

# Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2011

GCSE

GCSE German (5GN04) Paper 1

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## Paper 4 - Controlled Assessment in Writing

### General

A wide range of material was submitted for the January series. A few centres were unaware that two pieces of work need to be submitted for each candidate.

Most importantly, centres should ensure that they are differentiating between coursework from the previous specification and controlled assessment which has different requirements. For example, when the preparation period begins, students may draft their work but on no account must this be commented on by the teacher. Consequently, no draft work should be submitted. In effect, the teacher is conducting a controlled examination.

### Administration

While many centres provided the required documentation correctly, a number failed to do so. Please note that the Controlled assessment authenticity record sheet - Writing that appears in the specification has now been replaced by a new Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 4: Writing - this includes authentication statements and space for you to insert the task titles as well as space for Edexcel examiners to insert marks. Please use the new form or transfer information from the previous version, Your cooperation is much appreciated - the introduction of the new form will help to streamline the overall administration process for both teachers and examiners. Importantly, this will enable examiners to focus more time on marking student work and less on administration.

The Administrative Support Guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments) 2011 has details of what centres are required to send their examiner and the copies of the new forms to be used are held within the appendix. The Administrative Support Guide is available on our website at <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/spanish/Pages/default.aspx> under 'Exam Materials'.

Below is a checklist of materials to send to your examiner.

For every candidate:	✓
Stimuli/tasks	
Form CA4 (Candidate Notes Form)	
Candidate work (2 pieces of writing)	
*(Updated)* Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 4: Writing - signed by <u>both candidate and centre-assessor</u> . Any candidate unable to provide an authentication statement will receive zero credit for the component.	

### Stimulus

Only one copy of each stimulus needs to be sent with the centre's work if all candidates have completed the same tasks. This is best presented on top of the work submitted.

The most suitable stimulus task gives candidates clear instructions about the focus of the task with a few bullet points. It should be noted that the instruction given to candidates can affect the overall mark. For example, if the stimulus states "*You could mention...*", then the candidates may choose which bullet points to respond to. However, if the instruction is "*You must mention ...*", then candidates must cover all bullet points and will be penalised if they omit one or more bullet points in their response.

The tasks used within a centre must be refreshed every two years. This means that at least one significant bullet point must be changed. If only a title is used, the whole title must be changed. It is not acceptable to continue presenting work entitled *Mein letzter Urlaub* with no stimulus task.

### Topic areas

Popular topics included health and fitness, holidays, interviews with a famous person, a film review, the role of media in the candidate's life and school or work experience. Whilst candidates may present work from the same topic area for writing and speaking, it is important to stress that the focus of each task must be different. For example, a candidate may not write a description of a past holiday for writing controlled assessment and give a presentation and have a discussion about the past holiday in the speaking assessment.

### Word count

It is expected that candidates will produce about 200 words for each unit to be able to access the full mark range. Short pieces of work tend to be self-penalising. Good work of less than 100 words will not score more than 6 for Communication and Content. There is no maximum word count, although only the strongest candidates managed in excess of 200 words in the one hour allowed for each task. Candidates should be warned to avoid lists of English words, for example when describing their favourite television programmes.

### Quality of work

The majority of candidates managed to write comprehensible essays of the required length. Where work was short, this was from very weak candidates who often struggled to produce a complete sentence in German. Barriers to fluent and effective communication are:

- over use of *ist/war, hat/hatte* and *es gibt/es gab*
- lists of school subjects, foodstuffs, television programmes
- repetition of descriptions, for example of family members' appearance
- use of English
- lack of any punctuation
- lack of opinion
- misuse of the dictionary which is allowed during the final one hour stage of the assessment

Those candidates who access the top mark band for Communication and Content have learned to manipulate learned language successfully so that they are able to produce genuinely original language. Many essays in the next band (10-12 marks) are

solid, but rely too heavily on phrases from a text book. In addition, such essays often lacked good linking words and time indicators which helped the essay to flow smoothly. Alternatively, they produce one paragraph of sophisticated German followed by several lines comprising of a string of incomprehensible words.

## Knowledge and Application of Language

The range of language expected to access the whole mark range includes:

- a range of tenses and/or verb forms including modals. Since each unit is marked separately, a range of verb forms should be in evidence in each.
- a secure sense of word order including inversion, coordination and subordination, with more than just the token *weil* clause. The best candidates use *obwohl*, *damit*, *wenn*, *als*, *bevor* and *nachdem* appropriately.
- infinitive clauses usually with *um/zu* but perhaps also after verbs such as *vorhaben* or *beschließen*.
- a sound, though not necessarily perfect, command of case and gender.
- a good range of vocabulary including interesting adverbs and adverbial phrases.

## Accuracy

This was variable. Often candidates had not taken time to check their work for errors of word order or verb agreements. Too many use the infinitive with *ich* and fail to produce an accurate perfect tense in the whole essay. Many spelling errors were reported, particularly with confusion of *ei* and *ie*.

Candidates should take time in the final one hour assessment to check their work. Many simply write out as much as they can remember without due attention to communication and accuracy. Consequently, some essays are full of incomplete sentences.

In conclusion, it is evident that many centres prepare candidates well. However, candidates must be encouraged to use the conditions of controlled assessment to better advantage by doing the following:

- following the stimulus task carefully
- using preparation time to craft a well-sequenced essay rather than writing random sentences
- ensuring that they include evidence of a range of good structures
- checking their work carefully during the final writing-up session
- ensuring that their work is original. In centres where the work is virtually identical, it is not possible to award top marks.

## Grade Boundaries

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