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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
GCSE German (5GN01)
Paper 1H: Listening and
understanding in German.

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Summer 2017

Publications Code 5GN01_1H_1706_ER

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GCSE German
Unit 1H: Listening
Examiners Report

Paper 1H – Listening and Responding

The performance of most candidates was encouraging on the majority of the paper. The questions that were intended to discriminate did so effectively. As in previous years, the performance of weaker candidates was frequently characterised by vague answers, often based on the identification of single words rather than listening to the extract as a whole. It is important to note that if candidates give three answers for a two mark question it is only the first two which will be assessed. Likewise for a one mark question only the first answer will be considered.

The skills required for this paper will continue to be required for the new specification. However, there will be greater emphasis on open-ended questions in English like the current Q4. It will therefore be crucial that candidates are able to express themselves clearly and precisely.

Many of the comments made in previous reports still apply. 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 to give precise answers on Q4, the open-ended English questions.

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 (Shopping)

This crossover question was answered very well by most Higher Tier candidates, with most candidates scoring at least 3 marks. Although Q1i and Q1iv caused no problems for Higher Tier candidates, results were more mixed for the middle two parts. For Q1iii some candidates did not realise that it was Anna's birthday soon and that *etwas ganz Besonderes kaufen* implied a present.

Question 2 (A dance class)

This crossover question was answered successfully by most Higher Tier candidates, the majority of students scoring 3 or in many cases 4 marks. Q2iii proved the most challenging part. Where candidates failed to score a mark it was because they did not realise that *Leider machen wir immer das Gleiche. Ich möchte etwas Neues lernen* implied boredom on the part of the dancer. This type of basic inference question will also feature prominently in the new specification next year.

Question 3 (Camping)

This crossover question proved very accessible for Higher Tier candidates with many scoring full marks. It was reassuring to see that most candidates were able to cope with questions requiring global comprehension rather than merely the identification of single lexical items.

Question 4 (Travelling to work)

This question type continues to be an excellent discriminator and for most candidates the most taxing on the paper. However, it was a little more accessible this year than in some previous papers. As in previous years, 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. Better candidates, however, listened to the whole extract rather than just homing in on individual items of vocabulary and were thus able to supply the detail and accuracy required at this level. Q4ai was the best answered part of this question. Many candidates realised that the lack of time for the family was the key element although some candidates seemed to think that the speaker was working away from home during the week rather than travelling backwards and forwards every day. Q4aaii was the most taxing part for candidates of all abilities. *Berufsmöglichkeiten* was known only to the very best candidates. Candidates often had trouble expressing clearly what they meant. Many expressed the idea that there was a problem with jobs, but often that the jobs themselves were bad and not the job prospects. Another common guess was that *Heidrun* commuted to get better pay. Better candidates realised that *Heidrun* valued the chance to enjoy the countryside at the weekend. A frequently encountered wrong answer was that she enjoyed looking at the scenery from the train on the way to work. There were many correct responses to Q4aiii, but also many which were too vague, stating that the journey by train was less stressful, but with no comparison with driving. Some candidates confused *Autofahrt* with *Autobahn* and assumed *Heidrun* was talking about motorways. There were a great number of possible answers for Q4bai. Some candidates included three possible answers, only the first two of which were assessed. Most candidates realised that *Heidrun* slept on the train but the next most common answer was that she organised her day, which was not precise enough to be credited. Few candidates knew the key word *Termine*. Q4bii illustrated well the need for candidates to concentrate on the precise information given rather than attempting an approximate paraphrase or guessing what the speaker is likely to say on a particular topic. Many candidates said that the speaker advised cycling to work rather than merely to the station. It was often wrongly assumed that the advice was to eat a healthy breakfast rather than to eat at home before leaving for work.

Question 5 (Job advert)

This crossover question was answered extremely well by most Higher Level candidates. It was not uncommon for candidates to score full marks here.

Question 6 (Hotels)

This crossover question was answered very well by most candidates at Higher Level, although some weaker candidates picked out the right answers but attributed them to the wrong hotel. A minority heard *ein Hit* in association with the Hotel zur Krone and therefore wrongly assumed this must refer to music.

Question 7 (Social media)

This question proved a good discriminator, particularly Q7ii and Q7iii which were correct only in a minority of cases. Only better candidates associated Jens looking forward to the time when everybody will be on social media with social media having an exciting future (B). The link between *menschlich/sozialer* and social media making life more pleasant (E) also proved relatively taxing.

Question 8 (Educating children from abroad)

Many candidates scored about half marks on this question but only a small minority gained more than 6 marks. Taxing elements to this question included Qaiii where weaker candidates were taken in by the distractors. Six years was the age at which *Mamadou* came to Germany and although he originally came from abroad he has no intention of returning there to study. The key phrase *unbedingt Lehrer werden* was recognised only by a minority of candidates. Q8aiv is a commonly set question. The temptation is to assume that the answer will be "mixed experiences" but on this occasion *Mamadou* has nothing good to say about his school days. Each part of Q8b was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Although the language for this question was relatively complex most candidates scored more highly than in Q4 because of the question type, picking the correct answer from three possibilities.

The factors mentioned last year as being essential for success on this paper remain relevant and are quoted again here:

- thorough knowledge of vocabulary on all the prescribed topics
- reading rubrics carefully
- listening to the passage as a whole rather than concentrating on individual words
- clear expression in English
- basing answers on facts in the listening materials rather than suppositions based on candidates' own ideas and experiences
- recognising negation and partial negation

