

GERMAN

Paper 9717/01
Speaking

Key messages

- The Speaking Test begins with an uninterrupted presentation from the candidate. This must clearly relate to the culture or society of a German-speaking country, whilst also reflecting the candidate's personal interests.
- Presentations should last for around three minutes, up to a maximum of four minutes; no questions should be included in the content of presentations, unless they are rhetorical.
- Candidates should ask the Examiner at least two questions in both the topic conversation and the general conversation, ideally spontaneously; the Examiner should prompt them to do so if necessary; no marks may be awarded for Seeking Information if no questions are asked.
- The two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each, and the whole test should be completed within twenty minutes.

General comments

Presentation topics mostly referred to issues in a German speaking society, as required by the syllabus, and many were interesting and informative. On the other hand, some presentations referred only briefly to Germany, Austria or Switzerland, which was not sufficient to achieve a high mark for Content. Some specific detail is expected, with ideas and opinions, as well as factual points. A number of centres had not ensured that their candidates' presentations mentioned a German speaking country at all, and marks for Content should have been lower to reflect this. Please leave any questions that may arise until the Topic Conversation, as candidates must deliver their presentations uninterrupted and for at least three minutes.

It was evident that not all candidates are aware that they must ask the Examiner a minimum of two questions per conversation. Nor are all Examiners aware that they should prompt them to do so if necessary. It was sometimes the case that candidates did not ask any questions spontaneously, and if they were not prompted to do so by the Examiner, they were unable to access the marks available for Seeking Information. Some Examiners did prompt their candidates but only at the very end of a conversation: questions should be integrated and arise naturally, during the discussion. There were Examiners who awarded marks for Seeking Information even though no questions had been asked.

Candidates were mostly very responsive and nearly all were spontaneous. If candidates rely mainly on prepared material, they should be placed no higher than in the "Satisfactory" box for Comprehension and Responsiveness. Apart from some incorrectly awarded marks for Seeking Information, most centres used the mark scheme correctly and accurately. Some marks for the Content of the Presentation were pitched slightly too high, but the criteria for marking the linguistic categories were usually interpreted correctly. Some centres allowed the tests to last too long: twenty minutes should be the maximum duration of a test. Recording quality was usually good, but at some centres either the Examiner or more usually the candidate was less audible, owing to incorrect placement or use of the recording equipment.

Specific comments on the sections of the examination

Section 1 (Presentation)

- If the presentation contains ideas and opinions, refers in reasonable detail to the culture or society of a German-speaking country, and is delivered in a fluent and confident fashion, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- If there are only brief references to a German-speaking country a lower mark for content should be considered.

- Presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks for content, as they cannot be considered to have been “well organised”, as in the mark scheme.
- For a mark of five for pronunciation a candidate does not have to be a native speaker.
- A well-prepared candidate should be able to access at least 4 marks for Language. What is required is a “reasonable range” of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary, delivered “fairly fluently”, and without ambiguity of meaning;
- There was again a wide range of up-to-date and relevant presentation topics including:

Das deutsche Schienennetz, die Firma Audi, die Schweizer Armee, Gewalt in Familien, Veganismus, deutsche Philosophie, Skitourismus, gewaltfreie Protestaktionen, deutsche Kultur, das Burnout-Syndrom, Fußball-Nachwuchsleistungszentren, Kulturunterschiede zwischen Deutschland und dem Heimatland.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- In this conversation issues raised in the presentation should be followed up and discussed.
- Candidates should be able to defend any ideas and opinions already expressed and ought also to have prepared plenty of additional points; however, Examiners should not expect them to know any specific factual information over and above what has been presented.
- Any issues more suitable for the General Conversation should be raised later in **Section 3**, provided that the main issues of the Topic Conversation are not returned to.
- The questions a candidate puts to the Examiner to “seek information” should be as varied as possible. „Was denken Sie?“ or „Sind Sie der gleichen Meinung?“ are useful questions to move the conversation along, but a wider range is expected for marks of four or five.
- If a candidate asks only one question during a conversation the maximum mark for Seeking Information is three; if no questions are asked, even after prompting, the mark should be zero.
- A maximum mark of three should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts but finds more complex ones difficult.

Section 3 (General Conversation)

- This section should be distinct from **Section 2**. It should not be shorter, but of a similar length to the Topic Conversation at around eight minutes.
- The Examiner should clearly inform the candidate that the Topic Conversation is over and should introduce a completely different topic for the General Conversation. At least two different topics should be covered in this section.
- Examiners should ensure that two topics are covered in reasonable depth, and they should therefore not put a series of further questions requiring relatively short responses until the two main topics have been thoroughly discussed.
- It is essential to cover mainly complex issues in order to allow candidates to access the higher marks available for Comprehension and Responsiveness or Providing Information and Opinions.
- Questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* are particularly useful in prompting in depth discussion.
- It should not be expected that candidates will know specific information on a topic chosen by the Examiner. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with any topic suggested, the Examiner should quickly suggest a different area of discussion.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/02
Reading & Writing

Key messages

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (*Girls in Skateboarding*).

They must then answer vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**.

In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates answer comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates are asked to summarize the two texts with reference to **(a)** what shows the success of girls in skateboarding and **(b)** what problems still exist today. They then briefly give their own opinion on the topic.

General comments

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of this exam and showed a good understanding of the two texts as demonstrated by the answers to **Questions 3 – 5**. Some candidates wrote confidently using their own words, but others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This could not be credited. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level and who simply guessed the answers.

In **Question 5**, candidates should be reminded to keep the summary task in mind and not to just rephrase both texts without reference to the task. Simply copying sentences from the text does not gain marks as it does not demonstrate summary skills.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Question 1

- (a)** Some candidates struggled with this question as they did not understand the original word they were given and so were unable to find a synonym in the text. Spelling was also problematic as some candidates made mistakes when copying the word from the original text.
- (b)** The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c)** The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d)** Many candidates answered this question correctly.
- (e)** Many candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2

- (a)** A significant number of candidates struggled with word order in this question and were unable to construct the sentence correctly.
- (b)** Some candidates coped well with this question and answered correctly. However some candidates struggled with the correct spelling of *auszutauschen* (one word).

- (c) Many candidates answered this question correctly but some candidates did not capitalise the letter 'U' to indicate a noun.
- (d) This question was usually answered correctly but some candidates struggled with the correct case ending.
- (e) Many candidates answered this question correctly and used the correct sentence structure.

Question 3

- (a) This question presented difficulties for some candidates. They did not give enough detail for some elements of the answer (e.g. shoes in smaller sizes).
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly and were awarded full marks. However, some candidates did not give enough detail (e.g. Olympic sport for both men and women).
- (c) This question presented no difficulty for the majority of candidates and they were awarded at least two out of three marks.
- (d) This question was usually answered correctly. However, some candidates only gave two pieces of the required information.
- (e) The question presented no difficulty, and many candidates referred to three required pieces of information. Again, a lack of detail meant that some candidates were not awarded full marks (e.g. trains with dad who does not skate himself).

Part 2

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates were able to identify the three necessary points for the answer.
- (b) Many candidates coped well with this question and mentioned at least two out of the three required details.
- (c) The majority of candidates gained at least two out of three marks and were able to describe some reasons behind the fact that there are not many girls in skateboarding.
- (d) Most candidates identified two out of three details but some left out the fact that prize money is different for men and women.
- (e) The majority of candidates coped well with this final question and were able to score at least two out of three points.

Question 5

The majority of candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify many successes of girl's skateboarding (e.g. now an Olympic sport, growing number of girls taking up the sport) and problems that still exist today (e.g. less prize money for women, not enough funding). However, at times the poor quality of language made it difficult to understand some summaries.

Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit – any points after the 150-word cut-off will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary. Candidates should be discouraged from copying sentences exactly from the text. Instead, they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5b**, the majority of candidates were able to give a well-founded opinion on the topic and supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience. Very few candidates restricted themselves to writing short general statements without giving personal opinion. This is to be discouraged as it does not demonstrate that candidates have understood and engaged with the text.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/03

Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select a title that they feel most confident about answering;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well informed, supported with examples and coherently structured;
- use accurate German at an advanced level, demonstrating a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-specific vocabulary;
- use sentence structures that show complexity but that are still easy to follow.

General comments

Most essays were coherently argued. They were well structured with a suitable introduction and conclusion and were the appropriate length. The strongest essays showed maturity and insight, and opinions were supported with well-chosen evidence.

Many candidates had an excellent command of German, and so achieved language marks in the Very Good category. Most showed an impressive range of vocabulary, both general and topic specific. Their language was almost always fluent, idiomatic and read well. Occasionally, it lacked precision, however.

Common errors included:

- lack of punctuation;
- lack of capitalisation of nouns;
- errors in using the dative plural;
- incorrect, phonetic spelling.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Es ist die romantischste Vorstellung der Welt, alles mit einem anderen Menschen zu teilen. Deshalb sollte man definitiv heiraten. Stimmen Sie dieser Aussage zu?

There were several possible lines of argument in this essay and some candidates chose to focus on traditional, religious or family values, while others argued that times are changing and so too is the family make-up. Fewer candidates looked at the legal aspects of living together, but those who did were able to do so very effectively.

Question 2

Bei kleineren Verbrechen sollten Täter gemeinnützige Arbeit leisten, anstatt ins Gefängnis zu gehen. Davon würden alle viel mehr profitieren. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

This question allowed for a variety of responses. Many candidates agreed with the view given and indicated that prison sentences might better serve those who have committed more serious offences. Some candidates who answered the question well took a variety of lines, arguing what might constitute a minor offence and discussing whether this might depend on the reader's standpoint. The word 'alle' in the second sentence would have been worth considering more, as it implies society in general and governments might also benefit from these changes, a point only stronger candidates addressed.

Question 3

'Leute, die im Ausland alles wie zu Hause haben wollen, nerven mich. Wenn ich in ein fremdes Land fahre, will ich völlig in die Kultur dort eintauchen.' Renate, 30 Jahre alt Was halten Sie von Renates Aussage?

Candidates who answered the question very well generally looked at the cultural advantages of travelling, the breadth of languages used and the benefits in so many different ways of experiencing and tasting differing cultures. Other candidates were able to look at how not travelling can prevent people from gaining a greater understanding of the world and more effective sympathy for those of other cultures.

Question 4

Elektroautos sind die Zukunft. Damit viel mehr Menschen sie kaufen, sollte uns die Regierung finanzielle Anreize geben. Was halten Sie von dieser Idee?

Some candidates agreed completely and were therefore not able to challenge some more critical aspects of the topic. The strongest answers looked at the issues facing production and use of electric cars, such as the damage being done in Bolivia through lithium mining, and how to dispose of spent batteries. Candidates who received high marks tended to offer opinions both in favour of and against this perspective.

Question 5

Die Industrie beeinflusst die Politiker zu oft in Bezug auf Umweltfragen. Muss sich hier etwas ändern, um die Umwelt langfristig zu schützen? Was meinen Sie?

Candidates who did well on this question displayed impressive subject knowledge. The opening sentence had to be addressed and therefore some knowledge of industry was required. Candidates generally showed an impressive awareness of environmental issues, a breadth of related vocabulary and an ability to offer a wide range of prospective solutions.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/04

Texts

Key messages

In this part of the German exam, candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the texts. To achieve a very good result it is desirable that candidates are also able to show that they can see the texts in the context of the time they were written and display some understanding of the author's intentions and effect on the audience.

Stronger candidates were able to show in depth knowledge of the text, chose good examples to illustrate their arguments and structured their answers well.

Most candidates' command of German was good to very good with evidence of native speaker background. On the other hand, a small number of candidates had a poor command of German which in turn had an influence on how well they were able to get their point across (lack of vocabulary, poor grammar knowledge, spelling errors).

A few candidates did not follow the instructions given for the paper, i.e., answering two questions on one text, or not answering three questions. Candidates should be reminded to read the instructions very carefully to avoid this.

Also in some cases it was quite clear, candidates had not read the texts or had not received any teaching on the texts.

In general, candidates labelled their work correctly. There were a few candidates that marked an answer for instance as **2(b)** where they clearly had answered **2(a)**. Candidates must make sure to label their answers correctly.

When writing answers, candidates should focus on a clear structure of their argument. There should be an introduction: introducing the theme; main part: presenting evidence and a clear argument leading to a conclusion. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make, avoid repetition, and use relevant examples from the texts to illustrate their points. Most candidates structured their essays clearly. Proper paragraphing, organisation and linking of arguments and a structured approach in writing always resulted in a stronger answer. This approach should be encouraged. Good planning makes for a better essay.

Summary of good practice for candidates:

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on a third question.
- The third question must not be on a text which one question has already been answered on.
- Make sure to read each question carefully and identify what is required.
- Divide your time into three equal parts and start working on the first essay.
- Label each essay with the section and question number.
- Plan your essay before you start writing.
- Think about paragraphs: present one main idea and supporting evidence per paragraph.
- Make sure to have an introduction, main part, and conclusion to each essay.
- Make sure all content is relevant to the question and avoid repetition.
- Watch your spelling, grammatical accuracy, and use of vocabulary.
- When you have finished writing, read through each essay and check for grammatical or spelling mistakes and make sure names of characters/authors are spelled correctly.
- Ensure all handwriting is legible.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Mostly candidates answered questions well but some candidates relied too much on narration or did not focus enough on the question and wrote everything they had learned rather than answering the question in a focused manner. If the question included a text passage, mostly candidates engaged well with the passage. However, some candidates would have benefited from more practice in close reading.

Where candidates could improve is to look more beyond the text itself and consider the author's possible intentions and the time a text was conceived in. They should be encouraged to look at secondary literature more in order to get a deeper understanding of the texts.

Question 1

(a) (i)(ii) Candidates usually coped very well with this part of the question, placing the scene within the plot and being able to see the scene in the context of the whole play. Stronger candidates were able to compare the plans and motivations of each of the 'Physiker'. Many candidates stopped at the point of retelling the narrative without a close analysis of the extract/details of the language used/stage instructions for example. However, often candidates failed to support their arguments with relevant examples from the play beyond the given extract. The difference between a very good and not so good response was often whether or not candidates were able to see the connection of the events of the play and the time of its conception and Dürrenmatt's intentions.

(b) Candidates who chose this question did well in answering it and had good knowledge of the text to strengthen their argument for whichever character they chose (mostly Möbius, sometimes all three of the 'Physiker', sometimes Mathilde von Zahnd) with relevant examples from the text.

Question 2

(a) (i) For most candidates answering this part of the question was straightforward. They were able to place the scene within the narrative of the book. However, some candidates lost focus here. They narrated too much of the whole book rather than focusing on the immediate events leading up to the scene in the courtroom. Too often there was a lack of close reading of the extract. Only one or two relevant point were selected, like what Tschick and Maik say and how they say it with some of the other important details being left out: the father, the judge, the person from the 'Jugendheim'. In a small number of responses it was clear that candidates did not know who was speaking in the beginning of the scene, mistaking what the judge says with it being said by the father.

(ii) If candidates did not achieve a high mark on this part of the question it was due to a lack of good evidence to back up their argument and/or narrating too much of the story rather than focusing on the characterisation of Tschick and Mike and the changes they undergo and why and how this happens and how it is portrayed.

(b) There were some good responses to this question demonstrating a good understanding of the question and also a good knowledge of the text and the characters' family backgrounds – both in regards to similarities and differences. However, some candidates misunderstood the question and mixed up the word 'Verhältnisse' – in the question it refers to Tschick's and Maik's family backgrounds, with the word 'Verhalten' which would mean behaviour. So candidates tried to make this fit and attempted to find examples of the boys behaving badly (stealing of the car, getting in trouble with the police) – and also in an anti-social fashion (not wanting to talk to one another at the beginning) – which again is not the same as 'ein asoziales Familienverhältnis' = bad family.

Question 3

(a) (i) A close reading of the given text extract was vital for achieving a high mark here. Of the candidates who selected this question most did this well, referring to what happens in the scene as well as how the characters are described and how they behave.

(ii) Mostly, candidates answered this question well, but not in a very detailed way. It was clear that some detail was lost like: Where is Ludwig's mother and what role does Johann's father play?

(b) This question was only attempted by a small number of candidates.

Section 2

Question 4

- (a) Stronger candidates were able to look beyond the text and the story and place the events in their historical context. Rather than just retelling the story, these candidates were able to illustrate how the historical event of Hitler coming to power in 1933 affected Anna's life and that of her whole family: having to flee Germany, loss of his job for the father, loss of status, having to leave their life, friends, possessions behind, loss of childhood, innocence.
- (b) Most candidates who chose this question answered it very well detailing the symbolism of Anna's pink toy rabbit: childhood, innocence, 'Heimat' etc..

Question 5

- (a) Only a small number of candidates selected this question.
- (b) Candidates who selected this question answered it well by demonstrating a good knowledge of the text describing the events/character and meaning of the friendship between Demian and Sinclair.

Question 6

- (a) An understanding of what was important to Professor Unrat before he meets Rosa Fröhlich had to be demonstrated here, such as the nature of his relationship with his pupils and the importance of his profession in his life. Stronger candidates were able to show an understanding of what happened upon the two of them meeting and the changes that take place for Professor Unrat.
- (b) Only a small number of candidates selected this question.