Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In German (4GN1 02)
Paper 2: Reading and Writing In German

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Paper 2 is the Reading and Writing component of the International GCSE with the first assessment having taken place in 2019. There were no assessments in 2006 but candidates were able to sit an examination in November 2020. The paper constitutes 50% of the total marks for the International GCSE whilst the total number of marks for the paper is 80, with 40 marks for reading and 40 marks for writing. The assessment is through a 1-hour and 45-minute examination with the paper set by Pearson and externally marked by examiners.

The paper assesses reading and writing skills in separate sections across five topic areas:

- Home and abroad
- Education and employment
- Personal life and relationships
- The world around us
- Social activities, fitness and health

The **reading section** comprises the first five tasks where candidates are required to convey their understanding of written German through a series of five reading tasks, each based around a collection of short texts or a longer single text.

The first task is assessed through multiple choice answers (6 marks), the second task is a multiple-choice gap-filling exercise (6 marks) and the third task is a multiple-choice question (8 marks).
The fourth task is based on a literary text which consists of a short, adapted extract from an authentic source appropriate to this level. Candidates have to give short answers to prompts in German. (10 marks)
The fifth task is based on an authentic German text with questions in German which require the candidates to answer in German. (10 marks)

The overall level of difficulty increases from the first task to the fifth task.

The **writing section** comprises three tasks, two writing tasks and a third grammar-based task.
The first writing task is short, and the candidates are asked to write 60-75 words, including four prescribed words or short phrases. Students are being assessed in two sections: 1) Communication and content; 2) Linguistic knowledge and accuracy. (10 marks)
The second writing task is longer than the first and contains an element of choice. The candidates are able to choose from three questions that are drawn from different topics, and need to write between 130 and 150 words in response to the question, addressing four bullet points. Candidates are being assessed in two sections: 1) Communication and content; 2) Linguistic knowledge and accuracy. (20 marks)

In the third grammar-based task candidates are asked to change the words in brackets so that they correctly fit the sentences. This involves the need to manipulate, for example, verbs and adjectives, into their correct verb form. (10 marks)

Grammatical accuracy, punctuation and spelling is being assessed in this section of the paper.

Students have no choice when completing the tasks except Question 7 where they can choose between three longer pieces of writing. In the 2011 series, Q7b (Blog for a volunteering-Website) was not chosen by any candidate, answers to Q7a (Housework and life at home) and Q7c (Living in town or countryside) were fairly equally split.

Within all tasks for the reading section are items of differing difficulty which means that all candidates should be able to access parts of the more difficult texts (Q4 and Q5) and be able to answer some questions correctly. Within the writing section, students will be rewarded with high marks for Q6 even if they use less sophisticated language and grammatical structures than for Q7. For both tasks, the language in the bullet points and individual tasks has been chosen carefully in order not to be a hindrance for weaker students to access the tasks. Individual tasks within each Q7 are of varying difficulty so that all students can access some parts of the question but very able candidates are also being stretched.

Individual Questions

Question 1

This is a multiple-choice question totalling six marks and testing basic understanding of a continuous text. The topic in 2011 was Transport. Most candidates did not have a problem with this question and scored an average of 5 out of 6 marks.

Question 2

Candidates are asked to fill in the gaps in sentences with options from a word cloud. There are at least two viable options for each gap. In 2011 the topic for this section was School Pressure. Most candidates have dealt well with this task in the November 2020 series. They were able to identify the correct words without difficulty and many scored full marks.

Question 3

This multiple-choice question has a maximum of eight marks. Candidates have to identify who says what. The chosen topic for 2011 was Family and Friends. It was very well handled by the cohort of November 2020. Most students scored full marks. The most difficult section was Q3e where all three boxes needed to be left blank.

Question 4

For the literary question candidates were asked to give answers in note-taking form on the novel Lila, Lila by Martin Suter. This also posed no major problem for most candidates as the average mark was more than 8 out of 10. Question 4a was one of the trickiest. Many candidates offered midday as an answer but this was not precise enough to score a mark. It was pleasing that many candidates understood the text leading to the answer to 4c and correctly identified the answer as 'nichts'. Most candidates seemed to understand the expression 'statt' and answered 4i correctly with 'Buch'. Candidates have heeded the advice from 2019 that only short answers rather than whole sentences are required for Question 4. The answers were therefore generally precise and to the point and could be rewarded with a mark.

Question 5

The long German text with questions and answers in German is the most demanding section of the Reading Comprehension. This was no exception in November 2020 but many candidates were achieving good average scores in this section on Tourism too. The average score was 7.55 out of 10. Candidates were generally able to manipulate the language from the reading section so that they answered questions with the correct pronoun or tense. For example, they were able to change the text for 5a from 'Wir Deutsche wollen uns erholen...' to 'Die Deutschen wollen sich erholen' or 'Sie wollen sich erholen'.
5c seems to have been one of the more difficult questions as candidates stated that animals were born on farms and brought to nature reserves but these are not disadvantages as such which is what the question required.

Question 6

This is the first task of the written section and the 2011 topic Birthdays should be accessible to all candidates. Most candidates made sure that they used all four stimulus words and in the exact way as prescribed. These words are carefully chosen so that they can be used widely without the need for manipulation by the candidates. There were a number of excellent examples where candidates wrote freely and convincingly about the given topic. Most were able to give a detailed and fully relevant response to the task and achieved 5 marks for the Communication and Content section. Around half of the candidates also manipulated the language

so that they produced fluent sentences. They were therefore awarded 5 marks for Linguistic knowledge and accuracy too. Most other candidates tended towards the use of familiar and predictable vocabulary and structures and hence received 4 marks for their efforts in this category. The average mark for the task was 9 out of 10.

Question 7

Candidates are given four bullet points to cover in this more challenging writing task. The topic for 7a was Housework and Family life and about half of the students chose this task. The other half chose 7c where the topic was Life in Town or Countryside. All candidates had something meaningful to write on these topics and quite a number of them managed to show an excellent ability to express their ideas in a logical sequence and therefore were awarded 9 or 10 marks for Communication and Content. The range of vocabulary and grammatical structures was also mainly good to excellent and almost all candidates scored at least 7 out of 10 marks for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy with a high number managing 10 out of 10. The average mark was 16 out of 20.

Question 8

This is the section where candidates need to fill in the correct form of a word within a text. The topic in 2011 was the Fish Market in Hamburg. The performance in this section was very high. Most candidates achieved more than half marks, the average being 6.4 out of 10. There was no section that proved particularly difficult and it was pleasing to see that most candidates managed correct endings for 8d 'kleines' and 8j 'interessanten'.

Issues which should be addressed at teacher training

In general, teachers should emphasise to candidates to read the questions carefully and read through the whole section before answering questions. For task 4, the literary text, only very short answers are required (often one word) and non-targeted lifts from texts will not gain a mark. For task 5, candidates should be discouraged to copy whole untargeted sections of the text as this will not be rewarded with a mark. A number of these responses can also be given as one- or two-word answers, certainly not more than a short sentence. Candidates have to be aware that they might need to manipulate the subject pronoun in order to answer the question. Answering a 'man' question with an imperative will not score a mark.

For task 6, candidates are required to use all four bullet points in their answer in order to be able to score the highest marks. They should also make sure that they use more than one time frame in order to score 5 marks out of 5 for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy. For task 7, candidates also have to address all four sections in order to be eligible for the highest marks for Communication and Content. Examiners are looking for coherent and

purposeful responses that show an excellent ability to express ideas in a logical sequence. Candidates are also encouraged to display an excellent range of vocabulary and grammatical structures with a secure use of at least three tenses.

In task 8, candidates are able to show their grammatical knowledge and need to read the sentences with the words in brackets carefully in order to produce the correct answer.