GERMAN

Paper 8683/01
Speaking

Key messages

- The Speaking Test should begin with an uninterrupted presentation from the candidate, clearly relating 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

Nearly all candidates were appropriately entered at this level and most were aware of the requirements. 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 really 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 did not seem to have ensured that their candidates' presentations mentioned a German speaking country at all, and their marks for Content should have been lower to reflect this. Some centres allowed candidates to ask the Examiner questions as part of their presentation, and some Examiners even interrupted the presentation to ask questions themselves. 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 again evident, despite this being a Key Message every year, 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 still 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 fairly accurately. Also as detailed above, 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, thus risking tiring the candidates. Twenty minutes should be the maximum duration of a test. Recording quality was usually very good, but at some centres either the candidate or the Examiner was less audible, owing to incorrect placement 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 an exceptionally wide range of up-to-date and relevant presentation topics, including the following:

Die Corona-Pandemie, der 'Gender Pay Gap'/Chancengleichheit; Neurochirurgie; Selbstmord; verschiedene Sportarten: Boxen/Rudern/Schach/Leichtathletik; Deutschland und der Ukraine-Krieg; Korruption unter Merkel; 'die Sendung mit der Maus'; die Fernsehserie 'Dark'; Sterbehilfe; deutsche Philosophen; München; die Oper; Beethoven and *Jugendliche und ihre Handys.*

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 is 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, even a significant topic such as the Corona virus pandemic. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with any topic suggested, the Examiner should quickly suggest a different area of discussion.

GERMAN

Paper 8683/02
Reading & Writing

Key messages

- candidates should be reminded to keep the summary task in mind and not rephrase the texts without reference to the task.

General comments

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (*Vegetarianism)*. 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 the problems of high meat consumption and possible solutions to the problem and then briefly give their own opinion.

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**. The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. Whilst some candidates wrote confidently using their own words, others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This cannot 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 simply guessed an answer.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

(a)   The majority of candidates coped well with this question.

(b)   Many candidates struggled with this question and could not find a synonym in the text.

(c)   Some candidates struggled with this question as they did not understand the original word they were given and were thus unable to find a synonym in the text.

(d)   Many candidates did not cope well with this question and were unable to find the correct synonym.

(e)   The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2

(a)   A significant number of candidates answered this question correctly and used the correct sentence ending.

(b)   Some candidates coped well with this question and answered correctly; however some candidates used the wrong word order in their answer.

(c)   Many candidates answered this question correctly.

(d)   This question was mostly answered correctly, and candidates recognized the required structure, but some candidates struggled with the correct case.

(e)   Many candidates did not answer this question correctly and used a wrong sentence structure.

Question 3

(a) A straightforward warm-up question that still presented difficulties for some candidates. They did not understand that Germans are being criticised for not making the connection between meat consumption and climate change.

(b) Many candidates answered this question correctly and were awarded full marks – some candidates only referenced one statistical fact and were awarded one mark.

(c) This question presented no difficulty for the majority of candidates and they were awarded full marks.

(d) Many candidates did not read the question properly and gave irrelevant detail; thus scoring no marks or only one out of two possible marks.

(e) This question was mostly answered correctly. Some candidates, however, only gave one piece of the required information.

(f) The question presented no difficulty, and most candidates referred to three required pieces of information.

(g) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

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 the author's reaction to her daughter's decision in some detail.

(d) Most candidates identified two out of three details, but some left out the fact that she would cook delicious vegetarian meals in order to convince her husband of the benefits of vegetarianism.

(e) A significant number of candidates did not cope well with this final question and were unable to consider the text as a whole to find the answer.

Question 5

Some candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify many problems connected to a high meat consumption. However, the often quality of language made it very difficult to understand some candidates' summaries at times.

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 verbatim from the text; instead, they should summarize points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5(b)**, some candidates were able to give a relatively well-founded opinion on the topic and supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience. The majority of candidates however restricted themselves to writing short general platitudes without giving personal opinion or simply repeating sentences from **Question (a)** – this is to be discouraged as it does not demonstrate the candidates understood and engaged with the text.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

> **Paper 8683/03**
> **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 evidence 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 had the appropriate length. The strongest essays reflected maturity and insight, and opinions were supported with well-chosen evidence.

Many candidates had an excellent command of German, therefore achieving 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;
- incorrect, phonetic spelling.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Ist man mit 16 Jahren reif genug, seine Stimme bei Wahlen abzugeben? Was meinen Sie?

This was quite a popular question. Many candidates agreed and pointed out that young people today are possibly better informed than previous generations and that they seem more politically engaged in movements like 'Extinction Rebellion' or 'Fridays for Future'. Others argued, very convincingly, that 16-year-olds might lack the maturity to vote and could be easily influenced in their decisions by friends or family.

Question 2

Unsere Aktivitäten in sozialen Medien werden immer mehr überwacht. Hat diese Überwachung Ihrer Meinung nach auch Vorteile für unsere Gesellschaft? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

Maybe not surprisingly, this title was the most popular. Many of the candidates who chose this question argued that social media in general, and being 'spied on' by them in particular, was detrimental to young people's mental health. The importance of, and need to protect, the individual's privacy was an argument mentioned repeatedly.

Question 3

,Gleichberechtigung ist ein Traum. Wir waren nie gleichberechtigt, und wir werden nie alle gleichberechtigt sein.' Sofia, 19 Jahre alt. Was halten Sie von Sofias Standpunkt?

This title was very popular. Candidates who answered the question very well often presented an historical overview of equality, or the lack thereof. They also considered and discussed the different types of equality: gender, racial, religious, equality between the sexes, etc.

Question 4

Freizeitinteressen sind ein Luxus, den sich nur reiche Leute leisten können. Stimmen Sie dieser Aussage zu?

This question was also popular. Some candidates agreed completely and cited examples of so-called rich people's sports and activities such as golf, riding or travelling. Others argued that there were a lot of free or cheap activities and people needed to be more creative if they didn't have the money.

Question 5

Sind elektrisch angetriebene Flugzeuge ein realistisches Transportmittel für die Zukunft? Was meinen Sie?

This question was the least popular and the candidates who did well displayed impressive subject knowledge. They managed to explain how electric transport works, what the advantages and disadvantages or problems are. Weaker students found the concept difficult to explain in German and wrote about electric cars and, on occasion, confused electrically-powered with self-driving cars.