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Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In German
Unit WGN04_01

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Paper 4: Research, Understanding and Written Response (WGN04_01)

Section A – Listening

Question 1 (*Essgewohnheiten*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about eating habits and completed sentences with four multiple-choice options each.

This proved to be a good start to the paper with many candidates scoring full marks. The most common misunderstandings were at (a) and (d). At (a) there was often confusion between *gelegentlich* and *ausschließlich*; at (d) A was sometimes selected as the wrong answer.

Question 2 (*Handys*)

Candidates listened to a short radio report in German about parental rights relating to withdrawal of their children's mobile phones and completed sentences with four multiple-choice options each.

Many candidates scored full marks in this question. However, the most common wrong answer was given at (c) where some candidates wrongly assumed that legislators had given parents a clear duty to remove mobile phones as a punishment.

Question 3 (*Lehrkräfte mit Migrationshintergrund*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about the recruitment of teachers from migrant backgrounds and completed four sentences from a list of eight words.

This question caused very few problems. Candidates seemed to be very familiar with the topic area and were able to distinguish clearly between the given options. The link between *Jura* in the podcast and *Anwalt* in the answer or the inference that participant felt well-informed after the seminar because their career choice had been made easier caused no difficulties other than for a few candidates.

Question 4 (*Technologie auf dem Bauernhof*)

Candidates were required to answer questions on the content of a radio interview with a Swiss farmer.

Although only short answers are required here, it is necessary to give the exact detail to gain the mark. For example, in part (b) it was necessary to mention that feeding the world had to be *langfristig*. However, many candidates fared well the Question 4 and often scored 7 or 8 marks. Only the least successful left questions unanswered, but often managed to score a mark for recognising that the birth of new calves could be followed online via a live stream.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Question 5 (*Finanzielle Ungleichheit*)

Candidates read a short text about financial inequality between Austrian men and women. They were required to complete five sentences with five multiple-choice options each.

As with the first two questions in Section A, this multiple-choice task was answered well. The most common wrong answer was given at (c). This involved identifying a nuance between the correct answer at A that male and female pensioners would have different problems and the wrong answer at C which suggested that all pensioners would receive smaller pensions.

Question 6 (*Verkehr*)

Candidates were required to answer questions based on an article about the issues surrounding senior citizens' driving habits.

Most candidates identified correctly that senior citizens should probably stop driving because their powers of perception in traffic were often impaired. However, only a small minority rightly concluded that Ingrid could no longer drive because, although she was youthful and fit, she simply no longer had a driving licence. Some less successful candidates wrote nonsensical answers to (d) suggesting, for example, that Ingrid's friends were horrified that she was still driving or that her latest accident had caused her concern.

Question 7 (*Fußballrowdys*)

Candidates answered questions in German on a text about football hooliganism.

This more challenging longer text required careful reading and was clearly well understood. However, the detail required by some questions eluded less successful candidates. In part (a), for example, it was necessary to explain that German football raised revenue every year. In part (f), candidates needed to state explicitly that the intervention by the police was quick to gain the mark.

As always, the best approach is to rephrase the wording of the text when answering the question. Targeted lifts are only accepted when they genuinely answer the question. Some candidates were unable to change the adjective *gestrig* to the best answer *gestern* in (c) and in (d) sometimes even the most successful candidates were unable to manipulate *brennende Schals* and *das Werfen von Flaschen* to past tense verb forms as required by the mark scheme.

There was a broad range of marks for this question and some candidates omitted the whole question or parts of it. However, at the top end there were some very clear answers gaining full marks.

Question 8

Most candidates understood what was expected of them in this question although only a few were able to score full marks. The mark was often lost because of careless omissions.

8(a): A common error was to replace *bedroht* with *betroffen* which has a different meaning.

8(b): Most answered this correctly.

8(c): This infinitive clause construction with *zu* was well known.

8(d): Many candidates were able to rephrase the idea using a construction such as *Ich fand*, but some then tried to use *gefallen* in the answer which made no sense.

8(e): The most common cause of loss of a mark was failure to provide a past tense.

8(f): The endings on *viele Deutsche* were usually correct, although some candidates lost a mark by omitting *viele*.

8(g): The expected answer *eine hohe Gefahr* was rare and some candidates were unaware of the irregular inflected form of *hoch*. However, *eine Hochgefahr* was also accepted as long as it was written as one word.

8(h): This was generally well answered. Alternatives to *bei jedem Verein* were accepted as long as it was clear that it referred to two individual teams. Thus, *bei einem Verein* was accepted while *bei dem Verein* was not.

8(i): A good number of candidates answered this correctly with an infinitive passive construction. Marks were occasionally lost because they gave a wrong part of *werden*.

8(j): Only the dative case was accepted. Some candidates used the genitive *laut des Ministers*.

Section C

Marks are awarded in Section C for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of Language (out of 5). Whilst many can write fluently in German using a wide range of complex structures and therefore gain high marks for Quality of Language, there is often a tendency to resort to narrative accounts which lack incisive critical analysis of the question or a failure to select relevant detail from knowledge of the topic, text or film. Some candidates simply write down everything they know about their chosen work regardless of relevance to the question.

It is important that candidates answer the question on their chosen area of study which has been set. An essay, for example, which purports to be about the work of a figure as asked in Q10(b) will score no marks if it refers to *Der Besuch der alten Dame*.

Geografisches Gebiet

Option (a) produced some interesting descriptions of companies, in particular the Swiss pharmaceutical industry. Those candidates who were able to support general statements with sound evidence based on research often managed to access the top bands for Content and Communication. When the essay was organised in structured sequential paragraphs with an introduction and a firm conclusion then the top band could also be accessed for Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development.

Geschichtliche Studien

This is a popular area of study, but not all candidates select and hone their information to suit the essay titles. Sometimes, a pre-learned history essay is produced rather than one which focuses on the topic in hand and the required analytical element.

Good examples of interesting accounts in this exam season were of social unrest in the Reformation in response to option (a) and of the work of Bismarck in the unification of Germany in response to option (b). While such essays tend to be full of relevant information about the topic, candidates do not always formulate a coherent essay plan. Occasionally they are so overwhelmed by the familiarity of the topic that they fail to separate their ideas into paragraphs which could give the essay a purposeful structure and a coherent argument. In these instances, the mark for Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development is usually adversely affected. Careful planning is crucial.

Literatur

The most popular choice of literary text was yet again *Der Besuch der alten Dame*. The most striking element of many essays is the temptation to give irrelevant details about the first performance or to relate the whole plot. The best essays focus on the questions set.

Option (b) was chosen only by a few candidates who often described Claire's attitude to the press and their obsession with her marriages, but often omitted mention of the main portrayal of the media in the third act of play, both through their presence in Ill's shop and their filming of the community meeting in the *Gemeindesaal*. This often meant that the essays lacked depth and knowledge of the work.

Option (b), by far the more popular choice, gave rise to some interesting evaluations of Ill's change of circumstances after his attempted escape. Less successful accounts remained fixated only on the scene

at the end of Act II without exploring how Ill develops into a figure of heroic stature by accepting his fate. The most successful gave a brief account of the scene at the station and concentrated the bulk of the essay on Ill's change of heart.

Film

By far the most popular film for study was *Almanya – Willkommen in Deutschland* which had clearly been enjoyed by many candidates. In both options, candidates often were able to give evidence of understanding of the events in the film, but did not always select details carefully enough.

In response to option (a), there were often lengthy description of the day of Hüseyin's arrival rather than on an exploration of the consequences of the move for his family. Only the best managed to come to a firm conclusion in answer to the second part of this question with good supporting evidence from the film about the family's fortunes in Germany.

Option (b) gave candidates a good opportunity to describe the clichés in the film, although some failed to describe the German as well as the Turkish clichés. What was missing from many essays was an analysis of how these clichés were presented, eg in a humorous way, which in better accounts led to a more critical evaluation of their inclusion in the film.

The tendency to focus on the first part of the essay question, sometimes with too much irrelevant detail, was also apparent in those few other essays on the films by Heidelberg, Petzold, Ruzowitky and Weingartner.

Conclusion

To prepare for success in this paper, candidates should:

- familiarise themselves with all topic areas listed in the specification
- develop as wide a range of vocabulary as possible
- practise reading and listening to passages of German with a view to extracting the most important information
- become used to rewording the details in the written or spoken text succinctly
- become familiar with German grammatical usage, concentrating on complex verb forms and the fine details of declension of adjectives and nouns
- study their chosen topic, literary text or film in detail, considering various aspects in the course of their studies
- practise the skill of planning and writing an essay in paragraphs
- focus on structured analysis in answering essay questions rather than on narrative.

