

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE German (4375) Paper 2

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Paper 2: Reading & Writing

Generally, most candidates coped well with the demands of both the Reading and the Writing tasks, although a broader range of ability was evident this year.

Examiners felt the paper reflected the interests of young people. Some candidates appeared unfamiliar with the format of certain task types and centres are reminded of the need to prepare candidates specifically for the demands of the questions so that they are confident with the actual format.

Section A

Part One

Q1 Im Haushalt helfen

This question provided a gentle entry into the paper and most candidates scored full marks here. A few candidates, anxious to progress to the more challenging questions, selected incorrect answers to part (i) for which they selected D rather than C and part (iii) where they opted for B rather than F, but these candidates were in a relative minority.

Q2 Das Wetter

The weather remains a popular topic and most candidates fared very well with this question. A perhaps less than rigorous scrutiny of the question led some candidates to select A or B for (i) München rather than E, and F for (ii) Salzburg rather than A. Candidates should allocate their time wisely to each question, rather than rushing through the seemingly easy ones.

Q3 Touristenattraktion

Candidates met with mixed fortunes here. This question targets grades D and C and demands somewhat closer reading. Most understood that they needed to complete the sentences with a word from the box, but surprisingly few seemed to be able to recognise the type of word needed. Although grammar in itself is not being tested in this task type, it is undoubtedly the case that an understanding of the kind of word required to fill the gap helps candidates enormously. Thus, those who understood that a noun is required in part (i) stood a greater chance of scoring the mark than those who selected their answer seemingly randomly. A popular incorrect response here was *Straßenseite*. In part (ii), many recognised the need for a verb, but opted for *sortieren*. Parts (iii) and (iv) proved to be more successful. In part (v) examiners frequently saw *abends* and in the cases where candidates failed to recognise the need for an adverbial time phrase, *langweilig*. This question type relies on synonyms as in the case of (v) where *täglich* is offered as a synonym for *jeden Tag*. Centres are advised to spend some time working on synonyms or synonymous phrases as they prepare candidates for this kind of question.

Section A

Part 2

Q4 Beschreiben Sie eine Touristenattraktion.

There were some excellent and interesting answers here. 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. A small minority of candidates simply lifted from the reading text making little or even no attempt to adapt it. Some candidates produced short pieces where the content was not specific enough to the title. Centres are advised to share with candidates the assessment grids on page 16 of the Specification so that they understand the demands of this question.

Section B

Part One

Q5 Internet

This question led to mixed fortunes. It targets higher grades (C and B) and proved to be a reliable discriminator. *Flohmarkt* was understood by relatively few and thus part (ii) proved a challenge. Most candidates opted for B rather than the target D, presumably because they were misled by the use of *Artikel* in both (ii) and B. In part (iii) a significant number opted for C although there is no obvious explanation for this choice.

Section B

Part Two

Q6 Kindheit

Question 6 targets grades B, A and A* and is therefore more demanding. It discriminated exceptionally well. Individual questions test 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. Candidates should be able to note the significance of words like *konkrete Beispiele*, *wohl* and *vielleicht* since they have to be able to interpret and draw inferences from the text to access all the marks. 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.

Generally, candidates were able to communicate their answers effectively, if not grammatically accurately. Responses were assessed first of all for communication of correct information, and then a global mark was awarded for the quality of the candidate's German. Candidates should be dissuaded from lifting from the text: firstly, lifting does not demonstrate unequivocally good understanding of the text and secondly if candidates lift their answer, they cannot expect to score a high mark for the quality of their language - since it is not their language.

Centres should be aware of the 'order of elements' rule. Thus, if one mark is available, one piece of information will be assessed - and this will be the first answer candidates give. There is a need for both precision and detail here.

(a) Many candidates were successful here. A few put *in die Schule gekommen*.

(b) Examiners were looking for candidates to infer here i.e. to show that they had understood the text and could go slightly beyond it. Candidates who gave answers such as *sie sind gewandert* demonstrated this ability. A large number simply lifted from the text and offered *einen Wandertag gemacht*. This does not represent a concrete example of what they did, nor does it contribute to the Language mark since this comes directly from the text.

(c) Many candidates enjoyed success here and a wide range of answers were given and credited. This question forced candidates to use their own words to answer appropriately. Those who lifted *anhören* or *Lieder vorgesungen* were clearly unsuccessful.

(d) This question allowed partial lifting. Candidates could score the mark by manipulating *ich habe* to *sie hat* and then lift the rest of the sentence. Many candidates chose to use their own words entirely and gave answers such as *nicht wichtig* which was, in fact, ideal.

(e) Weaker candidates struggled with this question and tended to lift *Grenzen geöffnet* from the text without going on to answer the question asked. More able candidates were able to understand the implications of that section of the text.

(f) Examiners saw extensive lifting here which did not demonstrate understanding of the text e.g. *ein größeres Angebot an Waren* or *das große Barbie-Sortiment*. Examiners needed to see that candidates had understood what this really meant, not just that they could identify the correct chunk from the text. This proved to be a very challenging question indeed and centres are advised to practise this skill of drawing conclusions.

(g) This was a more accessible question although a few candidates contradicted an otherwise correct answer by adding *und traurig*. Any such incorrect addition will negate a correct answer.

(h) This is an A* question and represented a challenge for all but the most able or those who had been prepared on how to deal with this type of question. Candidates were expected to deduce and go slightly beyond the text. At A* level candidates should not be expecting to be able to lift discrete lexical items such as *Eltern* and *Zuhause* for 2 marks. There were lots of possible answers and Examiners accepted e.g. *Vater oder Mutter, Medikamente* since these represent concrete examples.

i) A large number of candidates enjoyed success here. *Zukunft* posed a problem for some and others gave answers which they had already used in part (h). The best candidates demonstrated excellent understanding and mastery of language by using synonyms such as *sie haben/bekommen keine Ausbildung*.

The standard of original German used in the responses varied immensely, but only in rare cases was communication hindered by poor and inaccurate language.

Section C

Options (b) and (c) proved by far the most popular. All titles offered candidates some guidance in the structuring of their writing via the bullet points - options (a) and (c) - and the questions -option (b). Whilst many candidates were able to demonstrate the ability to communicate a wide range of ideas, weaker candidates struggled to convey all the specified information. It is essential that candidates make sure they cover all the bullet points/questions as these determine the content. Any omissions will be reflected in the mark for Communication and Content.

To access the top marks, candidates should be able to link the concepts within their essay so that it forms a coherent whole rather a sequence of disparate episodes. It is also 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. To achieve 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*. Use of a range of vocabulary was variable and this year examiners were surprised to see the odd English word here and there.

Candidates should 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 there were, in fact, some long and at times repetitive essays which were self-penalising as the quality of language tended to deteriorate after the 150 words.

(a) This essay was generally selected by stronger candidates who found this title allowed them to demonstrate their linguistic capabilities to great advantage.

(b) Less confident candidates opted for this title and were able to acquit themselves quite well. By far the greater part of the essay was devoted to the first question, and this is fine as long as candidates ensure they cover a range of tenses in what they write.

(c) This was the most popular choice although candidates met with mixed fortunes. Some misunderstood the title and bullet points and thought they could detail their school routine and curriculum. The second bullet point was widely disregarded and again, it should be stressed that the bullet points determine the required content and therefore the Communication and Content mark. On the other hand, there were some very engaging accounts and some highly insightful opinions on the value of international schools.

Grade Boundaries

Raw Mark boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
60	47	42	37	32	26	21	16	11

Overall Mark boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
100	80	72	64	56	46	37	28	19

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