

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/01
Speaking

Key messages

- The presentation should clearly relate to the culture or society of a German-speaking country but should also reflect the candidate's personal interests. It should last between three and four minutes.
- Candidates should ask the examiner at least two spontaneous questions in both the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation, and if necessary they should be prompted to do so.
- The test should be completed within twenty minutes and the two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each.
- The candidate and examiner should be equally audible to anyone listening to the recording, and the recording equipment should be tested beforehand and placed accordingly.
- Natural interchange between candidate and examiner in the conversations is preferable to prepared responses.

General comments

Nearly all candidates were appropriately entered at this level and the majority were well aware of the requirements of the speaking test. At some centres, candidates did not ask the examiner a minimum of two questions per conversation and were not always prompted to do so. They were thus unable to access all the marks available for Seeking Information. In general, candidates were responsive and nearly all were spontaneous, with very few relying on prepared responses. Most centres had a small number of candidates. Most used the mark-scheme correctly and fairly accurately. Some centres allowed the tests to last too long, thus risking tiring the candidates. 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 delivery of the presentation is lively and confident, and ideas and opinions are evident, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- Presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks however, as they cannot be considered to have been well organised, as in the published 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 a very good range of interesting, up-to-date or relevant presentation topics this year, including the following:

Die negativen Einflüsse der Medien, Globalisierung und die deutsche Wirtschaft, Selbstmord, Veganismus, Hitler, Handball, Kant, älter werden in Deutschland, Sport in der Schweiz, Kartoffeln, die Flüchtlingskrise and kulturelle Unterschiede.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- In this conversation the issues raised in the presentation should be followed up and discussed.
- Candidates should be able to defend any ideas and opinions already expressed and also ought 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 candidates ask the examiner to seek information should be as varied as possible. „Was denken Sie?“ or „Sind Sie der gleichen Meinung?“ are useful questions, as they can move the conversation along, but a wider range is expected for a maximum mark of five.
- If a candidate asks only one question during a conversation, the maximum mark for Seeking Information is three.
- A maximum of three marks should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but not more complicated ones.

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.
- Personal details, such as the candidate's future and interests, could feature briefly, but it is essential to move on fairly swiftly to more complex and wider issues. This will allow the candidate access to the higher marks available for Comprehension and Responsiveness or Providing Information and Opinions.
- Open questions by the examiner are more effective than closed ones and will encourage the required level of response from candidates. Brief questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* are particularly useful.
- It should not be expected that the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the examiner, perhaps a topic of current affairs. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with, or uninformed about, the original topic suggested, it would be better to switch quickly to a different topic.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/22
Reading and Writing

Key message

In **Question 5**, students should be reminded to keep their summary brief and precise without going into too much details in order not to exceed the word limit.

General comments

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (Working from home compared to working in an office). They then answered vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**. In **Questions 3** and **4**, candidates answered comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates were asked to summarise the two texts with reference to the advantages and disadvantages of working from home/in an office and then to briefly give their own opinion.

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of this paper 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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates coped well with this question.
- (b) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) Many candidates coped well with this question. Some candidates gave the verb *zunehmen* instead of a noun which could not be credited.
- (d) Most candidates coped well with this question.
- (e) Nearly all candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates coped well with this question and the majority answered correctly, using an infinitive with *zu*.
- (b) Many candidates had problems with this question and did not manage to use the correct noun 'Organisation'.
- (c) This question was usually answered correctly and candidates recognized *abholen* as a separable verb.
- (d) A significant number of candidates struggled to use the correct adjective ending.
- (e) Many candidates did not know the correct past participle for *anbieten* and answered incorrectly.

Question 3

- (a) Almost all candidates answered this question correctly.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly but could not be awarded full credit as they did not give enough detail. There is not only a lack of skilled workers in Germany, but it is also important that working from home means you do not have to move.
- (c) Most candidates did not gain full credit as they did not mention all of the relevant details.
- (d) Most candidates gained at least partial credit. In order to obtain full credit, it was necessary to mention the fact that employees were more motivated and more productive, and also that they work longer hours when working from home.
- (e) This question was mostly answered correctly. Some candidates did not give enough details to gain full credit however.

Question 4

- (a) The majority of candidates coped well with this question and gained full credit.
- (b) This question was mostly answered correctly, and candidates identified at least three things that make working in an office 'uncool' with many candidates giving four details instead of three.
- (c) Most candidates identified the three details necessary here to gain full credit.
- (d) Some candidates struggled with this question as the answer was not directly in the text – candidates had to use their own words to explain the quote.
- (e) A significant number of candidates coped well with this question, with many giving additional details.
- (f) This question presented some difficulties for some candidates as they found it hard to identify the relevant passage from the text.

Question 5

Most candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify various advantages and disadvantages of working from home or in an office. Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit as any points after the 150-word cut-off will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary and candidates should be discouraged from rephrasing points of the text. Instead they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5(b)**, the majority of candidates were able to give a well-founded opinion on the topic. Many candidates supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

Question 1: seek a word (or words) that fit(s) perfectly in the place of the one from the text/question.

Question 2: start the sentence with the prompt provided and be careful with the grammatical changes in the new sentence.

Questions 3 and 4: candidates should formulate the answers with their own words and refrain from copying any part of the text.

Question 5: respect the word limit. In part **(b)** candidates should express their own ideas (instead of copying ideas from the text).

Language: when preparing for the exam candidates should revise adjective endings, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

All scripts were clearly presented, and response to the two texts was generally good. Candidates coped well with **Question 1** and were mostly able to identify the equivalent word in the text.

Question 2 presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have sufficient command of grammar to grammatically manipulate the sentences.

In **Questions 3 and 4** there was a tendency for some candidates to write unnecessarily lengthy answers, which did not always address the questions, or to rephrase the same points again and again.

Quality of language in this part of the exam was sometimes poor.

Candidates must read the instructions given for each question carefully, paying particular attention to the words in bold (specific details and examples are listed in the next section). The number of marks allocated for each question serves as a clear indicator of how many separate ideas need to be included in the answer in order to gain full marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The purpose of this exercise was to find an equivalent word from the text. On the whole this question was completed very successfully by candidates.

- (a) All candidates answered this question successfully.
- (b) All candidates answered this question successfully
- (c) Most candidates answered this question successfully. Some candidates did not know the meaning of the word that was required and took a guess.
- (d) All candidates answered this question successfully.
- (e) All candidates answered this question successfully

Question 2

Candidates found this question challenging and often did not manage to manipulate the sentences in a grammatically correct way.

- (a) Candidates were unable to find the correct past participle.
- (b) Candidates were unable to manipulate the verb *wachsen*.
- (c) Candidates were unable to manipulate the verb *abschließen*.
- (d) Candidates were unable to spell the verb *wünschen* correctly.
- (e) Some candidates had difficulties with the correct adjective ending.

Question 3

In **Questions 3** and **4**, to show clear evidence of understanding, it is expected that candidates will rephrase the text to express their answers in their own words.

- (a) This question was answered correctly by some of the candidates. Some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain full credit.
- (b) The majority of candidates scored some marks for this question. They did not identify all the reasons from the text why bookshops are having trouble.
- (c) This question was answered correctly by some candidates. Some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain credit for this question.
- (d) The majority of candidates gained some credit for this question. They did not identify all the mistakes that traditional bookshops made in order to be awarded full credit.
- (e) This question was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain full credit.

Question 4

- (a) This question was answered correctly by some of the candidates. Some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain full credit.
- (b) This question was answered correctly by some of the candidates. Some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain full credit.
- (c) Some candidates struggled with this question and did not refer to the relevant information in the text when attempting an answer.
- (d) Some candidates struggled with this question and did not refer to the relevant information in the text when attempting an answer.
- (e) In this question, some candidates gave their opinion and interpretation instead of referring to the text.

Question 5

In **Question 5**, candidates must first write a summary of both texts, with particular reference to problems of traditional bookshops versus Amazon's new concept. In part **(b)**, they should then briefly give their own opinion on the topic.

Candidates coped well with this task and were mostly able to identify various problems of traditional high-street bookshops and the advantages of Amazon's new concept.

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 points of the text; instead they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5(b)**, many candidates were able to give a relatively well-founded opinion on the topic. Many candidates supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience.

Quality of Language

The quality of language ranged from good to very basic, with some candidates finding it difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.



GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/32
Essay

Key messages

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

- select the title with which they feel most confident about;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, supported with examples, coherently structured and well informed;
- use German which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrating a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

Most essays had a clear structure with an introduction and a conclusion. Many candidates wrote a plan but some had not developed their ideas fully before they started to write. Sometimes more original thoughts occurred to candidates as they were concluding their essay. The strongest essays demonstrated insight and opinions were backed up with well-chosen evidence.

Many candidates had an excellent command of German. They had an impressive range of vocabulary, both general and topic-specific, and produced essays which were fluent and of an appropriate register. Some were clearly familiar with spoken German but were not very precise in their efforts at transcription. A few were unable to express their ideas adequately due to the limits of their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. There were a number of candidates who formed their letters so indistinctly that many words were difficult to decipher.

Common errors included:

- confusion between *man*, *Mann* and *das*, *dass*
- lack of punctuation
- confusion between possessives
- lack of capitalisation of nouns
- incorrect word order after subordinating conjunctions
- incorrect but phonetic spelling
- use of *mehr* with an adjective to create a comparative
- use of *viele* or *mehrere* to mean *mehr*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Was sind die Konsequenzen, wenn Familien nur ein Kind haben? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

This topic was accessible and proved to be particularly popular. Listing the advantages and disadvantages to the child and the family was within the scope of the vast majority of candidates and although the question did not require the candidate to state an opinion, most declared that they were not in favour of a one-child family. Only stronger candidates perceived the plural *Familien* in the question which invited them to widen the discussion to include the effects on wider society and the economy of the one-child family.

Question 2

Stadtbewohner und Landbewohner haben kein Verständnis für einander, weil ihre Leben nichts gemeinsam haben. Finden Sie das auch?

Candidates tended to describe the differences between the lives of those living in town and country but then neglected the 'understanding' aspect of the title. Those that did address it mostly thought that the two groups had more in common than they had differences. There were a few candidates who started to explore the way technology has become a unifying factor.

Question 3

Wenn man wirklich an etwas glaubt, ist es unmöglich tolerant zu sein. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

Candidates who answered this question produced thoughtful essays.

Question 4

„Meiner Meinung nach ist man als Tourist zu beschützt. Als ich jung war, hat man beim Reisen mehr erlebt“ Harald, 65 Jahre alt. Stimmen Sie mit Harald überein?

This was a popular title and produced a wealth of evidence that mostly led candidates to the conclusion that *Harald* was partly right and partly wrong. Candidates discussed the repercussions of mass tourism, the speed of modern travel and the development of adventure holidays to prove their case.

Question 5

Das letzte Jahrhundert hat fast kein kulturelles Erbe hinterlassen. Teilen Sie diese Meinung

This title was not chosen by any candidate.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/33
Essay

Key messages

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

- select the title with which they feel most confident about;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, supported with examples, coherently structured and well informed;
- use German which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrating a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow;
- leave some time at the end of the examination to check for avoidable language errors: agreement of subject and verb, consistency of gender, word order, for example.

General comments

Most candidates chose the titles on the topics of *Das Leben in der Stadt und auf dem Land* and *Reisen und Tourismus*. Many candidates were aware of the need to have an outline plan before starting to write and organised their ideas into paragraphs with an introduction and conclusion. It was helpful to refer to the title in the introduction, as many candidates did, but candidates should check in subsequent paragraphs that what they are writing about is still relevant to that title and not just the topic in general. C candidates are keen to demonstrate the phrases and sentences they have learnt but some allow themselves to be side-tracked from the title into a general discussion of advantages versus disadvantages and came to a conclusion that had very little relevance to the title. The strongest candidates presented their ideas in a coherent fashion and backed up their opinions with well-chosen evidence. Less successful essays failed to integrate the material candidates had prepared on the topic into an essay which addressed the actual title in the question.

Many candidates produced essays demonstrating an impressive topic-specific vocabulary and ambitious structures. Sometimes communication was impeded because the structures were imperfectly remembered and basic German grammatical structure was not well mastered. However, some candidates wrote clearly and succinctly. Candidates should note that the references to *idiom* in the *Language* section of the mark scheme do not refer to sayings or proverbs but to knowledge of German language usage.

Common errors included:

- confusion between *man*, *Mann* and *das*, *dass*
- nouns without articles
- singular subjects with plural verbs and vice versa
- confusion between *schauen* and *zeigen*
- confusion between *eigene* and *einige*
- lack of punctuation
- incorrect word order after subordinating conjunctions
- use of *mehr* with an adjective to create a comparative
- use of *viele* or *mehrere* to mean *mehr*
- confusion in use of *man* – object forms and accompanying verb forms.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Eine Familie besteht nicht nur aus zwei Erwachsenen und ein paar Kindern. Was halten Sie von diesem Standpunkt?

This was an accessible topic and almost all candidates agreed with the view expressed in the title. Candidates generally made relevant points about the various groupings that could be referred to as a family and made reference to *Patchworkfamilien* and *Regenbogenfamilien*, although they did not always exploit these different forms of family adequately.

Question 2

Es ist viel besser für die Umwelt in der Stadt zu wohnen. Sind Sie auch dieser Meinung?

The more thoughtful candidates tended to agree with the title, citing public transport, better recycling infrastructure, less living space per person and subsequently more space for nature and wildlife outside the city. Some candidates failed to examine the title carefully enough and assumed it merely required a description of the urban environment and the rural environment and concluded that it is better in the country. This approach did not address the title adequately.

Question 3

Philosophie sollte Pflichtfach in jeder Schule sein. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

Candidates answering this question covered the topic adequately by discussing the purpose of philosophy as a subject in school and what subjects should be compulsory.

Question 4

*„Ich muss nicht mehr reisen, um die Welt zu entdecken – ich kann in Dokumentarfilmes alles besser sehen.“
Stefanie, 20 Jahre alt. Stimmen Sie mit Stefanie überein?*

Very few candidates answering this question agreed with Stefanie. They pointed out that although you can see and hear what is shown on a screen, you cannot smell and taste it, so the experience is inferior. There were many points that candidates had prepared for this topic that could be manipulated to defend their point of view. Few candidates exploited the full potential of film as a way of exploring the world.

Question 5

Die großen Städte der Welt sind einander so ähnlich, dass kein kulturelles Erbe zu erkennen ist.

There were very few answers to this question.