

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE German (6GN01)
Paper 1A

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6GN01

The test is divided into two sections.

SECTION A

This requires candidates to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to the candidates 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 candidates 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 visiting or teacher examiner on an AS topic area chosen by the candidate.

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 candidates have 15 minutes to prepare with the stimulus card provided. They may make notes of up to one side of A4 in this time, which they may refer to 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 chosen topic. 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. 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.

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 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 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 teacher 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 what kinds of sport are the best to keep fit as part of a healthy lifestyle and then insists on giving information about what is important for a healthy lifestyle. Many candidates complete this section in less than the four minutes suggested in the specification. This is perfectly acceptable. 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/1B): Several candidates were unable to answer Q1 but most able to respond accurately to Q2 and most had no issues with Q4; however, the word 'schützen' was not always properly understood. Youth Culture & Concerns (2) Q3 & Q4 were easily answered and very many developed or expanded on their responses by citing how easy criminals could cause problems.

Youth Culture & Concerns (2A + 2B) Q1 & Q2 were not always answered well or correctly, perhaps the word "gehört" is not well understood. Some candidates were unable to make a link between designer labels and the influence of role models on fashion. Q3 & Q4 were answered quite well and allowed for the best candidates to develop and embellish their responses with references to personal experiences of tattoos and piercings.

Lifestyle health & Fitness (1A/1B) Q1 seems to have confused a lot of candidates with many only citing back problems. "Ratgeber" was often not understood. Q3 & Q4 allowed the best candidates and the majority to perform well by drawing on personal experiences. Q4 on Stimulus 1B was poorly answered and seemed to show that candidates are not particularly interested in dangerous sports.

Lifestyle, Health & Fitness (2A/2B) Most candidates got the right answer to Q1. Most knew the answer to Q2, but some had difficulty expressing it. Most candidates could answer Q3 on both cards after a moment's thought. Q4 on card 2B provided mixed responses with many candidates not understanding 'Gesundheitswesen' and what might or might not be involved in this issue.

The World around us (1A/1B) The very best candidates were able to deliver excellent and well-researched responses making references to the benefits of tourism. Q4 was a challenging question and only well handled by the very best candidates. For Q3 & Q4 on Stimulus Card 1B there seemed only to be a very vague understanding of the issues raised by this question. The word 'Pauschalreisen' was not always understood.

The World around us (2A/2B) This was well answered by those candidates who had chosen this topic, some candidates revealing excellent research into 'Umweltschutz' although some candidates do not understand 'fördern'. Q4 seemed to be lost on many candidates.

Education & Employment (1A/1B) Most candidates responded well to this card and many candidates provided a good insight into 'software development and the problems facing students with university fees.. Question 4 on Card 1A & 1B were well answered.

Education & Employment (2A/2B) Those candidates who chose this topic performed very well with many able to express personal experience of travelling abroad and the benefits of travel in general.

SECTION B

The second part requires the teacher examiner to engage the candidate 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. A phrase such as: *Gut, also das waren die vier Fragen zum Stimulus. Wir sprechen 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 give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of the topic chosen. Therefore personal and anecdotal questions are not appropriate.

The following types of questions should be avoided:

Was für Musik hörst du gerne?

Was machst du in deiner Freizeit?

*Was ist dein Lieblingsfach?
Fährst du oft ins Ausland?*

These are very GCSE in their style and will not allow the candidates to show understanding nor to demonstrate their knowledge of lexis and structures appropriate to AS.

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

Here are examples:

Ist Sport wichtig für dich?

This question could simply be answered with 'ja' or 'nein'. As it is a personal question, it should always be avoided. It can be improved like this: *Wie wichtig ist Sport für einen gesunden Lebensstil?* 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 Sport wichtig für einen gesunden Lebensstil?*

Was ist dir wichtiger, Freunde oder Familie? Another poor question, firstly, because it is personal and secondly, because it could be answered by just lifting one of the two choices. An alternative would be: *Wie wichtig ist es, gute Freunde zu haben?*

Inappropriate personal questions should also be avoided. Instead of asking "*Rauchst du?*" the teacher/examiner should ask *Ist Rauchen ein großes Problem unter Jugendlichen?*

A further important aspect of this part of the test is that it **must** be a **spontaneous** discussion. Therefore the candidate should not be allowed to respond with 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 large piece of language, will not score highly. Under no circumstances should 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 das 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 Lifestyle, Health and Fitness were chosen, candidates could be expected to know something about the numbers of young people who are overweight, to what extent it has got worse, and possibly what the government is doing about it. This goes beyond simply stating that too many young people are overweight. 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.

Good examining requires a good balance between keeping the candidate at their ease by encouragement, whilst at the same time asking probing questions which stretch the ability

of each candidate. Certainly no candidate should have grammatical errors corrected, nor should an examiner disagree in an aggressive fashion with the candidate.

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 severe penalties, longer tests are not marked beyond 10 minutes.

- Recording quality: there are no longer as many centres using cassettes. CDs are now far more popular and they give far better quality recordings. The orals from some centres on cassettes had a poor recording quality. Centres are however requested to make sure that CDs have been properly formatted before submission. It is advisable that centres check the recordings before sending them on, and that they are packaged appropriately, as we have come across a number of broken CDs this year. USB sticks are becoming more popular too, but these carry the slight danger of transferring of a virus. It is requested that only new USB sticks are used 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.

- Examiners must **never** rephrase the questions in section A, or ask supplementary questions in this section.

Centres are reminded of the Edexcel Notice to Centres on the website to inform them that **audio cassettes will no longer be accepted for assessment after September 2014.**

Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response

Marking guidance for oral examiners

Tests that are too short

A test is too short if it is less than 7 minutes 30 seconds. Candidates are allowed a 30 second tolerance.

Drop down one mark band to the corresponding mark across the following assessment grids:

- 'Quality of Language – Accuracy'
- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis'
- 'Response'

e.g.

4-5	Accuracy variable but errors rarely impede communication; pronunciation and intonation inconsistent but comprehensible.
6-7	Generally accurate but some errors in more complex language; pronunciation and intonation generally good.
8	Highly accurate with perhaps some very minor errors; pronunciation and intonation authentic.

If a candidate would have scored 7, they should be given 5, if they would have scored 6, they should be given 4. This will not affect the other assessment criteria 'Understanding – Stimulus specific' or 'Understanding – General Topic Area'.

Test that are too long

Once the 10 minute mark has passed, the examiner stops listening at the end of the next sentence.

Tests that do not move away from initial stimulus sub topic

Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score.

- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis' – limited to a maximum of 3 marks
- 'Response' – limited to a maximum of 8 marks
- 'Understanding - General topic area' – cannot score more than 0

Tests that are pre-learnt

Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score.

- 'Response' - limited to a maximum of 8 marks

Please note:

Understanding – Stimulus specific should only be used to mark **Section A** of the oral test.

Understanding – General topic area should only be used to mark **Section B** of the oral test

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
<http://www.edexcel.com/iwant to/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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