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Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level in
German (WGN04) Paper 01

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Section A – Listening

Question 1 (*Mobiles Internet*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about mobile internet services and completed sentences with four multiple-choice options each.

This proved to be a good start to the paper with many candidates scoring full marks. The most common wrong answer was given at (c) where some assumed that the wishes of internet users should be taken less in to account (C) rather than be given a higher priority (A).

Question 2 (*Upcycling*)

Candidates listened to a short radio report in German about an upcycling initiative in Berlin and completed sentences with four multiple-choice options each.

Many candidates scored full marks in this question. However, some candidates were unable to make link between mention of schools using the fashion shop's resources and *einen pädagogischen Zweck* at C.

Question 3 (*Familie*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about the challenges facing parents and completed four sentences from a list of eight words.

When candidates managed to identify the part of speech needed to complete the sentence, they often scored full marks. Less successful candidates tended to enter words which simply would not be grammatically correct such as *missachten* at A or *unerwartet* at C.

Question 4 (*Demonstrationen*)

Candidates were required to answer questions in German on the content of a radio interview with an Austrian police representative about issues surrounding demonstrations.

Many candidates fared well and often scored 7 or 8 marks. Although only short answers are required here, precise details are needed to gain the mark. For example, in (a) it was necessary to mention that demonstrations had to registered with the police to gain the mark; and in (c) the *Verkehrsstauungen* on its own did not answer the question, whereas the inclusion of *wegen* or *es gibt manchmal* made the answer fit the question.

Other common errors appeared at (e) where *die relevanten Personen* was not enough to gain the mark and at (f) where some candidates wrongly assumed that the demonstration would always have to be stopped.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Question 5 (*Sport in der Großstadt*)

Candidates read a short text about how city-dwellers can keep fit. They were required to complete five sentences with five multiple-choice options each.

As with the first two questions in Section A, this multiple-choice task was answered well. The most common wrong answer was given at (b) where some candidates wrongly assumed that those who did not like jogging had to use the keep-fit-trail. Otherwise, the majority of candidates showed an ability to pick out details from the text.

Question 6 (*Politik*)

Candidates were required to answer questions based on a report about a German politician. To gain full marks in this question it was necessary to read the text very carefully and to answer the questions based on what was in the passage rather than on general assumptions.

Many wrongly inferred that the class knew Gabriele because she was a politician rather than that she had given financial support for the class trip to Berlin. Others assumed that she had already spoken to the class on previous occasions. In (c), only the most successful gave the correct answer that Gabriele wanted to fight for fairer pay; often it was assumed that she thought she would find like-minded people in the trade union which is not the sense given in the passage.

Question 7 (*Das Leben an der Uni*)

Candidates answered questions in German on a text about the problems facing new students starting university.

This more challenging longer text required careful reading and was clearly well understood. Candidates were often able to give succinct and precise answers to questions and many managed to do so with very accurate German. Common misunderstandings were for example that Michael had not received a timetable (a), that there should be long breaks in the day (e) and that those who chose too many courses would have no friends at all (f).

When precise detail was given, the mark was awarded. However, at (c) less successful candidates simply wrote that Michael was not alone rather than answering the question by saying that he learned that he was not alone. Similarly, at (h) it was not sufficient to mention that advice centres were available: the question asks what students can do which required an active verb such as *besuchen* or *gehen* in the answer.

There was a broad range of marks for this question and some candidates omitted the whole question or parts of it. However, at the top end there were some very clear answers gaining full marks.

Question 8

Most candidates understood what was expected of them in this question although only a few were able to score full marks. The mark was often lost because of careless omissions.

8(a): Most candidates answered this correctly although some repeated the word *Lieblingssportarten* when this concept had been covered by the adverb *gern* in the new stem.

8(b): Those candidates who spotted the comma at the end of the new stem were usually able to produce a correct relative clause with *die*. Those who did not often wrote something which did not make sense.

8(c): Many candidates were able to produce the correct perfect tense of *werden* in the subordinate clause or used the imperfect tense correctly.

8(d): The change from the active to the passive was achieved only by the most successful candidates. Some candidates thought this task required a change of word order and simply repeated the existing clause which therefore did not make sense.

8(e): Many candidates were aware of the need for the dative case after *von*, but some failed to miss off the genitive *-s* in the new phrase.

8(f): The use of the infinitive without *zu* was well-known. Alternative verbs such as *überspringen* or *überwinden* were accepted as long as they made sense.

8(g): Many lost a mark here because they had not linked the phrase to its place in the text and replaced the noun with a present rather than a past tense verb form. Some candidates were unable to differentiate between the subordination conjunction *bevor* and the preposition *vor*.

8(h): Most answered this correctly.

8(i): Most answered this correctly.

8(j): The demanding relative clause was easily reworded using a clause with the verb *finden*. However, a large number of candidates were able to produce a successful phrase with *überfordert*. Others misunderstood the original phrase and implied in their new phrase that some newcomers owned too much (ie *Neuankömmlinge, die zu viel haben*).

Section C

Marks are awarded in Section C for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of Language (out of 5). Whilst many candidates write fluently in German using a wide range of complex structures and therefore gain high marks for Quality of Language, there is often a tendency to resort to narrative accounts which lack incisive critical analysis of the question or a failure to select relevant detail from knowledge of the topic, text or film. The least successful candidates simply write down everything they know about their chosen work regardless of relevance to the question.

It is important that candidates structure their essays well to access the top mark bands for Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development. Clear paragraphs with an introduction and a conclusion make the argument easier to follow. Some candidates produce one long paragraph with no attempt to link ideas coherently. Other start well but forget to write a conclusion. Only the most successful have thought carefully about how to present their selected material in such a way as to analyse rather than describe.

Geografisches Gebiet

Question 09(a) produced interesting descriptions of environmental problems, for example, in the Swiss Alps. In response to the second part of the question, candidates did not always go beyond a description of the reaction to the problems. The instruction *Untersuchen Sie* suggests an expectation that the reactions will be analysed and evaluated, perhaps with regards to their success. As with all essays, the best answers view the argument from both sides.

Option (b) was a popular choice. However, unless candidates were able to detailed evidence to support their ideas, the mark for Communication and Content was unlikely to access the top two bands. Comments such as *Es gibt viele Sporteinrichtungen* without detailed specific examples do not show enough evidence of research. However, it was obvious that many candidates were able to engage with the topic and could list many advantages for young people in their chosen area. Only the most successful took note of the word *inwiefern* and outlined why some young people were not content with what was provided for them.

Geschichtliche Studien

It is important that any historical study is firmly rooted in a German-speaking country or region. For example, a general essay about the role of women in the nineteenth century or an essay about a law introduced by Lenin cannot be credited with any marks.

Good examples of interesting and relevant responses to Question 10(a) concerned laws introduced by the Hitler to eliminate political rivals and the introduction of the

law permitting same-sex marriage in Switzerland. In response to Question 10(b), an essay on the role of women in Prussia made for interesting reading.

To gain marks in the top bands for Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development, the candidate must support independent judgements with facts and figures which show depth of understanding. Only the most successful give mature and insightful points of view throughout the essay.

Literatur

The most popular choice of literary text was yet again *Der Besuch der alten Dame*. The most striking element of many less successful essays is to describe the plot in unnecessary detail. The best essays focus on the questions set.

Both options were popular choices. In response to Question 12(a), candidates often showed a clear understanding of why the town was suffering financial ruin, although not all supported this with good examples from the play. Similarly in response to Question 12(b), it was clear that candidates understood that Claire confused justice with vengeance, but they did not always select relevant details from the script to support this view. For example, there were very few references to the link between Claire and Medea.

The most common shortcomings in essays on the play were:

- extraneous, irrelevant detail about the first performance,
- irrelevant narrative about the background to the events in the play,
- lengthy philosophical musings on the nature of poverty or justice, with reference to the play introduced only late in the essay.

However, some candidates managed to write coherent evaluations of the essay topic which relied on individual analysis rather than on a dull re-telling of the plot. The most successful essays had a clear introduction, often posing a question such as *Inwiefern trägt Claire die Verantwortung für die schlechte wirtschaftliche Lage in der Stadt?* This was then followed by a sequence of well-linked paragraphs which led to a strong conclusion which answered the question.

An understanding of the words *Untersuchen* and *Analysieren* in the second part of the essay titles leads the best candidates towards individual judgements. They are not being asked to describe the effect of the economic upturn in Gullen but to analyse it, not to describe how Claire interprets justice but to explore why she sees it in this way.

Film

By far the most popular film for study was *Almanya – Willkommen in Deutschland* which had clearly been enjoyed by many candidates. In both options, candidates often were able to show an understanding of the events in the film, but did not always select details carefully enough.

Question 19(a), the more popular choice, allowed candidates to describe Hüseyin's desire to see his homeland and to introduce the younger members of his family to their cultural heritage. It was a recurrent feature of responses that more emphasis was placed on these reasons than on a full exploration of the success or not of the trip. As always, it is the second question that leads candidates towards critical analysis.

The few candidates who chose Question 19(b) were often able to cite scenes from the film where the Turks were shocked by the appearance, habits or religion of their German counterparts. Some explored the use of language to show how difficult it was to become integrated when communication is impossible. Those essays which managed to sequence ideas and to reach a strong conclusion gained high marks. However, it was often the case that there were no concluding remarks at all.

Conclusion

To prepare for success in this paper, candidates should:

- familiarise themselves with all topic areas listed in the specification
- develop as wide a range of vocabulary as possible
- practise reading and listening to passages of German with a view to extracting the most important information
- become used to rewording the details in the written or spoken text succinctly
- become familiar with German grammatical usage, concentrating on complex verb forms and the fine details of declension of adjectives and nouns
- research their chosen topic, literary text or film in detail, considering various aspects in the course of their studies
- practise the skill of planning and writing an essay in paragraphs
- focus on structured analysis in answering essay questions rather than on narrative.

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