

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

IGCSE

IGCSE German (4375)

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IGCSE German 4375

4375/01 IGCSE German Paper 1: Listening

Questions 1 - 5 GESUNDHEIT

The majority of candidates had no difficulties at all with this accessible first topic and gained full marks.

Questions 6 - 10 KINDHEIT

There were few problems with this set of questions. Candidates were required to match a picture with a word or concept in a slightly longer passage of spoken German. In one case, *Hund* was confused with *Handy*.

Question 11 TASCHENGELD

Most candidates coped well with matching the idea to the name. However, weaker candidates began to falter at this stage in the paper, often unable to match the key ideas on the tape to the printed sentence endings.

Question 12 COMPUTER Teil 1

It was surprising that many candidates were unable to decipher *elegant* and *dünn* for the description of the mouse. Both the price and the number were often wrong, usually given incorrectly as 23,15 and NX156. It is worthwhile reminding candidates of the importance of revising numbers and the German alphabet.

Question 12 COMPUTER Teil 2

Despite the more abstract nature of this passage, it was generally well answered, showing perhaps that candidates had been well trained to use the five minutes reading time in advance of the playing of the tape. The most common error was choosing sentence (c) instead of (d).

Question 13 ZELTEN Teil 1

This question discriminated well. Less able candidates resorted to guesswork at this stage, even entering words that were grammatically impossible in context. The idea that the barbecue was free escaped many who were unable to match the concept of *für die Sie gar nichts bezahlen* with *kostenlos*, choosing instead the distractor *billig*.

Question 13 ZELTEN Teil 2

Only the best candidates deal well with note-taking in German. At this level, targeted at A*, attention to detail is necessary. Although even weaker candidates were able to identify that Franziska was unhappy with the weather and the town, but pleased with the playground and the other campers, many were simply unable to pick out a relevant opinion. Surprisingly, some wrote that the temperature was cold in (a); in (b) the misspelling of *Ruhetag* rendered it often nonsensical; in (c) the concept of organised games was often misunderstood; (d) was generally well answered. At the very top of the range, there were some excellent answers.

4375/02 IGCSE German Paper 2: Reading and Writing

General

On the whole, most candidates coped well with the demands of both the Reading and the Writing tasks.

Examiners felt the paper reflected the interests of young people and all questions worked well. Some candidates appeared unfamiliar with the format of certain questions and Centres are reminded of the need to prepare candidates specifically for the demands of the questions so that they are confident with the format.

Section A

Part One

Q1 Zu Hause

This question provided a gentle entry into the paper and the vast majority of candidates scored full marks here.

Q2 Hobbys

Most candidates fared very well with this question.

Q3 Schwedt

Candidates scored well here. Some candidates did not realise that one word answers were sufficient and wrote fairly extended replies. Centres are reminded that this note-taking exercise is a popular and discriminating test type. At this level, candidates would be expected to recognise common word families and Centres would be advised to spend some time reinforcing these in preparation for the examination. Thus, candidates unfamiliar with the key word *Verkehrsmittel* in the grid were unable to link it with the *Bus* from the *Bushaltestelle* in the text and so failed to score the point.

Part 2

Q4 Ihre Stadt

Candidates were clearly motivated by this familiar topic and had plenty of positive things to say about their hometown. More able candidates were able to draw cleverly on the information in the linked Reading text, without merely lifting. Good performances were characterised by a confident, fluent use of the language. Such responses were fully relevant to the task and wholly comprehensible. They were not necessarily 100% accurate but full communication was achieved. Centres are advised to share with candidates the assessment grids on p16 of the Specification so that they understand the demands of this question.

Section B

Part One

Q5 Fernsehen

This question led to mixed fortunes. It targets higher grades and it proved to be a good discriminator. Candidates must demonstrate an ability to appreciate opinions and differentiate between positive and negative. Not all candidates were able to do this however and Centres would be advised to spend some time developing this skill in their candidates. There were some over-lengthy responses here, which did not disadvantage candidate performance as long as the necessary detail was given. By way of preparation, candidates should practice manipulating the textual material to enable them to give the correct answer.

Part Two

Q6 Schule

Question 6 targeted grades B, A and A* and was therefore more demanding. It discriminated exceptionally well. Individual questions tested a mix of factual understanding, inference and the drawing of conclusions and whilst the majority of candidates coped with the factual knowledge, fewer enjoyed success in those questions requiring some level of inference. This ability to demonstrate understanding at a more complex level is a vital skill at grades A and A* and Centres would be advised to practise and reinforce this with their more able candidates to ensure greater confidence and proficiency. In addition, close and careful reading was required and some scripts showed evidence of superficial skimming only. On the whole candidates were able to communicate their answers effectively, if not grammatically accurately. Wholesale lifting from the text is not rewarded and candidates should be dissuaded from attempting this: they should bear in mind that questions are set in such a way as to make lifting very difficult if the answer is to make any real sense. Answers were assessed first of all for communication of correct information, then a global mark was awarded for the quality of the candidate's German.

- (a) Some candidates mistook *Schüler* for *Schule*.
- (b) This was the first inference question and proved a very good discriminator.
Some candidates left this sub question blank (not recommended as an examination technique), others responded with irrelevance. In preparation for this type of question, candidates should be trained to recognise the significance of the words *wahrscheinlich*, *wohl*, *vielleicht* and to demonstrate understanding beyond the immediate confines of the text. In addition, there was some considerable confusion about which school was intended.
- (c) Candidates tended to lift from the text here and often came up with answers which made little sense grammatically.

- (d) Again, lifting was common. Whilst this demonstrates that candidates have indeed understood the question and can locate the appropriate section of the text to generate a response, it does not allow them to access any marks for the quality of their German.
- (e) This was generally well done, although *Uhr* and *Stunde* were often confused.
- (f) Candidates struggled with this question and clearly did not understand the concept of an *Interview*.
- (g) Again, lifting was commonplace and only better candidates demonstrated the ability to express the ideas using their own words.
- (h) Whilst many candidates might have understood the meaning of the word *ganztägig* they were unable to seize the implications in this context. There were many rather vague responses such as *am Nachmittag, abends* but Examiners were looking for a much clearer indication of understanding.
- (i) The instruction to give *ein konkretes Beispiel* was not a great help to many candidates in this inference question. Some even suggested they help old people *mit der Hausaufgabe*.
- (j) This was generally well done, although once again, many candidates just lifted verbatim from the text.

The standard of original German used in the responses was very encouraging overall. Only in rare cases was communication hindered by poor and inaccurate language.

Section C

Examiners were pleased to note that candidates were inspired by all three titles in this writing section although (a) was the most popular option. Most candidates showed an ability to communicate a wide range of ideas in all three essays but those who prefer some guidance in the structuring of their writing would be advised to opt for those titles which contain bullet points (here (a) and (c)), as long as they convey all the specified information. Candidates should also be able to link the concepts within their essay so that it forms a coherent whole rather a sequence of disparate episodes. Candidates should understand the assessment criteria for this part of the Paper so that they can attempt to fulfil the requirements and so access the whole range of marks. For example, it is important to use a range of tenses and verb forms, show evidence of a confident use of a variety of more complex structures and lexis. High scoring responses were typified by this but in general, the range of language used and the levels of accuracy achieved were variable. Further to the point about a coherent essay, candidates should be encouraged to use linking words such as *außerdem, jedoch, leider* more confidently: for the most part there was an over-reliance on simple sentence structures and any attempt at subordination involved the use of *weil* with the verb *ist*. Candidates should also observe the word count for the essay: those who submit shorter responses will not be able to access the full range of marks since the mark grids are assessing responses of 150 words. Essays which exceeded 150 words were

not penalised but some were, in fact, self-penalising as the quality of language tended to deteriorate after the 150 words.

- (a) Examiners read some detailed essays here, in which candidates demonstrated their ability to narrate events and express opinions using a wide range of structures and lexis. There were some more original essays and candidates were clearly very confident writing about this familiar topic.
- (b) There were different interpretations here, but as long as the essay demonstrated a connection with the title, then it was admissible. This title gave rise to more imaginative and inventive essays and in their preparation for this section; Centres might consider whether this type of essay best suits their own candidates.
- (c) Once again, many candidates were able to write confidently about helping around the house and this clearly represented a familiar topic. In this option, several candidates failed to address all the prescribed bullet points and this will have a negative impact on the Communication and Content mark. Candidates must ensure they have made reference to each point, however briefly.

4375/03 IGCSE German Paper 3: Speaking

Once again, a large proportion of candidates entered for this Specification took the optional speaking component. Examiners were pleased to listen to some very proficient speaking tests sympathetically conducted which evidenced a pleasing standard of candidate performance.

General

Interviewers are to be commended on their sympathetic and encouraging conduct of the speaking tests. However, it should be noted that closed questions rarely encourage candidate participation. Those candidates wishing to access the higher bands in the assessment grids must show evidence of the ability to expand and take the initiative in the conversation and open-ended questions are therefore more relevant.

Centre administration for the Speaking Tests was good. The quality of the recordings was, however, very variable. In some instances candidates were virtually inaudible due to either extraneous noise or poor quality recording hardware. Reference should be made to p37 & p39 of the Specification which outline the requirement for a quiet environment and audible recording.

Section A: Presentation and discussion based on a single picture.

For this part of the Speaking test candidates must select a picture. It is very important that candidates choose this picture wisely since it should allow adequate exploitation to enable candidates to demonstrate their speaking proficiency. Whilst there were some excellent examples which reflected the interests of the candidates and gave rise to some very lively discussions, there were, sadly, some less inspiring samples which failed to facilitate adequate discussion material.

Candidates should start this section by giving a presentation for up to a maximum of one minute on their picture. They then take part in a conversation, which should last no longer than 3 minutes, based on their chosen picture. This total of 4 minutes represents an adequate length of time for candidates to give a personal interpretation of the picture, express opinions and discuss issues arising from the picture. In general, conversations which exceeded 4 minutes were self-penalising and Examiners were instructed to listen to 4 minutes only: thus any excess material was not assessed. Centres are therefore advised to respect these time limits in the best interests of their candidates. Furthermore, it is more reassuring for the candidate if the conversation is brought to a fairly natural close rather than ending abruptly almost in mid-flow.

On occasions information was asked for in the discussion which had already been given in the presentation. This should be avoided wherever possible since candidates cannot be credited twice for the same information and language. It is not perhaps in the spirit of the examination for the Interviewer to ask exactly the same questions of each candidate: it could be argued that this approach takes away any element of unpredictability. Questions may be repeated or rephrased to enable candidates give a suitable answer. Interviewers should be careful not to ask what are essentially repetitive questions i.e. variations on the same question

several times. Thus it is more profitable to ask a candidate to describe only one person in the picture rather than all of them. This would then allow time for a wider range of questions to be posed e.g.

*Was hat diese Person eben gemacht?
Warum sitzen diese Leute im Wohnzimmer?
Was wird bald geschehen?*

Interviewers should ensure their candidates have the opportunity to fulfil the requirements of the assessment criteria, namely express and justify opinions, give extended responses to a wide range of question types, and use an appropriately wide variety of structures and lexis, including a full range of tenses. Such performances would give candidates access to the full range of marks.

Section B: Two conversations

In this section candidates are required to take part in conversations with the Interviewer on two separate conversation topics chosen by the Interviewer.

Here again, Interviewers should adhere to the timings laid down in the Specification, namely a maximum of 3 minutes for each conversation topic to make a total of 6 minutes for this section. In section B Examiners were instructed to listen to only 3 minutes per topic. In general longer conversations were self-penalising as candidates began to struggle to find things to say and incidence of error increased.

Whilst Interviewers are free to develop any area within the chosen conversation topics, care should be taken to avoid any overlap with the material covered in Section A and with the other topic in section B of the test. Interviewers are reminded that the questions in the Specimen papers are suggestions only and that they should be mindful of the need to respond naturally to a candidate's previous answer to facilitate a more natural flow to the conversation.

It is preferable to ask candidates, particularly the more able, open-ended questions rather than closed ones. Thus *Beschreiben Sie, wo Sie wohnen!* or *beschreib dein Haus* are infinitely better than *Wohnst du in einem Haus oder in einer Wohnung?*

Centres' attention is drawn to p12 of the Specification where it is stated that 'in order to achieve grade C and above, candidates will be expected to express opinions and use past, present and future tenses.' This should be demonstrated in each of the two conversations of section B. Interviewers did not always give candidates the opportunity to use a wide range of verb forms, use past, present and future tenses or express opinions. Candidates will not have access to the full range of marks if they do not fulfil these criteria. Centres' attention is drawn equally to the Grade Descriptions on page 14 of the Specification. These detail typical performances at the key grade boundaries.

Statistics

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Grade Boundaries	80	72	64	56	46	37	28	19	0

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