

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2013

GCE German (6GN01)
Paper 1A

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GCE German (6GN01) Paper 1A

The test is divided into two sections.

This requires students to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the student's chosen general topic area. The teacher/examiner will first ask two questions about the general content of the stimulus and will then follow on with two other questions that invite students to express their opinions on, or give reactions to, the stimulus.

ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

This paper carries 50 marks. It consists of a conversation between the teacher/examiner on an AS topic area chosen by the student.

The general topic areas are:

- Youth Culture and Concerns
- Lifestyle: Health and Fitness
- The World Around Us
- Education and Employment

Stimulus cards are provided for each area. Before starting the examination, the candidate has 15 minutes to prepare him/herself for the examination with the stimulus card provided. He or she may make notes of up to one side of A4 in this time, and he or she may refer to these notes during the examination.

It is expected that the candidate will keep the notes throughout the exam and they, together with the card, will be collected at the end.

The conversation lasts **between 8 and 10 minutes** and is made up of two parts. In Part A, the candidate is asked 4 questions relating to the stimulus card which are set by Edexcel. These questions are **mandatory** and may be repeated, but **not re-phrased in any way**. The first two questions relate specifically to information in the stimulus material, the second two to the wider issues developing from the stimulus material. For questions 3 and 4 it is expected that the candidate will give answers which are **as full and as detailed as possible**. The candidate's understanding of this stimulus-specific topic area is marked out of 4.

In Part B the candidate is expected to **discuss and develop** the general topic area as part of a wider conversation. They must also show a clear understanding of the topic chosen. The subtopics of each area are stated in the specification.

The candidate's understanding of the general topic area is marked out of a total of 10. The marks of 8 for Quality of Language (Accuracy), 8 for Quality of Language (Lexis) and 20 for response apply to the test as a whole.

SECTION A

Questions were properly asked by examiners in nearly all cases; in the rare cases where a question had been rephrased, this was noted on the Oral Form and credit not given for that response. Most candidates dealt with the first two section A questions with relative ease. There was occasional difficulty when a candidate failed to identify the text extract with the required information and in some cases produced a garbled response. Q3 & Q4 were invariably more searching and generally more effective in discriminating between able and less able candidates. There were – and these not only from native speakers – some extensive and thoughtful answers to such questions, which required candidates to think quickly about the enquiry as well as find the appropriate language for the response. At the other extreme, weaker candidates sometimes struggled to give more than minimal answers to these questions or to answer coherently.

Once again, as in June 2012, the most popular topic was Lifestyle, Health and Fitness, followed by Youth Culture and Concerns, then The World Around Us and finally Education and Employment.

The first two questions from the stimulus card require quite brief answers which will **relate directly** to the text. It is indeed possible to lift the answers directly from the text and this is perfectly acceptable. **There is no need for the candidate to expand the answers at this point.** However, the examiner **must** ask the questions **exactly** as they are worded on the examiner's version of the stimulus. **No additions** whatsoever such as 'meinen Sie' are allowed. This is to enable exact consistency of examining across the whole entry. There were examples where examiners reworded the questions, thus disadvantaging the candidate, or even asking a significant amount of supplementary questions. It is also not expected that the questions are repeated unless the candidate asks for them to be repeated. The only change permitted to the wording of the questions is to change 'Sie' to 'Du' if the examiner and candidate prefer this. Please be aware that any change to the wording of the questions will result in this question not being considered as part of the assessment.

The third and fourth questions do require further expansion and development and will usually require personal ideas and opinions. However, this expansion must be directly relevant to the question. As an example, a candidate may be asked about sport as part of a healthy lifestyle and then insists on giving information about healthy eating.

Many candidates complete this section in less than the four minutes suggested in the specification. This is perfectly acceptable. However, it is important that the full test lasts **at least eight minutes**. If the test is too short, it will be liable to a penalty.

Similarly there is no point in continuing the test beyond ten minutes and examiners will usually not listen beyond this point. It is possible that some candidates may start to tire significantly beyond 9 minutes or so and there is no need to prolong the exam beyond 10 minutes. Examiners should possibly

remember that a written examination has a fixed time when candidates must stop and it is the same thing for an oral test.

All four questions should always be asked, even if a candidate has partially answered the next question in their previous answer. There were a very few instances of examiners missing out questions, intentionally or not.

Candidates must **never see the cards in advance** of the examination and the table provided in the instructions to examiners giving the order in which the cards should be chosen **must** be used. For this reason, it is not expected that the candidate will begin a response to any question without a few moments of thinking time.

Specific Comments on the Stimulus Cards

Youth Culture & Concerns (1A) It seems that this card was used more often than the second stimulus. The first two questions were usually well answered, although even some of the better candidates who hadn't read the text properly said that Samantha was still pregnant. Several candidates were unable to answer Q3 in a lot of detail beyond the issue of not being able to go out to clubs! Q4 was generally well answered with some good ideas about conflict between generations and the lack of space.

Youth Culture & Concerns (2A) Q1 & Q2 were not always answered well. Some candidates seemed not to understand the word 'Rat'. Q3 gave little beyond the idea of playing an instrument being an enjoyable hobby, but some ideas about why classical music is less popular with young people were interesting and appropriate, such as the lack of interest in it amongst peers or being unable to dance to it!

Lifestyle health & Fitness (1A) It seems that this was the less popular of the two questions due to the sequence of the tests table. Most were able to respond appropriately to Q1 and Q2. Q3 was sometimes misunderstood as 'Vorteile' which of course negated the answer. There were quite a large number of candidates who didn't understand the word 'gratis' which meant they were unable to answer the question.

Lifestyle, Health & Fitness (2A) This was without doubt the most used card of all eight on offer in the exam. Marks were lost on Q1 and Q2 because the length of time stated which could be added to one's life was wrong. It was very common to state that people born in the autumn may be expected to live half a year longer rather than one and a half. There were some good ideas about why married men live longer in Q3 although far and away the most common was that married men have a woman to cook for them. A common response from girls too. Q4 allowed an opportunity for a detailed response but the idea of '**wie** gefährlich' was sometimes missed.

The World around us (1A) Not many centres used this stimulus card. Q1 was well answered with most of the products in the text mentioned and the idea of plastic being 'robust, haltbar, leicht und billig' was usually if not always mentioned. Q3 and Q4 also produced some good responses particularly concerning the use of plastic bags.

The World around us (2A) This was also generally well answered by those candidates who had chosen this topic, some candidates revealing excellent research into environmentally friendly tourism. The vast majority were able to pick out the appropriate information to answer Q1 and Q2.

Education & Employment (1A) Few candidates responded to this card although those who did performed well. There were some problems understanding the word 'Stellenprofil' and the word 'passende' in Q3 was sometimes either unknown or ignored. Q4 produced some good responses.

Education & Employment (2A) This topic seems to be less popular and was almost exclusively chosen by native German speakers. Those candidates who chose this topic did generally perform very well. The final Q4 also gave a great opportunity to go into lots of detail, which happened in many cases but some just gave a weak response lacking in research and opinion.

SECTION B

The second part requires the teacher/examiner to engage the student in a discussion that, although still relating to the same general topic area and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus.

It is a good idea to make a clear distinction between the two parts of the test. For example, a phrase such as:

Gut, wir sind jetzt mit der Karte fertig. Sprechen wir vielleicht jetzt über andere Themen.

shows a clear movement between the two parts of the test.

The questions posed in this part of the test **must show that the candidate has an understanding of the topic chosen**. Therefore personal and anecdotal questions are simply not appropriate.

The following types of questions should be avoided:

Was für Kleidung trägst du gern?

Treibst du gern Sport?

Was lernst du in der Schule?

Wohin fährst du gern in Urlaub?

These are very "GCSE" in their style and will not allow the candidates to show any understanding of the topic which they have studied.

Another type of question to avoid is the so called closed question or others giving a choice of two possible answers. Here are a couple of examples:

Ist Sport wichtig?

This question could simply be answered with 'ja' or 'nein'. This can be improved like this: *Wie wichtig ist Sport für die Gesundheit?*

This question requires the candidate to give some opinions and cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. The question word '*Inwiefern..*' would also be very good.

Inwiefern ist Windkraft ein wichtiger Teil der Energie der Zukunft?

Another poor question: *Sprichst du lieber mit Freunden oder Familie über deine Probleme?*

Firstly this is too personal and secondly could be answered by just lifting one of the two choices. Much better: *Wie wichtig ist es, gute Freunde zu haben?*

In section A of the exam the examiner will not interrupt the candidate when he or she is responding but this is very different from the technique required in section B. It is vital, in order to gain a high mark for response, that the second section of the test is a **spontaneous** discussion. It should under no circumstances be a pre learnt monologue.

The feeling may be that the candidate should speak as much as possible and, although development of answers is important, an answer, no matter how lengthy, which is just simply the regurgitation of a huge chunk of language, will not score highly. Under no circumstances should of course the candidate know the questions in advance, something which would encourage pre learnt monologues.

Examiners are urged to interrupt candidates in order to elicit clarification of points made as well as to add their own thoughts. In this way the oral becomes a discussion rather than a one sided monologue. Phrases such as *'Was meinst du damit?' or 'Warum ist der Fall?'* are to be encouraged.

In order to access the very high marks for understanding of the general topic area, the candidates will need to back up points made, possibly with statistics or examples. For instance, if the topic of Education and Employment were chosen, they could be expected to know something about the numbers of young people out of work, the numbers going to university, the attitudes of young people to apprenticeships or what reforms might be appropriate in the education system.. This goes beyond simply stating that many young people are unemployed. This chosen topic should have been studied in detail and therefore just stating personal, anecdotal information will not suffice.

Centres with a large number of candidates must not use a list of questions which are asked to all candidates, possibly in a slightly different order. The best orals develop naturally from the spontaneous response of the candidates.

Examiners should be aware of the need to cover a variety of sub-topics in Section B so that candidates can show the range of their understanding and knowledge. They **must** also move away from the original stimulus in Section A.

Conduct of the Examination

The majority of examiners conducted the examination quite well. There were, however, a number of issues which arose:

- Timing was accurate overall, with most tests between 8 and 10 minutes. Please note that very short tests are subject to penalties, longer tests are not marked beyond 10 minutes. One exam was well over 15 minutes,

whereas another was under 4. Ultimately the candidate is disadvantaged in these circumstances.

- Recording quality: there are no longer as many centres using old fashioned cassettes. CDs are now far more popular and they give far better quality recordings. The orals from some centres on cassettes gave markers quite a lot of difficulty at times as the quality was particularly poor. Centres are however requested to make sure that CDs have been properly formatted before submission. USB sticks are becoming more popular too, but these carry the slight danger of transferring a virus. It is requested that only new USB sticks are used where possible and a check made for viruses. Whatever mode of recording is chosen, it is vital that the recordings are clear, with both teacher-examiner and candidate audible.
- Oral forms: Each candidate must complete the **new** OR1 form, which **must** be signed by the candidate and the examiner and submitted with the recordings. These new forms have now been in use for over a year. Please note that the new OR1 form will be requested if the wrong one has been submitted.
- Examiners must **never** rephrase the questions in section A, or ask supplementary questions in this section.
- It should be noted that native speakers will not score highly if they haven't prepared the chosen topic thoroughly. Similarly, native speakers will not score highly if they do not take any initiative or give few ideas and opinions. It is far from guaranteed that native speakers will achieve a top grade in the exam, as only 16 of 50 marks are awarded for language.

Handbook of Instructions to Centres:

Teacher Examiners should be thoroughly acquainted with this publication, as observing correct procedures is vital. An Oral Training Guide is available from Edexcel to help teachers to prepare for this examination. It is unfortunate that candidates are sometimes deprived of marks because the test has been incorrectly conducted. Teacher examiners have the responsibility to prepare adequately, in order to bring out the best from their candidates. All information relating to the oral tests is available on www.edexcel.com.

The team of markers at Edexcel would like to thank you for the help given by the majority of centres which made the marking an easier process than may have been the case.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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