

Moderators' Report /
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE German (5GN02) Paper 2A

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Moderator Report

General

This was the second major moderation session for the Controlled Assessment in 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 are asked to 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, although the majority of centres once again opted for the presentation and discussion and picture-based discussion, there was a pleasing increase in the number of centres who undertook an open interaction task.

Centres create their own task sheets for the P&D & the PBD – there are no Edexcel set tasks for these 2 options. Some centres did not give their candidates a task sheet: candidates had just a title e.g. *My holiday last year*. Centres should be aware 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. If the task is 'just' a title, this title may not be used after 2 years. The assessment criteria require candidates to demonstrate spontaneity, an ability to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements. Thus task sheets with a defined list of questions to prepare will not allow candidates to access the higher mark bands.

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 must 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, often 'customising' ones from the Edexcel bank in order to develop tasks that suited the interests of their own candidates. Teachers are reminded, however, that the stimulus in the open interaction task should not exceed 70 words. (cf. p33 of the specification: the stimulus may contain visual prompts in addition to the 70 words of either English or German). There is no word limit for the task but you are advised to set concise tasks.

Relatively few centres differentiated their tasks to cater for the different levels of candidates – most centres gave all candidates the same task which differentiated by outcome. This was not always a positive experience for candidates. Candidates in the same teaching group do not all have to do the same task. Teachers may start with a generic task but then modify e.g. 2 or 3 versions to correspond to the ability level of different candidates within the group.

Themes

Centres and candidates are free to choose their own themes for the orals: 4 popular themes have been identified by Edexcel (cf. 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 (typically pop stars), healthy living, leisure & sports and my town. Candidates presented with the task *My favourite celebrity* chose personalities such as Jeremy Clarkson or Prof Brian Cox. This usually proved to be a wise choice: their genuine interest in these people meant they had researched well and the ensuing oral was both well exploited and very engaging.

Conduct

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

Unfortunately, for all three task types, there were centres where TEs stuck rigidly to a bank of questions and so all candidates were asked the same questions.

These questions rarely followed on logically from one another. Teachers should be mindful that more able candidates are disadvantaged by such an approach since there is a need for candidates to speak spontaneously, to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements in order to access the higher mark bands. Tailoring the questions to candidates' responses is the best way to ensure spontaneity and genuine interaction. Thus candidates did best when TE questions followed on from what the candidate had just said and the unpredictable questions were frequently those which elicited more information or clarification.

In addition, TEs should ask questions appropriate to the level of the candidate being examined. In this way, they can afford more able candidates opportunities to express a range of ideas and points of view and to demonstrate a range of more complex structures and vocabulary. Similarly, weaker candidates have the opportunity to respond to more modest questions using language which they are able to manipulate.

Some candidates were asked too many closed questions. This was particularly disappointing when the candidate was very capable and clearly able to produce extended answers but, when faced with closed questions in the stressful environment of the oral, frequently resorted to yes / no answers. In general, closed questions should be avoided in favour of more open-ended questions as these latter lead to a better candidate performance.

Some TEs appeared to run out of questions to ask their candidates. This led to some wrapping the oral up ahead of time (see later comments on timing) whilst others asked repetitive questions e.g. on the theme of family: *Kannst du deinen Vater beschreiben? Und kannst du deine Schwester beschreiben?* Such a strategy will limit the outcomes for more able candidates.

Presentation and Discussion

In the presentation and discussion task type candidates must give an **uninterrupted** presentation which lasts between **1 minute minimum** and **3 minutes maximum**. (The clock starts ticking when the candidate starts speaking.) Presentations which fall short of the one minute minimum time allocation will incur a 2 mark deduction from the Content and Response grid (please refer to the *Marking Principles* at the end of this document). Unfortunately, some TEs did not allow their candidates to speak for at least one minute before interrupting them to ask a question - even when it was clear the candidate had more to say – consequently these presentations were too short. Some weaker candidates *dried up* after about 30 seconds and teachers should consider whether the other 2 task types might not be more appropriate for such candidates unable to give a presentation lasting a minimum of 1 minute. Centres should be reassured that just over 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. It is therefore not necessary for any candidate to go to the full 3 minutes mark.

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 but then had little left for the all-important interaction. The presentation section allows candidates to fulfil certain assessment criteria but the discussion section allows them to fulfil others. It is therefore crucial 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. Often when the TE asked a question about something the candidate had already stated in the presentation, this frequently caused hesitation and confusion.

A presentation followed by a sequence of, for example, 4 questions which in turn lead into shorter 'mini-presentations' will not allow candidates to access the higher assessment bands – within the constraints of an assessment, we are looking for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions. 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 limited the marks of the more able students.

The Picture Based discussion

This proved a popular choice with centres and many candidates were clearly motivated by being able to bring in their own picture. Candidates may give a presentation (maximum of one minute) but they do not have to. Practice varied. Some students find giving a presentation boosts their confidence for the rest of the oral, others feel more comfortable going straight into the discussion. Either approach is acceptable but it bears repeating that the picture is a 'prompt to discussion' so the oral must start from the candidate's picture. In the case of some candidates, the picture was not referred to at all. Since the assessment criteria for Content and Response refer specifically to *information related to the chosen visual* this will have had an impact on the marks available to such candidates. However, in the vast majority of cases, a short presentation or brief discussion on the photo or picture led on to wider conversation which was interesting to listen to. Pictures of a holiday or a hobby and a favourite celebrity were frequently used and many candidates spoke with great enthusiasm. Feelings and humour were evident and this greatly enhanced the spoken communication.

Open Interaction

Many teachers have realised the full potential of this task, however this was the lesser-chosen task option. Performance fell into two 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 being interviewed for a job, in a tourist office with a tourist asking for information on the candidate's local area, in a leisure centre, at a hotel reception. Well-structured Open Interaction tasks encouraged high scores in the Content and Response grid due to the level of genuine interaction. The nature of this task gives a real flavour of how language can be used in a way that is personal and unique to each individual candidate and many candidates were really enabled to demonstrate their language ability here. Moderators felt that the Open Interaction task often allowed weaker candidates to achieve better marks, as it could offer more support in the stimulus.

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 are talking with your German exchange partner about school* or *You are a guide at a school open day for a prospective parents* did not work well at all as there was no obvious role to play and these turned into general discussions on school. Centres are advised that there is no 'general conversation' task type in this new specification.

There is an expectation in the Open Interaction that candidates will ask the TE questions and the vast majority of tasks reminded candidates of the need to do so. All the more pity therefore that some candidates forgot to ask questions and were not prompted by the TE 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 must last between 4 and 6 minutes - this range affords flexibility to suit different candidates. The majority of orals conformed to the timings requirement. Centres should be aware that moderators stop moderating after 6 minutes and any material beyond that will not be considered for assessment. This ensures an even playing field for all candidates. At the other end of the time

scale, 4 minutes may represent too long a time for weaker candidates and orals which last 3'30" will be tolerated. However, anything less than this will be considered short and in the case of a short oral 2 marks should be deducted from the candidate's score in the Content and Response grid. The marking principles detail this. Many centres had not deducted these 2 marks in those cases where the oral was too short. Centres should note, however, 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.

In addition to the overall timing of the oral, centres should note that in the Presentation and discussion task type, candidates give a presentation which must last between 1 minute minimum and 3 minutes maximum. Presentations which fall short of the one minute minimum time allocation will also incur a 2 mark deduction from the Content and Response grid. Many centres had not deducted these 2 marks in those cases where the candidate's presentation fell short of the required minimum time.

Centres should also note that in the Picture based discussion task type, candidates may give a presentation but they do not have to. If they do choose to start off with a presentation, this may last a maximum of one minute (whereby anything up to the one minute is acceptable).

Recordings

Just one recorded exemplar per candidate in the moderation sample should be sent to moderators. This session centres submitted their recordings on CDs and USB sticks (with orals recorded as both mp3 files and music/audio files). Very few centres sent in cassettes. 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.

Moderators would respectfully request that centres check their recordings before sending off the samples. There were some poor quality recordings which were almost inaudible. In addition, whilst it is not necessary to conduct the orals one-on-one in a dedicated room, there is a need for minimal background noise so that the candidate being examined can be heard. Some candidates recorded in a classroom situation were very difficult to hear due to high levels of background noise. Moderators received CDs, USB sticks and cassettes which did not contain all the required recordings or on which the recordings could not be found. It is important to check for compatibility and details of accepted digital formats (.mp3 (at least 192 kbit/s), .wav, .wma) are listed in the Administrative support guide.

Centres are kindly requested to include with the CDs or USBs a track list – detailing centre number, candidate name and number, language and series details. It would help moderators tremendously if the task type were indicated next to the candidate's name. It also avoids confusion if details of both candidate name and number are announced clearly at the start of each oral – TEs at some centres started the oral without identifying the candidate at all which made it very difficult for the moderators to know which candidate they were listening to. Where orals have been recorded as music/audio files, it would be helpful to moderators if centres could write the relevant track number on the CM2 form.

All recordings will be returned to Centres.

Marking

The vast majority of TEs showed a good understanding of the assessment criteria and were able to differentiate performances among their candidates. It was clear that the vast majority of centres had standardised their marking internally when there was more than one teacher involved in the assessments. Unfortunately, there were centres whose marks were out of tolerance and 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 TE 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 but lack interaction or do not evidence an ability to expand or take the initiative cannot be rewarded with top marks. Thus marks were incorrectly awarded in the 16 – 18 band in cases where the candidate gave extended, informative answers which had clearly been pre-learnt but where they did not show any spontaneity or ability to respond to unpredictable questions. Marks were awarded too generously in the 12 – 15 band for candidates who answered a lot of questions but tended to give a one sentence answer i.e. did not take the initiative and develop elaborate answers.

On the other hand, the weakest candidates were often under-marked in this section. Candidates who had given a decent amount of information albeit it in short simple sentences and were able to maintain the conversation for 4 minutes were still put in the 1-3 band when they deserved to be in the 4 – 7 band.

Range of Language and Accuracy:

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. Many candidates had been well trained by teachers to include different tenses. Sometimes, however, use of tenses was given priority over the use of a variety of structures and vocabulary: candidates were able to speak in three tenses, but use only short sentences and simple vocabulary. Teachers should be aware then that the demonstration of a good grasp of the tenses alone does not mean candidates will automatically score a mark of 5 – they do need to demonstrate wide range of structures and vocabulary as well.

When awarding the mark for Accuracy it is important 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.

Some centres based their marks for both Content and Response and Language on the information given and level of language used by a candidate in the presentation without acknowledging that this was not sustained in the ensuing discussion. Marks awarded for all 3 grids are awarded globally across the whole performance.

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 Edexcel web site, 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 in addition to the requested sample. In this case, *the highest and lowest scoring candidates* refers to the 2A task only (that is

to say, the task to be moderated): it does not refer to the overall scores i.e. not the total scores across both tasks.

There was some misunderstanding of what constitutes the 2A task. The 2A task is **not** necessarily the task centres conduct first, and the 2B task is not necessarily the task which centres conduct second. The 2A task is the task which has been recorded and for which a recording will be available to send to the Edexcel moderator if requested. The 2A task should **not** be the same for all candidates in the centre: centres will need to send at least 2 different task types in the sample for moderation. It is not a requirement to record the 2B task, although many centres do record everything. Thus, if a centre records all candidates undertaking all task types, it will be necessary for the centre to designate which task is task 2A for each candidate and which task is task 2B for each candidate bearing in mind that not all candidates should have the same task 2A. If centres record only task 2A, then they should note that they will have to record some candidates doing one task type and other candidates undertaking a different task type.

Moderators will moderate the 2A task only. They do not moderate the 2B task. Consequently, centres should not send to moderators any recordings or paperwork relating to the 2B task.

Candidate mark sheets

Centres are reminded that the Code of Practice requires that assessment evidence provided by candidates has been authenticated. The **CM2** form (the revised *Candidate mark sheet*) has a double function: it is the form on which the tasks (including a short description of the picture) and centre awarded marks are recorded, but it is also the authenticity form and **must** be signed by both candidate and teacher. Unfortunately, lots of forms were not signed by either the candidate or the teacher and signatures had to be requested. Before despatch, centres should check that these forms have been signed by both parties.

The CM2 form replaces the old *Authenticity record sheet* and is available as an appendix in the Administrative support guide referred to above. In addition, the CM2 form has a box with Y/N which allows teachers very easily to indicate whether the CA2 form has been used by this candidate.

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. Centres should note that printed images (e.g. photos or pictures from magazines) are not allowed.

Candidates may take this form into the oral with them so it is one of the controls. If candidates used this form during the oral, then moderators must see it to check exactly what support candidates had. Some centres did not include the CA2 forms nor did they circle the *N* on the CM2 form nor did they include any statement to the effect that their candidates had not used CA2 forms. If candidates decide they do not wish to use this form, this is fine but moderators must have a signed document to this effect.

Those candidates who used a CA2 form did not always use it to their best advantage, especially weaker candidates. Complex vocabulary items were often listed, but it was apparent that candidates did not know how to pronounce them, and consequently communication was impaired. A list of 30 discrete lexical items may not represent the most helpful use of this form. We would strongly recommend that candidates do not write full sentences – this uses up the 30 words very easily. Centres should spend some time discussing with their candidates how the allowed 30 words can best support them during 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 – even if the task was just a title.

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 opinions and reasons) etc.

General

Centres are requested not to send candidate materials in plastic wallets. The best way to submit work is to collate each candidate's materials and then use a treasury tag (or a bit of string).

Moderators felt that moderation went most smoothly where centres had followed the checklist on page 17 of the Administrative support guide:

For each candidate in the sample:

- Recording of task 2A
- Task/stimulus
- Candidate Mark Sheet (CM2)
- Candidate Notes Form (CA2)

For the centre:

- Second copy of the 2A OPTEMS form (bottom copy to be kept by the centre) or the Edexcel Online printout
- The 2A work of the highest scoring candidate and lowest scoring candidate, if not already included in the sample
- CD / USB / Cassette Track listing for each candidate

Support

The Edexcel GCSE 09 German web page offers a wealth of support to teachers on the CA in speaking.

The *Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book – speaking* is an invaluable resource with many FAQs, as is the *Supplementary Frequently Asked Questions – GCSE Controlled Assessments (Speaking and Writing)*.

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

For those wanting a brief overview, there is a Podcast available and you can ask and answer queries and exchange ideas via the MFL Online community.

Any teacher with a query about any aspect of the CA process should send an email to TeachingLanguages@edexcelexperts.co.uk

You might also be interested in:

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/LangsAdvisor>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com> (Search for Edexcel Languages)

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.

Finally, Edexcel offers a programme of trainings events, details of which can be found on the website.

Further marking guidance

Tests should last between 4 and 6 minutes.

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 adjustment applied to either Range or Accuracy.

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

- Once the 6 minutes have passed, stop listening and assessing at the end of the next sentence.

Test which are a monologue and have no interaction:

- Candidates cannot score more than 7 marks for Content and Response.
- This does not affect the marks for either Range or Accuracy.

Open interaction tasks only:

- If a candidate asks only one question in a task that requires 2 or more – deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response.
- If a candidate asks no questions in a task where questions are required – deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.
- The other two assessment criteria will not be affected.

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.
- Where no presentation takes place, candidates can only score a maximum of 11 for content and response.

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.

Grade Boundaries

Much work has taken place on the comparability of the speaking units for French, German and Spanish. The senior examiners have worked closely together to ensure their application of the common assessment criteria during moderation is consistently applied across these three languages. This has been in response to queries from centres about the results at unit level on the speaking Controlled Assessment.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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