

### Oral component

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

There was an improvement in students' performance compared with last year, particularly with regard to the detailed study. Well prepared students performed well in both sections of the oral. Many were able to expand on their answers and offer interesting ideas and opinions.

Good results in the oral depend on the amount of preparation done. Students who have practised a wide range of questions and answers, focused on the main ideas of their detailed study and thought through ideas and opinions in advance are more likely to speak in a fluent and interesting manner.

#### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

##### Section 1 – Conversation

###### Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately

Overall, students seemed well prepared for this and in most cases performed better than in Section 2. Good students extended their responses willingly and gave interesting detail which led to new areas of discussion. It is disappointing when students who speak German fluently give only one sentence answers devoid of ideas and opinions. All students need to know that their performance will benefit from explanations and extended responses. Some students memorised information, and were unable to cope when the flow was interrupted. When asked unexpected questions, they often could not understand or provide an appropriate response.

Students should listen carefully to questions before rushing to answer, making sure that what they say is relevant. Assessors should not be addressed informally with the *du* form. It is also not appropriate to say the English word and ask for the German one or to wait for the assessors to provide the right word. If a student cannot think of the appropriate word or expression, they should try to develop the skill of using a synonym to paraphrase their ideas.

###### Relevance, breadth and depth of information

It is important that students learn the required vocabulary and gender, to talk about their personal world, knowing the expressions, for example, of their parents' occupation, the names of their subjects and their own career aspirations in German.

Some students elaborated very effectively, others would make a statement, but were then unable to follow up with more detail. Students should have thought about their personal world and have already formulated some ideas and opinions about such aspects as position in the family, size of family, what they like and dislike about their school and school uniform and their preferences for leisure activities.

When students have an opportunity to talk about something of real personal interest, they unwind and often communicate better, and this spontaneous interaction may carry over into the discussion of the detailed study.

###### Accuracy of grammar and vocabulary

Verbs proved difficult for many, with incorrect subject and verb agreements, wrong past participles, failure to use *sein* as the auxiliary in the perfect, trying to translate 'I am going' by *Ich bin gehen* and using 'sein' for the passive instead of *werden*. Personal pronouns were not well known with students confusing *er* and *ihn* as well as *sein* and *ihr*.

###### Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Many did not know question words like *wer* or *was für ein*. A few typical mistakes were *für drei Uhr* (instead of *seit drei Stunden*), confusion between *Studenten* and *Schüler*, *auch* and also, *Uhr* and *Stunde*, *studieren* and *lernen* and *teilen* and *trennen*. A number did not understand the meaning of *machen* and *tun*. Expressing the idea of fun proved tricky with incorrect examples like *das ist Spaß* or *es war Spaß* or *es war sehr spaßig*. Students should avoid using expressions like *Es ist OK*.

###### Clarity of expression (including pronunciation, intonation, stress, tempo)

The pronunciation of similar words was sometimes confused such as *leben* and *lieben* and *Leid* and *Lied* and some words such as *Gebiet* were pronounced incorrectly. In some cases students spoke extremely slowly or took a long time to think of an answer, which detracted from the interaction.

##### Section 2 – Discussion of the detailed study

###### Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately

The introductions were much better this year. Many were well prepared and had memorised their opening. Students should understand that the maximum one minute allowed is **not** to give a point of view. It is simply for them to state that they are doing *Sprache und Kultur durch Texte* (state the sub-topic), give a brief summary or overviews and indicate any picture or article they have brought with them. Some students led the discussion and spoke confidently and fluently, while others prepared a monologue beyond which they could not go, so that no real discussion eventuated.

### **Relevance, breadth and depth of information**

The choice of topic is crucial. It needs to be something that interests and motivates the student. It is disappointing when students come into the examinations room and say they hated the topic or found it very boring. There must be at least three texts in German and the topic should lend itself to 15 hours of study in class and a discussion of approximately 8 minutes during the oral. Some good topics were Baron von Müller, The Environment, Festivals in Germany, Foreigners in Germany, Germans in Australia, The internment camp at Tatura, Refugees, Various aspects of Berlin and life in the DDR, and Young people in Germany during the Nazi period. The texts should not be too difficult for the particular students who studying them. Sources such as encyclopaedias are often too detailed and usually do not lend themselves to discussion. Students should refer to every source and not just concentrate on one, when giving evidence from the texts to support an opinion.

Able students seemed to cope well with any topic but students who were not so strong found difficult and complex topics beyond them. Some students felt they simply had to retell the content of the texts instead of discussing them and giving ideas and opinions. The most successful students gave an analysis of the issues, referring constantly to their texts and presented some conclusions from what they had learnt.

No-one is expected to know everything, so it is quite acceptable for students to say they are not familiar with a particular aspect of the sub-topic. A good strategy after this is to steer the conversation towards aspects which they can talk about.

If photos or objects are brought in, they must be free of language apart from a heading. Students must be able to elaborate about this material, give its relationship to the topic and say why they consider it important.

### **Accuracy of grammar and vocabulary and Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar**

After spending 15 hours of class time studying the sub-topic, students should be able to discuss it, showing familiarity with the required vocabulary and having knowledge of the appropriate grammar. If, for example, they have studied life in the DDR, then they would be expected to use the past tense accurately.

### **Clarity of expression (including pronunciation, intonation, stress, tempo)**

After 15 hours work on their texts students should be able to pronounce the required words correctly and talk fluently about their chosen topic.

### **Written component**

Students should plan their time carefully to ensure they allocate adequate time for all sections of the paper.

To perform well, students need considerable practice in the necessary skills. In the listening and reading responses students have to be able to comprehend main points, recognise details and pick out any inferences. When they are writing in German, their ideas should have been planned and organised, then given expression using correct language and a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures.

It is important that students watch the time, as this year some did not finish the paper. Students need to practise completing the three sections of listening, reading and writing in one three hour sitting. It is also important to keep to the given word limit and to write legibly with a ballpoint pen or ink.

More successful students completed all the tasks in sufficient time to allow themselves enough time to check their work and eliminate careless errors, resulting in more interesting, correct and creative answers.

## **Section 1 – Listening and responding**

### **Part A – Responses in English**

Good responses resulted from students reading the questions carefully and finding out exactly what was required before they heard the texts. There was no need for long answers, but the exact details were required.

#### **Text 1**

##### **Question 1**

Vienna

##### **Question 2**

11.50

##### **Question 3**

Nuremberg (Nürnberg)

##### **Question 4**

Information desk/in the main entrance hall

#### **Text 2**

##### **Question 5**

Two of:

Forum discussion/criminal film/sports show/concert/political program/children's program/TV program/radio program/TV series.

**Question 6**

Exciting and second part of a film

**Question 7**

Forum discussion – reactions to the federal election

**Question 8**

On radio not TV/for children rather than adults/live not pre-recorded/a political program/a concert

**Text 3****Question 9**

a) Two of: luxury buses/a lot of room/comfort/air conditioning/toilet

b) Two of: kitchen/refrigerator/shower/easy to erect tents/toilet

**Question 10**

Positive feedback from customers

**Question 11**

Costs more/you may need to share a room with a stranger/you have to book beforehand and pay in full

**Question 12**

Share a double room with another passenger and choose a camping tour

**Question 13**

She will think it over

**Part B – Answers in German**

More successful students not only selected the necessary information but also answered the questions in correct German. Difficulties occurred with using the correct verb forms, tenses, word order, cases and adjective endings. Many students found some words difficult: *Schalter* was translated as *shelter* and some were unfamiliar with *Haupt* as used in *Haupthalle*. Numbers and telling the time proved difficult. Students had to express ideas simply and show that they had understood the texts and could write their answers accurately and appropriately.

**Text 4****Question 14**

One of: on a bus/tour/city tour/guided tour/in Berlin

**Question 15**

100th birthday of the Berlin Underground

**Question 16**

The line was originally above ground. When it was put underground, the name was changed to the *Underground*

**Text 5****Question 17**

Two of: use of 'du' form/use of first names/talked of mutual things from the past/he made a joke about her/she says she will come round to his place

**Question 18**

Jakob didn't do anything special/he helped his uncle in his bakery/he had to babysit his younger brother

**Question 19**

Three of: held in summer/has been held before/over 100 people attended/learnt what to do in a circus/training in being a clown/young people between 12 and 16/treated like professionals/gala presentation on the last day

**Section 2 – Reading and responding****Part A – Responses in English**

Students needed to provide correct details from the texts. Some students suggested plausible answers, but were not given the marks if these were not supported with information from the texts. Provided the meaning was clear, no marks were deducted for mistakes in English.

**Text 6****Question 20**

A person who is environmentally aware/active in protecting the environment

**Question 21**

Don't leave rubbish lying around/sort rubbish/no packaged food/take rubbish home

**Question 22**

Two of: find out about animals first/don't disturb animals/watch them through binoculars/stay on paths

**Question 23**

One of: no pre-packaged foods/buy fresh food from market

**Question 24**

Two of: don't leave rubbish lying around/sort rubbish/use public transport or bike instead of car/avoid pre-packaged food/buy fresh food from market

**Text 7****Question 25**

Three of: Europeans grow closer together/live in peace together/greater security or safety/buying and selling easier

**Question 26**

Have decided not (yet) to use Euro/have own currency

**Question 27**

Three of: have own designs on coins/Germany has oak leaf or Brandenburg Gate or German eagle/Austria has Mozart's face/Ireland has harp or traditional musical instrument

**Question 28**

Compost company wanted to make potting mix/notes could be used to make brief cases or insulation material/these options were too expensive

**Question 29**

Notes were burnt/incinerated

**Question 30**

Coins recycled to make forks, knives or saucepans

**Part B – Responses in German****Text 8****Question 31**

Students had to respond to Tobias' letter by answering all of his questions and advising him about all of the problems he mentioned.

Students were required to demonstrate an understanding of the general and specific aspects of the text. It was necessary to read the original closely to identify the issues that needed to be addressed. The questions to be answered were: How are you? How is your brother? How were your holidays at the beach? What is your parents' attitude to your schooling? Do your parents expect you to be super good?

The letter had to include opinions on: Tobias' parents' reactions toward him and his sister/pressure of school/whether Tobias should leave school/whether he should go to University/whether he should travel to Australia and get part-time work and improve his English.

Students were required to demonstrate the capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately. They had to use connected sentences, linked with conjunctions where appropriate. The letter had to have the correct format and style, be well sequenced and within the word limit. Grammatical accuracy was also essential to gain a high mark.

**Section 3 – Writing**

Students had to cover all the aspects required with a full and thoughtful explanation of each. Attention had also to be paid to the requirements of the text type. A certain sophistication in the writing was expected. A variety of sentence structures, a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures enriched the writing. Accuracy of grammar was assessed particularly in relation to gender, verbs, word order, adjective endings, conjunctions and punctuation.

**Question 32**

The task was to write a script for an informative talk to be given at the end-of-year assembly on the topic of how important friends are at school. A full and thoughtful explanation was needed of how friends had influenced the speaker over a number of years with examples of special experiences. The talk had to be appropriate for school students with a clear beginning, middle and end, the ideas needed to be well organised into paragraphs with good links between them. The concept of audience had to be clearly taken into account.

**Question 33**

The task was to write an article for a youth magazine responding to a grandfather's comment that 'Back then everything was a lot better'. Life and experiences for young people today had to be compared with those of previous generations. The layout had to be suitable for a magazine article with a heading, author and a clear beginning, middle and end. The ideas needed to be well organised in paragraphs with good links between them. Most successful students analysed various aspects of life today and in the past, and then came to a conclusion. Less successful responses dealt with only one aspect of life.

**Question 34**

The task was to write a diary entry covering two or three days describing a holiday job. It had to contain an imagined daily routine and a comment on how the job had influenced the writer's attitude to work. The diary entry required a date, beginning, middle and end, the correct layout, ideas well organised in paragraphs with good links between these.

**Question 35**

The task was to write a persuasive report to convince readers of the advantages of adopting a healthier life style. Suggestions needed to be made for activities, diet and a possible daily routine to help achieve this goal. The piece required a title, author, a clear beginning, middle and end, correct layout, effective paragraphing and good links between ideas and paragraphs.