



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In German (WGN04)

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Section A – Listening

Question 1 (*Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about the train network in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 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 (d) where some assumed that local government plans would lead to improvements (D) rather than the correct answer which was that the plans would lead to a reduction in the population because many people were moving away from the area (B).

Question 2 (*Glauben und Kochen*)

Candidates listened to a short radio report in German about a new TV programme on cooking and religion and completed sentences with four multiple-choice options each.

All but the least successful candidates scored full marks in this question. The most challenging part was at (c) and some candidates assumed that only two religions were involved throughout the series rather than in the first programme as the report stated. However, at (d) the vast majority correctly identified that the presenter was used to discussing religious topics because she grew up as the daughter of a protestant pastor.

Question 3 (*Sport und Gesundheit*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about the problems of over-exertion in sport and completed four sentences from a list of eight words.

This was well answered by those who took time to think carefully about the grammatical context of each sentence. The most common wrong answer was at (a) where it was necessary to make the connection between the fact that sporting injuries were often *ein Rätsel* with the word *Überraschung*.

Question 4 (*Kommunikation unter Jugendlichen*)

Candidates were required to answer questions in German on the content of a radio interview with a psychologist about how young people communicate using technology.

Only a few candidates scored full marks on this more challenging task. The key to scoring marks was the correct wording of the answers. Those who simply transcribed sections of the recording were unlikely to gain marks. At (d), for example, it was necessary to state what the parental errors were rather than what they should do. At (c) careful wording was also necessary: young people tended to log out if they did not agree with the opinion of others rather than the other way round. Even the least successful candidates managed to score a mark at (e) although some missed out by not including the comparative in *schlechtere Schulleistungen*. Part (f) was the most challenging part. The inference of what schools should do was subtle: the suggestion was not that they should ban laptops, but rather that they should educate students in the appropriate use of technology for communication.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Question 5 (*Die Erfahrung einer Praktikantint*)

Candidates read a short text about internships. They were required to complete five sentences with five multiple-choice options each.

This proved to be an accessible task for most. The least successful part was (d) where candidates had to understand the meaning of *recht angemessen* in the text to link this to *schien ziemlich normal* at D. Otherwise, the majority of candidates showed a good ability to pick out details from the text.

Question 6 (*Technologische Innovation in der Schweiz*)

Candidates were required to answer questions based on a report about technological innovations in the Swiss food industry.

Although only short written answers were required, sufficient detail was necessary in each response to gain marks. For example, candidates needed to mention *Nahrung* at (a) and *Hauptsitz* at (c) for credit to be given. At (e), many understood the concept of attracting specialists in the field, but only the most successful gained the mark by noting that these had to be the best ones.

Question 7 (*Migration*)

Candidates answered questions in German on a text about the experience of the daughter of Turkish migrants in Austria.

- (a) Not all candidates included the crucial word *fast* in their answer.
- (b) Most managed to understand that the father would return to Turkey.
- (c) The question referred to earliest part of the family's life in Perg. The mark scheme shows that a wide variety of responses was accepted as long as it was clear that their life was solitary and without technology or that they had little contact with others in the beginning.
- (d) This was answered well, often with a simple rephrasing of the idea that migrants and locals no longer have as much social contact nowadays.
- (e) This was answered well, either with the idea that Elif wanted to help newcomers or that there was an increase in the numbers of Turkish people arriving.
- (f) This was the least successful part. Only a very few candidates managed to infer what sort of work Elif was doing in both her work places. The best answers included a verb such as *fördert* or *unterrichtet*. Simply saying where she worked did not answer the question.
- (g) Many understood that Elif did not get accommodation but some wrongly assumed that she was trying to buy a house.
- (h) Less successful candidates assumed that the phrase *im Glauben* referred to religion and came to wrong conclusion.
- (i) This was generally answered correctly, although the least successful answers resorted to general points about discrimination rather than give evidence from the text.

It should be noted that in answering questions in German, it is always better to rephrase the ideas from the text in some way without the German becoming too convoluted. Whilst

occasionally section of the text can be lifted directly to give the answer, such lifts must be accurate and must not include extraneous material.

Although few candidates scored full marks for this question, the majority were able to pick up some marks at least in answer to parts (b), (d), (e) and (i).

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): When candidates understood the need to change the adjective to a noun, then the rephrasing was successful. However, some candidates assumed the verb had to change and ended up with something nonsensical such as *desto größer ist sie geworden*.

8(b): The change from the noun *Einstieg* to the infinitive of *einsteigen* in an infinitive clause with *zu* was challenging for some. Those who managed the infinitive clause correctly often did not write *inzusteigen* as one word but nevertheless gained the mark.

8(c): The most common error here was to misunderstand the meaning of the original *bevölkerungsreicher* and often it was assumed that the population would become richer rather than larger. Often the mark was withheld because the idea of the world was not included, ideally using the genitive.

8(d): Those who understood the need for the dative plural ending *-n* gained a mark, but occasionally some omitted this on the noun.

8(e): This was a straightforward change from the infinitive of *stärken* to the infinitive passive form *gestärkt werden*. Many candidates managed this.

8(f): Even the least successful candidates were able to manage this change to produce an adjective in postnominal position with no ending. There was no need to provide a synonym for *glücklich*.

8(g): To gain a mark for this part, candidates had to change *gefolgt* to *folgen* and to show inversion in the next clause. Many managed this successfully even though the wrong auxiliary was used after the comma.

8(h): The change from passive to active was generally successful as long as the new verb was in a past tense form.

8(i): An infinitive clause or a subordinate clause with *dass* was the most obvious way to change the phrase. Less successful candidates often failed to include a verb in the new version.

8(j): Many candidates produced a good alternative clause either with *finden* or *verstehen*. However, some confused the meaning by retaining the adjective in a clause such as *wenn sie unverständlich sind* which could not be credited.

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. Others 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. A useful guide is to structure the essay so that the argument can be followed by reading only the first sentence of each paragraph.

Geografisches Gebiet

Question 09(a): It is clear that many candidates engage with their chosen region and have good, often first-hand knowledge of it. This question asked about the place in the region rather than the region as a whole and not all candidates made that difference in what they wrote. Another common fault in approaching the question was a failure to notice that the question asked about the significance for inhabitants: some candidates wrote about the meaning for tourists which was not required. The best candidates gave a detailed description of the place with supporting statistics or examples. They also went beyond saying simply that the inhabitants were proud of their area, but rather gave concrete examples of how certain aspects of the place had a positive effect on the lives of those who lived there.

Question 09 (b): Social problems typically focused on migration issues, unemployment and homelessness. The best answers described these and gave examples and statistics. The second part of the answer had to be addressed to gain marks in the upper mark bands for Content and communication. Often, candidates were able to list some measures taken by the authorities but did not follow this up with sufficient evaluation of the success of the measures.

Geschichtliche Studien

It is important that any historical study is firmly rooted in a German-speaking country or region. General history essays about non-German speaking countries cannot be credited with any marks.

Question 10(a): Candidates had no difficulty choosing two events in their chosen period of study. There were many essays comparing the impact of the building as opposed to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Others chose to compare events surrounding the collapse of the Weimar Republic with those surrounding Hitler's rise to power. The best essays focused on two events that were related in some

way, eg financially or politically. Only the most successful managed to create a coherent argument which went beyond a basic description of the two events.

Question 10(b): Several candidates wrote about either Adolf Hitler or Gustav Stresemann. They clearly knew the historical context of the work of these men but occasionally did not focus enough on their individual work, giving instead a broad historical view which lacked incisive detail. However, when the individuals' work was described and evaluated in a coherent, well-structured essay, then there were some essays which were able to attain marks in the higher mark bands.

Literatur

Question 12(a): It is clear that candidates know the plot of *Der Besuch der alten Dame* well. Many essays described the effects of Claire's offer without actually considering why the townspeople were unable to resist it and only a few referred to the final chorus where *Armut* is mentioned as the main driving force behind the Güllener's actions. In addition, it was rare for candidates to probe deeply into the concept of *Käuflichkeit*. Only a few explored the fact that the townspeople had already shown themselves to be bribable during the paternity suit against Alred III and that Claire recognises and exploits this deep-rooted flaw in society.

Question 12(b): Many who attempted this option on the Dürrenmatt play could not resist the temptation to give an irrelevant introduction including dates of the original performance and describing the whole plot in unnecessary detail, leaving the examiner to search for relevant details in the essay. However, most managed to come to a conclusion about the extent to which III's death is deserved, albeit sometimes with little supporting evidence in the body of the essay.

Question 15(a): While most candidates recognised that idealism was an important theme in *Stern ohne Himmel*, not all were able to explore the various characters' defence of their ideals deeply enough. Some focused only on the youngsters, often omitting Ruth and her grandfather in the equation, and simply described their role in the plot. Others fell into the trap of discussing only one character, most commonly Antek. The most successful contrasted the ideals of Willi and Jähde with those of Kimmich and Dressler and perhaps also explored how Antek's ideals are challenged in the course of the novel.

Question 15(b): Conditions in the *Alumnat* were generally well described with details including the feud between Jähde and Kimmich, the atmosphere of mistrust and the hunger and deprivation of those who seek refuge there. Some candidates then went on wrongly to describe these conditions in relation to the modern world rather than the outside world of the novel. Those who did not make this mistake often made some general points but often did not organise their thoughts clearly enough in a coherently argued essay. Occasionally, there was no paragraph structure at all.

Film

Question 16(a): Most responses to this question on the film *Berlin 36* were able to give full reasons for the developing friendship between the two athletes and it was always clearly stated which was thought to have the stronger character, eg Marie because she has to suffer so much to hide her

gender or Gretel because she shows great strength of character to fight against discrimination and the attempts of the Nazis to unsettle her. Few essays explored the fact that Gretel is innately strong whilst Marie grows in strength with Marie's support. Such an approach might have allowed for a stronger argument and more critical analysis.

Question 17(a): Responses to questions about tension in the film *Barabra* tended to focus on details in the plot, with only some referring to specific techniques. Few candidates fully explored the range of reactions from different characters, from André's presumed corroboration with the regime to Barbara's silent but effective resistance to Stella's inability to do either because of her circumstances.

Question 17(b): Descriptions of Barbara's character usually made some relevant points but did not adequately go on to explore the second part of the question. When this was achieved, it was rare that a candidate had thought carefully enough about the nature of heroism and the fact that Barbara is willing to put her own life in danger and to sacrifice her own freedom to save Stella and her unborn child. Many essays simply related the plot often with irrelevant detail about the historical background.

Question 18(a): Candidates who chose this option were often able to describe the historical events well. However, the key word in the second part of the question was *inwiefern*. Here as always, this indicates two possible sides to the question which can be explored and gives a direction which the argument might take. Most candidates were able to focus on the negative portrayal of humanity through the many atrocities in the film and some were able to illustrate the opposite side of the argument by describing the acts of kindness shown by Sorowitsch. However, only the most successful martialled these details into a coherently organised argument, for example with clear paragraphs of the essay dedicated to both viewpoints.

Question 18(b): Candidates were aware of why Sorowitsch is given preferential treatment and could often describe his reactions to this. However, few explored the main point of the question which was to assess to what extent his reactions were justifiable. Only when this was achieved, did the essay showed good evidence of genuine critical analysis.

Question 19(a): This popular question produced a variety of responses ranging from excellent to limited. Most were able to refer to Canan's role in the film as narrator and her role in the family as a third-generation Turkish woman living in Germany. Not everyone explained, as the question asked, why this makes her an important figure, for example because she becomes the mouthpiece for the director and opens up the question of how she and others will face the future without losing contact with their cultural roots. Canan's relationships within the family were generally explained only with reference to Hüseyin and Fatma. However, the most successful also explored her relationship with her mother and with Cenk.

Question 19(b): As so often, many candidates missed the relevance of the crucial word *inwiefern* in the second part of the question. Whilst many were able to describe Hüseyin's arrival in Germany in the 1950s, not all took the opportunity to describe how his immigration status developed or to explore the effect of Hüseyin's decision to come to Germany on the family as a whole. Making clear

distinctions between the positive and negative aspects of this then allowed more successful responses to evaluate the extent to which the director portrays immigration as something positive.

Question 20(b): The naivety of the three protagonists was often described using less important details from the film. The crucial scene in which Hardenberg explains how he sees Jan's life developing and belittles his present views as no more than a passing phase was often ignored. However, some candidates managed to write full and interesting essays showing depth of knowledge in their response and also organising the material in such a way as to produce a coherent argument.

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.

