

General

The aim of this question is to test candidates' ability to write a continuous response of about 150 words in German. Examiners will not count the words and everything a candidate writes will be assessed. However, it should be stressed that a piece of 150 words will be able to access the full assessment criteria and if it is well crafted could attract full marks. In many cases, overlong pieces tend to become repetitive and often irrelevant and communication starts to deteriorate due to growing inaccuracy. Candidates should be encouraged to write about 150 words.

Candidates select one writing task from a choice of three, each with bullet points (or questions within in a short stimulus) which must be addressed, although not necessarily in equal measure.

The 20 marks available for this question are sub-divided into:

10 marks	Communication and Content
5 marks	Knowledge and Application of Language
5 marks	Accuracy

The mark grids are printed on page 13 of the Specification (Issue 1).

The grade descriptions for grades A, C and F are printed in the specification on pages 23 – 24. These give a general indication of the required outcomes at the specified grades. The 3rd paragraph in each set of descriptions refers to the writing. Here is the description of the required outcomes in writing at grade C:

They write for different contexts that may be real or imaginary. They communicate information and express points of view. They use a variety of structures and may include different tenses or time frames. The style is basic. They convey a clear message but there may be some errors.

Task : Sie wollen an diesem Wettbewerb teilnehmen.

GEBURTSTAG

Schreiben Sie einen Aufsatz über Ihren besten Geburtstag !
Der beste Aufsatz gewinnt € 1 000 – also los!

Schreiben Sie einen Aufsatz (ungefähr 150 Wörter) mit folgenden Informationen:

- Wie Sie Ihren letzten Geburtstag gefeiert haben
- Warum es die beste Geburtstagfeier war
- Was Sie mit den € 1000 machen würden.

Commentary

The essay covers all bullet points in the order given. This strategy is to be recommended as it makes for a more coherent piece of writing and helps candidates on their pathway through the task. The candidate has written 170 words, so the piece of writing can access the full assessment criteria.

Communication and content:

The mark for Communication and content will be awarded first. Examiners will read the essay through and consider to what extent the response

- a) is clear (Communication)
- b) addresses all aspects of the task (Content).

Communication

Whilst communication may not be limited, there is actually a fair degree of ambiguity, e.g.

*...habe ich viele freunde und familie ins kino gegangen.
 ...Nach Nandos haben wir mein haus getrefft für meine geschenk geöffnet
 ...weil alles meine freunde und familie besucht
 ... ein frucht bar konpfscherzen*

Indeed, we have to unpick the majority of the sentences to access the message, and this does require quite some effort in places, so it is fair to state that the piece is *frequently lacking in clarity* (3 – 4 band).

Content

The candidate has worked through the bullet points, giving the following information

1. the candidate celebrated his/her birthday at the cinema, with friends and family, watching the new James Bond film; and afterwards at a restaurant, the food was tasty: s/he ate chicken burger and chips and drank coke; then they went to his/her home to open the presents and eat chocolate cake before going to bed.
2. it was the best birthday celebration because all his/her friends and family came round, the food was great and the presents were interesting.
3. the prize money would be spent on a specific computer for the family. This is because the family does not have a computer and this computer is excellent for playing games which s/he loves.

and has included extra detail in 1 and 3 – not always relevant detail, however e.g. *Aber die nächstes morgen stehe Ich ein frucht bar konpfscherzen auf*. Bullet 2 is very thin indeed but the candidate has explained his/her point of view, albeit at a modest level.

The response is mostly relevant (band 5 - 6) but the candidate has addressed the task overall.

Overall mark Communication and Content

This piece has aspects which fit into 3 different bands and the best-fit mark will be in the 5 – 6 band. A mark of **5** is more appropriate here.

Knowledge and application of Language

This assessment grid rewards candidates for the range of both vocabulary and structures which they attempt to use. In addition, it rewards their use of a range of tenses. It is very important to bear in mind that the accuracy of the spelling and of the structures is assessed separately in the *Accuracy* grid.

The range of structures and tenses is considered in relation to the defined list of **Linguistic structures for German** (Appendix 1 on pages 29 – 30 of the specification).

Range of vocabulary:

The vocabulary deployed here is just about adequate for the task but it is basic and quite restricted. The criterion in the 1–2 band *narrow range of basic vocabulary* fits.

Range of structures:

In the second sentence the candidate uses inversion and there are several examples throughout the piece. There is an attempt to extend sentences by using coordination (but this is limited to *und*) and subordination (a couple of *weil* clauses). Adjectives are used both predicatively and attributively, but the range of adjectives deployed is actually quite narrow and although a superlative form is used, this is *besten* which is given in the task. The candidate has tried to link the piece by using adverbs e.g. *auch* and *aber* and quasi-adverbial phrases of time e.g. *Nach die kino, Nach Nando's, nach dem tort* (note the repetitive, anglicised format).

It is fair to state that this candidate has used *an adequate range of structures with some repetition* (3 – 4 band).

Range of tenses:

Bullet points 1 and 2 require a response in the past tense and the candidate uses the imperfect of *sein* (repetitively) and attempts to use high frequency verbs in the perfect tense. In the response to bullet point 3, the candidate uses the present tense and attempts the conditional.

This candidate has therefore tried to use a range of tenses appropriately, although the variety of verbs is somewhat limited. The criterion in the 3 - 4 band would be appropriate here: *some use of tenses to vary sentences*.

Overall mark for Knowledge and application of Language

In the spirit of positive marking, the best-fit mark here across the range of vocabulary, structures and tenses would be **3**.

Accuracy

Here we assess how accurate the candidate has been in his/her in the range of language used.

It is more than fair to say that inaccuracy in the manipulation of language leads to an impairment in the communication. Although the candidate attempts to use the perfect tense, many of the high frequency past participles are incorrectly formed e.g. *geseht, getrefft* and *geschafft* (for *geschlafen*). The incorrect

auxiliary is used with *gegangen* (another very high frequency verb) and there are some instances where the auxiliary is missing. On the positive side here, there is generally sound subject/verb agreement.

The candidate demonstrates no grasp of either case or gender e.g. *für mein letzte geburtstag mit eine gross Coca-cola, die nächtes morgen* and in general there is a very high incidence of error over an adequate range of structures and tenses.

Spelling is a significant issue e.g. *Hänchen, tort, familie, konpfscherzen, nächtes* and apart from *James Bond, Nando's* and *Coca-cola* no nouns have capital letters. Compound nouns are written discretely e.g. *Hänchen burger, Schokolade tort, Lieblings geburtstag*.

This piece of writing fulfils the criteria in the 1 – 2 band and the appropriate mark here is **2**.

Conclusion

This piece of writing would score $5 + 3 + 2 = 10$.