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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCSE German 5GN03 3F

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Unit 3 (Foundation): Reading and Understanding

These papers were offered for the first time as part of the suite of papers forming the GCSE 2009 specification.

Assessment Principles and Mark Schemes

A maximum of 40 marks is awarded positively for correct information successfully retrieved and conveyed in each paper. All instructions are in English and no question involves target-language writing. The targeted vocabulary on the Foundation paper is drawn from the minimum core vocabulary list. Centres are reminded that questions appear in a sequence of peaks and troughs to encourage candidates to keep going to the end, and that individual questions follow the sequence of the text and thus appear in chronological order. Grade C/D questions are common to both Foundation and Higher Tiers.

Mark Schemes

A few days after the examination the examiners discuss any possible versions and variants which have emerged from their considering a large number of scripts prior to the marking process. A definitive mark scheme is agreed by the Principal Examiner. The attention of candidates and teachers is drawn to the detailed mark schemes as published.

All tasks are marked positively, with varying marks available for each question according to the information required in the answer or the difficulty of the question. The number of marks available for each question and sub-question is clearly stated within the paper.

Candidates' Responses

The examiners were agreed that the papers this summer for both tiers as a whole represented a good test, that they were user-friendly and fair to all candidates, that the texts were interesting, that the questions were well thought out and that the papers as a whole differentiated well between the weaker candidates and the very able ones.

On the whole, centres entered their candidates appropriately at Foundation level. Consequently, the examiners felt that they were assessing the performance of genuine Foundation level candidates.

Question 1

The familiar topic of types of food and drink offered candidates a gentle introduction to the paper and most did well here, though *Karotten* and *Käse* caused problems for the weaker candidates around the F/G borderline. If candidates ticked or crossed more than the required four boxes, then one mark was deducted from their score for each superfluous box ticked or crossed. This rule was applied throughout the paper for appropriate questions.

Question 2

As anticipated, the majority of candidates around the C/D borderline were able to match the activities with the words denoting these tasks and found this question to be very accessible. Weaker candidates gave 'zoo' as one of their answers.

Question 3

This first crossover question on the profiles of young people was attempted successfully by C/D candidates, though weaker candidates typically gave correct answers to just one or two of the sub-questions.

Question 4

C/D candidates often gained three of the four marks on offer in this second crossover question, while weaker candidates gained one or two only (typically giving correct answers to 4a and/or 4d).

Question 5

C/D candidates often gained three of the four marks on offer in this question, while weaker candidates gained one or two only (typically giving correct answers to 5iv). It was surprising that so many candidates were unfamiliar with various occupations in German.

Question 6

C/D candidates often gained all four marks on offer in this question, while weaker candidates gained one or two only (typically giving correct answers to 6a).

Question 7

This third crossover question represented a challenge to many F/G borderline candidates, with typically no marks earned. However, most C/D candidates obtained full marks on this question.

Question 8

Candidates on the Foundation paper struggled somewhat with this fourth crossover question, with a number not understanding *Verkehrsam* or *im Ausland*.

Question 9

A small minority of candidates continue to answer the English questions in German and thus sadly debar themselves from scoring at all. Clearly candidates' use of English should be unambiguous. Candidates met with mixed fortunes here, which was surprising since travel is a popular topic. Most F/G candidates obtained no marks on this question and C/D candidates typically scored two or three only. It will be noted from the published mark scheme that answers for 9b such as 'in Berlin' were insufficient to be rewarded. Candidates had a choice of response for a mark in 9d.

Question 10

The majority of students were able to score at least a mark for 10i, though even C/D candidates typically dropped at least one mark on this task.

Advice and Guidance

Superfluous information, information not contained in the printed target-language material, and self-contradictory combinations of correct and incorrect information earn no credit. Similarly, non-synonymous alternatives can be given no credit. Candidates are encouraged to cross through any alternative answer rather than leaving examiners with a choice, though crossed-out work will be marked where the candidate has not replaced it with an alternative response. Candidates should be aware that if just one mark is on offer, as throughout most questions, they should be giving only one item of information in the answer. However, if it is clear that more than one item of information is being solicited (eg Paper 3H question 4d), then candidates must ensure that they produce the required number of items in their response. Candidate scripts are marked onscreen for this paper and the examiners struggled to read a number of scripts. Some candidates used very faint ink and there were scripts where the quality of the handwriting was extremely poor. Candidates should be reminded to use black ink and to write as clearly as possible. Many responses indicate that candidates are not reading the texts carefully enough. For those candidates aiming at a higher grade it is imperative that they pay attention to the actual content of the texts and that they do not make assumptions. Especially for the task requiring answers in English, candidates should ensure that what they have written is relevant to the question and can be supported by the text. Candidates should also be encouraged to keep their answers as concise as possible. It is not advisable for candidates to put down everything they have understood, as this may lead to their losing the mark if they hedge their bets or negate their answer. The space given for the answer is deemed adequate for a full and complete response.

Grade Boundaries

Raw Mark boundaries

| Max Mark | C | D | E | F | G |
|----------|----|----|----|----|---|
| 40 | 32 | 26 | 20 | 14 | 8 |

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries

| Max Mark | C | D | E | F | G |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| 60 | 36 | 30 | 24 | 18 | 12 |

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