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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In German (WGN01) Paper 1

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The International AS Level in German WGN01 is an 8–10 minute assessment in two sections that total 40 marks with 15 minutes preparation time.

In advance of the examination, the student chooses two of the four specified general topic areas (GTA) to prepare.

The GTAs are:

- Youth matters
- Lifestyle, health and fitness
- Environment and travel
- Education and employment.

A randomisation grid informs the teacher, which of the two chosen areas will be tested. The student is told this immediately before the preparation time begins.

**Section A** requires students to respond to four set questions on a stimulus related to one of the student's chosen general topic areas (GTA).

**Section B** requires the teacher/examiner to engage the student in a discussion that, although still relating to the same GTA and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus.

Stimulus cards are provided for each area. These form the assessment for section A. Before starting the examination, the candidates have 15 minutes to prepare with the stimulus card provided. They may make notes of up to one side of A4 sheet of paper in this time, which they may refer to during the examination.

In Section A, the candidate is asked four questions relating to the stimulus card. These questions are mandatory and may be repeated, but for the purpose of fair assessment across all centres, they **must not be re-phrased**. The first two questions relate specifically to information in the stimulus material, the second two relate to aspects of the sub-topic, upon which the stimulus text is based.

For question 1, it is expected that the candidate will manipulate the wording of the text in order to arrive at a complete answer to the question. A lift of information from the stimulus text will not provide sufficient information to answer the question completely. This question targets information in the first paragraph of the stimulus text. There are three possible elements to the answer to question 1 in the first paragraph and candidates should try to include as many of these elements as they are able.

For question 2, it is expected that the candidate will find the answer in the second paragraph. It will be necessary to manipulate the language found in the stimulus text to arrive at a complete answer.

For questions 3 and 4 it is expected that the candidate will give answers which are full and detailed, drawing on the research that they undertook on the GTA, in preparation for the examination.

The candidate's understanding of this stimulus-specific topic area is marked out of four. The four marks are not directly allocated as one mark per question. The statement in the mark grid, which best matches the entire performance of section A, will dictate the mark awarded.

In Section B, the teacher examiner must initiate a discussion about the general topic area chosen by the randomisation grid. The teacher examiner must move away from the sub-topic of the Stimulus Card to more general discussion of the topic area and its linked subtopics. The sub-topics of each area are stated in the specification. The students must attempt to show a clear understanding of the chosen topic, and use the research they completed in advance of the examination in order to do this, ideally citing sources they have used in their research.

The candidate's knowledge and understanding of the general topic area is marked out of a total of ten. The marks of five for Quality of language (Accuracy), five for Quality of Language (Range of lexis) and sixteen for Response apply to the test as a whole.

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.

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, and the one that produced the greatest variance of marks. By contrast, there was greater parity of marks across the performances of candidates who had chosen the topics of Environment and travel; and Education and employment. This may be due to the fact that these candidates researched and produced more specialised topic-specific related to these two GTAs and consequently tended to score highly for for Quality of language (Range of lexis). Successful candidates are able to use sophisticated lexical items when talking about the topic areas of Youth matters and Lifestyle, health and fitness, but less succesful candidates tend to employ more 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 but can be mitigated by skillful examination technique.

## **Application on the Marking Criteria**

### **Understanding Stimulus Specific A02**

To arrive at a mark, examiners consider primarily the mark band descriptions, rather than the number of “correct” answers. A response attains full marks when the student correctly identifies **all three elements to Question 1**. In previous examination sessions, there were always many candidates who offered just one element, or who summarised the content on the Stimulus card, but it was pleasing to note that in this examination session, almost all candidates attempted to identify three elements in response to Question 1.

To respond to Question 2, the candidate has to manipulate the language in the stimulus text sufficiently, rather than answering from their general knowledge or personal experience. This may require the manipulation of pronouns, verbs and tenses, as well as summarising information in the paragraphs, without including irrelevant details, or details which suggest that the question and the text have not been fully understood.

The candidate should then also go on to provide developed, justified answers to questions 3 and 4, which consider more than one implication and use examples to illustrate answers. There is no need for teacher examiners to ask additional questions based on the Stimulus card, as happened in a minority of cases in this examination session.

### **Quality of Language – Accuracy**

To access three or more marks, students need to show accuracy in basic principles, such as subject/verb agreements, tense formation and word order. At three marks, communication may be impeded at times, either due to pronunciation issues, or grammatical errors. To access full marks, communication must be clear at all times, and the student will demonstrate the ability to pronounce German well enough to be understood without undue difficulty. There may be minor errors in case agreements and complex structures, as well as the occasional major error, but these will be outweighed by a generally accurate response. In this examination session, it was pleasing to note that all candidates attained an Accuracy mark of 3 or above, a testament to their linguistic abilities and endeavours.

### **Quality of Language – Range of Lexis**

To assess the performance in this area, the grammar list in the specification is considered, and examiners listen for a wide range of specified structures in order to award the higher marks. In addition to this, the GTA is important, as examiners are standardised to listen for and reward a range of **topic-specific** lexis. In this occasion, the majority of candidates offered a wide variety of lexis and structures, and most confidently manipulated vocabulary to narrate events in the past, the future or the conditional tenses.

### **Spontaneity and Development**

Candidates are assessed on the ability to communicate spontaneously in speech. Spontaneous use of language occurs when students use their knowledge of structures, lexis and the GTA and apply it appropriately in response to questions. The discussion should develop naturally, and should build on the answers to previous questions. It should not be a list of pre-determined questions devised in advance of the examination.

A well-developed discussion is one where the candidate expands on an idea, justifying, illustrating and clarifying their points, and where the teacher examiner responds to what the candidate says. The teacher examiner might, for example, ask, "Wie meinen Sie das?", "Warum?" or "Können Sie ein Beispiel geben?". When giving examples, students should draw on their research, not on anecdotal evidence or personal experience, as doing so will not enable them to demonstrate understanding of the GTA. A 'question-and-answer' approach also continues to dominate in some centres, with candidates of different linguistic abilities being asked near-identical questions, which did not allow all candidates to demonstrate the full range of their spontaneity and ability of discussion development.

### **Knowledge and Understanding – General Topic Area**

It is expected that candidates will undertake preparatory work in their two chosen topic areas in advance of the examination. There must be evidence of knowledge and understanding, beyond what is considered general knowledge and awareness, in order to satisfy the criteria for the highest marks in this section. Good or excellent knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated by referring to independent research which has taken place in preparation for the examination. This could take the form of mentioning a statistic or referring to a named source, such as an article online, which the student has evaluated.

Knowledge which derives entirely from the student's personal experience is not sufficient to satisfy the terms "many" or a "wealth" of ideas, as stated in the mark grid. Many candidates – even linguistically very able ones – rely on anecdotal or general knowledge to illustrate their ideas, and they can only be credited in the "some relevant ideas" band of this mark grid. Regrettably, this last point is still not well-understood by centres as there was only a handful of candidates who referred to articles, T.V. programmes, radio programmes, statistics or other items of their research into their GTA. There was also a minority of cases where teacher examiners attempted to cover both GTAs chosen in advance of the examination by the candidate. There is no need to do so as only the wider GTA pertaining to the candidate's Stimulus card should be explored in Section B.

### **General observations – comments of 2501 session compared to 2401 session**

The Section A parts of the tests in the allocation were generally conducted well and in the same fashion of Section A in the 2401 series, although there was a minority of teacher examiners in the 2501 series who rephrased questions, added additional questions, or suggested vocabulary items to candidates that could subsequently not be credited. In the Part B sections, there was a tendency, in a small minority of centres, to ask several candidates with the same General topic area identical questions which is not in the spirit of the examination, nor always appropriate to the candidates' individual linguistic levels. This is an issue that has been observed over several examination sessions and existed in the 2401 session too. Regrettably, the Part B marks in approximately half of the 2401 allocation had to be severely restricted by poor examination techniques arising from a misunderstanding of the examination brief: in these cases, teachers/examiners moved onto other GTAs in Section B of the test rather than remaining within the wider area of the chosen GTA. It is regrettable that this misunderstanding of the brief has resulted in a considerable number of candidate results that were lower than could be expected because marks that could be awarded for Knowledge and understanding – General topic area were severely restricted. It is worth noting, however, that this occurrence was not due to any

accessibility issues with the 2401 paper, and it was extremely pleasing to note that this scenario did not occur in the 2501 session.

### **Specific observations – 2501 sessions compared to 2401 session**

#### **Youth matters Cards 1A/B**

Questions 1 and 2, related to the benefits of time-out from mobile phones, were answered confidently and in the main accurately by all candidates assigned this Stimulus card.

Questions 3 and 4 prompted candidates to reflect on the wider issues social media consumption and attempts by parents and/or the government to reduce it among young people. These questions were understood well by the vast majority of candidates and all responded well, although it was noted that many responses were rooted in personal anecdotes rather than research into the GTA. Overall, the Youth matters Stimulus cards 1A and 1B were of a challenge that was equal to the 2401 session and produced a similar level of linguistic/conceptual responses from candidates.

#### **Youth matters Cards 2A/B**

The stimulus text concerned sibling relationships. Whilst the text was understood well, not all candidates identified 3 items of information from the first paragraph in response to question 1. Several candidates who attempted this card appeared to believe that one item is sufficient. Question 2, however, was usually answered correctly. Questions 3 and 4 on cards 2A and 2B that prompted candidates to reflect more broadly about topics such as the value of intergenerational friendships and factors complicating 21<sup>st</sup>-century-family life. These questions encourage some interesting and individual candidate responses. These often included good justifications and linguistic development but as can perhaps be expected, occasionally drew on personal experiences rather than evidence of genuine research into the topic area.

Overall, the Youth matters Stimulus cards 2A and 2B were as accessible as the comparable 2401 Stimulus cards, but a little less successful by outcome due to the personal/anecdotal answers that the 2501 theme of 'family' invited from candidates.

#### **Lifestyle, health and fitness Cards 1A/B**

The stimulus text referred to an urban festival, and Questions 1 and 2 were handled well by all candidates who were assigned this Stimulus card. Questions 4 and 4B, which required candidates to reflect on ways of raising the quality of life enjoyed by urban or by rural communities, were equally successful, with candidates offering plenty of substantial responses. These two Stimulus cards were more successful than their comparators from the 2401 session as they required candidates to reflect on societal/global issues that could not be answered with anecdotal evidence.

#### **Lifestyle, health and fitness Cards 2A/B**

This card was based on a fictitious young female living with an allergy. It proved to be very successful as candidates of all linguistic backgrounds responded with a high degree of success to all four questions. Questions 3 and 4 on cards A and B were equally successful in prompting candidates to think about ways to boost individual health through healthy lifestyle choices. In a small number of cases, an overly long time was spent on Questions 3 and 4, however, as candidates added personal detail to their responses; consequently this

restricted the time available for the wider discussion in Part B of the examination, with the result that these two Stimulus cards unintentionally became a little less successful than their corresponding predecessors from the 2024 session had been.

### **Environment and travel Cards 1A/B**

Although this topic area was selected on fewer occasions than the topic areas of Youth matters or Lifestyle, Health and Fitness, and although its topic of melting glaciers in Switzerland requires the understanding of subject-specific vocabulary, this stimulus card proved particularly successful 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 consider potential tourists' efforts at water conservation, ways in which schools can save resources, to consider communities specifically affected by climate change, and to make suggestions for governmental responses to climate change. Candidates had plenty to say on these matters and produced extremely interesting and individual responses that allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and research into the wider topic area of an environmental theme that clearly resonates with many young people. For this reason, Stimulus cards ET 1A and 1B, although designed to be as accessible as their predecessors, were slightly more successful than the corresponding 2401 cards had proved to be.

### **Environment and travel Cards 2A/B**

This card related to the opportunities afforded by renting private car parking spaces in urban conurbations. It proved to be very successful, with all candidates answering the questions with a good degree of success. Questions 3A (the demerits of a car as a means of transport), 4A (inviting candidates' suggestions for traffic calming measures), 4A (how to encourage car sharing), and 4B (suggestions for improvements to the candidate's own local transport systems) all produced unique and complex responses that helped candidates attain the higher mark bands, especially where candidates made good efforts to draw on topic-specific vocabulary and were able to demonstrate their reading of related newspaper articles or other research. This pair of Stimulus cards was therefore deemed to be comparable to the 2401 cards on the same General topic area.

### **Education and employment Cards 1A/B**

The introductory paragraph about an alternative school with greater student participation was generally understood well, although a minority of candidates omitted to offer 3 items of information in response to Question 1. Question 2 was uniformly understood well. Candidates also discussed with good confidence, justifications and elaborations wider aspects of the GTA as prompted by Questions 3A and 3B and 4A, such as the value of school subjects, creative subjects, important whole-school activities. Question 4B, inviting candidates to offer their opinion on whether school prepare young people well for life, led to some lively discussions, with skilful examination by teacher examiners able to avoid anecdotal evidence from candidates and broader, more holistic responses. Where this did not occur, however, the card was less successful than the predecessor from the 2401 had been. However, considering the 2501 examination session holistically, it was noted that these two Stimulus cards were allocated only to a small minority of candidates, thus minimising negative impacts on grades of the WGN01 2501 session.

## Education and employment Cards 2A/B

This card introduced the precarious employment status of zero contract hours, a topic that clearly resonated with candidates. Despite its topic-specific, abstract vocabulary, all candidates attempting Card 2A or 2B handled their responses to Q1 and Q2 well, although a small minority of candidates tried to integrate summaries of the Stimulus card, which is not necessary. Candidates also had interesting, often complex, things to say in response to Question 3A (jobs that candidates considered are underpaid), 3B (the advantages of full-time jobs) and 4B (merits and demerits of frequent employment changes). Interestingly, although it is a contemporary topic currently much debated in the press, Question 4A (prompting candidates to consider the disadvantages of working from home) produced fewer extended responses from candidates. Overall, the 2501 Stimulus cards 2A and 2B were therefore comparable in challenge and level of linguistic/conceptual responses received to the 2401 Stimulus cards on this topic area.

## Summary

For subsequent series, the following points should be noted.

- During their preparation period, teacher examiners should not allow candidates access to the questions they will ask.
- Rephrasing questions for section A will render a candidate's response void, as it may give an unfair advantage. It is, however, acceptable to change 'Sie' to 'du'. In Section A, teacher examiners should also refrain from asking additional questions over and above those printed. Regrettably, this was a feature of several tests in this allocation and resulted in reductions of the time available for Section B of each affected test, with potential impact on marks that could be awarded for Spontaneity & development and for Knowledge and understanding – General topic area.
- Question 1 on the stimulus card refers to the first paragraph only and will **have three possible elements for the answer**, which must be communicated by the student in his or her own words, in order to be considered a full answer. Question 2 will relate to the second paragraph, and the student must manipulate the language from the text in order to answer the question. Questions 3 and 4 must be developed in order to be considered as complete answers.
- Pronunciation is an important aspect of the accuracy mark, and centres should encourage their students to develop their pronunciation skills, in order not to impede communication.
- Knowledge and understanding (GTA) must show evidence of research into the topics chosen, ideally citing at least one source. General knowledge, or personal experiences alone, will not demonstrate "many" ideas or a "wealth" of ideas, which are required for marks of 7 or higher.
- The question words on the stimulus card are important – for example "inwiefern" must have an answer which addresses this particular question word, i.e. both sides of the argument. A comparison question must show an ability to compare in the answer.
- Topic-specific lexis and the specified grammar contents are important considerations when awarding marks for Quality of Language (Range of lexis).
- Very able candidates should be discouraged from giving overly long answers in response to the four questions in Section A, as this will limit the time available for the discussion in Section B and will have an impact on the overall marks that can be awarded for Understanding (General topic area).

- Section B should be a discussion. It is not good practice for the teacher examiner to pose a question, for the candidate to reply – sometimes at length – and for the teacher examiner to ask another question on a different sub-topic. Fewer topics being covered in Section B usually leads to a more natural and in-depth discussion that will allow candidates to access the higher mark bands for Spontaneity and for Understanding (General topic area).
- The questions asked in Section B should relate to the same General Topic Area as the stimulus card that has been covered, as otherwise the mark that can be awarded to Understanding (General topic area) will be adversely affected.
- Questions should be challenging enough for candidates to demonstrate that they have moved on from IGCSE level;. Asking about the candidate's personal preferences or interests, for example, does not achieve this, nor does inviting candidates to offer long lists of vocabulary items or long pre-learnt sequences of speech.
- Even in the case of large centres, it is helpful if examiners do not work from a "list" and refrain from asking identical questions to candidates of different linguistic abilities. Instead, by commenting on individual candidate responses, and challenging candidates' answers, the teacher examiner will give their candidates the chance to access the higher mark bands for Spontaneity and for Understanding (General topic area).
- In Section B, teacher examiners should refrain from asking questions that form part of the Section A assessment for other candidates, i.e. a candidate who has been allocated Stimulus card 1A should not be asked questions printed on the 1B card, as this is not in the spirit of the examination.
- In Section B, the conversation should move on from the subtopic printed on the stimulus card to explore wider aspects of the General topic area.
- Although candidates are asked to nominate, and prepare, two General topic areas in advance of their speaking examination, only the one allocated General topic area is tested on examination day. There is therefore no need for teacher/examiners to test, or ask questions on, the second General topic area nominated by the candidate.

The examiners marking on this 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 and we seek to reward this whenever possible.

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