



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2024

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level in
German (WGN01) Paper 01

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January 2024

Publications Code WGN01_01_2401_ER

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Format of the Test

There are two sections.

Section A consists of a stimulus card based on one of the two General topic areas chosen by the candidate in advance of the examination day. The cards are allocated according to a running order established by Pearson that is printed in the teacher booklet. Candidates have fifteen minutes' preparation time, during which they should read the stimulus text (consisting of two paragraphs) and may make notes on a maximum of one side of A4 paper to refer to during their response. Candidates must then answer four questions devised by Pearson and asked by the teacher examiner. Up to four marks are available for evidence of Knowledge and understanding – Stimulus specific.

Section A should last for approximately four minutes.

Section B is a discussion between the teacher examiner and candidate. The teacher examiner should open up the discussion into the wider General topic area and should tailor their questions to the individual candidate answers, commenting on responses, challenging answers, and asking for clarification so that the candidate is appropriately challenged, both conceptually and linguistically. There should be fluent discourse and up to 16 marks are available for Spontaneity and development. Meanwhile, up to 10 marks are available for Knowledge and understanding – General topic area. To achieve marks of 7 or above for this criterion, candidates need to demonstrate evidence of some research into their selected General topic area.

The total test consisting of Section A and Section B should comprise no more than 10 minutes. Once the 10 minutes mark has passed, the examiner will stop listening at the end of the next sentence/sense group.

Assessment Principles

This unit assesses communication in spoken language as well as critical analysis. It also covers understanding, which is, in essence, a test of listening skills.

It is marked positively out of 40, by Edexcel examiners.

Knowledge and understanding – Stimulus specific: this criterion is marked out of 4 and tests the candidate's understanding of the stimulus card text and the subsequent questions. If a candidate fails to answer questions 1 and 2 appropriately but successfully answers questions 3 and/or 4, the examiner will seek to credit the candidate's understanding of the wider implications of the text.

Spontaneity and development: this criterion is marked out of 16. It assesses performance in relation to spontaneity, discourse and development of candidate responses as they occur during Section B of the test.

Quality of language: This criterion is assessed with 5 marks available for Accuracy and 5 marks for Range of lexis. Pronunciation, intonation, the structures employed, lexis and grammatical accuracy are all taken into consideration when awarding these marks.

Knowledge and understanding – General topic area: this criterion accounts for up to 10 marks and assesses evidence of the candidate's research into their chosen General topic area. To access marks of 7 or above the candidate should show evidence of some research into their chosen General topic area.

Pearson Edexcel publish the guidance to examiners on the website. This explains and defines the standards for spontaneity, discourse, development and other key assessment principles. Centres are strongly advised to refer to this document

Candidate Performances: Individual observations on the use of each Stimulus card

As in previous examination sessions, the most popular combination of topic areas chosen by candidates was once again Youth Matters combined with Lifestyle, health and fitness. Lifestyle, health and fitness was the topic area tested most often, in almost a third of tests overall. It was pleasing, however, to note an increase in the number of candidates choosing the topics of Environment and travel and Education and employment. There is perhaps more specialised topic-specific related to these two GTAs, and so candidates who commit to these topics tend to score highly for Quality of language (Range of lexis). Choosing these two GTAs also generally allows candidates to demonstrate very good or excellent knowledge of their selected General topic area. Good candidates are able to use sophisticated lexical items when talking about the topic areas of Youth matters and Lifestyle, health and fitness, but weaker students tend to employ rather pedestrian vocabulary, often drawing on their IGCSE knowledge, offering anecdotal evidence, or talking about personal preferences when responding to examiner questions, which can restrict access to the higher mark bands.

Youth matters: Cards 1A/B

This stimulus card related to a young person's ambitions of becoming a professional musician. Question 1 prompted candidates to detail three opportunities or chances youth orchestra members have, and was, in hindsight, ambiguous, as many candidates equated 'chances' with the statistical chances or likelihood. Questions 2, 3 and 4 prompted candidates to reflect on the wider benefits of learning an instrument. These questions were understood well by the

vast majority of candidates and most demonstrated a good or excellent understanding of the stimulus text and the wider topic area.

Youth matters: Cards 2A/B

The stimulus text invited candidates to consider the significance of role models. The stimulus text was understood well, and in the main, all four questions were competently answered by candidates who attempted this card. Questions 3A and 4 B which prompted candidates to reflection on intergenerational role model relationships produced some particularly interesting responses.

Lifestyle, health and fitness: Cards 1A/B

The stimulus text referred to a fictitious culinary competition, with questions 3 and 4 on the A and B cards inviting candidates to consider the wider benefits and consequences of culinary arts and food preparation. Without exception, all questions on these two stimulus cards were handled well by candidates. In a small handful of cases, however, teacher examiners used this stimulus card as a springboard to ask their candidates some personal questions about culinary preferences, which encouraged IGCSE-type responses.

Lifestyle, health and fitness: Cards 2A/B

This card, based on a stimulus text of the trend sport of Nordic Walking, proved to be successful in the majority of candidate cases. Candidates responded with a high degree of success to all four questions. Questions 3 and 4 on cards A and B were successful in prompting candidates to think about the wider aspects of trend sports, and the importance of integrating physical activity into busy lifestyles.

Environment and travel: Cards 1A/B

Although the topic area was selected on fewer occasions than the topic areas of Youth matters or Lifestyle, Health and Fitness, this stimulus card on German youth hostels produced good outcomes for those candidates who attempted it. Questions 1 and 2 were answered correctly by the vast majority of candidates. The final two questions on cards A and B encouraged candidates to debate the merits of electric cars, whether it is possible to renounce driving cars altogether, and ways in which use of public transport can realistically be encouraged. These questions produced interesting and individual responses that allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and research into the topic area.

Environment and travel: Cards 2A/B

This stimulus card related to efforts to grow vegetables in big cities. Perhaps due to the topic-specific vocabulary that is required to discuss issues related to food miles, food preservation and nutritional initiatives, candidates who attempted this

topic area produced some unique and complex responses that helped candidates attain the higher mark bands.

Education and employment: Cards 1A/B

This was also one of the stimulus cards allocated to fewer candidates. The introductory paragraph about virtual gallery visits to introduce young children to art was understood well by all candidates who attempted it, with the majority of candidates offering the required 3 items of information in response to Question 1. Question 2 was also generally handled well. Questions 3A (on the demerits of virtually experienced art) and 4B (prompting the candidate to assess whether art should be a compulsory subject) were more successful than Questions 3B and 4A. This was, perhaps because the latter two questions asked candidates to reflect on aspects of school trips, which led to some candidates drawing on anecdotal evidence of trips they had themselves enjoyed.

Education and employment: Cards 2A/B

This card referred to issues related to volunteering. The stimulus text was understood well and all four questions, both on the A and the B card, were generally handled well by candidates who addressed this stimulus card.

Questions 3B and 4B, which asked candidates to identify areas where volunteers are of particular benefit, and to consider the challenges that volunteers might experience, resulted in some specifically interesting responses from linguistically able candidates.

General observations – Section A

This part of the assessment is based on four questions, devised by Pearson and published in the teacher booklet. Questions should be asked exactly as printed and in the specified order. Questions may be repeated but must not be simplified or rephrased. In this examination session, examiners noted several instances where teacher examiners did not adhere to the printed questions but rephrased them. Additionally, there were instances where teacher examiners asked additional questions, and also isolated instances where teacher examiners supplied vocabulary to assist the candidates. All of these scenarios had an impact on the marks that could be awarded to candidates for Knowledge and understanding – stimulus specific, as material supplied by the teacher examiner cannot be credited to the candidate. In some cases, overly long Sections A resulted in reduced time available for the Section B discussion and therefore impacted adversely on marks that could be awarded for Knowledge and understanding – General topic area.

Question 1 in Section A will always be based on the first paragraph of the stimulus text and involves the identification of three items by the candidate. It was pleasing to note that in this session, most candidates realised this and attempted to give the three required items.

Question 2 will always be based on the second paragraph and will require an answer that involves an element of grammatical manipulation undertaken by the candidate. There were some isolated cases where candidates attempted to respond to the question by drawing on general knowledge rather than on information contained in the stimulus card, but in the majority of tests, the candidates were aware of the requirement to base their response on the stimulus text.

Questions 3 and 4 are not based on the stimulus text but invite candidates to think more widely about aspects of the stimulus card's specific subtopic. They are designed to allow candidates of different linguistic levels to be challenged appropriately and to demonstrate an awareness of issues. Candidates should ideally give responses that move beyond iGCSE-level language, and in the majority of tests, this was the case.

General observations - Section B

Knowledge and understanding – General topic area

Section B is a discussion between teacher examiner and candidate. It requires the teacher examiner to engage the candidate in a discussion that, although still relating to the same General topic area and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus. It is important that candidates are challenged at the appropriate conceptual and linguistic level; questions that are designed to elicit personal preferences or anecdotal evidence are not suited to AS level, and yet in this exam session, there were many instances where teacher examiners employed some questions, perhaps in an effort to put their candidates at ease. Such exam conduct did, however, impact adversely on the marks that could be awarded for Knowledge and understanding – General topic area. Similarly, teacher examiners should not work from a list but should tailor their questions in response to the individual candidate's linguistic level and responses conveyed. There were several centres where candidates who had selected the same General topic area were asked identical questions, often also in identical order. This is not in the spirit of the examination, nor does it represent a tailored approach for candidates of different linguistic abilities or different intellectual interests.

In a small number of samples in this examination sessions, both General topic areas that had been chosen by the candidate were erroneously covered in the Section B discussions, when it should only be one. There were a handful of centres in this examination series where teacher examiners asked Section B questions that straddled several topic areas that often bore no links to the General topic areas

the candidate had researched. In line with the marking principles, this severely impacted the marks for Knowledge and understanding – General topic area.

Spontaneity and development

Candidates should also be discouraged from delivering long, pre-learnt passages in Section B as this will impact the marks available for Spontaneity and development. It should be noted that there is no set amount of questions that have to be asked in Section B; rather, conversation should deliver naturally from candidate responses, with teacher examiners picking up on candidate responses by encouraging them to elaborate, justify opinions and expand. Examples of how this can be achieved are "Wieso", "Kannst Du ein Beispiel geben?" or "Was genau meinst Du mit diesem Punkt" which allow the candidate to engage in spontaneous discussion. It is better to discuss fewer aspects and in depth, than several areas which are covered superficially. It is not genuine discussion if the teacher/examiner asks a question, allows the candidate to answer, possibly at length, and then moves on to another completely unrelated question, asking a total of perhaps three questions. In such cases there is no 'fluent discourse' as required to attain the top mark band for Spontaneity and development.

Quality of Language (Range of lexis)

This criterion accounts for 5 out of 40 possible marks. Examiners look for evidence of topic-specific lexis as well as comparing what they hear to the specified list of grammatical structures. Progression from GCSE to AS level is required here; therefore, the most successful performances feature candidate attempts to try a range of complex structures, perhaps several tenses and lexis as appropriate to AS level.

Quality of Language (Accuracy)

This criterion equally accounts for 5 of the 40 possible marks. A mark of 5 does not constitute faultless language. Non-native speakers must have access to the full marks available here, and the examiners are standardised with this fundamental principle in mind. It should be noted that 5 out of 40 marks is a relatively small proportion. This will explain why many grammatically perfect performances do not achieve full marks overall, as they must also satisfy the criteria in the other mark grids.

Advice for Future Examination Sessions

Section A questions should be asked by the teacher examiner exactly as printed in the teacher booklet. No additional questions should be asked, and overly long candidate responses should be discouraged, as they may leave insufficient time for Section B.

In Section B, personal questions should be avoided as they are not challenging enough. If a candidate attempts to draw on personal experience or anecdotal evidence to illustrate a point, they should be steered towards making more general points. This point is of particular relevance in the case of very fluent candidates, who also need to demonstrate evidence of some research into their chosen topic area, as well as evidence they can engage in spontaneous discourse and respond to unpredictable elements. Equally, reciting pre-learned material does not lead to the best outcome for a candidate.

Teacher examiners should avoid working from lists of questions, as this strategy does not take into account individual candidate levels and interests. In large centres where multiple candidates have selected the same topic area, a large enough number of questions should be devised to avoid several candidates identical questions.

The complete test should not exceed 10 minutes. It is important that the full test lasts at least eight minutes. If the test is too short, examiners follow the guidance stated in the "Unit 1 Further Marking Guidance" which is available to centres via the Edexcel website. The examiners will stop assessing tests beyond ten minutes and will base their judgements on the performance offered up to that time limit.

Additional Note about the Conduct of the Assessment

An assessment should be conducted by one teacher/examiner. It is not acceptable for two teacher/examiners to be in the room with the candidate and to both ask questions. This leads to an overwhelming experience for the candidate and places the candidate at a disadvantage. Sections A and B of the assessment should be conducted by the same teacher/examiner. Of course, centres are free to use several teacher/examiners to conduct the assessments of large cohorts, but each test should be on a one-to-one basis.

Summary

The examiners marking on the unit would like to thank centres for the effort they put in to ensure the assessments run smoothly for their candidates and to allow them to reach their full potential. The hard work that goes into preparing candidates for examinations is also appreciated.

Grade Boundaries

Much work has taken place on the comparability of the speaking units for French, German and Spanish. The senior examiners continue to work closely together to ensure their application of the common marking guidelines is consistently applied across the three languages.

