the limit, which was potentially limiting when it came to I2 (Depth of treatment of ideas, information, or opinions). Students are therefore encouraged to write up to the 500-word limit.

This task must differ in context, audience and purpose to the oral presentation. It is suggested that students choose different aspects of their in-depth study for the written response and the oral presentation.

The written response should reflect research. Some written responses were creative pieces that showed no evidence of research and were more like folio tasks. Teachers must ensure that the written response conforms to the requirements described in the subject outline.

It is helpful if a task sheet is attached to the task to indicate the topic of the written response, including its audience, context, purpose, and text type.

### ***A Reflective Response in English***

Many very good reflections were submitted but unfortunately this task was also misunderstood quite often.

The best reflections were based on in-depth study topics that lent themselves to a reflection on values, ideas, cultures, practices, and beliefs. It was clear that teachers discussed and helped students to formulate suitable questions for reflection based on their particular in-depth study topics. This ensured that students had the opportunity to reflect on cultures and values, their own values and ideas, and their own learning, which allowed them to demonstrate their learning against IR3 at the highest level.

Unfortunately, a considerable number of tasks were informative rather than reflective, resembling the written task in English from the previous syllabus. This prevented students from demonstrating their learning in feature IR3 (Reflection).

The subject outline states that students 'reflect on, for example, their experience in undertaking the in-depth study in English', and also includes a number of points to guide student reflection. Not all of the dot points from this part of the subject outline need to be addressed.

It is very important for teachers to help students in selecting questions to reflect on. Reflecting on all points listed for this task makes it difficult to demonstrate depth of thinking and reflection. Achievement at the highest level in this feature requires critical and sophisticated reflection, which is difficult to demonstrate when too many questions for reflection are addressed.

## **EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

### **Assessment Type 3: Examination**

A total of 135 students completed the examination. The majority of candidates were very well prepared, generally coped well with conversational, everyday German, and could express themselves adequately. However, presenting ideas, opinions, and concepts in German is much more challenging, and students are advised to practise the more complex kinds of writing (e.g. persuasive) and text types (e.g. speeches, articles, and formal letters to the editor). Vocabulary and expressions regarding *Meinungsäußerung* should be acquired and practised in the normal course of the Year 11 and Year 12 program.

#### ***Oral Examination***

##### ***Section 1: Conversation***

Most students were able to speak well about topics such as family, interests, school life, and future plans. The relevance and depth of treatment of information, opinions,

and comments depended largely on the student's level of proficiency. In the more successful and better prepared conversations, students were able to respond in depth and give opinions, to make thoughtful and detailed answers, and to take the initiative in the conversation. Others, however, answered very superficially. Probing questions revealed quickly whether students had learned by rote or were able to move beyond predictable questions.

Students' ability to demonstrate capacity to maintain conversation varied widely. Most could offer information but left it up to the examiner to 'lead' the conversation. Many students relied on simple answers and had to be encouraged to respond in more detail and depth.

Teachers and students are encouraged to practise exam-style conversation and to refer to the support material on the SACE website ([www.sace.sa.edu.au](http://www.sace.sa.edu.au)). However, there is a danger for students to over-prepare their answers. The conversation then becomes rather artificial.

An examination is a formal situation and students should be able to differentiate between formal and informal address and use the formal address confidently and correctly.

#### Linguistic and grammatical comments

Even though, in general, students communicated quite well, overall attention to detail and grammatical correctness could be improved. There were frequent errors in basic elements of sentence structure that one would expect to be applied accurately at this level. Many students lacked some basic vocabulary, for example, simple time phrases. The following is a selection of the most common errors:

- problems with basic subject–verb agreement, e.g. *die Schüler hat*
- incorrect auxiliary verbs, e.g. *sie hat nach Sydney gefahren*
- errors with word order and, in particular, verb second rule, word order in subordinate and relative clauses
- problems with tenses, in particular Perfect Tense, e.g. *er hat ....sehen, ich hat ...gefahren*
- incorrect use of pronouns, possessive pronouns, gender, e.g. *meine Bruder und ihre Hund*
- use of anglicisms, e.g. *In die Zukunft ich bekomme eine Lehrer.*

This was the best-handled section of the exam.

#### Section 2: Discussion

As students had the opportunity to prepare and work with the required vocabulary and content, they should handle the discussion confidently and competently. Many students were able to discuss at length the dot points on their in-depth study outline forms. However, some students had not researched their topic in depth and were able to handle the discussion only on a superficial level and without enough relevant vocabulary to express their ideas effectively. Thirty-two students scored less than 6 in this section, which may indicate inadequate preparation.

The in-depth study outline form can play a vital role in the discussion. Students are able to list the points they have researched and are prepared to discuss, and the



examiners are guided by these points. It is imperative that students think carefully about the details listed on this form and they are prepared to discuss topics at length and express their personal opinion.

The choice of topic is vital and the teacher must offer guidance and direction when selecting the topic, the texts, and the assessment tasks. Teachers should encourage students to approach research and topics broadly as well as aiming for depth in studying and understanding. However, the danger is that some topics can be too broad, which results in only superficial treatment of the subject, for example, a topic such as 'travel in Germany'. Some students chose interesting and original topics and were able to present ideas and opinions very competently.

It was very pleasing to see how many students were well prepared and could talk about their topic passionately at length and in depth. However, it was quite obvious when students had not chosen the topic themselves. While these students may have been well prepared, they lacked interest and/or ability to comment independently or with opinion and reflection, which somewhat limited their potential to achieve in the A range. Some umbrella topics make it very difficult for students to demonstrate in-depth study as well as personal opinion.

Overall there was a tendency for students to recite information that they had learnt by heart, but the more successful responses demonstrated that students coped well with probing questions.

### ***Written Examination***

#### ***Section 1: Listening and Responding***

##### **Question 1**

(a) A well-answered question. The majority of students were able to state clearly what happened.

(b) Most students realised the purpose of the advertisement.

##### **Question 2**

(a) Generally a well-answered question, with many students picking up on services which included individual/customised tours, wet weather protection, special events like wedding/birthday tours, but only a few students explained the extraordinary nature of the tours and the unique perspective of Berlin that were offered.

##### **Question 3**

(a) There was major confusion between the meaning of 'Wälder' and 'Welt'. Many students interpreted the advertisement as 'the Year of the World' (it was 'the Year of the Forests') but most were able to indicate that it was an awareness-raising campaign. Most did not mention that its aim was to make the youth of Germany take action.

(b) A well-answered question, with many students able to explain clearly what young people needed to do to enter the competition. However, many students did not mention the topic of the competition: what would be missing in a world without forests?



#### Question 4

(a) A well-answered question, with most students explaining Marie as 'less than perfect' and 'not materialistic'. The top answers included that she likes sleeping in, feels she is lazy, and doesn't talk much.

(b) This part caused a few problems, with some students talking about Marie's relationship with her parents, when the focus should have been on her friendships. In responding to the statement that 'her friends didn't mind her laziness and found she wasn't a good listener', many students were able to produce this information. The most successful answers mentioned that Marie appeared disinterested and that her friends resented having to explain things to her and were annoyed when she didn't react to some questions.

(c) Generally a well-answered question. Most students picked up that Marie lives for the moment and that she likes attending music festivals with friends. The better answers mentioned that music is essential for Marie and that she connects with people through it. For Marie, happiness means peace, love, and fun. The word 'Friede' posed problem for students, with a majority interpreting it as 'freedom' rather than 'peace'.

#### *Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A*

#### Question 5

(a) Nearly all students interpreted the first two paragraphs as *not* including the opening statement in bold print. Very few students looked at the way the mood of the text is conveyed in a multidimensional way. Only the very best responses talked about smells, warmth, and how slowly time passed.

A few responses described the slowness of the time and the repetitive nature of the days in a negative way, stating that these were boring. This may have been the result of confusion between 'langsam' and 'langweilig'. The text specifically states 'jeder Tag...verging so richtig schön langsam' – which is a *positive* statement.

Quite a few responses also talked about the mood being 'exciting', which seemed to stem from a confusion with the word 'Entspannung' meaning, by virtue of the prefix 'ent', the opposite, relaxation.

(b) Most students had some valid ideas in responding to this question. Few answers really addressed the question of what was 'unique' about the time, describing the time but not explaining why the situation was a one-off.

(c) Most students understood this question and wrote good responses. It was important that students mentioned 'the time for decision making' in their responses.

#### Question 6

(a) Mostly done well. It was a matter of giving sufficient detail to receive full marks. Some answers were too general, not specifically talking about the Cosmos musicians but about multiculturalism in general.

Some answers missed the point and talked about record sales, but most students understood the text and the question.

(b) Many responses talked about the changes, without explaining why they were important. Some explained the importance without giving the details of the changes. To gain full marks, the answer needed to do both.

A good answer really needed to talk about the 1950s, discuss the changes in the intervening years, describe the situation today, and say why these changes were important.

Some responses talked about migrants using 'megaphones', without reading the specific idiomatic meaning of 'Sprachrohr' meaning 'the voice of', which was given below the text. Students should ensure that they read *all* information carefully before answering questions.

The reading task was in general completed much more successfully than in 2010. Most students understood the gist of the texts, and a good number of students gained full marks.

Most students understood the need to give evidence from the text. However, some wrote lengthy excerpts from the texts without giving any English translation or explanation, and some excerpts copied were irrelevant to the point being made.

### *Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B*

Most students demonstrated a good understanding of the task and were generally able to write to the set word limit. Some students wrote much more than required and a few responses were very short but still demonstrated an understanding of the task.

Most students took a stance and responded well to the given proposal. A few took on the role of a concerned parent. The more effective responses demonstrated an understanding of the need for an introduction and set out logical responses, opinions, and arguments that referred to the text. These responses provided depth of ideas, detail, and opinion, and sometimes included alternative suggestions. The less successful responses did not refer much to the text and failed to consolidate a position or argument with examples, depth, or detail.

Although students should be familiar with letter writing, many did not use the formal language that a letter to the editor requires (for example, formal address). In many responses it was clear that a student had not planned his/her response and so jumped from idea to idea without making logical connections. The more effective responses showed a clear structure and a logical sequence, and communicated ideas effectively and originally.

It was interesting to note that the tone of the letters varied greatly. A few were very formal and polite, many were more informal but polite, and some were discourteous and angry.

A large number of responses did not use the conventions of the text type, such as date, address, or salutation, and all three conventions were used only rarely. There was a great range of salutations, many of them incorrect and too informal, for example, *An dem Redakteur, sehr geheerte Herr, liebe Editor, Lieber Bruce Miller*.

The accuracy and range of vocabulary and sentence structures varied quite a lot. There were some excellent responses in which students used a variety of vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and conjunctions. However, less successful responses used distinctly limited sentence structures and vocabulary.

It was surprising to see that a large number of students had not learnt how to use the following expressions correctly:

- In **die** zwölfte Klasse instead of in **der** zwölften Klasse
- **Meine** Meinung nach instead of **meiner** Meinung nach

### Section 3: Writing in German

Answers in this section of the exam ranged from excellent to less than adequate. Most responses showed inadequate knowledge of grammar, structures, and vocabulary. In particular, limited vocabulary prevented students from expressing their ideas fully. There was little evidence of planning. Attention should be paid to proper planning, structuring, and sequencing of the responses and to the use of paragraphs.

Teachers should note that writing skills and linguistic skills are two different competencies and both need practice well before Year 12.

Students are reminded to indicate clearly the question they are answering, as instructed in the examination paper.

It was noted that a number of students achieved outstanding accuracy, range, and subtlety of expression in their responses, in a foreign language, under exam conditions.

A good number of students chose each of the three tasks in this section, with question 9 the most popular.

#### Questions 8 and 9

Most responses were relevant to the question and some were excellent. It was particularly impressive to see that so many students answering questions 8 and 9 were able to adopt a tone that was appropriate to their purpose and audience. The lack of paragraphing in some responses weakened the sense of structure and sequence.

Many students who responded to question 8 switched frequently between formal and informal address. Students are reminded to be careful in using the familiar *ihr* and its possessive adjective *euer–eure* in all its cases.

Students responding to question 9 seemed to be very familiar with the text type and language for it; however, the most effective responses presented their arguments more logically and convincingly, appealing to personal relationships.

#### Question 10

There were some excellent responses to question 10. However, the students who answered this question needed to show how sport changed their life in a positive way, not just how sport has played an important role in their life. Many students wrote about their love of sport and only linked it to the title of the task with hindsight.

Some students wrote this text as if they were writing a letter or the text of a speech, but the most effective responses were articles that described how sport had changed the person's life in a positive way. Overall more responses achieved a mark in the A

range for this question than for the others in this section, which reflected the depth of ideas and reflection students achieved in their responses.

## **OPERATIONAL ADVICE**

### **Moderation**

An indication of the assessment decision for the assessment type clearly referenced to the performance standards is helpful. Teachers may provide grades for each task to support the overall grade for the assessment type.

Some schools submitted all tasks for Assessment Type 1: Folio and Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study in manila folders, which made the moderation process much easier.

For combined classes from more than one school it is vital that teachers agree on the interpretation and application of the performance standards, by, for example, exchanging student assessment work or benchmarking tasks. This was not the case for some assessment groups and could lead to inconsistencies in the application of the performance standards.

Teachers must ensure that students adhere to word and time limits when the subject outline states them. Students are advised to include a word count for each written piece.

If a student did not complete a task, this should be indicated clearly with the student's material submitted for moderation.

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