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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In German (WGN04) Paper 1

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International A Level German

WGN04 Paper 4

Research, Understanding and Written Response

January 2025

Principal Examiner's Report

Section A – Listening

Question 1 (*Die Berliner Modewoche*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about Berlin Fashion Week.

For most candidates, this was a positive start to the paper. Only a few were unable to identify the correct answers.

Question 2 (*Extremes Wetter*)

Candidates listened to a short radio report in German about the impact of a storm in southern Austria.

Most candidates were able to identify the correct answers. However, at (d) there were more wrong answers than in the other parts of the question.

Question 3 (*Minikraftwerke*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about the installation of mini solar power station in German houses.

Most were able to choose the correct part of speech to enter in the gap. While many realised that (a) required one of the two nouns in the box, less successful responses to other parts showed an inability to pick the correct word and occasionally ended up with a sentence which did not make sense, eg by entering *gering* at (b). The most common error was at (c) where it was necessary to make the fine distinction between *ausbauen* and the correct answer *ersetzen*.

Question 4 (*Gleichheit in Österreich*)

Candidates were required to answer questions in German on the content of a radio interview with a sociologist about equality in Austria.

Although full sentences were not required, carefully worded answers showing attention to detail were necessary to gain the marks. For example, in (a) although many correctly stated that only the rich were able to gain qualifications in the past, some gave a more general answer which suggested that the poor were not educated. In addition, only the most successful candidates realised that the mention of inequality for women referred to the workplace. If this was not mentioned, the mark was withheld.

Question (f) caused some problems: many quoted inappropriately from the interview with something like *Es könnte für alle nützlich sein*. This did not answer the question.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Question 5 (*Eine jährliche Tradition*)

Candidates read a short text about the yearly tradition celebrating the almond blossom in Rheinland-Pfalz. They were required to complete five sentences with five multiple-choice options each.

As with most multiple-choice questions, the majority of candidates identified the correct answer to at least 4 of the 5 parts. (b) caused some problems for those who chose option D and did not notice that the festival always took place at some stage each year.

Question 6 (*Die Ethik von Zoos*)

Candidates were required to answer questions based on a report about ethical issues surrounding zoos in Germany.

As with Question 4, detailed, carefully worded answers were necessary here. For example, in (a) there was a subtle difference between saying that Tanja said the animals were treated badly and the correct answer that she was concerned that the animals might be suffering. At (c), careful reading of the text was required to identify that *Beschäftigung* was the reason for hiding food rather than *Abwechslung*. As a result, only about 10% of the entry gained full marks for this question.

Question 7 (*Wohnen auf dem Wasser*)

Candidates answered questions in German on a text about the impact of houseboats in Hamburg.

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.

The best example of this was at (d) where the question was worded in such a way that direct lifting of nouns such as *Wasserverschmutzung* and *Lärm* did not describe the boat owners' behaviour. This could only be done by using verbs. The best answers stated clearly: *Dass sie den Fluß verschmutzen* or *Dass sie zu laut sind*.

At (e), some less successful candidates thought that the men did not like spending time on deck because the living accommodation was below. Again, this required careful reading of the question to note the inclusion of the word *gern* which indicated preference rather than necessity.

The more complex inference at (f) was successfully managed by many who realised that those who wanted to live on the water should not be easily stressed or should not lack patience.

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

Question 8

Most candidates understood what was expected of them in this question and many were able to score full marks.

8(a): The irregular present tense *einbricht* was well-known.

8(b): Less successful candidates confused the passive with the conditional tense or produced a passive sentence in the present rather than a past tense.

8(c): This was answered well, most realising that the comma indicated the need for a relative clause.

8(d): Only the most successful candidates were aware that *mehr* had to be followed by a noun rather than an adjective.

8(e): The noun *Freude* and the adjective *erfreulich* were relatively well-known. However, some candidates struggled to produce a genuine word from the verb *freut*.

8(f): Almost all candidates managed this correctly.

8(g): Some candidates were unaware of the need for a clause with a verb after *weil* and some failed to gain the mark because the adjective endings in the rewritten clause were incorrect.

8(h): This was well-answered although.

8(i): Most managed to produce an active sentence although some made the sentence incomprehensible by adding the reflexive *sich* in *Viele Leute lösen sich*.

8(j): Almost all managed to rephrase this correctly with only a few failing to produce the appropriate adjective ending.

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 9(a): The topic of climate change was clearly well understood by those who chose this option. However, not all wrote a detailed analysis linked closely enough to their chosen area. Successful essays included not only the signs of climate change but backed these up with pertinent examples including statistics or particularly noticeable aspects in the area. The more important part of the essay was an analysis of the effectiveness of the measures. This required a weighing up of what worked and what did not. Too often the emphasis was on describing the measures taken rather than evaluating their success.

Question 9 (b): There were many interesting essays on developments in public transport in, for example, Berlin, Stuttgart or Bern. The most successful gave precise details about price changes, statistics about the number of people using new transport systems rather than private vehicles or specific information about the benefits of electric buses and trams. Sometimes, candidates wrote simply a generic piece which could have been about public transport anywhere, ie mentioning reductions for students or more regular services, without any mention of the local area.

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): Popular choices for this essay were Gustav Stresemann, Walther Ulbricht or Adolf Hitler. In the case of Hitler, a good essay described the prevailing view during his chancellorship of his heroic stature and contrasting this with the negative views of him as a dangerous dictator and war criminal which emerged later.

Question 10(b): It was important here to mention at least two main achievements of the period and to link them to how they were viewed. For example, an essay about the DDR mentioned the positive achievements of the policies on young people or sportsmen and sportswomen, but contrasted these with the disadvantages of such policies such as doping in sport or indoctrination in schools. As always, those candidates who took note of the key word *inwiefern* wrote the best essays because it allowed them to include the two sides of the argument.

Literatur

Question 12(a): Most candidates were keen to show a knowledge of the text although often the details of the plot were unnecessary and not related directly to the essay questions. Some candidates confused the roles of the eunuchs and the two gangsters. Good essays delved into the reasons for and the consequences of Claire's treatment of Koby and Loby and thus were able to show evidence of true analysis rather than simply description. For example, her treatment of them was likened to her derision of all men including her husbands as a punishment for Ill's treatment of her and her subsequent rejection by the townspeople. Only the very best managed to bring the essay to a strong conclusion, perhaps by evaluating to what extent her actions are justified.

Question 12(b): The theme of fate was understood well and most who chose this option managed to see the link between Ill's acceptance of his fate and the townspeople's blind acceptance of Claire's offer which seals their fate as murderers. Many candidates showed good knowledge of the text by including carefully selected quotations, but few referred to the teacher's wise words about the symbolic visit of the old lady or to the epilogue where the people of Gullen drift away from morality like a wrecked ship.

Question 13(b): Essays *Zonenkinder* addressed the abrupt ending of Hensel's childhood and explored her dissatisfaction with her adult life. However, there was a tendency to write in general terms rather than to mention specific details which affected her view of her new life.

Question 15(a) and (b): Essays on *Stern ohne Himmel* often showed a reasonable knowledge of the plot, but did not always analyse the facts deeply enough or present their argument in a coherent form.

Film

Question 16(a): Those who answered this question produced perceptive accounts of different types of protest in the film, ranging from the overt protests of the American Olympics delegation to the more subtle protest of the trainer Waldmann and Maria's powerful defiance at the end of the film. The best essays compared and contrasted these and made strong concluding remarks choosing one type of protest as the most successful.

Question 19(a): Essays often focused successfully on the comic elements of the film, but occasionally missed the relevance of the true tragedy, the death of Hüseyin. Whilst candidates were able to relate details of the film, sometimes at great and unnecessary length, only the best took a personal stance to assess how the tragedy and the comedy were linked.

Question 19(b): There was a wide range of essays on views of Turkey as the homeland of the family. Less successful candidates gave long rambling accounts of Hüseyin's and Fatma's early life and his pride in his roots. The best essays probed more deeply into the reasons why the other family members had drifted away from their roots or wanted to uphold them as part of their family tradition. The reasons for these various views were more important than a simple description of them.

Question 20(a) and (b): Candidates know the film well and could relate the plot in detail. However, essays tended to be descriptive and often lacked a coherent argument which showed true analysis of the topics of Hardenberg's relationship with the youngsters or on the protests against the capitalist system.

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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