

Comparison of key skills specifications 2000/2002 with 2004 standardsX015461July 2004Issue 1

Speaking Unit Commentaries

Summer 2023

International A Level

German (WGN01) Unit 1

**International A level German Unit 1 WGN01 Commentary**

A grade summer 2023

Total mark: 31/40 (A grade boundary 2306 = 31/40)

Stimulus: Lifestyle, health and fitness 1A

**Conduct of the Assessment**

This assessment is conducted incorrectly in that the teacher-examiner asks personal questions which do not allow the candidate to show her knowledge of the General Topic Area. The level of some of the questions is more appropriate to GCSE than AS level.

**Section A**

In Section A the teacher-examiner must ask the four questions on the teacher-examiner version of the card as they are written. The only change that the teacher-examiner may make, if they wish, is to change the *Sie* form of address to *du*, so that, for example, *Ihrer Meinung nach* becomes *deiner Meinung nach*. If any other change is made to the question, the candidate’s response to the rephrased question cannot be credited. The question may, however, be repeated.

The total time for the WGN01 assessment is 8-10 minutes. Timing starts when the teacher-examiner begins to ask the first question in Section A. In theory the timing is split equally between Sections A and B. However, in practice, Section A often lasts less than four minutes, as is the case in this example (Section A of this test lasts 3 minutes 08 seconds). This is not an issue; a candidate can still access all four marks available for *Understanding (stimulus specific)* when Section A lasts less than four minutes. It is important that teacher-examiners do as this teacher-examiner does, and move on to Section B as soon as the candidate has answered all four questions in Section A. Additional questions must not be asked in Section A.

Teacher-examiners must ensure that the total test time is 8-10 minutes. Therefore, if the candidate answers all four questions in Section A in less than four minutes, Section B must be extended so that the total test time is 8-10 minutes.

In this example Section A lasts 3 minutes 08 seconds and the total assessment time is 9.38 minutes. If an assessment is shorter than the minimum time this will have a quite considerable impact on the marks that can be awarded, so centres should ensure that each assessment is at least 8 minutes long.

**Section B**

The teacher-examiner here does not clearly indicate the move from Section A to Section B. It is helpful to the candidate if this is done.

In Section B the teacher-examiner asks questions which move away from the topic of the stimulus card but relate to the sub-topics of the General Topic Area (GTA) being tested. In this case the GTA is *Lifestyle, health and fitness*, for which the sub-topics are *Food and diet, Sport and exercise* (the topic of this card)*, Health issues and Urban and rural life*. All the questions asked by this teacher-examiner relate to the correct sub-topics.

It is very important that only questions from the correct sub-topics are asked. Candidates cannot be credited for what they say in response to questions which are not related to the sub-topics of the GTA being tested. In this example the teacher-examiner asks mainly about Food and diet which is quite distinct from the topic of the stimulus card Sport and exercise, but within the same GTA. When the candidate attempts to talk about sport the teacher-examiner correctly steers her away from that.

Section B should be a conversation, not just a string of questions and answers. The teacher-examiner and the candidate need to listen to what the other says and to respond to this. This particular teacher-examiner does do that. The questions follow on from each other logically.

16 of the 40 marks available for this assessment are awarded for *Spontaneity and development*. It is therefore important that teacher-examiners give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to be spontaneous and the chance to develop their answers by asking follow-up questions e.g *Können Sie ein Beispiel nennen? Warum sagen Sie das?*

It is unfortunate that the wrong type of questions are asked in this assessment as in all other respects the way in which this teacher-examiner conducts the assessment is an example of good practice. Throughout the test, her tone is friendly and encouraging. She prompts the candidate to develop her answers but does not speak too much.

**Assessment commentary**

**Quality of language (Accuracy)**

**Mark awarded – 5/5**

*This mark is awarded for the candidate’s performance across both sections of the test, A and B.*

There are some errors in the candidate’s language such as verb/subject agreement and the occasional slip with word order. She makes a basic error with *habe ich gegangen*. However, a mark of 5 for Accuracy is described as “highly accurate but not necessarily error free” in the mark scheme and this example serves well to show that a candidate does not have to be a native speaker in order to achieve a mark of 5, nor does the performance have to be faultless. There are elements of the candidate’s performance - such as pronunciation and that basic error with the auxiliary verb - which give us cause to consider a mark of 4 for Accuracy, but overall, her performance is better than “generally accurate”. Her accuracy never impedes communication and she therefore was awarded 5/5.

**Quality of language (Range of lexis)**

**Mark awarded – 5/5**

*This mark is awarded for the candidate’s performance across both sections of the test, A and B.*

The candidate is able to use a wide range of lexis appropriate to this GTA (e.g. *geistige Gesundheit, Schönheitsideale, Herzschlagrisiko, ungesättiges*) and some good general lexis such as *versichern* and *rund um die Uhr*. There are some examples of more complex structures (in the context of an IAS level exam), such as *nicht nur….sondern auch* although in terms of structures we would ideally like to have seen more complex ones other than *weil, dass* and *um zu*. For this reason, the candidate again falls between a mark of 4 and one of 5. The lexis is very good, but there could be more of a range of structures. In such cases examiners are trained to favour the candidate and so this candidate was awarded a mark of 5 for Range of lexis.

**Spontaneity and development**

**Mark awarded – 13/16**

*This mark is awarded for the candidate’s performance across both sections of the test, A and B.*

The candidate responds spontaneously, and she gives very well-developed replies with good detail. She answers readily in most cases although there is some slight hesitation. When we listen to the assessment the amount the candidate says far outweighs what the teacher-examiner says. This is a natural conversation with fluent discourse; that is the teacher-examiner and candidate listen to each other and respond accordingly. For example, when the candidate says that she avoids unhealthy foods the teacher-examiner asks her whether she allows herself to visit a well-known fast-food chain. All of this leads us to look at the top band of 13-16.

The problem with this section of the assessment though is the level of demand. Many of the questions would be more appropriate for GCSE such as*, Isst du gesund? Darfst du einmal zu ...gehen?* and *Was wirst du jetzt nach der Prüfung zu Mittag essen?* The questions asked should allow the candidate to show progress linguistically and conceptually from GCSE. At best the response to that last question will be a list of foods. The question about how the candidate would help a friend with an eating disorder is not well chosen as it leads to personal information. It would have been better to have asked what percentage of young people have eating disorders, what schools can do to help or something else more general which would have allowed the candidate to show her knowledge of the GTA.

When examiners award the marks for Spontaneity and development there is consideration given to the level of the questions and that is the reason why this candidate was awarded a mark of 13 at the bottom end of the 13-16 band.

**Understanding (Stimulus specific)**

**Mark awarded – 3/4**

*This mark is awarded purely for the candidate’s response to the four questions set by Pearson Edexcel in Section A of the test.*

Please note that in this examination, question 1 relates only to the content of the first paragraph of the text on the stimulus card. There will be at least three items of information in the first paragraph which can be used to answer question 1, and candidates are expected to mention three points in their response to this question. Unfortunately, this candidate only mentions two items as she forgets to say that dancers have to go without their canteen lunch. This means that she cannot be awarded the maximum available 4 marks.

It is a good idea for candidates to spend part of their preparation time with the stimulus card identifying the three items in the first paragraph which they will probably be asked about.

It is such a shame that this candidate slips up on the first question as she answers question 2 correctly and gives fully developed responses to the other two questions, including a personal example with question 4. A mark of 4 requires “full and detailed answers” and unfortunately the candidate’s response to question 1 is not full she was therefore given a mark of 3/4.

**Knowledge and understanding (General topic area)**

**Mark awarded – 5/10**

*This mark is awarded purely for the knowledge and understanding of the GTA demonstrated by the candidate in Section B of the test.*

Due to the nature of the questions which this candidate is asked there is a lot of personal information. The candidate uses examples from her own experience to exemplify and to develop the points she makes. For example, after the teacher-examiner asks, *Isst du gesund?* the candidate talks about the food she likes and her hobbies for nearly a minute and this is not the only point where that occurs. In order to score well here candidates need to demonstrate wider reading into and research of the GTA. The candidate does refer to a study (*Studien zeigt, dass*…) and she does, towards the end of the assessment, give risk factors associated with an unhealthy lifestyle, but far more is needed. This is one of the topics which candidates have chosen, and the examiner needs to hear evidence of research, so statistics are useful, or possibly a reference to a source.

This performance was considered to be *satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the GTA* and was awarded 5/10. For a mark of 7 and above, candidates need to demonstrate evidence of wider reading into and research of the GTA by, for example, giving facts and figures to support the points they make.

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