

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2012

GCSE German (5GN02) Paper 2A

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January 2012

Publications Code UG030530

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General

Entries were modest in this moderation session for the Controlled Assessment in German Speaking. Moderators listened to some imaginative, creative and genuinely interesting orals and were impressed by the level of performance and achievement of many of the candidates entered. There was a definite sense of a natural conversation with evidence of interaction and spontaneity and the range of vocabulary and grammar used by many candidates was excellent. Teachers are to be congratulated on managing the process so effectively and clearly putting their candidates at ease during the orals.

Tasks

Centres have a choice of 3 tasks:

1. a presentation and discussion
2. a picture-based discussion
3. an open interaction

Each candidate must undertake at least 2 of these 3 task types but only one has to be recorded and submitted, although centres must submit in the moderation sample recordings of at least TWO different task types for which they are submitting marks across the whole centre cohort.

In this session, the majority of centres opted for the presentation and discussion and picture-based discussion, but a pleasing number of centres undertook the open interaction.

Centres create their own task sheets for the P&D & the PBD – there are no Edexcel set tasks for these 2 options. This session, most centres gave their candidates a task sheet and instances of candidates receiving just a title e.g. *My holiday last year* were rare. Centres are reminded that all tasks have to be refreshed every 2 years, in accordance with all other Awarding Bodies. The best tasks will therefore be a title with 5 or so bullet points to guide and support candidates: the task can then be refreshed at the end of 2 years by changing at least one of these bullet points.

Where a candidate engages in a picture-based discussion, centres should note that the specification states on p16 that the picture is intended to be used as a 'prompt to discussion'. The ensuing discussion should therefore start from the candidate's picture. The spirit of this task type is that candidates will bring in their own picture, rather than all being given the same one.

Most centres undertaking the open interaction created their own stimuli and tasks, generally 'customising' ones from the Edexcel bank in order to develop tasks that suited the interests of their own candidates, thus allowing them to perform well. Teachers are reminded, however, that the stimulus in the open interaction task should not exceed 70 words.

Relatively few centres differentiated their tasks to cater for the relative aspirations of their candidates – most centres gave all candidates the same

task. Centres are reminded that candidates do not all have to do the same task and that controlled assessments allow candidates access to tasks which are tailored to their ability level. Tasks which offer higher achieving candidates little or no scope for stretch and challenge will not allow such candidates to achieve their potential. Conversely, tasks which overstretch lower achieving candidates may lead these candidates to under-perform.

Themes

Centres and candidates are free to choose their own themes for the orals: 4 popular themes have been identified by Edexcel (as listed on p9 of the Specification) but these are not prescriptive. Candidates may undertake both tasks on the same theme if they wish although there should be no direct overlap of content. Popular themes included holidays, work experience, school, family, media, lifestyle, leisure, my town, Olympic Games and Christmas. Plenty of candidates used the opportunity provided by the new specification to talk about things which were of genuine interest to them e.g. favourite actors, singers or sports stars and it was evident that they had carried out lots of independent research.

Conduct

In general, the orals were well conducted and allowed candidates to achieve their best. Skilful and appropriate questioning from the Teacher-Examiner afforded candidates the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria.

Presentation and Discussion

In the presentation and discussion task type candidates must give a presentation which should last between **1 minute minimum** and **3 minutes maximum**. Unfortunately some Teacher-Examiners did not allow their candidates to speak for at least one minute before interrupting them to ask a question - even where the candidate clearly had more to say – consequently these presentations were too short. Teachers should note that presentations which fall short of the one minute minimum time allocation will incur a deduction of 2 marks on the Content & response grid (please refer to the *Marking Principles* at the beginning of this document). The other 2 task type options might be more appropriate for students who are unable to give a presentation lasting a minimum of 1 minute. Centres should be reassured that 1 minute really is long enough for the presentation part of the task - long presentations could mean less time for the more interactive, spontaneous part of the task.

Many candidates performed well here and were a pleasure to listen to. Other candidates had prepared their presentation thoroughly and were able to perform well only then to have little left for the all-important interaction. The presentation section undoubtedly allows candidates to fulfil certain assessment criteria but the discussion allows them to fulfil others. It is therefore very important to ensure that both sections are well represented and accomplished. Sometimes the follow up questions covered exactly the same ground as that in the presentation, which led to candidates using the same language and repeating information already given rather than taking the conversation forward, expanding on detail and opinion or taking the conversation in a new direction. This has negative implications for the

marks which can be awarded. In addition, when the Teacher-Examiner asked a question about something the candidate had already stated in the presentation, this frequently caused hesitation and confusion. When devising tasks, teachers might wish to consider suggesting content for the presentation as distinct from content for the discussion as this way both sections will deal with different aspects of the theme.

It is not in the spirit of the examination for each candidate's presentation to be followed by the same sequence of questions which in turn lead into shorter 'mini-presentations' – within the constraints of an assessment, we are looking for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions. Asking all candidates the same questions will not provide enough challenge for more able candidates. There was evidence that the questions had been well rehearsed in some centres. Whilst this drilling may have allowed weaker students to access their potential grade, the lack of spontaneity and unpredictability definitely limited the marks of the more able students.

The Picture Based discussion

This proved a popular choice with centres and candidates bringing their own photo or picture added a sparkle to the conversation - they clearly enjoyed talking about their pictures. Candidates may give a presentation (maximum of one minute) but they do not have to. Practice varied. Teachers should note however that one minute is the maximum time allowed for any such presentation and candidates should be interrupted when they reach the one minute mark. Some students clearly find giving a presentation boosts their confidence for the rest of the oral, others find it too daunting and feel more comfortable going straight into the discussion. Either approach is acceptable. A short presentation or brief discussion on the photo or picture led on to wider conversation which was interesting to listen to. Personal pictures of their home, a holiday or a celebrity were frequently used and things that had clearly captured candidates' imagination gave rise to opportunities to express opinions and speak with enthusiasm. Feelings and humour were evident and this greatly enhanced the spoken communication.

Open Interaction

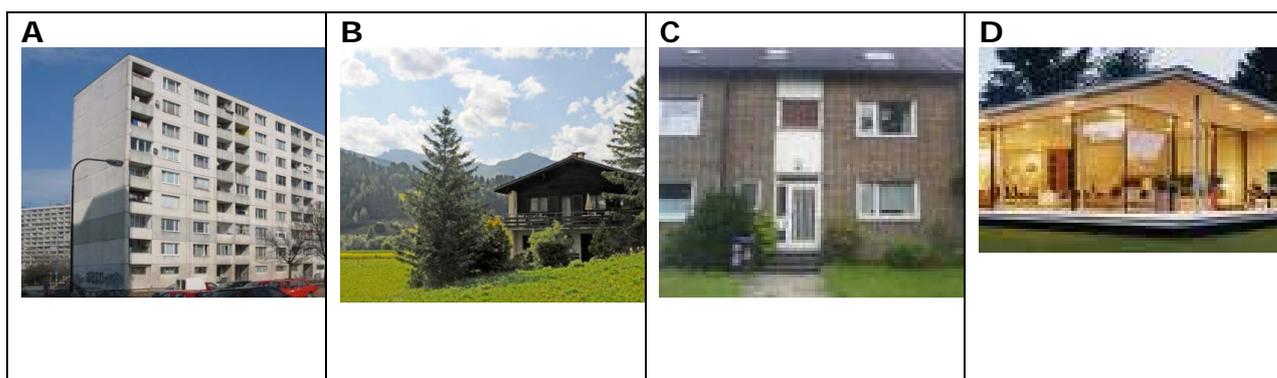
Whilst many teachers have realised the full potential of this task, this continues to be the lesser-chosen task option. Performance tended to fall into two polarised categories.

Where the task was exploited correctly, candidates of **all** levels were able to engage in a genuinely spontaneous role-play type dialogue. There were some excellent performances e.g. candidates in a tourist office with a tourist asking for information on the area, candidates at a job interview. Well-structured Open Interaction tasks really encourage high scores in the Content and response category due to the level of genuine interaction. The nature of this task gives a real flavour of how language is used in a way that is personal and unique to each individual candidate. Moderators felt that the Open Interaction task often enabled weaker candidates to achieve better marks, as it was more structured and even the sort of "unpredictable questions" which might be asked were easier to predict.

Here is an example of an Open Interaction task which works well: the candidate is given a clear context and a defined role to play. The teacher also has a defined role to play. There is a support stimulus to which the candidate may refer during the oral. The bullet points suggest a path through the situation and offer the candidate support. The candidate is also reminded of the need to ask the teacher some questions.

Open Interaction Travel & Tourism

Your family has decided to visit Germany and wants to exchange houses with a German family. You are speaking with a representative of a German agency, which arranges this. There are four houses available:



During the course of the conversation you **may** need to do the following:

- describe your family
- explain what sort of house you want, where it should be and why
- say what you will do in Germany
- choose which of the four houses you want to exchange with
- describe your house and the area it is in
- say why your area is suitable for the German family

Be prepared to ask some questions.

Unfortunately, many teachers conducted this task as a question and answer session – so more of a general conversation than an unscripted role-play scenario in response to a stimulus (which candidates will have prepared under supervision ahead of the test). Some tasks set did not easily give rise to an unscripted role-play - situations such as *You meet a friend and talk about your holiday* did not work well as there was no obvious role to play and many Teacher-Examiners forgot the scenario. Centres are advised that there is no 'general conversation' task type in this new specification.

You must ensure that there is a context and that the candidate is given a definite role to play. Equally, the teacher must have a role to play. A support stimulus should be used and candidates should be reminded to ask questions. The task must be structured and should not be conducted as a general conversation.

There is an expectation in the Open Interaction that candidates will ask the Teacher-Examiner questions and the vast majority of tasks reminded candidates of the need to do so. If candidates forget to ask questions, the Teacher-Examiner should prompt them to do so – it is perfectly acceptable for teachers to prompt candidates in this respect e.g. *hast du/Haben Sie Fragen für mich?* Centres should refer to the Marking principles for details on how to apply the marking criteria in such instances.

Timings

Each oral task should last between 4 and 6 minutes - this range affords flexibility to suit different candidates. Moderators noted in this session that very many orals exceeded the time allocation. Centres should be aware that moderators stop moderating after 6 minutes to ensure an even playing field for all candidates. In any case, prolonging the oral rarely, if ever, brings any advantage to the candidate – often the reverse is true. At the other end of the time scale, we have recognised that 4 minutes may represent too long a time for weaker candidates and we are willing to accept orals which last 3 minutes 30 seconds – so some considerable leeway. However, anything less than this will be considered short and centres should refer to the *Marking principles* for details on how to apply the assessment criteria in this case. However, centres should note that in order to access the full mark range, the oral must last between 4 and 6 minutes. An oral which lasts only 3'30" will not be able to access the full mark range.

Recordings

Just one recorded exemplar per candidate for moderation should be sent to moderators. This session no centres submitted their recordings on cassettes, preferring either CDs and USB sticks (with orals recorded as both mp3 files and music/audio files). Whilst we will continue to accept cassettes for the next few sessions, it is undoubtedly the case that orals recorded digitally and saved as mp3 files greatly facilitate for centres the selection process for the moderation sample. The quality and clarity of the recording are also better in comparison with cassettes. Whilst it is not necessary to conduct the controlled assessments one-on-one in a dedicated room, there is a need for minimal background noise. Moderators commented that many candidates situation were very difficult to hear due to high levels of background noise.

Centres are kindly requested to label cassettes, CDs or USBs carefully – centre number, candidate name and number, language and series details should be clearly given. It would help moderators tremendously if the task type were indicated next to the candidate's name. It also avoids confusion if these details are announced clearly at the start of each oral – Teacher-Examiners at some centres started the oral without identifying the candidate which made it very difficult for the moderator to know which candidate they were listening to.

All recordings will be returned to Centres.

Marking

The vast majority of Teacher- Examiners showed a good understanding of the assessment criteria and were able to differentiate performances among

their candidates. Unfortunately, there were centres whose marks needed adjustment.

Content and response:

These centres tended to overvalue their candidates' performance here. It should be remembered that the assessment criteria are applied globally on a best-fit basis and that the ability to interact well with the teacher and respond spontaneously to unpredictable questions is necessary to attain marks in the higher mark bands. Pre-learnt mini-monologues or 'conversations' which consist of a question and answer session (typically, one question followed by a one sentence answer) but a lack of interaction or the ability to expand or take the initiative cannot be rewarded with top marks. On the other hand, the weakest candidates were often under-marked in this section. Candidates who had been able to give a mix of short sentence answers or phrases and maintain the conversation for 4 minutes were still put in the 1-3 band.

Accuracy and Range of Language:

Marks here are largely dependent on the amount of German conveyed by the candidate and it is unusual for a candidate who scores in the lower mark bands for Content and response to score highly in these grids since there is not the breadth of language required. Tenses other than the present must be used in order to have the opportunity to access the 5 mark band for Range of Language. However, the demonstration of a good grasp of the tenses alone does not mean candidates should automatically score a mark of 5 – they do need to demonstrate wide range of structures and vocabulary. It is important when awarding the mark for Accuracy to note that the mere lack of error does not mean the candidate will score highly. The candidate must attempt to use more complex structures to reach 5 and there must be generally good pronunciation and intonation.

Administration

Many centres completed the administration admirably. Others had omitted to include vital documents but responded quickly to moderators' requests for material.

Centres are advised to refer to the *Administrative support guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments)* available on the web site

<http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/GCSE-Administrative-Support-Guide-2012-ICE-upd.pdf>

for each examination session as this details exactly which materials should be sent to the moderator.

Centres should not send more than the one oral per candidate to which they wish moderators to listen i.e. only those recordings which are to be moderated. The candidates required for moderation are identified with an asterisk by Edexcel, but Centres should ensure that they send their **highest** performing and their **lowest** performing candidates on the 2A task (i.e. task for moderation) in addition to the requested sample.

Moderators will moderate the 2A task only. They do not moderate the 2B task. Consequently, centres should not send to moderators any paperwork relating to the 2B task. However, the 2A task should not be the same task type for all candidates in the moderation sample.

Missing orals

Some centres emailed through to their moderators mp3 files for outstanding candidates e.g. highest and lowest scoring. Whilst email is a very expedient process, centres are reminded that the Code of Practice dictates that examinations, including controlled assessments, must be kept confidential until the closing date for enquiries about results. Since email is not secure, it is not possible to guarantee that orals sent in this way have been kept secure.

CM2 - Candidate mark sheet

Centres are reminded that the Code of Practice requires that assessment evidence provided by candidates has been authenticated. The **CM2** has a double function: it is clearly the form on which the tasks and centre awarded marks are recorded, but it is also the authenticity form and **must** be signed by both candidate and teacher. The CM2 form is the updated Candidate mark sheet and replaces all previous mark sheets. It is available as an appendix on the Admin guide referred to above and centres are kindly requested to use the current form for their candidates. In order to reduce the admin burden on centres, the revised form has a box for centres to indicate whether the candidates used the CA2 form.

CA2 forms

The CA2 form is the pro forma on which candidates may write up to 30 words of notes and make 5 small drawings. They may take this form into the oral with them so it is one of the controls. Moderators must see this form to check exactly what support candidates had whilst taking their oral. If candidates do not use a CA2 form during their oral, this should be indicated on the CM2 form above.

Those candidates who used a CA2 form, did not always use it to their best advantage, especially weaker candidates. Complex vocabulary items were often recorded by such candidates, but it was apparent that they did not know how to pronounce them, and consequently communication was impaired. A list of 30 discrete lexical items does not represent the most helpful use of this form and centres should spend some time discussing with their candidates how the allowed 30 words can best support them as they undertake the speaking tasks.

Task sheets

It is very difficult for moderators to moderate a candidate's performance if they do not have access to the task used in the assessment. Centres are reminded that a copy of each task used in the moderation sample must be sent to the moderator.

Task sheets should not contain additional vocabulary such as *useful fillers*. Candidates are allowed up to 30 words of notes (on the CA2 form) and any words in addition to the 30 permitted words infringe the controls. The task

sheet should be just that, a task sheet with no reminders to use a range of tense, express opinions etc. Such reminders should be achieved via the bullet points e.g. mention an activity you did last week (to encourage past tense), say why this was enjoyable (to encourage opinion and reason) etc.

General

Moderators respectfully request that centres do not send candidate materials in plastic wallets. The best way to submit work is to collate each candidate's materials and then staple together or use a paper clip or treasury tag.

In short, moderators felt that moderation went most smoothly where centres had

- collated each candidate's CM2 form, CA2 form and task sheet together with a treasury tag/staple/paperclip.
- included a print out of the candidates they were sending in the sample, including the highest and lowest scoring candidates (on task 2A).
- included the yellow copy of the OPTEMS if marks had not been entered online.
- included a track list of sampled candidates (giving candidate name and number) complete with task type on the CD or memory stick for the sample candidates.
- completed the CM2 form correctly, with both TE and candidate signatures.

Support

Centres are reminded that the GCSE 09 German web page

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/german/Pages/default.aspx>

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offers a wealth of support to teachers on the CA in speaking and teachers should check for any updates on a regular basis: it is possible to sign up for email alerts (see bottom of web page for details). E.g. under Teacher Support Materials, there is a *Summary of useful support for GCSE Modern Foreign Languages - French, German and Spanish Controlled Assessment Unit*

The *Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book – speaking* is an invaluable resource with many FAQs

<http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/CPS/GCSE%20from%202009/GCSE%20MFL%20Controlled%20Assessment%20Teacher%20Support%20Book%20-%20Speaking.pdf>

as is the *Supplementary Frequently Asked Questions – GCSE Controlled Assessments (Speaking and Writing)*

<http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/FAQs-Supplement.pdf>

The *Controlled Assessment Exemplar Materials* include exemplar orals, tasks and moderator commentaries.

For those wanting a brief overview, there is a Podcast (<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/podcast-mfl.aspx>) and you can ask and answer queries and exchange ideas via the MFL Online community (<http://community.edexcel.com/forums/22.aspx>).

Any teacher with a specific query about any aspect of the CA process should send an email to one of the Senior Examiners for German at *Ask the Expert* gcsegerman@edexcelexperts.co.uk. A reply will be received within 48 hours (often sooner). Alternatively, teachers may like to send their query to LanguagesSubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk

In addition to the GCSE German page, there is a generic languages web page and it is possible to subscribe to regular newsletters with updates and advice via this web page

<http://www.edexcel.com/Subjects/Languages/Pages/Default.aspx>

Finally, Edexcel offers a programme of trainings events – both face-to-face and online. Please refer to

<http://www.edexcel.com/resources/training/Pages/default.aspx>

GCSE Modern Foreign Languages – Main Taught

Unit 2: Speaking Marking principles

Tests which are **too short**: < less than 3'30" - so 3'29 " is too short

- Automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid.
- There is no penalty applied to either Range or Accuracy.

Test which are **too long**: > more than 6 minutes

- Stop listening and assessing at the end of the first sentence after 6 minutes have elapsed

Test which are **a monologue** and have no interaction

- No more than 7 for Content and Response
- There is no penalty applied for either Range or Accuracy

Open interaction tasks only

- Candidate asks only one question – deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response (where two or more questions are clearly required)
- Candidate asks no questions – deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.

There are no penalties on the other two assessment grids.

There is an expectation in this task type that the candidate will ask the TE questions since it is a transactional task type. Although interaction is important in all three task types, there is no requirement for candidates to ask questions in the Presentation and discussion or in the Picture-based discussion task options.

Presentation and Discussion

- The presentation must last between 1 – 3 mins (max). If the presentation is shorter than 1 min deduct 2 marks for Content and Response.

Marks for content and language are awarded discretely – i.e. if a candidate scores 8-11 for content, there is no imposed ceiling on either of the other assessment boxes for range or accuracy.

These are the only penalties to be applied. Pro-rata calculations from other specifications or languages should not be used.

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Order Code UG030530 January 2012

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