



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In German (4GN1) Paper 03

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General Overview

The speaking assessment (4GN1_03) for the International GCSE German specification (2017) is worth 25% of the qualification. It is conducted in exam centres and assessed externally by Pearson.

The maximum mark in this speaking test is out of 40 and the total assessment time is between 8 and 10 minutes. This assessment consists of three tasks:

Task A - a picture-based discussion

Tasks B and C - two conversations on two different topic areas.

Content overview

Candidates are assessed on their ability to convey their understanding of spoken German through three speaking tasks. Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the contents of a picture.
- Describe possible past or future events related to the people in the picture.
- Respond to questions about the picture and its related topic.
- Take part in a spontaneous conversation on two further topics.

Assessment overview

- Task A requires candidates to answer five questions about a picture. It should be between two to three minutes in length. This task is worth 12 marks.
- Tasks B and C are worth 28 marks in total. These are conversations on two different topic areas, determined by the randomisation grid supplied by Pearson. Each task should be a minimum of three minutes long, with the maximum time allowed for each task being three minutes and thirty seconds.

The three topic areas of the three different tasks must be chosen from the five following topic areas:

- A. Home and Abroad
- B. Education and Employment
- C. Personal life and relationships
- D. The world around us
- E. Social activities and fitness.

Each topic area may only be addressed once.

The sub-topics A3 Services, C3 Role models, C5 Childhood, D2 weather and climate and E4 accidents, injuries, common ailments, and health are not assessed in the speaking test.

The timing of the various tasks is extremely important. Timing of **Task A** should start when the candidate begins their response to the first question – not when the teacher/examiner asks the question. The maximum time allowed is three minutes. Any responses after that cannot be credited.

Task B and **task C** must each be between three minutes to three minutes and thirty seconds. An overly long task B does not compensate for a short task C and vice versa. If either task B or task C is shorter than three minutes this will have an adverse effect on the marks that can be awarded.

Before the beginning of the first conversation, the teacher/examiner should announce the first topic area to be covered and then they should announce the second topic area at the changeover to the second conversation.

Details of the Requirements for Task A

In the first part of the examination the candidate selects a picture on which they answer five questions.

The picture must contain people, objects and interaction and must be linked to one of the five topic areas in the specification.

This part of the test lasts between 2 and 3 minutes. **Timing starts when the candidate begins to answer the first question.**

Where Task A is too long:

- If the teacher/examiner is speaking at three minutes, the examiner stops assessing the conversation at that point.

- If the candidate is speaking at three minutes, the examiner stops assessing the conversation at the end of the sentence / the next sense break.

It is most important that centres observe the timings as otherwise they restrict the marks their candidates can achieve.

Centres are reminded that they may not practise Task A with their candidates using the picture which will be employed in the actual assessment. They may practise using other pictures on the same topic, but they may not rehearse with the picture the candidate has chosen to use in the examination. It is not intended that candidates have prepared answers for the five questions; a lack of spontaneity in Task A will affect the mark awarded for Communication and Content.

The candidate gives the teacher/examiner a copy of the picture in advance of the assessment. The teacher/examiner must prepare five questions to ask each candidate about their chosen picture but must not share these questions with the candidate before the test.

The candidate **may not** take any notes into the examination but may bring in a copy of the picture they have chosen to use.

The question types for Task A are prescribed and this requires thorough preparation from the teacher/examiner in order to achieve the best marks available for candidates. The pattern of these five questions must follow the examples in the specification and should consist of the following:

Question type 1: A description of what you can see in the picture.

Question type 2: Specific factual information about the picture.

For example, select a person or persons in the picture and state what they are doing.

Question type 3: Past or future hypothesis.

This question must ask the candidate to imagine a possible past or potential future event **relating to the picture**. This is the opportunity to support the candidate in using additional tenses and time frames.

Question type 4: Opinions about the picture.

This question elicits the candidate's opinions on the picture and the topic.

Question type 5: Evaluation

The teacher/examiner should elicit an evaluation from the candidate. This question will move away from the content of the picture and exploit the wider topic area.

As an example, if the candidate chooses a picture of a group of young people playing in a football match (Topic E, sub-topic 2: Hobbies, interests, sports and exercise) the five questions could be:

Question 1 Kannst du das Bild beschreiben?

Question 2 Beschreib die Person auf der rechten Seite.

Question 3 Was, glaubst du, haben die Spieler vor dem Spiel gemacht?

Question 4 Was magst du lieber? Mannschaftssport oder Individualsportarten?

Question 5 Warum, denkst du, sollte man regelmäßig Sport treiben?

On occasion a teacher/examiner may think that a candidate is capable of a more developed response. In that case they may wish to ask a further question. However, centres are reminded that the **only additional questions** that may be asked are:

- Why (not)? *Warum ? Warum nicht ?*
- Anything else? *Ist das alles ?*
- Is that all? *Sonst noch etwas ?*

There must be no other supplementary questions and teacher/examiners must not deviate from these prompts. If in Task A an additional question is asked which is not one of these, the candidate's response to that question is ignored when assessing the performance.

Teacher/examiners are allowed to repeat the question and, if need be, to rephrase it, but not to ask a completely different question. An example of this might be:

“Was machen die Kinder am Strand?” could be rephrased to “Was machen die Kinder auf dem Sand?”. However, if a completely different question is asked such as, “Was tragen die Kinder?” the response to this would not be credited.

Candidate performance

This year there were many examples of centres where the candidates had clearly been very well prepared, with a large proportion of candidates demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary and complex structures, enabling them to achieve maximum or close to maximum marks - including candidates who did not have German as their first language. These centres were a pleasure to mark and the examiners would like to give credit to those centres and teacher/examiners for their hard work in conducting the assessments so efficiently, as well as to the candidates who had clearly worked very hard.

Regular use of unusual vocabulary in all tasks was more evident this year. This meant that instead of basic vocabulary (*gut, schlecht, interessant, toll*) there was noticeably far more evidence of advanced vocabulary (*ekelhaft, begabt, schrecklich, unterhaltsam, grossartig, beeindruckend*) being used by candidates.

In addition, there was more use of complex structures such as *wenn* clauses which encouraged use of the conditional and inversion of the verb across by of centres together with more use of *obwohl, als, seit* and relative clauses.

Examples of good phrases and vocabulary used included:

Sie ist ein pingeliger Esser	Gruppenzwang	bevorzugen
die Mehrheit der Zeit	Leistungsdruck	Essensreste
eine Leserratte	atemberaubend	
extrem herausfordernd	Es war eine unvergessliche Erfahrung	

Task A

For the majority of centres, the picture task was completed well. Examiners saw a further increase in centres choosing topic area D, with environment (cleaning beaches) and media (use of technology and TV) being very popular. Topic area C continues to be chosen frequently – usually with family gatherings of one type or another.

In some cases, the centre had prepared the candidates to describe their picture using more than one tense such as, “I chose this picture because”, “This picture was taken in...” and “I am going to describe this picture”. The advantage if this is that candidates have more of an opportunity to use tenses other than in the tense question, Question 3.

Unfortunately, there was an increase of centres this year who did not adhere to the prescribed question types as laid out in the specification. Where this is the case, the response cannot be credited. Many centres, for example, asked a further tense question for Question 4 rather than an opinion. If the response included an opinion it was credited, otherwise it was not.

Centres must not ask 'supplementary questions' and leave it to the examiner to select which are the 'correct' five questions to assess. Usually in such cases the three minutes will have elapsed before Question 5 has been asked.

Across many centres there were issues with the pronunciation of the word 'trägt'. It was usually pronounced as if it had no Umlaut. Centres are advised to practise this with their candidates.

- Question 1: There were some excellent and detailed responses here. However, many responses were overly long which led to the candidate running out of time at some point around question 4. Responses given after the three minutes have elapsed cannot be credited.
- Question 2: Whilst candidates were able to describe the people on the pictures and their actions, the responses to Question 2 tended to be the briefest. Please note that the mark scheme requires the candidate to regularly give opinions and justifications in order to access the 5-6 and 7-8 bands for Communication & content. Candidates should be encouraged to use this question for adding personal opinions.
- Question 3: Only one tense from past or future needs to be elicited here. There were some very successful tenses, developed phrases and uncommon vocabulary used. Candidates who are unsuccessful in answering in a tense other than the present at some point in Task A are restricted to one mark for Linguistic knowledge and accuracy.
- Question 4: This must be a question which elicits the candidate's opinion. Candidates should be advised to develop their answers, as some missed the opportunity to justify and develop their answers sufficiently to access the highest band for Communication & content.
- Question 5: This was mostly well answered, and candidates were able to respond at length on the wider topic area. A considerable number of candidates, however, gave responses which could not be credited as the three minutes had already elapsed.

Tasks B and C

Many centres seem not to be aware that the timing for these two tasks is three to three and a half minutes **each** and many of the tasks stopped short of the three-minute mark. This, unfortunately, had an impact on the marks that could be awarded. It is advised that centres time each task separately.

The style of questioning used in some centres meant that candidates could not be spontaneous. One approach was to ask three or four questions as one: e.g 'What is your favourite subject? Your least favourite? And why? And what will you do next year?' – all as one question. The teacher would then move onto a completely unrelated set of questions. This led to a lack of spontaneity and even to the candidates forgetting what they were meant to be answering.

Some responses were so long that it became a monologue rather than a conversation. Good practice was when teacher/examiners showed interest in what the candidate said and asked spontaneous follow-up questions.

Within each topic, teacher/examiners tend to gravitate to a narrow range of subtopics. Namely, for topic A, conversations focused mainly on holidays, for topic B, school, for topic C, family, for topic D, environment, and topic E, hobbies. Teacher/examiners might like to consider covering a wider range of subtopics, as in many cases, performances were better when candidates tackled matters other than their immediate personal lives. For example, conversations around future plans, the advantages and disadvantages of social media, and shopping trends included more examples of less common vocabulary and more genuine expressions of opinion.

Some centres ensured there were a good range of questions covering a variety of tenses – this allowed candidates to demonstrate what they could do. Sometimes lack of tenses was an issue with candidates who had German as their first language. If they were not asked past or future tense questions, they only used the present tense with a disappointing outcome.

It is not in the spirit of the examination to employ the same questions for multiple candidates. Whilst some centres do use a bank of questions, candidates should not all be asked the same questions in the same order.

Advice for Future Sessions

Please time each task separately.

Task A

- Ensure that a suitable picture is chosen with people, objects and interaction. This should be a range of topics across the centre and no two candidates should have the same picture. The picture should ideally be a photograph. It should not be a cartoon.
- Prepare the five questions in advance to ensure that the specification is being followed correctly. Please ensure Question 4 is an opinion question.
- Do not ask more than five questions, even if the candidate response is short, as these additional responses will not be credited.
- Encourage the candidate to develop their answers, by using only the allowed prompts - *Warum ? Warum nicht ?* ^[L]_[SEP] *Ist das alles ?* ^[L]_[SEP] *Sonst noch etwas ?* ^[L]_[SEP]
- Ensure that all five questions are answered within the three-minute time limit; possibly this will entail cutting a candidate short in Question 1 if they describe the picture in too

much detail.

- Ask one tense question only for Question 3.
- Ensure all questions are within the chosen topic area.
- Do not correct a candidate's language during the test as it uses up time and unsettles the candidate.

Tasks B and C

- Be sure in advance of the examination which conversation topics are to be discussed according to the randomisation grid. This should not be discussed with candidates.
- Observe the timings carefully to maximise opportunities for candidates to access the full range of marks.
- Be clear and announce when the topic changes from task B to C to help both candidate and examiner.
- Ensure that Tasks B and C are balanced in terms of linguistic knowledge. Ask questions in both conversations which prompt the candidate to use present and past and/or future time frames. Questions using the conditional prompt the candidate to use the conditional too.
- Listen to the candidate. Follow up with an appropriate question or ask them to expand on what they have said.
- Encourage spontaneous speech by the candidate.
- Encourage the candidate to develop answers, elicit opinions and give reasons for their opinions.
- Ask open questions, encouraging the candidates to answer using an extended phrase or sentence. An example of an open question is "Warum treibst du Sport?" rather than the closed question of "Magst du Sport?"
- Keep teacher/examiner input to a minimum so that the candidate speaks as much as possible. The candidates do **not** have to ask a question.
- If a candidate does not understand a word in a question, the teacher/examiner should move on, not labour the point or ask additional questions with this word.

Administration

Most centres followed the guidance for the administration of these tests extremely well with clear introductions to all sections of the assessment. On occasion, the requirements were not followed, and centres had to be contacted to upload documents and/or replacement recordings.

There were a fair number of recordings this year where it was extremely difficult to hear the candidates. Centres should test how well sound is recording in advance. In some cases, the

teacher/examiner's voice was recorded very clearly while the candidate was further away from the microphone and difficult to hear. Teacher/examiners should also consider the extraneous noises which are picked up on the recording such as bells ringing, traffic noises and playground noise.

Recording and uploading of tests

- Make sure that both the candidate and the teacher/examiner can be heard clearly; where only one microphone is used, make sure that this is placed closer to the candidate.
- The room used should be quiet so that no extraneous noise is heard during the test.
- Introduce the candidate's name and number clearly at the beginning of the test.
- Do not stop or pause the recording at any time during the test.
- Tasks A, B and C should be conducted in that order and timed separately.
- Check that the whole test has been recorded clearly.
- Ensure that **three** files are uploaded individually for **each** candidate, not as one document for all candidates: MP3 recording, picture and candidate cover sheet.
- Audio files should be in the correct format. MP3 is preferable, but files as outlined in the 'guidance for oral recordings' are also acceptable.
- Audio files should be labelled, for example, 12345_7890_Smith_J for ease of examining.
- Cross check that the candidate numbers coincide across all uploaded files for each candidate.
- Ensure that the teacher/examiners and candidates have signed the candidate cover sheet before uploading.

Further information can be found on the Pearson website and teacher/examiners should make sure they are familiar with the following documents (all available on the Pearson website):

- Specification: International GCSE German (first teaching 2017)
- International GCSE German: Getting Started Guide
- International GCSE German: Oral Examination Training Guide

