

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

GCSE

GCSE German (5GN02)

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Unit 2: Controlled Assessment in Speaking

General

This was the first assessment opportunity for the new GCSE specification Controlled Assessments in Speaking. Unsurprisingly, entries were modest but moderators were impressed by the level of performance and achievement of the candidates entered. There was a definite sense of a natural conversation with more interaction and spontaneity than has been apparent in the legacy specification. 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: a picture-based discussion, a presentation and discussion and 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 in the moderation sample centres should submit recordings of the different task types for which they are submitting marks across the whole centre cohort.

In this session, the majority of centres opted for the picture-based discussion and presentation and discussion, but there was a substantial minority who undertook the open interaction. Moderators were pleased that candidates fared well with the open interaction since many teachers have expressed some concern that this task type might prove more challenging than the other two.

Centres create their own tasks for the Picture Based Discussion and the Presentation and Discussion - there are no Edexcel set tasks for these 2 options. Centres who attempted the open interaction created their own stimuli and tasks, sometimes 'customising' one from the Edexcel examples and sometimes devising their own completely. One of the great advantages of Controlled Assessment is that teachers are able to develop tasks that suit the strengths of their own candidates.

Themes

Centres and candidates are free to choose their own themes for the orals: four popular themes have been identified by Edexcel (as listed on page 9 of the Specification) but these are not prescriptive. Candidates may undertake both tasks on the same theme.

Themes chosen included holidays, hobbies, family and friends, home town, school and ideal job. Examiners were particularly impressed by candidate performance on slightly different themes such as music festivals, film reviews and birthday celebrations.

Not all candidates in a centre chose to speak on the same theme and in this case, teachers had devised a different task for each student. These teachers are to be commended on such a student-focused approach to the speaking assessment.

Conduct

In the Presentation and Discussion task type candidates must give a presentation which should last between 1 minute minimum and 3 minutes maximum. Some presentations were a little short. If centres are concerned that their students may be unable to give a presentation lasting a minimum of 1 minute, they might like to consider the other 2 task type options instead. Centres should be reassured that 1 minute is long enough for the presentation part of the task - long presentations could mean less time for the more interactive part of the task. It is not in the spirit of the examination if all candidates learn the same presentation off by heart. Nor should a presentation be followed by the same 2 or 3 questions which in turn lead into shorter 'mini-presentations' - within the constraints of an assessment, we are looking for spontaneity.

For the Picture-based Discussion candidates may give a presentation but they do not have to. Practice varied. Some students clearly find giving a presentation gives them confidence for the rest of the oral, others feel more comfortable going straight into the discussion. Either approach is acceptable.

There is an expectation in the Open Interaction that candidates will ask the Teacher - Examiner questions. All Edexcel produced Open Interaction tasks (i.e. in the Sample Assessment Materials and in the live tasks) make this very clear in the rubric. Where centres created their own Open Interaction tasks, they made candidates aware of this expectation. However, not all candidates asked questions during the course of their oral. This omission limits the marks which can be awarded for Content and Response: where questions (i.e. more than one) are required by the task.

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.

Timings

Each oral task should last between 4 and 6 minutes - this range affords flexibility to suit different candidates. Moderators were pleased that in this session the majority of orals conformed to the timings requirements. Looking ahead, centres should be aware that moderators will 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 some 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 there will be an automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid. Centres should consider this guidance when awarding marks themselves.

Recordings

Just one recorded exemplar per candidate for moderation should be sent to moderators. Centres should not send any more than the one oral per candidate to which they wish moderators to listen. This session centres submitted their recordings on cassettes or CDs (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. We are happy to accept the sample on both CD and USB stick. The recordings will be returned to centres. Please label cassettes, CDs or USBs carefully - centre, candidate, language and series details should be clearly stated on both the cassette or CD and on the case.

Administration

Centres should submit one recorded oral per moderated candidate. The candidates required for moderation are identified on the 2A OPTEMS (with an asterisk), but centres should ensure that they send their highest performing and their lowest performing candidates in addition to the requested sample. The number of candidates identified by Edexcel is the number required: should any of the candidates identified withdraw or score 0, they should be replaced with another candidate to ensure the size of the moderation sample remains intact.

Centres should refer to page 22 of the Edexcel GCSE MFL *Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book - Speaking* which is available to download from the GCSE 09 German web page (<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/german/Pages/default.aspx0>). All materials which must be sent to the moderator with the moderation samples are detailed on this page:

1. One task recording for each sample candidate as indicated on the OPTEMS form (or via Edexcel Online) **plus** the recordings from the *highest* and *lowest* marked candidates if not featured in the requested sample.
2. The yellow copy of the 2A and 2B OPTEMS forms or the relevant printouts of these marks from Edexcel Online. 2A OPTEMS: for each candidate centres should enter the mark only for that oral which is evidenced by a recording. 2B OPTEMS: centres enter the mark for each candidate only for that oral for which no recording is required. The A and B are not in respect of the task type, nor should the total score for the 2 orals be entered on just 2A OPTEMS.
3. The completed *Controlled assessment authenticity record sheet - Speaking* (page 97 in the Specification) for each sampled candidate. This must be signed by both the candidate and teacher. Failure to submit this signed form will result in the grade for the speaking unit being withheld.
4. The CA2 pro forma *Candidate Notes Form - Speaking* (download from the web page above) for each sampled candidate. On this pro forma, candidates may write up to 30 words of notes which should be in either bullet point or spidergram format. For these purposes a word is exactly that - a word. Thus *es gibt* will be 2 words, *in der Schule* 3 words. These notes may include conjugated verbs such as *ich habe gegessen* (3 words), but there should be no coding e.g. *i b l K g* (short for *ich bin ins Kino gegangen*). In addition, candidates may make up to 5 small drawings (i.e. not pictures from a magazine or similar) if they would find these useful. If a candidate declines access to the CA2 form during the oral test, this should be noted in writing and this information sent to the moderator. Alternatively a blank CA2 form could be submitted. It is important that the moderator is able to verify that the relevant controls were observed.
5. A copy of the stimulus and task for each sampled candidate. For Picture-based Discussions, a photocopy or **full** description of the picture can be provided instead of the original.

It is not necessary to submit the *Student Checklist Form* with the sampled work although these should be retained securely in the centre until 30 September. It is also not necessary to submit the individual students' *Controlled Assessment Mark Recording Sheet (Speaking)* since teachers will have transferred the marks from these to the Authenticity record sheet.

The sample of submitted recordings should reflect the full range of task types attempted in the centre. Therefore, if a centre is submitting marks for all three task types across the full cohort, exemplars of all three task types must be included in the sample. In this case, it may be necessary to include recordings additional to the stipulated moderation sample to accommodate this. In all cases it will be necessary to send recordings of at least 2 task types since all candidates must undertake 2 different tasks.

There is no requirement to send to the moderator any details relating to the 2B task, other than a copy of the 2B OPTEMS.

Support

Centres are reminded that the 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. 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>)

We would recommend that teachers sign up for email alerts for the GCSE 09 German web page. In this way an email will be received whenever anything new is uploaded to the web page. Any teacher with a specific query about any aspect of the Controlled Assessment process should send an email to one of the Senior Examiners for German at Ask the Expert: (<http://edexcel5571.custhelp.com/app/ask/session/L3NpZC9yLUItYXY0aw%3D%3D>). A reply will be received within 48 hours (often sooner). Alternatively, teachers may like to send their query to LanguagesSubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk. There will also be a programme of trainings events - both face-to-face and online.

Grade Boundaries

Raw Mark boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
60	50	44	38	32	26	21	16	11

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
90	81	72	63	54	45	36	27	18

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

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