

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

International GCSE German (4GN0)
Paper 2 Reading and Writing

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International GCSE German Paper 2 Reading and Writing Examiner Report

Examiners were pleased to note that most students coped well with the demands of both the Reading and the Writing tasks. As was mentioned in last year's Examiners' Report, some students seemed unfamiliar with the format of Q5 in particular, frequently entering disadvantages in *Vorteile* boxes and advantages in the *Nachteile* section.

Section A

Part One

Q1 Einkaufen

This question provided a gentle entry into the paper for most students and the outcome was very positive for the majority, with shopping being a topic, which is generally well known.

Q2 Essen

Food and drink is a popular topic area and most students fared very well with this question. However, *Birnen, Pfirsiche und Erdbeeren* proved challenging for some of the weaker students.

Q3 Fasching: eine traditionelle Feier

This question targets grades D and C and most students were able to score 3 or 4 marks here. Where students lost marks it was frequently on *H Man kann Snacks kaufen*, as *Imbißhallen* was generally not well known.

Part 2

Q4 Beschreiben Sie eine traditionelle Feier in Ihrem Land

Students are expected to write approximately 50 words in German on the topic given and Examiners were pleased to note that students seemed well prepared for this task type and were able to give a lot of relevant information. Examiners noted a significant number of high quality answers which met all the criteria and which were fully relevant.

The celebrations described ranged from Diwali, Eid, the Russian New Year, National Days in Dubai and Switzerland, Chinese New Year, Christmas and Easter.

Many students were able to achieve high marks by describing the festivities with interesting and colourful adjectives, attempting not only to describe events but also the atmosphere.

Students often successfully used past and future tenses although there is no requirement to do so in this task.

Students in the lower mark range were sometimes only able to give simple sentences, which focused on the food consumed and the fact that there was no school – this being taken from the preceding text. The adjectives such students used tended to be of a more pedestrian nature, e.g. *das ist gut* or *das ist super*. These students also made mistakes with verb endings, genders, cases and modal verbs.

Examiners noted that there is confusion between *Geschäfte* and *Geschenke* with some weaker students.

Centres are reminded that students should only include material which is directly relevant to the task. It would, for example, not be relevant for a student to give a detailed description of his/her brother when writing about a festival.

Section B

Part One

Q5 Ferienerlebnisse

This question targets higher grades (C and B). There were many correct answers for five marks and most students were able to achieve two or three marks. Most students offered *viele Unterhaltungsmöglichkeiten* for Q5(i) and *herrliches Wetter* or *er hat sich entspannt* for Q5(ii). Answers, which did not score marks here, mentioned the various activities but not with the necessary detail required.

The negative aspects of the camp were accessible to most students although there were quite a few answers that simply stated *es war langweilig*, *man musste lange warten* or *zu viele Leute* without any reference to the *Vergnügungspark*, which was required, and so did not get the mark.

A considerable number of students misunderstood *herrlich*, taking it to be a negative adjective.

As mentioned above, disadvantages were fairly frequently entered in the *Vorteile* boxes and advantages in the *Nachteile* section.

Part Two

Q6 Freiwillig arbeiten

Q6 targets grades B, A and A* and is therefore more demanding. Answers are assessed first of all for communication of correct information, and then a global mark is awarded for the quality of the German. Whilst targeted lifts from the text are allowed, students should be aware that such lifting will have an impact on the mark awarded for the quality

of their language. When relying on the language in the text, students should be careful to lift judiciously and not include extraneous material.

Students should also be aware of the 'order of elements' rule. Thus, if one mark is available, only one piece of information will be assessed – the first answer students give. Students need to give precise answers which contain all relevant detail to answer the question set.

Q6(a)

Many students overlooked the fact that the question asked what Marco did in detail and they seized at the first two verbs without providing supporting detail. There were correct responses giving two details although the conjugation of *basteln* proved to be difficult (*er bastlet, er bastle*) but the change from the text *spielen wir...* to *er spielt ...* was also not always successful. Verb endings were problematic in some responses. Examiners allowed this for the reading comprehension mark, of course, but this was then reflected in the mark awarded for language.

Unsuccessful responses usually omitted *mit den Kindern*.

Q6(b)

Although the question was understood by most, many students omitted to mention *Kinderkrankenpfleger* and wrote only *um Erfahrung zu bekommen*. Quite a number struggled with the verb *bekommen*, using it incorrectly: *er will ein Kinderkrankenpfleger bekommen*. Some correct answers stated *weil er mit Kindern arbeiten will* although sometimes including *gern* as a verb *er gernt mit Kindern arbeiten*.

Q6(c)

This question was designed to be more accessible. There were many correct responses giving *er erfährt alles über seinen Traumberuf*. Less frequently students mentioned *weil er sie besuchen muss*. Incorrect answers included a reference to 330 Euro. As with other parts of Q6 the possessive adjectives were not always used correctly with students offering *über deinen Traumberuf* etc. Again, this is acceptable for the reading comprehension mark, but will not count towards the mark for Knowledge and Application of Language.

Q6(d)

Some students did not provide enough detail and simply lifted *Schwierigkeiten zu besprechen* and *Eindrücke auszutauschen*. Students are advised to attempt to manipulate the language so that it is a response to the question. Stronger students formed sentences referring to both activities and so were able to gain two marks.

Q6(e)

This was a very accessible question and many students gained at least one mark. Weaker students were able to lift the appropriate sentences from the text, however, again the full information was not always given. Students needed to supply *praktische Erfahrungen und Kenntnisse* for one mark. Many were able to

give *lernt viel über die Berufswelt* for the second mark. Examiners again saw many examples of the incorrect personal pronoun, *ich lerne sehr viel...* This is acceptable for the reading comprehension mark.

Q6(f)

This question discriminated well, with only stronger students gaining the mark here. Many unsuccessful responses lifted *in Bewerbungen beschreiben* or *schreibt über seine Zeit in Bewerbungen*, whereas specific reference to *Ausbildungsplatz* or *eine Lehre* was required.

Q6(g)

This was a difficult question requiring close reading of the text. Some were able to give *Er kann den BFD empfehlen*; fewer supplied the information about extending the period with the BFD. Many students answered with *er kann zeigen, dass er für eine solche Ausbildung der Richtige ist* which did not get them a mark.

Knowledge and application of language

Scores were variable, as might be expected, but only in rare cases was communication hindered by poor and inaccurate language. Very many students relied on the original text – this is fine in terms of communicating understanding of the text but it will limit the language mark. Those who preferred to use their own independent language tended to do so skilfully and accurately.

Section C

Option (a) was the most popular option – attracting roughly 40% of the entry - with option (c) in second place with a very similar number of responses. Option (b) was by far the less popular choice, but it was an option, which many of the more able students chose.

All three titles offered students guidance in the structuring of their writing via bullet points. It is essential that students make sure they cover all the bullet points as these determine the content. Any omissions will be reflected in the mark for Communication and Content. Best practice indicates that covering the bullet points in the order given is advisable.

To access the top marks, students should be able to link the concepts within their essay so that it forms a coherent whole rather a sequence of disparate episodes. To achieve this coherence, students should be encouraged to use linking words such as *außerdem, jedoch, leider* more confidently, as well as a range of adverbial phrases e.g. *vor zwei Jahren*. For the most part there was an over-reliance on simple sentence structures and attempts at subordination tended to focus on the use of *weil* or sometimes *obwohl* with the verb *ist*. It is important to use a range of tenses and verb forms. The best responses demonstrated sophisticated vocabulary and a wide range of lexis. High scoring responses were typified by this but in general, the range of language used and the levels

of accuracy achieved were variable. Examiners identified word order, gender of nouns and adjectival endings as areas for development in this regard.

Students should observe the word count for the essay: those who submit shorter responses will not be able to access the full mark.

- a) Many students were familiar with the language and structures required for this topic and they were also able to express their opinions and give reasons. Most successful answers were structured and covered bullet points in a logical order – sometimes linking paragraphs and ideas successfully, especially the first and second and/or third and fourth bullet points.

Quite a high number of answers omitted to mention the first point but wrote only about the things they usually do to help at home. Obvious chores that were mentioned included *sauber machen, abtrocknen, abwaschen, einkaufen, im Garten arbeiten, Müll trennen, kochen* and various attempts at *staubsaugen (ich staube saug)*. Like *staubsaugen* some other separable verbs presented difficulties, such as *abwaschen*, especially in the participle (*abgewascht*). *Neulich* was frequently not understood or taken to mean 'previously' which resulted in students referring to things they helped with when they were younger or *letztes Jahr*.

A few students misunderstood the last point and referred to *Taschengeld* without linking it to *Hausarbeit*, others made a connection and were able to write a more developed answer. Reasons for helping with the housework were often quite well expressed (parents too busy, one learns responsibility, family like a team where all have to pull together), whereas weaker students were either not able to convey these concepts or remained pedestrian in their approach (*ich helfe, weil es richtig/wichtig/gut ist*). The phrase *Geld/Taschengeld bekommen* was not always confidently handled (*Meine Mutter hat mir Geld bekommen*).

- b) The task was generally well understood and some students produced very good answers with detailed descriptions of the journey. Some mentioned that they had travelled first class, referred to excellent service from train staff, the landscape seen through the windows or that the train broke down and they stopped for two hours. Lower scoring students just stated that the journey was *gut, interessant* or listed the food they had consumed. A reason for taking the train was often the environmental aspect which allowed some students to incorporate vocabulary learnt for a different topic area.
- c) There were a number of good responses with a well-structured essay. Weaker responses were very pedestrian and included pre-learned sentences about advantage and disadvantages of TV. As with 7(a) quite a number of responses did not refer to *neulich* at all but mentioned shows they generally like to watch. Others (again as with 7(a)) referred to shows that they used to watch years ago when they were younger. Students who found this question challenging did not explain the positive aspects of the programme they had watched but just listed positive aspects about watching TV in general.

Quite a few responses did not refer to bullet point two at all, possibly taking the *Sie* in the rubric for *sie – die Jugendlichen* in the first bullet point and then went on to explain what programmes young people watch and why.

Some responses used the stimulus, with some students quoting them whereas a few compared and analysed the figures in more depth.

The fourth bullet point was mostly covered by meeting friends or sport/outdoors activities which allowed students to bring in some vocabulary from the topic area of fitness and health.

Whilst many used a range of structures and lexis, including e.g. past tenses, subordination, and infinitive clauses with ease, others struggled with verb agreements, word order and adjectival endings. These represent areas for development.

Centres should remind students that illegible handwriting and multiple crossings-outs are not helpful.

Some students made a plan, which generally led to a more structured piece of writing in which all bullet points were covered. If time permits, students should be encouraged to do this, or to cross off the bullet points in the task as they work their way through them.

Examiners felt the paper reflected the interests of young people and offered all students the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in German.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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