



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In German (8GN0) Paper 3A

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Format of the Test

The test is divided into two tasks.

Task 1 requires the students to read and respond to two short texts on a stimulus card based on Theme 1: *Gesellschaftliche Entwicklung in Deutschland* and then hold a discussion. The student is asked four compulsory Edexcel - set questions by the teacher/examiner in the order they are written. Stimulus cards 1-6 are for Task 1.

Task 2 requires the student to respond to a statement on a sub-theme, which is based on a discussion from Theme 2: *Politische und künstlerische Kultur im deutschen Sprachraum*.

At the start the teacher/examiner asks the two compulsory questions on the card, which is then followed by a broader discussion by on any other aspect(s) of the same sub-theme. Stimulus cards 7-12 are for Task 2.

Assessment Principles

The assessment is out of 72 marks.

Students complete two tasks – Task 1 is worth 42 marks and Task 2 is worth 30 marks.

Task 1 should last 7 to 9 minutes and Task 2 5 to 6 minutes , which makes the total assessment time: 27 to 30 minutes (12 to 15 minutes of speaking plus 15 minutes' preparation time for both tasks).

Task 1 is based on Theme 1, which focuses on aspects of society of Germany only. Each theme is broken into three sub-themes which are each exemplified further on page 8 in the specification:

- *Natur und Umwelt*
- *Bildung*
- *Die Welt der Arbeit*

The student is given a stimulus card according to the allocation table in the front of the teacher examiner booklet on one of the above sub-themes. The teacher/examiner has to ask the four questions relating to the stimulus card. 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**.

Q1 requires the student to summarise the first text.

Q2 requires the student to answer a comprehension question on the first text.

Q3 requires the student to respond to information in the second text or both texts.

Q4 will stimulate wider discussion of the cultural and social context of the subtheme beyond the focus of the texts on the stimulus card.

Task 2 is based only on content from Theme 2, which is set in the context of German-speaking countries and communities. This theme covers artistic culture (through music and festivals and traditions) and political and artistic culture (through media). Each theme is broken into three sub-themes which are each exemplified further on page 8 in the specification:

- *Musik*
- *Die Medien*
- *Die Rolle von Festen und Traditionen*

The student has a choice of card from two of the above sub-themes as allocated according to the table in the front of the teacher examiner examination booklet.

The stimulus card for this task contains a statement on the sub-theme that will act as a springboard for the discussion. The student can choose to support the statement or disagree with it during their discussion.

The teacher/examiner asks the two compulsory questions on the card and then helps to develop the discussion by asking appropriate follow-up questions relating to the subject matter on the stimulus card. For the second half of the time allocated, the teacher/examiner broadens the discussion by moving on to any other aspect(s) of the same sub-theme.

Students will be assessed on their ability to use a range of language accurately (AO3) 0-12 marks, communicate and interact effectively (AO1) 0-6 marks, summarise and understand written sources in speech (AO2) 0-12 marks, and show knowledge and understanding about the culture and society where the language is spoken (AO4) 0-12 marks.

A02 is only assessed in Task 1, therefore Task 1 is worth 42 marks and Task 2 is worth 30 marks.

Students' Performances

It was exciting to see and hear how students and teacher examiners handled the demands of this new speaking exam. Well prepared students were able to discuss the issues on the cards and had the linguistic ability to express themselves well.

Task 1

The first question in Task 1 was to summarise the main points of the text. Most students were able to say what the text was about and were able to give an outline of the ideas. At times, however, students just read two sentences per paragraph and thought that they had fulfilled the requirements.

Q3 required an opinion, which some students found difficult. This question was very effective in discriminating between able and less able students. There were some extensive and thoughtful answers to the question, which required students to think quickly about the enquiry as well as find the appropriate language for the response. At the other extreme, weaker students sometimes struggled to give more than a minimal answer or to answer coherently.

Some question phrases like '*Was halten Sie von*' were not universally known, and students had problems answering the question.

All four questions should always be asked, even if a student has partially answered the next question in their previous answer.

Students 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 need to be given out must be used. For this reason, it is not expected that the student will begin a response to any question without a few moments of thinking time.

Q4 should lead into the discussion of the sub-theme. The questions posed in this part of the test must give the student the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme in Germany. That means that the answers have to refer to society and culture in Germany. Personal and anecdotal questions are not appropriate.

It is fair to say that this element was the most challenging for a number of students as they failed to link their answers to Germany. This is the biggest change from the legacy paper and teachers are advised to root their lessons firmly into the German speaking world in order to comply with this component of the test.

The student 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 interaction. The student needs to demonstrate the ability to interact within a sub-theme. The best orals develop naturally from the spontaneous responses of the students. A mere question and answer approach cannot facilitate a spontaneous interaction as described above, neither does a series of monologues.

Some tests showed very good interaction, whereas others sounded very stilted where the students kept asking the teacher examiner '*Was meinen Sie?*' at various moments during the test. Interaction does not simply mean to ask a question, but to interact within the discussion as described above. Care should be taken not to spend too much time on the set questions, as the student needs to have the opportunity to show knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme in Germany in the remaining discussion in order to access the full range of marks available.

Task 2

Because the students had an element of choice, they seemed to feel more secure in the sub-themes. Often they performed better at this task than in task 1. The most popular choice was the sub-theme of *Musik*, followed by *Medien* and *Feste und Traditionen* came last.

The main problem, again, was the link to German speaking countries in order to have full access to marking grid for AO4, Knowledge and Understanding of society and culture.

The questions on the stimulus cards were well received and fulfilled their aim to start of the discussion.

Specific Comments on the Stimulus Cards

Stimulus GN1

Text 2 seemed to present a problem for many students. Most understood that it had something to do with cycling, but missed the point that it stated that Germany's cycle lanes were a good example for other countries. This was the debatable issue.

Stimulus GN2

This card was usually well done, with only a few students not understanding the text. Q4 was sometimes not linked to Germany.

Stimulus GN3

This proved to be a very accessible text and text 2 provided some very good ideas and comments by very able students. The word 'sinnvoll' was not always known.

Stimulus GN4

The main text was usually understood, but the students had problems with the questions. Q2 proved to be a stumbling block, because '*am schnellsten*' was not known. Also, Q4 was misunderstood on a number of occasions: '*Das Studentenleben*' refers to university life not school life.

Stimulus GN5

Again on the whole the main text was understood well. However, the second text was often misunderstood by students, who thought that the lacking knowledge of language referred to foreign languages and not to poor German.

Stimulus GN6

Students understood the meaning of the texts, but the word '*abhängig*' was often not known.

Task 2

Stimulus GN7

The stimulus encouraged the students to talk about music and music festivals in the German speaking area. A good number of students had some facts and were able to express themselves well in German on this topic.

Stimulus GN8

This card was well received, however some teacher examiners and students veered into a different sub-theme while talking about casting shows.

Stimulus GN9

Most students were able to answer the questions on this card.

Stimulus GN10

There were some great answers about German speaking bloggers and the reasons why they were doing it. This card seemed to strike a chord with the students.

Stimulus GN11

The phrase *Kaffee-Klatsch* was often unknown and teachers had to explain it's meaning. However, there were some unforeseen excellent answers to Q2 to what extent the economy profited from traditions.

Stimulus GN12

This card didn't pose any difficulties and it gave students the opportunity to speak about religious traditions and feasts.

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 12 and 15 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 student.

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 students properly and not just leave it as track 1, track 2 etc.

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 student audible.

- **Oral forms**

Some centres did not send in their oral forms, which makes it difficult for the marker to write down the marks. A copy of the Oral Form can be downloaded from the Edexcel website. Also centres are reminded to write down the number of the stimulus cards used in the spaces provided.

- **Centre Authentication Sheet**

Some centres did not send the authentication sheet with the students' and the teacher examiner's signatures. Again, this is vital admin which needs to be taken care of.

Grade Boundaries

Much work has taken place on the comparability of the oral units for French, German and Spanish. The senior examiners have worked closely together to ensure their application of the common oral marking criteria is consistently applied across these three languages. This has been in response to queries from centres about the results at unit level on the oral examinations.

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>

