

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE German (5GN01) Paper 1H

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Listening and Responding (Higher)

The majority of candidates had been correctly entered at Higher Level. Scores on this paper were on average somewhat higher than on the equivalent paper on the previous specification. The English language format of the questions proved accessible. The best candidates displayed a wide vocabulary, a high level of comprehension and listening skills.

For the Higher Tier paper it is essential that candidates have the opportunity to practise global listening techniques. The strongest candidates were able to recognise attitudes, opinions and emotions drawn from a variety of sources and referring to past, present and future events and to give precise answers on the final two questions. However, there were many candidates whose answers to the last two questions were far too vague to gain any credit. Crossover questions were tackled more confidently at this level.

It is important that candidates are advised on how to best use the five minute preparation time before the playing of the listening material. In many cases this time can be used to narrow down the choice of possible answers. Candidates need to take care over the presentation of their work as there are still a number of illegible answers. Examiners are unable to award marks if they cannot read a candidate's handwriting. When crossing out sections candidates must make it absolutely clear what their final answer is supposed to be.

Question 1 (Directions)

This crossover question proved very accessible for Higher Tier candidates, many scoring almost full marks. However, even at this level a number of candidates had problems with *Viertelstunde* and could not link this with 15 minutes. As always, the time *halb acht* proved problematic for a minority of candidates. Most coped well with this question type, realising that in most cases there were only two answers that were possible in the context. Some candidates sensibly wrote the 2 possible choices on the paper during the 5 minute reading time before making their final decision on hearing the listening material.

Question 2 (Technology)

Most Higher Tier candidates scored highly here, gaining at last 3 marks. Some candidates penalised themselves by crossing too many boxes. The maximum mark for this question was 4 and therefore only four boxes should be crossed. Most of the vocabulary was familiar although *Stelle* in the context of jobs was not known by weaker candidates.

Question 3 (School)

This crossover question proved accessible to most Higher Tier candidates, most scoring at least 3 marks. The most problematic answer was to Q3i. Almost half of all Higher Tier candidates did not realise that *zu spät in der Schule angekommen* meant that Manni was late. The other 3 parts to this question posed few problems.

Question 4 (Future Careers)

This crossover question proved very accessible to most Higher Tier candidates. The last two parts were the most taxing; a number of candidates did not recognise *Gehalt* and *etwas Spannendes*.

Question 5 (Leisure time)

This exercise caused few problems for stronger candidates. Not all realised that *mein Roman* had anything to do with reading and instead opted for the distracter *einen Spaziergang machen*. Unsurprisingly, almost without exception, most teenagers realised that Lady Gaga is associated with music. The concept of past and future leisure activities caused difficulty for some. This type of question merits practice as it will undoubtedly feature in future examinations.

Question 6 (Health and Fitness)

This question type featured on the previous specification but is now more accessible with English language sentences, which was reflected in the overall marks achieved. Many candidates scored 2 or 3 marks here but only a small minority gained full marks. Some heard *30 Prozent* and presumed that answer a) must therefore be correct, not realising that the percentage was used in a different context. Similarly, the connection between *jeder zweite Schweizer* and 50% of Swiss people was not always made.

Question 7 (Health and Fitness)

Despite the complexity of the language marks were quite high here, partially due to the multi-choice test type. Candidates also used their general knowledge to arrive at sensible answers. This approach did not work with Q7iii, many assuming that white bread should be part of a healthy diet.

Question 8 (Shopping)

Candidates coped well with this test type, new with the advent of the current specification. However, few realised that *ein großes Loch gefunden* meant that the jacket was damaged. Many used the 5 minute reading time to narrow down the choice of possible answers to make it easier when they heard the listening material.

Question 9 (Theme Park)

The last two questions on this paper proved to be excellent discriminators. Weaker candidates failed to cope with the more open-ended format and, even if they understood the listening material, did not answer with sufficient precision to be awarded the marks. Students should take the time to review higher numbers in German: in Q9a the number 35 was frequently interpreted as 53, 5 or 25; most candidates, however, understood the concept of the anniversary. 1 million or even 5 million visitors was also a common mistake. Few candidates grasped the idea of *über 4 Millionen*. In Q9b many candidates lost marks because of vague answers. *Große Events finden ... im Winter statt* confused some who described events in the winter town. Very few appreciated that one could try out new dances in December.

Question 10 (Theme Park)

This question proved successful in separating the excellent candidates from the rest. Very few candidates scored more than half marks here. Whereas a huge number of candidates had understood the noun *Kinder*, far fewer had understood *Erwachsene* and the response that there 'was something for kids' occurred repeatedly. As happens every year, careless reading of the question led to answers such as 'she was very impressed' or 'she hated it'. *Inbegriffen* was not generally known, although *im Preis* should have been sufficient to work out the correct answer.

In Q10b many candidates assumed that Freiburg was part of the theme park and answered accordingly. Very few were able to give all the elements necessary for the awarding of the mark. Only a small minority realised the significance of *leider hatten wir keine Zeit, in die Kunstaussstellung zu gehen* and gave answers such as "the art was rubbish".

A small number of queries were received about the duration of the recording. Edexcel will be offering guidance for this on the front cover of the examination paper and on the recording to provide more clarity.

Grade Boundaries

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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