

2008 LOTE: German GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students seemed to be well prepared for the oral examination in 2008. A good range of vocabulary was used and interesting opinions were expressed. Some students were able to recount something unusual or funny, which was a delight to the assessors. Students all tried hard to communicate according to their ability and most linked well with assessors. They advanced the conversation, asked for clarification and gave ideas and explanations. Some students showed a high level of maturity. Students' remarks were well thought-out, yet did not seem to be rote-learned. It was impressive to see how some students spoke in quite an individual way.

It was disappointing that a small number of students did not seem to be aware of what was required in the oral examination and were inadequately prepared. These students had not prepared a Detailed Study and had no German texts to discuss. They had simply prepared a topic, such as Christmas or computer games, which bore no relation to the requirements of the *VCE German Study Design*. Some students spoke about their Detailed Study in the Conversation section, while others were not aware that they were required to give an introduction of no more than one minute to the second part of the examination.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

Most students were able to speak well on the key areas. Outstanding students were proactive and able to connect the different aspects of their life so that the conversation became a real one. Some students gave short answers of only one or two sentences rather than expanding their ideas. For example, when a student is asked to give an opinion about school uniform, it is not adequate for them to say 'I haven't thought about it'. It is also not appropriate in the general conversation for students to frequently say 'I'm sorry' or 'Excuse me' or 'We didn't cover that, but I could talk about ...'. These phrases can be used in the Discussion section, but not in the Conversation section where students should be aware of the areas of their personal life about which the assessors may ask.

Students needed to listen carefully to questions and ensure that they addressed the areas about which they were being asked. Many students focused on a key word in the question and missed the real point. Students should pause for a few seconds before responding to ensure their reply is relevant. Effective repair strategies that help students overcome problems are essential.

Students should remember that pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo are also assessed under communication. Key words should be rehearsed so that students do not confuse the pronunciation of *ei* with *ie* and that they correctly pronounce *er* at the end of a word. Students should not say an English word and ask for a German translation; they should rephrase what they want to say, even if it means starting the sentence again.

Content

Most students were able to speak effectively about their family, school, free time, subjects, part-time jobs, summer holidays and about going on exchange. Areas that seemed to be more difficult for students to discuss were justifying why they liked a subject and giving reasons for a career choice.

Students seemed to have difficulty expressing and differentiating various aspects of 'I like'; *mögen* in particular, was often used incorrectly. The present tense is incorrectly formed and often constructions using it are incorrect. It would be better to say, for example, 'Ich spiele gern Tennis' rather than using the verb mögen. Students also often confused mag with möchte. 'Es gefällt mir...' or 'Mir gefällt es...' could be used more as alternatives when expressing likes or dislikes.

Students wanting to express frustration with an annoying sibling described him or her as *ärgerlich*; '*er/sie nervt mich*' or '*er/sie ist nervig*' would be better. Students commonly used 'ok', and although it is used in German, there are much better adjectives that could add variety to the language. Many students had difficulty saying 'I have a sister called ...'. This would be an ideal time to introduce a relative pronoun to add to the range of sentence structures.

1



2

Language

Every year the same mistakes appear. Words that are regularly confused include *Student* and *Schüler*, *studieren* and *lernen*, *Spaß haben* and *Spaß machen* (often with *sehr* in front), *Sie* ('you' formal) with *sie* ('they' plural). Verbs present problems with incorrect tenses, endings, past participles and incorrect use of the auxiliary in the perfect. Students need to remember that if you are still doing something, German requires the present tense, whereas English uses the past tense. A good example would be '*Ich lerne seit sechs Jahren Deutsch*', which in English would be 'I have been learning German for six years'. Other frequent errors are wrong word order, particularly after subordinating conjunctions like *weil*, incorrect adjective endings, imperfect tense, such as the plural form *waren*, difficulties with pronouns (calling everything 'es', such as in describing 'meine Schule'). Interrogative words seem to be challenging; *Wer* was understood as *where*, and *Woher* and *Wohin* were often misinterpreted.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

The choice of the Detailed Study topic is critical. A topic should be chosen that appeals to students, has adequate resources, and gives students the opportunity to formulate and express their own opinions. The interests and abilities of the group of students should also be taken into account; a topic that is ideal for one group may be unsuitable for another. Strong students may be done a disservice with topics that are largely descriptive and lack scope for interpretation, and weak students may suffer if the topic is beyond their ability. With a mixed group it is important to select a topic that all students can comprehend and feel able to master. It should be easy to comprehend, well-structured and not too openended. The texts should be able to be linked to explain the focus, which needs to be carefully defined. The topic must also fit in with German-speaking communities. For example, a topic such as *Umwelt* or *Alternative Energie* should refer to one or more of the German-speaking countries rather than be handled from a global outlook. It is useful if comparisons can be made with other countries. It is advisable for students to have three sources of different types in German with a minimum of 15 hours of class time spent on them. It is important that the texts link together and are not three unrelated sources, so that students are able to discuss the links.

Content

In the one-minute introduction students must name the main theme and state the main focus of the topic. Assessors should be made aware of photographs or other objects that have been brought in to support the discussion. This was mostly well done. It is helpful if students also give a sub-topic and/or indicate areas they would like to concentrate on, but they should not have too many *Schwerpunkte*. Some introductions were too long, with students providing details about the main points of their information. This made it difficult to handle the discussion in a structured way.

Students should have enough content in the Detailed Study to enable them to speak about it for about eight minutes and there should be a full range of information upon which they can draw. Teachers should ensure that texts have enough scope for a detailed discussion and assist students to prepare adequately. Some resources do not lead to much discussion, for example, maps, photos, cartoons, and poems. Many students gave much information but few opinions, while others offered opinions effectively without being asked. Relevance, breadth and depth of information, ideas and opinions are included in the criteria, so the texts must be known well enough to provide these. Students handled these criteria with varying degrees of expertise, research and thought. Some students needed a great deal of support. Some students left their best remarks until the end but need to prepare thoroughly so that they feel confident throughout the discussion. Students should have an interesting finishing point and something to add when asked at the end of the Discussion if there is anything more they would like to say.

Some effective topics were Wiederstand in der DDR, Nachkriegszeit, Tatura Internierungslage, Die weiße Rose, Kindertransport, Neue Energiequellen and Die Qual der Wahl (for able students using such texts as Das schreckliche Mädchen and the short story Die rote Katze). Less effective topics were Berlin als kulturelle Metropole, Österreich, Oktoberfest, Feste and Das Leben in Berlin (all too broad and vague).

There were some topics where students lacked sufficient background knowledge. Some students had little understanding of concepts such as the Cold War, the benefits of reunification, why the *Gastarbeiter* came to Germany, the reasons why many Germans came to Australia during different periods, and the background to the film, *Good-bye Lenin*. It would be wise for teachers to prepare greater historical and political content before embarking on a topic that relies on an understanding of such aspects.

Many students presented basic facts, such as that there was a war between 1939 and 1945. An understanding of the texts, interpretation, explanations, ideas and opinions are required, not a simplistic explanation of basic historical facts.



3

When selecting a film as a resource, students and teachers should consider visiting the film's website. Film websites offer a considerable amount of background material to the topic, supporting historical, political or social perspectives, information and background leading to the development of 'ideas and opinions'. In particular, they also offer students the German vocabulary to help them discuss the topic and possible questions that may arise in the course of the discussion. These websites also often offer teaching materials and reviews that may assist in preparing the introduction to the topic as well as expanding the students' understanding.

Language

It is important that students be aware that assessors look for a good range of vocabulary, appropriate structures, well-phrased expressions and accuracy of grammar in the language section. As this is prepared work, genders and verb forms should be correct. Students should not rely on rote-learned passages and anglicisms should be avoided. Strong students were well prepared, had good analysis and evaluation of their topic, and were able to link their texts effectively. Thorough preparation is essential to achieving success.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Virtually all students made a very good attempt at each section of the examination. They appeared to have managed their time for each section effectively and generally prepared well thought-out responses. The degree of student comprehension (listening and reading) was very pleasing.

It is disappointing that students still make very basic mistakes and show a lack of knowledge of commonplace vocabulary; for example, Jugend(zentrum), Balkon, $Stra\betae/Stra\betaenbahn$ and Berge (mountains) were misunderstood as 'castle', and Stadt (town) was again confused with Staat (state). Common mistakes occurred again with the conjugation of modals, wissen, $m\"{o}gen$ and $m\"{o}chten$. Many students repeatedly made verb ending errors when writing in German, which is considered a very serious mistake at Unit 4 level. They should continually check through their writing during the examination.

Ten years after the introduction of the German spelling reform, many students still apply the old rules for the spelling of ss and β , for example, old: $da\beta$, $mu\beta$; new: dass, muss.

Students and teachers are encouraged to carefully read the *VCE German Study Design* and look at past Assessment Reports when preparing for future examinations, as much of the advice remains appropriate, and common errors recur annually.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Students responded very well to the listening passages this year. They appeared to have read the questions carefully before each passage, which enabled them to listen effectively for the critical points. Note-taking indicated that most students realised that it was necessary only to record the points relevant to the questions. Although note-taking was not assessed in the examination, it showed that students had developed good listening skills that helped them deduce the meaning from the context, even if they missed one or two words necessary for a particular question.

Part A – Respond in English

Text 1

Text 1 covered very basic vocabulary and the majority of students achieved full marks. However, some students still struggled with dates, times and basic words such as *Stadt* and *Staat*, *regnet*, *Jugendzentrum*.



Question 1

COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

Date: 23 November

Reason for the celebrations: 800th anniversary of the town OR 800 years of the town

PROGRAM

Time Event 09:00am Concert

10:15am Speech by the Mayor, Ms Erika Scholz Highlight: opening of new youth centre

Concluding event: fireworks

Condition: no rain

Text 2

Text 2 covered general topics and basic vocabulary with which students at this level should be very familiar: looking for a room, sharing an apartment, eating, hobbies, and lifestyle. Students generally performed well and were able to identify possible areas of conflict between Anna and Bernd.

Question 2

- new in town OR her parents live in the country (one of these for one mark)
- commences her studies/university course

Some students confused auf dem Land with in einem anderen Land.

Ouestion 3

- disadvantage: small, smallest room
- advantage: balcony OR view of the mountains

Berge was often misunderstood as Burg(en).

Question 4

Three possible areas of conflict with Bernd needed to be identified, including:

- Anna prefers studying to partying OR Anna might not like loud music (late at night) because she needs to study
- Anna is a vegetarian, Bernd likes meat OR Anna does not like cooking much but Bernd does OR Anna might not like it when Bernd/housemates cook meat
- Anna gets up early in the morning, Bernd sleeps longer
- Anna is neat and tidy, Bernd is less so.

Students needed to indicate either **how** it could become a problem, for example 'Anna is a vegetarian, she might not like cooking meat', or to contrast Anna and Bernd, for example 'Anna likes salad, but Bernd really likes meat'.

If Anna moves into the shared apartment, she and Bernd would get along well because:

- both like going to the mountains
- both like hiking
- both like the outdoors
- they get up at different times in the morning so they would not want to use the bathroom at the same time.

Part B – Respond in German

Students and teachers should be reminded that in this section of the examination, students are assessed for both their understanding and ability to write accurately and appropriately in German. This year's communicative task enabled students to show their writing and communicative skills in German. The design of the task encouraged students to use full sentences and a variety of structures. By the end of Unit 4 students are expected to be able to write a short notice for the purpose of making an appointment. This is not the same as extended responses in the previous VCE Study but is in accordance with the current *German VCE Study Design*: 'The student will be expected to respond to a range of question types, such as ... responding to a message ...' (page 31).

4



5

Many responses displayed a great deal of creativity, authenticity and a good sense of humour. Weaker students were able to fulfil this task even if their language skills were more limited. However, it was surprising that a high number of students did not know the word *Straβenbahn* (tram).

Common issues included:

- many students confused *passen* (to suit) and *passieren* (to happen)
- 'appointment' was often incorrectly translated with words like *Ernennung*
- sich treffen is a reflexive verb in German and was often incorrectly used
- hilfreich and hilfsbereit are often mixed up
- many students either did not know the word *Zahnarzt* or used it in combination with the wrong preposition, for example, *nach* instead of *zum*
- students who have done Unit 3 and 4 are expected to know the plural *Bücher*, however this was not the case for far too many students.

Text 3 Question 5

- cannot make it to the meeting/Thursday, kann nicht (zum Treffen/Projekt) kommen, kann nicht am Donnerstag
- dentist appointment, Zahnarzttermin
- mother made the appointment, Mutter hat den Termin gemacht

Question 6

- bring (female) classmate (Nena), möchte Nena/neue Schülerin mitbringen
- Julian has not found many books about Australia *nicht viele Bücher über Australien gefunden* BUT/ABER Nena knows a lot about Australia, Nena weiβ viel über Australien
- Nena knows a lot about Australia, weiβ viel über Australien AND Nena is nice, sie ist nett

Question 7

In their responses, students should have:

- accepted one of the suggested meeting dates/times OR suggested a further time/date
- told whether they had more luck finding books
- told whether it is ok for Julian to bring a classmate; accept or reject
- advised Julian of the number of the tram line to his house OR suggested another method of transport for getting to his house (giving the street name or number did not gain any marks).

The following is an example of a possible response.

Freitagnachmittag passt mir gut. Ich habe ein gutes Buch über australische Geschichte gefunden. Natürlich kannst du Nena mitbringen, kein Problem. Zu meinem Haus fährt die Straßenbahn Nummer 64.

Friday afternoon is fine with me. I've found a good book about Australian history. Sure, you can bring along Nena, no worries. Tram number 64 gets you to my house.

Most students produced creative responses, inferring, for example, that Julian might be attracted to Nena, or that her attraction might prevent the two boys from focussing on their studies. Excellent students even picked up on *nochmal* and provided responses such as: 'Ich habe dir schon hundertmal gesagt, dass du die Straßenbahn Nummer 5 nehmen musst.'

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Forty minutes are allocated for this section of the examination, 20 minutes per reading passage. Students should try to read the two passages during the 15 minutes reading time at the beginning of the examination. They should read the questions carefully so that they know what information needs to be found from a particular paragraph or from the passage as a whole. As they need to find many points in a very limited period of time, it is vital that they do not waste too much time looking up words and seeking the meaning of phrases if they are not relevant to the questions.

Questions can often give the meaning for some vocabulary which may initially be unfamiliar to students, thus avoiding the need to spend time look them up in a dictionary. Once again, the dictionary should be used as sparingly as possible.



6

Students performed well this year on each of the reading passages. They were able to draw conclusions from the passages and see the passage as a whole unit, not simply as a collection of individual points.

Part A – Respond in English

Text 4

While most students provided the correct answers for Questions 8–13, Questions 14–18 discriminated well between students.

Question 8

Paragraph	Correct order
1	• (3) A Girl of Ambitions
2	• (5) Beyond the Horizon
3	• (2) Record Time
4	• (1) Unforgettable
false	• (4) Technical Innovations

Students performed very well in Question 8 and most students numbered the subheadings correctly. This showed that students had a very good understanding of the overall meaning of the text and single paragraphs.

Question 9

Both of:

- Africa/exploring Africa
- to travel alone/(big) adventure.

Question 10

Both of:

- model
- swimming instructor/teacher.

Question 11

Speech/presentation/report by a (famous) pilot, not about a pilot

The use of the genitive, 'der Bericht eines berühmten Piloten', proved challenging for many students.

Question 12

Question 12a.

Emergency landing (in the desert in Africa)

Question 12b.

(African) local people helped her

Question 13

Both of:

- rejected by (one) flying club, but went to the flying school and passed the test, obtained her licence OR being female in a male domain did not discourage her
- the mishap/emergency landing/experience in Africa did not prevent her from going on her next trip around the world (very soon after).

Question 14

Both of:

- two extra tanks (built in to plane)
- (only had) one/short break.

Question 15

Beinhorn wrote many books and people read her books.

^{&#}x27;Travel alone to Africa' was acceptable for two marks.



7

Many students misread 'How do many people know ...' as 'How many people know ...'.

Question 16

Two of:

- flying was considered a real adventure back in Ellie's flying days, unlike today when flying is accepted as normal
- independence
- she was on her own (in the sky), flying on her own or flying alone.

Question 17

Man is an impersonal, generalising pronoun. Beinhorn talks about what flying was like in general, she does not merely talk about herself, other pilots had similar experiences

Reference to the past was essential. Beinhorn did not say that anyone would be able to achieve what she achieved. The answer needed to be based on the text. Many students provided a more general interpretation, which was not based on the text.

Question 18

(One of the) **first** female pilot(s), **first** flight to Asia in less than 24 hours, flight to Africa, where people have not been before, set flying **records**, paved the way

Part B – Respond in German

Text 5

This task was in accordance with the *VCE German Study Design*, 'Section 2 of the written examination is designed primarily to assess the student's knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from written texts.' and 'If the texts are related, the students may be required to compare and/or contrast aspects of both ...'. (page 31)

Students showed a very good understanding of the two texts and were able to contrast the different ways the two migrants achieved their integration into Australia. The majority of students achieved high scores for criterion 1 (content). Criterion 2 (language) discriminated well between students.

Common mistakes included:

- Freunde machen instead of Freundschaften schließen or Freunde finden
- many students still did not know the difference between Australien, Australier and australisch
- even though it appeared in the text, some students still misspelled Weihnachten.

Question 19

mother	son
 sie fand es sehr schwer (found it difficult), alles war fremd (everything was strange) sie brauchte deutsche Kontakte (she needed German contacts) fand Sprache und Akzent schwer/hart (found the language and accent hard/strange) war im deutschen Hilfsverein und in der deutschen Kirche (she went to the German support group and the Lutheran church) hilft bei Festivals/Festen, unterrichtete Deutsch (she helped organise German cultural events and helped at the German Saturday school) möchte deutsche Herkunft bewahren, möchte Sprache und Kultur bewahren (wanted to maintain German heritage/wanted to keep language and culture) fühlt sich (immer noch) als Deutsche ([still] feels German) 	 hat sich schnell australische Feunde gesucht (looked for Australian friends quickly) wollte wie 'Mates' sprechen (wanted to speak English like his mates) spricht nur Englisch (speaks English only) mag keine deutsche Klubs oder deutsche Kirche (does not like German church and clubs) gut integriert, hat sich Mühe gegeben (overall they integrated very well, made a real effort) fühlt sich als Australier (feels Australian)

Students put more emphasis on either the mother or the son. Summarising comments were appreciated, for example, 'the son found his integration much easier than his mother did', *Der Sohn fand die Einwanderung leichter als seine*



8

Mutter. Students needed to make a comparison to some extent, for example, 'The mother found the language hard, but the son did not' *Die Mutter fand die Sprache schwer, der Sohn aber nicht*.

Overall aspects were: integration, language, new environment, friends, clubs, German heritage, feeling Australian/German.

Question 20

Both of:

- nutzen deutsche Medien, Radio, Nachrichten (using German radio, news, media)
- traditionelles/deutsches Weihnachten, deutsche Traditionen (traditional OR German Christmas, OR traditional OR German customs).

Section 3 – Writing in German

Many students showed a lack of understanding of basic German sentence structure and basic verb conjugations.

Often students did not address the actual task, especially in Questions 21 and 23. Students must read the topic carefully and ensure their response meets all of the requirements of the question. They should read both the German and the English versions as key vocabulary or points can be easily overlooked. They should identify the style, register and text type, the audience, and any key words that may need to be checked in the dictionary. They should also note the gender, plurals and irregular verb forms, etc., before starting to write.

Most students recognised the importance of the key features of text types and clear paragraphing. However, criterion 2 (appropriateness of structure and sequence) also required the effective use of sequence and paragraphs, including linking of ideas and concepts and a natural flow, to gain full marks.

It is important that students consider the register when choosing and preparing the writing task. Who is the audience and which form of address should be used? Is it formal or informal? Is it written for one or more than one person, and for students or adults? These issues are relevant not only stylistically but also grammatically, especially in persuasive and informative topics where the choice of audience and addressing of the audience plays a vital role. Students need to be consistent in their choice of du/ihr/Sie no matter what type of writing they are producing. It is better to select one form of address, even if it is incorrect, and remain consistent in its use, than to swap between different forms of address.

Question 21

Text type	Editorial
Style	Evaluative and Personal
Register	combination of subjective and objective
	may use emotive language
Layout	title/heading, content (opinion, personal and factual information)
	creates a sense of person/personality
	establishes a relationship between reader and writer
	emphasises ideas, opinions, feelings and impressions
	may use contracted language such as is used in speech

Suggested answer

- introducing the theme of 'stress'
- description of favourite hobby
- **how** does the hobby help to give relief from stress

It appeared that many students did not read the entire task and dealt either with several hobbies or talked about stress in general. Students were required to explain which favourite hobby helps them to release stress, and describe how. There was, however, an interesting range of hobbies.



Question 22

Text type	Short Story
Style	Imaginative
Register	various
Layout	title/topic, structure, content, author (fictional name)
	manipulates the reader to create the desired impression or response
	creates a strong sense of context and situation
	includes descriptions and careful selection of language
	uses a range of techniques to create the desired atmosphere or emotion

Suggested answer

- what happens, special event and/or developments
- the child's fears and problems
- how has the child been saved

Question 23

Question =e	
Text type	Talk to fellow students (script)
Style	Evaluative (and Persuasive)
Register	• Ihr
	appropriate for fellow students
Layout	title, content
	problems and possible solutions
	 reaches a conclusion through logical presentation and discussion of facts and ideas
	• presents important aspects, discusses these rationally, uses evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives
	 uses an objective style, appeals to reason instead of emotion, gives an impression of balance and impartiality

Suggested answer

- advantages (new friends, independence)
- problems (less time for study, sports, hard, need)
- finding a balance and possible solutions (make a plan, negotiate work hours, work during holidays only or only one or two evenings)

Many students struggled with the use of *ihr/euch/euer*, or switching between the different forms of address.

Ouestion 24

Question 24	
Text type	Article
Style	Informative
Register	• formal
	impersonal
	objective; but some subjective aspects (competition entry)
Layout	title, introduction, body, conclusion, content, use of evidence
	aims to convey information as clearly, comprehensively and accurately as possible
	objective style and impersonal expressions, although may use an informal style to
	establish a relationship of 'friendly helper' with the reader
	generally uses facts, examples, explanations, references as evidence

Suggested answer

- which country? Why this country? (good for career, learning the language, environment, good facilities, easy to travel around, diversity, range of options for travellers, culture, sports, festivals)
- what could someone learn?: customs, politics, handling economy and environment, language
- specific preparations for this country: learn language, read books, contact people, become familiar with special customs, warm clothes (**not preparations for any general trip**, for example, booking a flight, getting a visa, etc.)



There were some excellent responses, for example, describing Ethopia and how it is not generally a tourist destination, but there is much to be learned from the country and a lot of good work can be done there. Students who chose Australia as a country often simply listed tourist attractions and did not address the fact that the writing was for a competition entry, and that they did not actually live in the country chosen.

Ouestion 25

<u></u>	
Text type	Formal letter
Style	Persuasive
Register	• formal
	• uses <i>Sie</i>
Layout	address, date, salutation, greeting, body (content), farewell, sign off (fictional name)
	manipulates the reader's emotions and opinions
	persuasive techniques and language
	careful choice of words
	may use exaggeration, extravagant language and humour to create a relationship
	• uses the second person for direct address and appeal or inclusive wir

Suggested answer

- suggestion of changes (needs to make sense)
- **how** would they make school more exciting and creative?
- why are suggestions realistic and achievable? (does not cost much, students can do it, already done somewhere else)

This topic was the least popular.