

GERMAN

Paper 8683/01

Speaking

General comments

There was a wide range of entry, mostly from Centres with a small number of candidates, typically two or three. Some candidates were clearly native German-speakers, others had a German-speaking parent, whilst others had acquired the language either in Germany itself or at School. There was a good range of mainly appropriate, German based Topics and some interesting General Conversations.

The majority of Centres appeared to be well aware of the general format of the examination and of the mark scheme. These Centres conducted the tests well and applied the mark scheme appropriately.

Paperwork relating to the examination was generally well and accurately completed. Some Centres need to be aware that there are two types of mark sheet to be completed: the Working Mark Sheet, included in the syllabus, and the Internal Assessment Mark Sheet, to which marks from the Working Mark Sheet should be transferred. Marks should be entered in each column of the Working Mark Sheet, rather than just a global total per section. Each column corresponds to one of the criteria set out in the mark scheme. It makes the Moderator's task more straightforward if it is possible to see exactly how marks have been awarded.

The Examiner's name should also appear on the bottom of the Working Mark Sheet.

It is important before starting the examination that both candidates and Examiners are familiar with the format and timings of the examination:

- 3 to 3½ minutes for the Presentation (on a topic chosen and prepared beforehand by the candidate with clear reference to culture or society in a German-speaking country);
- 7 to 8 minutes of conversation about that topic;
- 8 to 9 minutes of General Conversation (covering topic areas different from the one chosen for the Presentation).

Many of the following points have appeared in previous reports and fortunately apply only to a relatively small number of Centres. They are, however, very much worth noting, in order to maximise candidate marks.

- The candidate must ask at least two questions in the **Topic Conversation** and in the **General Conversation**. It is stated in the syllabus that candidates are required "to seek information from and the opinions of the teacher". Some Centres did not appear to be aware of this. Others awarded marks for "Seeking information and opinions" even though no questions had been asked. If the candidate fails to ask any questions, he or she should be prompted by the Examiner. Candidates will not be penalised for being prompted in this way. If there is still no question forthcoming then no marks can be awarded and a total of ten marks would be lost. If only one question is asked, the maximum mark is 3 out of 5 in both **Section 2** and **Section 3**.
- Please make a clear distinction between **Section 2** and **Section 3** by announcing to the candidate that the switch to General Conversation is now being made.
- Similarly, make a clear distinction between the Presentation and the Topic Conversation. A few Examiners started asking questions during the Presentation. This is not a good idea, as the candidate is being judged on his or her ability to speak uninterrupted for about three minutes. The Topic Presentation is the opportunity for candidates to develop their chosen topic. Examiner's questions should try to allow them to do this. Questions should not just ask candidates to restate what they said originally, but should look for additional information, reasons and opinions as appropriate. The aim is for both the Topic and General Conversation elements to be lively and spontaneous. Candidates are encouraged to prepare thoroughly for the test at the same time as guarding against over-rehearsing in advance.

- Please do not allow the examination to last too long. The stipulated time is twenty minutes. At some Centres, particularly when there was perhaps only one candidate, far exceeded the limit. This does not benefit the candidate in any way.
- Please ensure that the Presentation relates specifically to a German-speaking country, as the content mark should be halved if this is not the case. A candidate, especially perhaps a German native speaker, must, therefore, not talk exclusively with regard to the country where he or she is currently living. Some form of comparison is, of course permissible.
- To obtain a top mark for Responsiveness in the conversation sections, the mark-scheme requires candidates, amongst other criteria, to "defend their point of view". This implies that some challenging questions should be put from time to time or that some form of debate could in fact take place. It is not sufficient for a fluent candidate to utter his/her opinions unchallenged.
- Individual Centre Reports will have highlighted any other issues.

Comments on specific questions

There are no further comments on the specific sections of the Speaking test.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

Whilst the subject matter of this year's paper was rather more specialized than in some previous years, the questions set proved accessible, such that the level of difficulty overall was judged similar to last year. Most candidates appeared familiar with the topic: nuclear power, its advantages and drawbacks and the attitude of the German government to it, and quite a few wrote their answers with obvious enthusiasm, and were even keen to provide further explanatory details. Whilst this is laudable in many respects, there are unfortunately no extras marks available within **Questions 3 and 4** for such material. Some candidates found it difficult to move away from the phrasing in the texts. It is essential that the guidance *ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben* and in *Ihren eigenen Worten* is properly heeded, and that candidates understand that credit cannot be earned for answers that are simply lifted from the text. A majority of the candidates entered performed well and wrote fluently; this year again there were few very weak candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 [*Erster Teil*]

Question 1

- (a) This was usually answered correctly.
- (b) This was usually answered correctly.
- (c) This was usually answered correctly. Occasionally *zur* was omitted from *Zur gleichen Zeit*, rendering the answer incorrect.
- (d) Finding words in the text that corresponded to *mit Ausnahme von* caused problems for a few candidates, who tried to find an alternative noun answer, instead of the correct answer from the text: *außer*.
- (e) This was usually answered correctly.

Question 2

This exercise was also done well in most cases.

- (a) This was usually answered correctly.
- (b) This was usually answered correctly. However, there was no justification for changing the tense, nor for adding a modal verb.
- (c) This occasionally caused problems, with *Debatte* apparently not recognized as a singular noun, though this should not in fact have affected the correct answer.
- (d) Incorrect answers here were quite frequently down to the use of the present tense, instead of the imperfect called for here.
- (e) A fair number of answers gave the correct case and adjective ending agreement.

Question 3

The language of the text was familiar to most candidates, but, as already mentioned, there was a general reluctance to move away from the idiom and vocabulary given, and to convey the ideas in a different way, thereby showing understanding. Where a candidate simply reproduces a section of the text by way of an answer, without manipulating it in any way, no marks can be awarded. By and large the nouns in the text were accessible, however some attempts simply to re-arrange the syntax revealed a lack of proper appreciation of the point of the question.

- (a) Most candidates gained 2 or 3 marks here, but there was occasional lack of clarity over the role of *Umweltschutz*, and a general reluctance on the part of candidates to explain *wurden zu Alltagsthemen* in their own words. The points were also sometimes offered in the present tense instead of the past, and this had to be taken into account when assessing the language mark for the whole set of answers to **Question 3**.
- (b) This was usually well answered: *Was passiert mit den restlichen 17 Atomkraftwerken in Deutschland?* with some good attempts at alternative verbs. However, it should be noted that the use of a past tense renders the answer incorrect.
- (c) This was usually answered correctly for the 2 marks, but again the language and syntax of the text were often quite heavily relied upon.
- (d) Most candidates were able to produce at least two of the five possible points in response to the question: *Welche Vorteile sollen die alternativen Energien haben?* in order to earn their full 2 marks.
- (e) Most candidates earned 2 marks here, but a surprising number retained the double negative in *nicht unbegrenzt vorhanden*, instead of going for a simple formulation such as: *könnte zu Ende gehen*.
- (f) (i) Candidates needed to refer to the possible destinations for the disposal of atomic waste mentioned in the text, in response to the question posed there: *Wohin mit dem radioaktiven Müll?* The phrase *in der Tiefe* is important in relation to both *Erde* and *Meer*: *In Beton auf Ewigkeit in der Tiefe der Erde oder des Meeres vergraben*. These alternatives are listed alongside that of sending the waste out of Germany, i.e. abroad/exporting it. These are the 3 main solutions mentioned. Answers which suggested that the waste could simply be thrown into the sea or buried in the ground had missed the point. The idea of re-processing the waste or *Wiederaufbereitung* was likewise secondary to that of first sending it out of the country. Despite the detail required at this stage in the question paper, almost all candidates scored some marks on this question.
- (ii) This was mostly answered correctly for the two marks, with some candidates keenly offering further explanation as to why *Sicherheit* is such a serious consideration when transporting atomic waste.

Section 2 [Zweiter Teil]**Question 4**

This exercise was generally a little more difficult, as should be expected at this stage in the question paper, and again candidates lost marks as a result of simply reproducing material from the text. The instruction *ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben* stated in the instructions for Exercise 3 is repeated for Exercise 4. Candidates should also note that the specific paragraph guidance accompanying each question is intended to help them with the text. Simply repeating information or giving their own ideas on the subject are not likely to be appropriate for the reward of marks in **Questions 3 and 4**.

- (a) Most candidates gained 1 mark here, recognizing the insufficiency of the *erneuerbare Energien*. Fewer picked up on Germany being isolated within the G-8 nations on this issue, however, and very few noted the *mit Recht* in the text, which indicated that the politicians agreed with the other G-8 nations on this issue.
- (b) A number of candidates found this question difficult, and answers quite often repeated the idea of *mehr Zeit* in the question, without considering the *wie?* Others misunderstood the reference to *Energieeinsparung* and suggested that more time could be gained by saving energy.

- (c) Most candidates gained two marks here. Vague references to supporting or protecting in response to the specific *die internationalen Klimaschutzziele* in the text were ins however.
- (d) Most candidates identified the appropriate material, but marks were occasionally lost for simple reproduction of the text after *die 30 Prozent Stromversorgung*. References to *ideologische Gründe* were also sometimes made, but not expanded upon.
- (e) Most candidates gained two marks here.
- (f) Most candidates gained two marks here. Very occasionally a candidate's answer appeared to be suggesting that the *Energiemix* meant an actual combination or literal mixing up together of different energy sources, but this was rare. Most recognized that *Kernkraft* had to be included for the second mark.
- (g) Two out of the three marks were commonly gained for this question, but the pressure of time issue was rarely satisfactorily explained. Many candidates repeated or simply re-arranged the syntax of *Bis haben wir wenig erreicht und möglicherweise zu viel verloren* without showing any appreciation of what the *nicht auskommen* in the final line here meant.

Question 5

In their responses to this task candidates are required to summarise the arguments presented in the two texts in their own words. Both texts should be referred to, and candidates should look to present an overview of the main points, ideally by means of points of contrast and comparison. It should be made clear to candidates that the word limit of 140 encompasses both parts of the question, and that therefore the conciseness and effectiveness of their writing is likely to have a bearing on achievement. The general pattern is for opening sentences that are clearly often prepared, which is obviously good practice, but candidates should be wary of expending too many words at the beginning of their answers before addressing the main content. Again this year a significant number of candidates wrote at considerable length, without regard for the word limit, and in such cases they tended to lose out on the opportunity to gain marks for the *personal response* part of their answer, because they left this too late. It is essential that candidates realize that marking of this exercise ceases at the end of the sentence after 140 words, with a final cut-off at 150 words. In general, candidates would undoubtedly benefit from focused practice in the skills of summary. There were plenty of points to be made again this year, and many candidates were able to gain around seven out of the ten marks available for this summary part of the question.

Most candidates preferred to address **Question 5** in two distinct parts, and most expressed a pleasingly clear stance on the issue, albeit sometimes limited and quite frequently responding simply to the element of danger as discussed in Text 1. A few found themselves simply repeating what they had already written in the first part of their answer, and in the same words, whilst others found that they had run out of ideas by the time they reached the second, *personal response* part of their answer. This again suggests that there is a case for practice in how candidates can most effectively convey their opinion on the arguments, along with the arguments themselves. This offers the advantage of conserving words and avoiding repetition, but it should also be noted that answers which are significantly shorter than 140 words will limit the language mark available. Where personal views are incorporated within the textual summary, however, candidates should recognize the need to make clear that these are personal views, and not assumptions which the text(s) may not support.

Marks of two and three out of the potential five for personal response were more usual than higher marks, as in previous years.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Question 5** are for the quality of the language, and for most candidates these were broadly comparable with those awarded for **Questions 3 and 4**, as might reasonably be expected. Many candidates wrote fluently, if not always accurately, and confusion of *dass* and *das* remains frequent. Punctuation also continues to be rather unreliable, making syntax sometimes clumsy and difficult to follow, and the requirement in German for commas between clauses continues to be quite widely overlooked.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/03

Essay

General Comments

As at previous sessions, there was a considerable range in both the quality of the content and the language competence displayed in the essays submitted. Candidate performance overall was of a good standard.

There were a number of candidates with some native speaker experience who, although they wrote quite fluently, made some phonetic spelling errors. The most common of these was the confusion between *das* / *dass* and *ä* / *e* sounds. There appeared also to be a rather relaxed attitude to the use of capital letters for nouns and to punctuation, especially commas.

Of the non-native-speaker candidates there were many with an excellent command of the language. They had an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific; indeed most candidates had sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas effectively.

Although many essays were clearly structured and coherently argued, only a minority of candidates wrote out the title they had chosen on the paper before they started. For those candidates who tended to address the topic rather than the specific title, it would help them to respond more effectively to the title. There was evidence in some cases that candidates had chosen the topic area they wanted to write about and then paid little heed to the title. Time spent studying the title and planning the essay is never wasted.

Question 1

Welche Konflikte zwischen den Generationen schaden der Gesellschaft und wie könnte man Ihrer Meinung nach diese Probleme lösen?

This question was chosen by a substantial minority of candidates. Most candidates had a clear grasp of generational conflict but many appeared to have difficulty relating this to the element of the question which required them to focus on the damage these conflicts inflict on society. Indeed many ignored this element altogether and merely gave examples of conflict situations and suggested how they could be resolved. This approach, of course, restricted the Content marks that could be awarded.

There was the usual confusion between *Jugendliche*, *Jugend* and *Jungen* which led to errors in meaning, endings and number. *Das Problem* often appeared as *die Probleme* used as singular.

Question 2

„Im Internet stecken mehr Gefahren als Vorteile.“ Sind Sie auch der Meinung?

This was the most popular question: the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet appeared not only to have been widely discussed by candidates but also to be of genuine interest to them. No candidate was short of material; indeed it proved to be quite challenging to find the right balance between detail and generalisation and at the same time keep within the 400 word limit. Many candidates restricted themselves to describing the attributes or otherwise of the Internet rather than explaining why these might be considered advantageous or dangerous. The essays were usually well structured by grouping the positives and negatives separately, although some very good essays explored aspects of the Internet which had both good and bad points and structured their essays according to theme. Some candidates announced their opinion in the introduction, even though it would seem more logical to discuss the two sides of the argument and decide between them in the conclusion.

As the language of the Internet is almost an international language in its own right, vocabulary posed few problems for candidates. There was, however, a surprising number who were unsure of the gender of *Internet* and sometimes chose to leave out the article altogether.

Question 3

„Unser Bildungssystem richtet sich zu sehr auf Prüfungen, nicht genug auf das Individuum.“ Sind Sie so pessimistisch?

Since examinations are clearly uppermost in a candidate's mind at the time of writing, this topic appealed to many. Opinions were divided but most agreed that examinations were a necessary evil. Most candidates discussed this aspect of the title readily but had more difficulty with the development of the individual. There were some interesting insights into the education system in the candidates' own country although some candidates were tempted into descriptions, rather than the analysis called for in the title.

Question 4

Wie kann die Erste Welt der Dritten Welt vernünftig helfen?

This essay question produced some very thoughtful and quite sophisticated essays. Weaker candidates, however, tended to overlook the word *vernünftig* in the title. This required some evaluation of the help to be given by the developed world to the Third World and not merely a list of possible ways of delivering aid.

Many candidates tried to use the *Erste Welt* and *Dritten Welt* from the title as adjectives. That *helfen* takes the dative was recognised by a pleasing number of candidates.

Question 5

„Investitionen in das kulturelle Erbe eines Landes ist Geldverschwendung.“ Nehmen Sie Stellung zu dieser Aussage.

This question was the least popular with candidates, probably because it lies further from their immediate sphere of interest than the other topics. Those who did attempt this question seemed to have chosen well. They appeared to be ambitious and thoughtful candidates who produced essays that showed some insight.