

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/01

Reading

General Comments

Paper 1, the Reading paper of this First Language syllabus, consists of two extended passages. One passage invites candidates to answer comprehension questions and then both passages are summarised in **Question 2** of the paper.

Overall, candidates did very well on this paper. Most responded to both parts of the examination with extensive, well-written answers and, particularly on the first question, there were almost no examples of an incomplete response – all candidates gave a full answer to most of the questions. Presentation was generally good, but candidates should make sure they label all questions clearly, as a couple of candidates missed out on answering a particular question just because their labelling had gone wrong or spaces between questions had been omitted and so a missing question was hard to identify.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) A straightforward warm up question, which the vast majority of candidates answered correctly.
- (b) Most candidates mentioned that bullying had a physical aspect and that mobbing was psychological and verbal. With correct spellings (physisch, psychisch) applied, most candidates gained the two points awarded here.
- (c) Some candidates gave the answer to (e) here and then relabelled later, when they realised which information was required here, but most candidates answered this question correctly by mentioning the play ground and the way home.
- (d) The majority of candidates scored the three marks awarded for mentioning three examples of mobbing. Bullying/physical violence however was not part of this question.
- (e) Again, this question posed few problems for the candidates: Most candidates wrote that people who were or looked different from the majority were mobbing victims.
- (f) All candidates successfully answered this question and gained two points.
- (g) This question again was handled well. Most candidates mentioned that mobbing victims were ashamed, saw the fault in themselves and not with the perpetrators and wanted to solve their own problems.
- (h) This question proved easy as most candidates scored the one point by mentioning that parents should talk to their children or pay attention to them.
- (i) This question was targeting what should be done, when mobbing had already happened: the school psychologist should get involved, the class teacher should be informed and all involved in the problem should talk together and be given targets to meet. The School should deal with mobbing (incidents) openly.

- (j) This last question was targeting how to avoid mobbing, so preventative strategies were discussed, creating a good atmosphere in class, objective ways of dealing with the topic, the development of personal strengths in children, learning strategies to diffuse/solve conflicts, a fair way of arguing, preventing the prevention of mobbing and teachers you could generally talk to.

Most candidates distinguished between **Question (i)** and **(j)**, but some wrote the same points for both, so only limited credit could be given.

Overall, it was pleasing to see that most candidates had labelled the questions properly and presented their work in a legible fashion. The level of language used when answering the questions was good in the majority of cases. Some candidates did quote at length from the text rather than using their own words – this is not necessary and tends to waste time, which could be spent on proof reading work and eliminating mistakes.

Question 2

Most candidates structured their summaries effectively and there were fewer instances at this session of linguistic analysis and interpretation of the texts, which are not part of a summary. Some candidates nonetheless continued to include their opinion as to their preferred text and gave their personal solutions of how they would solve the mobbing and bullying problems people face. This likewise is not part of a summary and could not be credited.

Some summaries did not include the level of detail that would have scored marks under the mark scheme. Especially the second text was often shortened or even omitted. In some cases candidates interpreted the text by writing about Tina's looks and her eating problems, which were not explicitly mentioned in the text.

It was encouraging to see that all candidates finished the summary exercise and the work did not appear to have been rushed. In a very, very small number of cases candidates had taken a long time to produce a detailed draft of their summary and did not have time to mention all the points they had made in their drafts. Some summaries were slightly shorter than the allocated word count – candidates should make use of their allocation to avoid the risk of missing points out. Candidates who wrote much more than the word limit often repeated themselves unnecessarily and scored lower marks for structure than candidates who were more succinct.

Candidates scored well on the language side. Most candidates wrote in fluent, mostly idiomatically correct German and handled their responses to **Question 1** and the summary appropriately. Two trends in particular are worthy of note: Verbs were often spelt in the English way: *gemobbed*, *attackierd* instead of *gemobbt*, *attackiert* and capital letters seemed almost to have disappeared from nouns in some instances e.g. *zweifel*, *erklärung*, *ergänzung*, *lösung*. Candidates are reminded of the importance of consistent application of these rules of more formal written German in the examination context. One habit candidates should avoid in this context is the use of informal abbreviated words like *was* when *etwas* and *reinhauen*, when *ins Gesicht schlagen* is meant. There should be a clear distinction between written and spoken German.

Some general language mistakes picked up in both parts of the paper:

- *dass* and *das* confusion
- nouns in the incorrect form or spelling: *Belästerung* instead of *Belästigung*, *Isolation* instead of *Isolation*
- Umlaute were sometimes omitted or used instead of the right vowel: *Ängel* instead of *Engel*, *töeffl* instead of *Teufel*
- endings of adjectives were sometimes misspelt: *schmächtigaren* instead of *schmächtigeren*
- prepositions; *handeln sich von*, instead of *es handelt sich um*, or *der Text handelt von*
- some candidates started off well and then forgot to carry on using the correct case: *von Schlägereien und das Schneiden von Schülern gesprochen* instead of *von Schlägereien und dem Schneiden von Schülern gesprochen*

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

General Comments

Candidates are expected to write two essays in a period of two hours during this paper. They must write one discursive and one descriptive/narrative essay and have a choice of one out of four essays in both of these categories. Both essays carry equal marks and it is important that candidates allocate their time equally between the two essays, and that they take their time to choose each title carefully in order to ensure that each title suits the candidates' knowledge and language base.

Candidates should also take care to ensure that their work has a clear structure and that the essays read fluently. They must ensure that the grammar and spelling is accurate, and in addition, a good introduction and an effective summary at the end of the discussions are both equally important.

A good style will carry the candidate over many mechanical defects. This includes the correct use of grammar, the correct use of vocabulary and correct spelling. Only then does the writing achieve its aim of communicating without drawing attention to errors, carrying the reader effortlessly through the story.

The majority of this year's candidates wrote in fluent, mostly idiomatically correct German and acquitted themselves very well. Outstanding candidates handled German syntax and lexis very well, making appropriate and consistent use of complex sentence structures. They used ambitious vocabulary with a high level of accuracy and fluency, showing ease in their manipulation of language. Despite errors, their level of accuracy was generally high and errors which occurred were normally of a minor nature and may arise from their desire to use more enterprising constructions and vocabulary. Candidates also structured their summaries effectively.

Use of expressions was sufficiently varied and sophisticated, conveying thoughts and argument effectively. The information, concepts and opinions were clearly communicated and it was apparent that those candidates who thoroughly prepared their chosen topic, achieved high marks and wrote lively and interesting essays.

Some candidates were inconsistent in their use of common structured sentences and showed a limited capacity to express and justify points of view, displaying fundamental spelling and grammatical errors. Their vocabulary was restricted and repetitive with excessive use of simple sentences. These candidates also had a tendency to use stereotypical phrases.

Candidates must have the language of opinion to perform well in **part 1**: *Meiner Meinung nach, ich finde* etc. There are still candidates who struggle to use the former phrase accurately.

Although candidates' handwriting did not cause many problems this year, there were a small number of instances where it was very difficult (if not impossible) to make out what a candidate had intended to write.

Some candidates must once again take notice of word limits given and they must not use less than 350 words or more than 500 words as the limit is strictly enforced.

Some general language mistakes are worthy of note:

- *das* and *dass*; *man* and *mann*; *herein* and *hinein*; *heraus* and *hinaus* confusion
- nouns in the correct form or spelling
- adjectives beginning with a capital letter and the following noun with a small letter
- further improvement needed in the use of past participles or imperfect
- verbs were often spelt in the English way, e.g. *bedeuted* instead *bedeutet*
- incorrect word endings, e.g. *mach* instead *macht*
- the incorrect placement of inverted commas when writing spoken language in German

- lack of preparation - planning the essay structure

There should be a clear distinction between written and spoken German, e.g. *echt geil* und *abge* instead *fantastisch* or *total toll/super*.

Comments on specific questions

Erster Teil - Discussion and Argumentation

Question 1 (a)

Wer sich bewegt, lernt besser. Wie denken Sie darüber?

There were credible responses from stronger candidates when answering this question, whereas some weaker candidates were only able to achieve little success, e.g. *...aber ein anderer Weg in dem Bewegen beim lernen Helfen kann, ist dass, mit bestimmte Aktionen, kann man Sachen besser merken.*

Most candidates were able to recognise the link between *sich bewegen* and *besser lernen*; therefore many candidates were able to link the key targeted vocabulary in the title, making the essay relatively straightforward.

Centres would be well advised to practise this type of question. The key answer to success is the ability to transcribe key sections with a fair degree of accuracy.

Question 1 (b)

Hobbys fördern das Selbstbewusstsein. Was ist Ihre Einstellung dazu?

This proved to be a very successful question and the answers were overall convincing. There was enough here to challenge the better candidates and many of them showed excellent use of complex structures. The style and accuracy marks on the whole, were quite high in this section, e.g. *...vor allem heutzutage im Zeitalter des Fernsehens und Internets drängen viele Eltern ihre Kinder dazu, sich Hobbys zu suchen, um ihnen eine Beschäftigung zu geben und gleichzeitig ihr Selbstbewusstsein zu stärken.*

Question 1 (c)

Macht ein Lottogewinn immer glücklich? Was meinen Sie dazu?

This was the most popular essay title and produced a wide range of performances. Most candidates demonstrated a very good command of the target language and were able to give negative and positive accounts of a Lottery winner in everyday life. A few candidates lost marks because they could not phrase their ideas and opinions sufficiently, including quite basic errors, such as incorrect verb formation, e.g. *unverausgesehen*, meaning *unvorhergesehen*; confusion in choice of vocabulary, e.g. *übersteuerte Scheine*, *...wählen den Berühmtentrip*...; *mit einem Lottogewinn bekommt man nichtnur Geld, sondern sehr viel Geld*; *...wie glücklich werden ich bin*...

Question 1 (d)

Junge Leute sollten sich heutzutage mehr für die Schulpolitik interessieren. Was halten Sie von dieser Aussage?

This topic seemed to be more challenging and proved to be only familiar to stronger candidates. It was the least popular title in this section.

The importance of being interested in School politics seemed to be a very real topic in today's school life. Candidates had to produce a decisive opinion with regards to the standards of schools and their politics.

They addressed the essential details and wrote with considerable fluency including very good idiomatic usage, a variety of expressions, a range of tenses and a high standard of accuracy.

Zweiter Teil - Beschreibung und Erzählung

Question 2 (a)

Auf dem falschen Weg - mit dem Fahrrad verirrt. Beschreiben Sie eine Situation, die zu diesem Titel passt.

Candidates who chose this title produced a wide range of essays, from the slightly irrelevant all the way through to insightful. The best candidates were characterised by their creativity and were able to express their ideas in accurate and fluent German. The need for personal response prompted them to use the subjunctive, which was very effective when used correctly. But even in some very fluent scripts, capital letters were not always used appropriately. Common problems for some weaker candidates were verb endings and trying to 'Germanise' foreign words, e.g. *Balans*, meaning *Balance*; *Pavelon*, meaning *Pavillion*; *reckognition* meaning *Anerkennung* and *konsekvent*, meaning *konsequent*. Genders were often rather erratic. Almost all weaker candidates render *man* as *mann* and often used the wrong personal pronoun.

Question 2 (b)

This question served its purpose extremely well, differentiating between the very best and the rest of the cohorts. Although very few candidates understood the meaning of *Meine schönste Party*, their creative flair within the chosen subject was evident. They used a wide variety of vocabulary, trying hard to convey fantastical ideas along with some advanced sentence structures. Some candidates came up with wild ideas but without really matching their answers to the 'happy' 'wonderful' party theme. Some candidates were very good at manipulating their story but struggled when it came to writing their own ideas, whilst others had difficulties with the concept of the story, but were quite fluent with their language and ideas. It was evident that there was a lack of pre-planning in these essays, resulting in the structure suffering, with words and sentences often crossed out and the overall layout sometimes becoming difficult to read.

Some sentences became bizarre, e.g. *Auf einer Party gibst es die negativen aber auf positiven perspectiven die fellen aber auch nicht eingefügt sie sollen.*

Question 2 (c)

Erzählen Sie eine lebendige und spannende Geschichte, in der die folgenden Wörter eine wichtige Rolle spielen. Erfinden Sie auch einen passenden Titel: Geisterbahn -Schreck - Preis gewonnen.

This essay stimulated the minds of 72 candidates. Once again, this gave candidates the opportunity to tap into the depths of their imagination. Quite a few candidates wrote creatively, inspirationally and successfully. A very good use of grammar and a wide range of vocabulary were evident, showing a thorough understanding and control of the German language. There were a couple of weaker essays, where candidates used a monotonous and routine orientated approach, often lacking style and imagination. Speech marks and commas were often ignored or positioned in the wrong place.

Question 2 (d)

In den letzten Herbstferien besuchten Freunde und ich einen Wildpark. Als wir gerade beim Füttern der Löwen zuschauten...

Erzählen Sie weiter und lassen Sie die Geschichte gut enden.

All the responses to this question were appropriate with the most successful candidates following the title closely, and most essays had very happy endings. Many candidates managed to control the structure and presentation of this task whilst also maintaining a high standard. Some candidates spent too much time 'setting the scene', as opposed to developing the quality of the story to a higher standard. The use of the past tense was required in this narrative task, but still a few candidates ignored this and decided to write part of their essay in the present tense, which was incorrect and disadvantaged them. Weaker candidates only managed to produce a simpler standard and structure of language, e.g.*es war ein normaler Tag und ich bin gegen 9 Uhr aufgestanden und habe gefrühstückt.*

...nachdem ich aufgestanden war, machte ich mich fertig.

...nachdem ich wieder zuhause war, schlief ich ein.

Spelling and punctuation errors, such as speech marks, the use of the comma and *das* and *dass* were frequently not applied correctly and there was still confusion between *man* and *mann*.