

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

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

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AS German 6GN01 1606

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 candidate'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 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 examination, 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 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 (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 the same should apply for an oral test.

SECTION A

This year we had a fair number of teacher examiners who rephrased or expanded on the prescribed questions which resulted in no credit being given to the candidate. It was noted on the Oral Form and schools should read the feedback on them carefully.

Most candidates dealt with the first two sections 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 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.

Non-taught native speakers had a tendency to answer the first two stimulus questions based on their own personal thoughts as opposed to the content of the stimulus cards, for which they were not credited.

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 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) Qs 1+2: Most candidates had no problems with the questions and they were on the whole well answered. 1A (Q3) caused some candidates difficulties, most, however, gave reasons relating to "Gruppenzwang" or wanting to be part of a group.

1B (Q4) fair trade seemed a problem at times.

Youth Culture & Concerns (2A + 2B) Qs 1 & 2 were mostly answered correctly with responses drawn from the text. However, some candidates failed to make the connection between "13- bis 19-Jährige" and "Teenagers". Also, not everybody was able to make the link between "Experten" and "Wissenschaftler". Q4 (2B) seemed to cause the most problems, because candidates did not recognise the word "berühmt".

Lifestyle health & Fitness (1A +1B) there was confusion between Q1 and Q2 responses as some candidates offered the same response for both questions. Q3 and Q4 were very well done by most candidates and it was evident that these were areas which centres had worked on extensively.

Lifestyle, Health & Fitness (2A/2B) Again there was confusion by some candidates, offering the same answer for Q1 +2. Q3 was generally well answered. Q4 at both, 2A and 2B, gave the candidates some problems. However good candidates came up with some extensive and well-thought through answers.

The World around us (1A/1B) both cards were answered well and generally with good detail about ways in which we waste water or use too much in tourism. Best candidates were able to add sophisticated detail to their arguments and opinions.

The World around us (2A/2B) Q2 caused some difficulty for quite a few of the candidates who were unable to use the text information to answer the question correctly. Q4 on 2B also elicited shorter, often not quite successful answers.

Education & Employment (1A/1B) the questions on both cards were well answered with candidates able to expand on Qs3+4 on both. For a few candidates, however, the words “Schulwesen” and “rechtfertigen” seemed to be unknown and caused some problems.

Education & Employment (2A/2B)

Only the strongest candidates were able to answer the first two questions successfully. The words “Lehrkräfte” and “beschweren” were misunderstood by a number of candidates. The final two questions were answered well with some interesting ideas for advantages and disadvantages of attending a university close to home.

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 chosen topic area. Personal and anecdotal questions are not appropriate.

Again this year some teachers still asked inappropriate questions such as:

Rauchst du?

Trinkst du Alkohol mit deinen Freunden? Or they ask GCSE style questions such as:

Was isst du?

Treibst du gern Sport?

Hast du viele Freunde?

Was für Musik hörst du gern?

If it is just one question to lead into a subtopic, then it is acceptable but often there is more than one occurrence which is not desirable. Answers to these kinds 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. They may also put the candidate under pressure in the examination situation due to their, at times, probing nature.

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 das Internet 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 das Internet 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 Ernährung 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-learned 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 set 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 orals 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 LHF deals with the health aspects, but asking why young people start smoking will lead you into YCC with expected answers of peer pressure etc.

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: 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.
- Examiners should not simply work their way through a list of questions when conducting the exam, as that will not lead to a coherent discussion.

Also it should be avoided to ask the same set of questions to all candidates.

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 (this includes 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 for Accuracy, they should be given 5, if they would have scored 6, they should be given 4. A similar adjustment should be made for Range and for Response. 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/sense group.

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

Spontaneity/Response

If a test appears to lack spontaneity in large part to the extent that significant sections *appear to have been pre-learnt*, the mark for **Response** will be limited to a maximum of 8 marks. It may be that intonation is also impaired; however, poor intonation would not, on its own, suggest pre-learning.

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.

Discourse

Discourse is a discussion where the candidate demonstrates the ability to interact within a subtopic. This means developing the subtopic area and exploring it in some depth.

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, a remark. To reach the full range of the marking criteria there will be frequent examples of this level of discourse.

Development

Development means appropriately expanding on an idea and point of view. This can be in the form of justification, illustration, exemplification, clarification, comparison of the candidates' ideas and views.

- 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. Candidates should be able to demonstrate their knowledge about the GTA and express ideas and opinions relevant to their research.

When marking the oral exam, examiners are advised to immediately allocate a mark for Section A, prior to allocating marks for the rest of the test (Section B).

It is important that the PE and team leaders can see clearly the justification for marks awarded and examiners should note briefly on the OR1 form the reason for any caps which are applied in marking an oral test.

If a score of '0' is awarded for any of the assessment grids, the oral recording should be referred to your Team Leader.

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>