



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In German (WGN02)

Unit 2: Understanding and written response

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Examiner's Report: Paper 2, Understanding and Written Response

Introduction

External assessment: written examination

Availability: January and June

First assessment: June 2017

Total marks: 90

Weighting: 69.2% of the total IAS raw marks

34.6% of the total IAL marks

Examination time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Assessment across Unit WGN02 01 relates to the following General Topic Areas:

General Topic Area	Subtopics
Youth matters	Family relationships and friendships Peer pressure and role models Music and fashion Technology and communication
Lifestyle, health and fitness	Food and diet Sport and exercise Health issues Urban and rural life
Environment and travel	Tourism, travel and transport Natural disasters and weather Climate change and its impact Energy, pollution and recycling
Education and employment	Education systems and types of schooling Pupil/student life Volunteering and internships Jobs and unemployment

Assessment

The assessment for this unit has three sections.

Section A: Listening (20 marks)

Candidates listen to a range of authentic recorded TL (Target Language) material and retrieve and convey information given in the recording by responding to a range of TL questions.

Candidates need to show understanding of both the general sense and specific details conveyed. The questions will elicit non-verbal responses and short answers in the target language.

Section B: Reading and Grammar (30 marks)

Candidates read authentic TL printed materials and retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of TL test types. The questions elicit both non-verbal responses and TL answers.

Questions are linked to a range of reading comprehension exercises.

Candidates also need to understand and manipulate grammatical structures in the TL by selecting the most appropriate word form to fit a gap.

Section C: Essay (40 marks)

Candidates write a 240–280-word essay in the TL, in response to a TL stimulus and four related bullet points. The assessment rewards effective communication of information as well as quality of language.

General comments

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.

Questions 4, 6 and 7 require concise answers in German. Generally, the examinations are designed in such a way that simply copying or transcribing words from the texts will not satisfy the requirements of the question. At least some manipulation of the language in the text will normally be required and candidates should expect to have to do this. Although grammatical accuracy is not assessed in the comprehension questions, the response does need to communicate a full answer to the question, without ambiguity. Particular care should be taken when using pronouns, and candidates should consider using the actual nouns or names in their answers to aid clarity. Candidates may use their own words, and many are doing so increasingly effectively, although this is not always essential. Taking very short, focussed phrases is sometimes enough, but here the skill is really shown in the precision with which information is selected. It is also rarely possible. Copying full sentences will almost never be a way to score a mark, and it is important that all candidates are aware

of this. Most candidates did show an awareness of this. Sometimes only very limited manipulation of the text is required, so this is something which all candidates should be able to manage to some extent.

Candidates need to be aware that tasks 4, 6 and 7 contain questions of varying cognitive demand. For example, low demand questions require candidates to demonstrate comprehension of the text. However, some questions require judgement, processing of information or inference and these questions require candidates to reflect and evaluate on what they have read or heard, before answering. The timing of the examination reflects this.

An essential part of the comprehension test is also the ability of candidates to not only understand the text, but also to understand the questions and answer them directly. Some examples to inform future candidates will also be provided in later sections.

Question 9 requires a written response to a stimulus in German. Candidates should address all four bullet points in a coherent, well organised and purposeful fashion. Candidates generally performed well in this question and examples of what is meant by the terms coherent, organised and purposeful in the mark grids will be provided below.

Section A: Listening

Q1 Multiple Choice

This was a listening text about train travel. Candidates had four options A, B, C, or D for each part (the correct response, and three distractors). Candidates generally responded well, all had a degree of success at this question and showed knowledge of the key vocabulary linked to the topic area.

Q2 Multiple Choice

This listening text was on the topic of health. This task is identical in design to question 1. The demand level for this question is similar to question 1 and this was reflected in the candidates' performances, although many candidates did demonstrate a slightly better understanding of this topic area in comparison to Q1.

Q3 Summary completion

This question requires candidates to listen to a short passage and then complete a summary text, selecting from a pool of eight items. The topic of the text was role models.

This is a higher demand question than the previous two. As always, careful listening is required to score the marks and candidates who relied solely on grammar knowledge or guesswork were unlikely to be completely successful. The most frequently provided response that was incorrect

was 3d – candidates were perhaps unsure of the difference between “abnehmen” and “zunehmen”.

Q4 Short Answer Questions

Question 4 requires a written response from candidates, although the quality of the language provided by candidates is not assessed discreetly. Examiners credit responses which communicate the answer to the question in understandable German. It is important that the answer is not ambiguous. Each part is worth 1 or 2 marks. Q4 was on the topic of Artificial Intelligence, specifically its usage in schools.

Candidates were nearly all able to gain some credit for this question, although some parts proved more challenging.

4a – this was the question which was most frequently answered incorrectly – in most cases, candidates transcribed a part of the text that was only partially relevant and not an answer to the question word “inwiefern”. In order to score the mark, candidates had to process what they had heard and choose their own words to communicate the extent to which AI is useful.

4c – this question required precision – the comparative “more complicated” had to be successfully communicated in order to gain credit.

4d – there were a number of incorrect answers that focussed on “chatbots”, which were not credited, as that was a general advantage, and not an advantage specifically for people with learning difficulties.

Section B: Reading and Grammar

Q5 Multiple Choice Questions

Candidates choose from four options: A, B, C, or D for each item within the question (the correct response, and three distractors). This text was set on the topic of sport. Most candidates were able to find the information needed to score marks in this question.

Q6 Short Answer Questions

This question required short written responses from the candidates. The quality of language was not assessed here, and responses were considered in the same way as for question 4. The text handled the topic of friendships.

6a required precision, and candidates had to show that they had understood that friendships can break up quickly.

6c – answers here often focussed on the wrong part of the text. The question is about people in a friendship. Answers which said “the friendship lasts” were simply restating this information. To gain credit, candidates had to refer to the idea of “ausgenutzt”.

Q7 Short Answer Questions

This question also required brief written responses using a single word, a phrase or a short sentence. The marking principles were exactly the same here as for questions 4 and 6. Each part was worth 1 or 2 marks. This question was about climate change. Most parts were well answered. There were a few observations.

7a required candidates to give a full answer – including a reference to “climate change”.

7f needed to be clear. The pronoun “sie” was presumed to refer to “ärmere Länder” due to the wording of the question, so when it was used, the answer had to be consistent with this. Sometimes, candidates presented answers which were the wrong way round.

Question 8

This question continued on the theme of climate change. There were 10 words selected, which were presented in the infinitive form for verbs, or the non-declined forms in the case of adjectives or determiners.

This question requires absolute precision, so it is not surprising that candidates find it very challenging. Nearly all candidates had some degree of success in this question, zero marks was very rare.

Most candidates recognised the feminine noun endings “-keit” and “tät” correctly.

The past participle of “vorschlagen” was quite often incorrect. The adjective endings after plural “keine” were often incorrect too. Many candidates showed good knowledge of case usage after the prepositions “von” and “vor”.

Section C: Writing

Q9 Essay

This section requires candidates to write a response based on a short, written stimulus. The recommended length for this is 240-280 words, though examiners mark the full response, whatever its length; they do not count the words when marking the essay. It is perfectly possible for an essay of 240 to gain full marks and candidates should avoid writing essays which are excessively long, as they often start to lack organisation, coherence or purposefulness. There is no automatic penalty for responses shorter than the recommended length, the content is assessed on its own merits, but candidates should be aware that detail is a key consideration in this assessment. Short answers may not contain this in sufficient amounts for the top marks.

The topic of the essay was “Sitzenbleiben” and all candidates were able to respond to at least some of the bullet points. The overwhelming majority of responses covered all bullet points, although some communicated far better than others.

The marks for content and communication are awarded based on how well candidates address each of the bullet points in the task and how well they structure and present their ideas.

The ideal answer covers all 4 bullet points in a logical order, making good use of paragraphs, which is one way to satisfy the “coherent” element of the mark grids. Candidates, whose responses seemed convincing internet comments were able to satisfy the “purposeful” element of the top mark band and reading the task carefully and showing an appropriate style is one of many good ways to show evidence of purposefulness. Linking paragraphs well and treating the piece as a whole, rather than four separate “mini-essays” is an easy way to show evidence of fluency. Those candidates who did not deviate from the topic and therefore did not include additional information that was not required were also able to satisfy the “pertinent” element of the top mark band.

Many candidates addressed all four bullet points successfully. Candidates who did not score the highest marks despite doing this had not quite managed to do so in a way that was possible to understand. It should also be noted that examiners are as sympathetic as possible in their approach and will credit any material that communicates under this assessment objective. Sometimes, however, the language was so inaccurate that it was impossible to understand in parts, and so this, unfortunately, has to be considered when awarding the marks.

Quality of language was, on the whole, very good and often excellent. Teachers can help their candidates to improve their marks in this section by drawing their attention to key words in the mark scheme.

The highest mark band requires a wide range of structures and vocabulary. Ensuring that all of the task bullet points are thoroughly dealt with, and including different ideas when doing so, will also help the candidates to widen the range of vocabulary and structures that they use.

Finally, the marks for language take account of control and accuracy. It is important to make candidates aware of the following areas, if they wish to attain the highest marks for this assessment objective. Pay attention to verb agreements, particularly in longer sentences. Candidates should use an appropriate register for writing, rather than conversational German. Completing regular spelling practices would be helpful, particularly for those

candidates who speak more German than they write. Many candidates produced German which seemed to be at the level of a native speaker. Such performances were considered to be above the requirements of the task. However, the expectation for full marks was not perfection. All candidates who demonstrated significant progress from level 2 were awarded full marks for language.

“Basic language” in the mark scheme refers to verbs endings, tense formation and word order. There needs to be evidence that these are very secure to access the higher mark bands.

Paper Summary

Based on candidates’ performance on this paper, we offer the following advice:

- A careful reading of each part, with attention to the specific question words is important. The angle of the question needs attention.
- Manipulation is often required and lifting from the passage is only successful if the correct information is directly given.
- All German offered needs to communicate unambiguously in the comprehension questions.
- Examiners assess the skills of deduction and inference in this specification, and candidates will not find all the required information presented explicitly in the passages.
- Candidates should offer succinct and direct responses.
- In Q9, candidates should address all four bullet points fully.
- Verb formation and word order need to be secure for the higher marks in QoL in Q9.

Grade Boundaries

There has been much work on the comparability of the speaking units for French, German and Spanish. Senior examiners continue to work closely together to ensure that they apply the common marking guidelines consistently across the three languages. It is possible to find grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, on the website via this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

