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 keep to 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 the description of the required outcomes in writing at grade F:

They write short texts that relate to familiar contexts. They can express simple opinions. They use simple sentences. The main points are usually conveyed but there are mistakes in spelling and grammar.

Task :   Sie schreiben einen Bericht über Ihre Familie (ungefähr 150 Wörter) mit folgenden Informationen:

- einige Details über Ihre Familie
- wie Sie sich mit Ihrer Familie verstehen und warum
- was Sie neulich zusammen mit Ihrer Familie gemacht haben
- warum Ihre Familie für Sie so wichtig ist.

Commentary

The essay covers bullet point 1 and attempts to cover bullet point 3. The piece is a bit short at just under 130 words, so the candidate would struggle to 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

This candidate undoubtedly communicates some information, albeit very limited, but there is a high incidence of ambiguity. However, there is more than just *little meaningful communication* and it is more than *only occasionally comprehensible.* Therefore, we should discount the 1 – 2 band and look at the 3 – 4 band, but we would be looking more towards the 1-2 band than the 5-6 band and thus we would favour a mark of 3.

Content

The candidate has focussed on bullet point 1 for the most part, giving fairly repetitive but relevant information about his family: name, age, physical attributes, jobs. The detail given about where they live is actually not relevant to this task.

A generous reader might allow that the final three lines are an attempt by the candidate to address bullet point 3. In addition, a simple opinion is certainly expressed. The response is therefore more than *barely relevant to the task* (1-2) – the criterion in the 3 - 4 band fits this piece perfectly – *the response is partially relevant to the task but there may be major omissions* given that bullet points 2 and 4 are not addressed at all. Again, we would not be looking at all towards the 5 -6 band so we would award a mark of 3 here.

Overall mark **Communication and Content**

A mark of **3** reflects the candidate's performance in both Communication and Content.

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 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 highly repetitive and very basic. The candidate resorts to English words at times. This falls into the 1 -2 band and we should opt for the lower mark as a mark of 2 would suggest that we might be considering 3 – which we are not.

Range of structures:

The structures are equally basic and repetitive. The candidate uses simple main clauses only, sometimes linked with *und*. The only verbs deployed are *haben* and *sein*. A mark of 1 is appropriate.

Range of tenses:

The candidate uses the present tense of either *sein* (the more frequently used) or *haben*. In the final three lines, we can read *went* and *was* which perhaps indicate that the candidate was aware of the need for a past tense. So in fact, we have an extremely narrow range of tenses and this performance would certainly be worth no more than 1 for the use of tenses.

Overall mark **for Knowledge and application of Language**

The best fit mark here across the range of vocabulary, structures and tenses would be **1**.

Accuracy

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

It is more than fair to say that inaccuracy in the manipulation of language leads to a significant impairment in the communication e.g. *Mein Vater ist XXX und sie hat blaue augen*. At times, nouns are used as verb substitutes *wie wohnung in der stadt in Wohnblock.* Nouns are invariably written without capital letters and the candidate demonstrates no grasp of gender or agreements. Whilst spelling is largely correct, the lexis is extremely repetitive and basic and the candidate frequently resorts to English words. The 1-2 band is appropriate here and a mark of 1 fits the performance better than 2 since we are not looking towards the 3 - 4 band.

Conclusion

This piece of writing would score **3 + 1 + 1 = 5**.

Candidates at this level should be encouraged to write a short, simple paragraph for each bullet point, using language with which they are confident. Addressing all bullet points would allow them to access more content marks and oblige them de facto to use a more diverse range of lexis, simple structures and possibly a range of tenses.