



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In German (1GN0) Paper 4F
Writing In German

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Publications Code 1GN0_4F_2506_ER

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Introduction

The paper consists of four questions:

Question 1 – a short description of a photo of between 20 and 30 words with an opinion required;

Question 2 – a short message of between 40 and 50 words giving four points of information from a choice of two options;

Question 3 – a longer informal response of between 80 and 90 words from a choice of two options;

Question 4 – five sentences to translate into German.

Question 1 – Homework

Candidates were required to write a short description of between 20 and 30 words in German about homework in response to a photo that featured three individuals in a home setting engaged in a reading and/or writing task. The four bullet points prompted candidates to write about their interests, school subjects studied in the previous year, the importance of work and their plans in the future. The suggested word count of between 20 and 30 words is notional rather than prescriptive. 2 separate marks are awarded for this task, 1 for Communication and Content and 1 for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, both out of 6. To gain access to the top mark for Communication and Content, candidates must fulfil both parts of the question (i.e. description of the photo and offering an opinion). Responses which omit and opinion are capped at 4 for the first mark category but the second can still access the full range. When awarding the second mark for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, for a top mark in this criterion, examiners look for an example of simple linking, such two main clauses joined with “und” or “aber” or perhaps a subordinate clause with “weil”. It is important to note, however, that absolute accuracy is not require at this level to access the full mark range.

It was clear that centres had prepared their candidates well for this task. The vast majority of candidates were able to provide a basic description, even if this referred only to the number of persons in the picture, their likely familial relationship, or what they were doing. Some candidates managed to use the verb “aussehen” or relative clauses with “dass” correctly. Some candidates were able to suggest emotions that might be felt by the characters depicted e.g. “sie sieht glücklich aus”, although the partitive verb posed some issues in most of the cases where it was used.

Question 2(a) Information for a German tour group

Candidates were required to produce a short email of between 40 and 50 words with information for a visiting German tour group. The four bullet points asked candidates to identify a meeting place, to list some local attractions, to specify a time for lunch and to outline what the group would be doing the same evening.

Although this was a well-devised question with great potential for candidates to produce imaginative and individual responses, there were very few entirely convincing responses to this question. Many candidates struggled with the lexical item of “Treffpunkt” (meeting place), although “treffen” was a well-known and popular verb choice - and as a result, many candidates failed to say where the meeting place was, although it was often described as being “interessant” or “gut”. The majority of candidates were able to give some brief information about their region. For the 3rd bullet point that required the specification of the time for lunch, the “wann” was sometimes - many candidates wrote about what was on offer for lunch, or where lunch was hosted but omitted the mention of a time. Often, when candidates did specify a time, this was surprisingly early or late for lunch. Many candidates found it challenging to use a future time frame to answer the final bullet point, even though a wide range of activities was suggested. Overall, candidates tried hard to develop their responses and to offer justifications for their opinions, and to provide extended linguistic structures, even though they were not always entirely successful.

Question 2(b) – Food and drink

Candidates were required to write a short e-mail of between 40 and 50 words for visitor/group of visitors from Switzerland. The four bullet points asked candidates to write about the time they have breakfast, their favourite drink, how often they cook at home and what their family would be eating the following weekend. Candidates who chose this option were usually at ease with food-related language and useful linguistic structures, although the verb conjugations of “kochen” often proved challenging, with pupils misspelling this both in the first and the third persons singular. The majority of candidates were able to suggest a future time frame and an interesting meal their family would be having, and in response to the third bullet points, there were some imaginative answers as to why candidates cook or do not cook at home, often with extended sentences such as relative clauses.

Question 3 (a) – Ambitions

Candidates were required to write an informal email to a fictitious German-speaking friend of between 80 and 90 words about their ambitions. The four bullet points prompted them to consider and write about their interests, school subjects studied the previous year, why work is important, and their plans for the future. On this question, Bullet points 2 and 3 seemed to be the differentiators in terms of candidate response. Some students were not always able to effectively describe what they had learnt in the previous year. More successful candidates were able to give detailed opinions on why it is important to work - not only to earn money, but to meet new people and develop new skills. Some also wrote about their own previous work experience or voluntary work. It was also noted that there was some recycling of environment vocab in response to the first bullet point. Vocabulary used was generally sound, with most candidates inserting questions and building good engagement with their fictitious audience, although there was a noticeable percentage of candidates who were unsuccessful in formulating the second person singular of regular and presumably familiar verbs.

Question 3 (b) – Sport

Candidates were required to write an informal email to a fictitious German-speaking friend of between 90 and 90 words about sport. The four bullet points prompts addressed the candidate's favourite sport, what they had done recently for their fitness, why school sport is important, and what their activities the following week would be. This question was much more popular at Foundation level than at Higher level. The majority of candidates named football as their favourite sport - often given as "FuBall" or "Fuball", and other sports with English names, such as basketball, badminton etc. were also popular. Bullet point 2 often caused challenges as a number of candidates did not respond in the past tense and were not familiar with "neulich" (recently). Candidates often wrote in the present tense about food and drink and confused "gesund" and "gemuese". Sometimes "du neulich fuer deine Fitness gemacht" was included as part of a sentence. It was noted that not all candidates were successful in giving a convincing response to the third bullet point.

Question 4 – Problem in a hotel

In the translation task with a hotel setting, candidates had to translate 5 sentences into German in increasing order of complexity.

The majority of candidates coped well with this passage that related to a problematic situation (the lack of water in a hotel room) and managed to convey the gist of each

sentence, even if some structures and syntactical order were challenging. Most candidates conveyed the sense of the first sentence (A) correctly with accurate word order and verb agreement, although “problem” was incorrectly accorded a feminine gender in a large percentage of responses and instead of “da ist”, there were a lot of “der ist” sentences. Thereafter, there were varying degrees of success, with the German translations of the words “shower” and “expensive” (required for Sentence C) apparently unfamiliar to the majority of candidates and sentence D (“I have spoken with the manager twice”) the most problematic of all sentences. By contrast, the most complex sentence, Sentence C, proved quite manageable to many candidates, and a good number were able to gain the full three marks that were available for this sentence.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this examination session, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Practise writing short pieces on all topic areas from the specification with a particular focus on useful adjectives and expressions of personal opinion.
- Identify exactly what the requirements of each question and each bullet point in each question are.
- Learn question words that will help understanding of what is required by the bullet points of a question.
- Learn as wide a range of flexible vocabulary and structures as possible that help convey challenges, personal preferences, availability/non-availability of items.
- Practise different ways of conveying opinions (both in the first person singular and the third persons singular and plural)
- Learn some short phrases that can be used for a variety of scenarios e.g. “Ich freue mich darauf!” (I’m looking forward to it) or “Das wird schwierig” (That will be difficult) etc.
- Learn structures useful for writing in different contexts, e.g. how to set out an email, how to devise a heading or strapline for an article.

