

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
in German (6GN01)  
Paper 1A Spoken Expression and  
Response

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Summer 2015 Publications Code US041674\*

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The test is divided into two sections.

## **SECTION A**

The first part of the examination requires candidates to respond to four 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.

## **SECTION B**

In the second part of the exam the candidate is expected to **discuss and develop** the general topic area as part of a wider conversation.

### **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 speaking exam 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 Pearson Edexcel. These questions are **mandatory** and may be repeated, but for the purpose of fair assessment across all centres, they must **not be re-phrased or expanded on 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 candidates' understanding of this stimulus specific topic area is marked out of 4.

In Part B, the teacher/ examiner must initiate a discussion about the general topic area chosen by each student, and the teacher/ examiner must move away from the subtopic of the stimulus card to more general discussion of the topic area and its linked subtopics.

The candidates 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 (Range of 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. Teacher/ examiners should remember that the examination has a fixed time and the oral test should be stopped after the 10 minutes have passed.

## **SECTION A**

Questions were properly asked by examiners in nearly all cases; in the rare cases where a question had been rephrased or expanded on, it was noted on the Oral Form and credit was not given for that response. Most candidates dealt with the first two questions in section A 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 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, less able candidates sometimes struggled to give more than minimal answers to these questions or to answer coherently.

Once again the two most popular topics were Lifestyle Health and Fitness and 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 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.

Candidates must not answer the first two stimulus questions based on their own personal thoughts as opposed to the content of the stimulus cards.

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.

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.

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)** most candidates could extract appropriate answers to Questions 1 & 2 from the text, although a number of candidates found it challenging to explain what the aim was. Nearly all could say something appropriate in response to 3A & 3B. Most could answer 4A and 4B intelligently. On the whole candidates coped well with the questions and were able to expand on the questions using the information in text and adding own researched ideas.

**Youth Culture & Concerns (2A + 2B)** Questions 1 & 2 were mostly answered correctly with responses drawn from the text. Some extensive answers were given to Questions 3 & 4 (A & B), however a number of candidates had problems with the word "Eigenschaften" or could list some, but could not give reasons. Many candidates were particularly well primed on "Gruppenzwang", which has clearly featured in teaching and learning at most centres.

**Lifestyle health & Fitness (1A/1B)** Occasional answers indicated some confusion between "Veganer" and "Vegetarier". Question 2 was often misunderstood, because the word "beachten". Most candidates had interesting answers about Question 3 (A/ B). Question 4A was generally well received, but some candidates were initially hesitant in responding to 4B, no doubt because many teenagers are not used to being asked about the morality of lifestyles or activities.

**Lifestyle, Health & Fitness (2A/2B)** These were well answered by the majority of candidates and most answered the questions about clowns and laughter very well. "Stress" is clearly prominent in teaching and learning at many centres where answers to 4A/B were full and extensive. However, sometimes Question 4 was misunderstood and candidates gave lengthy answers about how to avoid stress rather than discussing what causes stress.

**The World around us (1A/1B)** Most candidates were fairly strong and generally coped well with all questions. In the case of card 1B there were some particularly full and extensive answers to Question 4.

**The World around us (2A/2B)** Responses to Questions 3 & 4 were generally full and extensive, though some candidates hesitated at first on hearing Question 3B, clearly never having considered why anyone might be against recycling, but generally reasonable answers were then forthcoming.

**Education & Employment (1A/1B)** Most candidates opting for this topic area were fairly strong. The stronger candidates were able to use the text and own opinions to give very pleasing and extended answers. However, a few less able ones were unable to answer Questions 3 and 4 on either card successfully.

#### **Education & Employment (2A/2B)**

Question 2 caused some problems with many candidates not clear on the meaning of *Versager*. On 2B Question 3, a significant proportion of those doing the card misunderstood *Schulen* for *Schüler* and gave incorrect answers.

### **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.

Teacher/ examiners should avoid asking questions such as:

*Rauchst du?*

*Trinkst du Alkohol mit deinen Freunden?*

or GCSE style questions such as:

*Was isst du?*

*Treibst du gern Sport?*

*Hast du viele Freunde?  
Was für Musik hörst du gern?*

Answers to these kind of questions will not allow the candidates to show understanding of the General Topic Area (GTA) or to demonstrate their knowledge of lexis and structures appropriate at 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 Musik 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 Musik für junge Leute heutzutage?*

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?*

A further important aspect of this part of the test is that it must be a **spontaneous** discussion. Spontaneous use of language occurs when candidates use their knowledge of structures and lexis and apply it appropriately in response to unpredictable questions.

The unpredictability is created by the teacher examiner responding to the candidates' views to elicit development. Unpredictability on the part of the teacher examiner will facilitate a proper level of spontaneity.

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 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 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. The 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. We are looking for discourse. A discourse describes the exchange of opinion and information on a subtopic between the candidate and the teacher examiner. In practice this means that each participant addresses the points made by the other. The candidate and the teacher examiner should respond appropriately to each other's input, whether that be a question, a comment or a remark. To reach the full range of the marking criteria there will be frequent examples of this level of discourse. The candidate needs to demonstrate the ability to interact within a subtopic. This means developing the subtopic area and exploring it in some depth. The best examinations develop naturally from the spontaneous response of the candidates. A mere question and answer approach cannot facilitate a spontaneous discourse as described above.

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.

Care should also be taken not to stray into a different General Topic Area. The discussion must be rooted in the candidates' chosen GTA.

For example the subtopic of smoking in Lifestyle Health and Fitness deals with the health aspects, but asking why young people start smoking will lead you into Youth Culture and Concerns with expected answers of peer pressure etc.

Good examining requires a good balance between keeping the candidate at 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 and longer tests are not marked beyond 10 minutes.
- Recording quality: as now only CDs and USB sticks are permitted there was generally no problem with the sound quality, however, care should be

taken to record the exams in a quiet area of the centre, as background noises can be very off putting to the candidate.

Centres are 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 label the individual candidates properly and not just leave it as track 1, track 2 etc. There have also been incidences this year where identical CDs were sent by the centre, rather than two different ones with all the candidates.

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.

## **Grade Boundaries**

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

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>