

# Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE German (5GN03) Paper 3H

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## **Reading and Understanding (Higher)**

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

### **Assessment Principles and Mark Scheme**

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. 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 Tier papers.

### **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, with well thought-out and interesting questions. The papers as a whole differentiated well between the weaker candidates and the very able ones. The vast majority of candidates had been entered correctly for the Higher Tier.

### **Question 1**

This was the first crossover question which is common to both Foundation and Higher papers and the vast majority of candidates fared well. 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**

The second crossover question posed a bit more of a challenge although the best candidates were able to identify the tenses correctly and scored full marks. Slightly weaker candidates were often unsure about the tenses and this could be a focus for centres for the coming year.

### **Question 3**

The topic of Visitor Information was well-handled and most candidates scored well throughout this task. Slightly weaker candidates often missed out on section 3iii: rather than reading the text carefully, they opted for what they thought was the obvious answer and assumed a play would be performed in a theatre rather than the castle grounds as mentioned in the text.

#### **Question 4**

Parts of Question 4 proved quite challenging to most candidates as they were too imprecise with their answers or gave extra and often contradictory information and henceforth could not score a point here. Question 4b proved to be the most difficult as candidates could not identify why the family wanted to spend time in New Zealand. The word 'Verwandte' seemed to be not widely known and was a key to gaining a mark here. In order to be awarded two points for 4c, candidates needed to state that the barbeques were on the beach. Only the best candidates were able to do that. In 4f the word 'Ausland' seemed to be less widely known than anticipated and a high number of candidates were unable to give a satisfactory answer to this part of the question.

#### **Question 5**

This was the third crossover question and the more able candidates were generally successful in scoring three or four marks in this question, the most difficult part being section b where the word 'Unterkunft' needed to be identified in order to answer the question successfully.

#### **Question 6**

The fourth crossover question was on the whole handled well by most candidates; question 6a required the understanding of the negative 'noch nie' in order to eliminate a wrong answer. The most able candidates were successful in doing this, it proved more of a challenge to those on the C/D borderline.

#### **Question 7**

This question with the topic Work was generally handled very well and most candidates were able to gain three or four marks.

#### **Question 8**

The last question on lifestyle targeted the most able candidates and this was obvious in the number of points scored for the question. The most able candidates scored an average of 5 or 6 marks whereas weaker candidates often scored only one or two. Therefore, the question differentiated very well.

### **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 (e.g. Paper 3H questions 4c and e), then candidates must ensure that they produce the required number of items in their response. Candidate scripts are marked online 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**

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

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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