

GERMAN LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8683/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- The presentation, which should last between three and four minutes, should refer clearly to the culture or society of a German-speaking country and should also include some personal input.
- Candidates should ask the examiner at least two questions in the topic conversation and two questions in the general conversation and they should be prompted by the examiner if they ask only one question or none at all.
- No marks may be awarded for Seeking Information if a candidate asks no questions.
- The test should be completed within twenty minutes and the two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each.
- It is important that the candidate's two questions in each conversation should be asked within the allotted 8 minutes; the questions should be integrated into the discussions and not left to the end.
- The candidate and the examiner should be equally audible to anyone listening to the recording, and the recording equipment should be tested and placed accordingly.

General comments

Although most candidates were aware of the requirements for the speaking test, there were some who did not ask the examiner enough questions. At least two questions are required in each of the conversations. At some centres candidates were not prompted to ask any at all and thus failed to access the available marks for Seeking Information. Some examiners prompted the candidates to ask questions, but this was at the very end of the conversation, or even beyond the recommended 8 minutes. Topics chosen were nearly all appropriate and were often interesting and informative. Most candidates were responsive and spontaneous with very few relying on prepared answers. The marking of the tests was mainly quite accurate, with mostly appropriate use of the mark scheme. Some centres allowed the tests to last far too long, thus risking disadvantaging the candidates. Recording quality was usually 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 test

Section 1 (Presentation)

- If the delivery of the presentation is lively and confident, and if the ideas and opinions required by the mark scheme are evident, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- Presentations that are far too long should not receive high marks, as they cannot be considered to have been 'well organised', as in the published criteria.
- 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 four marks for Language. A 'reasonable range' of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary is required, delivered 'fairly fluently', and without ambiguity of meaning.
- There was a varied range of sometimes unusual and often up-to-date presentation topics, including the following:
Homosexualität, psychische Gesundheit, Austauschjahre, Mobbing, Gentechnik, Sebastien Vettel, Roboter, der Musiker Joris, Brot, Fettleibigkeit, öffentliche Verkehrsmittel, Kriege, Golf, Steroide im Sport, Kriminalität and Arbeitslosigkeit.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- This conversation should deal with the candidate's presented topic, following up on the issues raised, and should last about eight minutes.
- It should not be expected that a candidate knows any additional factual information.
- Issues more suitable for the General Conversation should not be raised until **Section 3**.
- The questions a candidate puts to the examiner to seek information, should be varied. „*Was denken Sie?*“ or „*Was ist Ihre Meinung?*“ are useful questions, but a wider range is expected for a mark of five, or even four.
- If a candidate asks only one question during the conversation the maximum mark for Seeking Information is three. If no questions are asked, even after prompting, the mark must be zero.
- A candidate must be able to respond to unexpected questions. If the material is predominantly memorised by the candidate, the maximum mark for Comprehension and Responsiveness should be from the 'Satisfactory' box. A mark from this box can also be awarded if a candidate can deal satisfactorily with basic situations and concepts, but not more complicated ones.

Section 3 (General Conversation)

- This start of this section should be announced by the examiner. It should be clearly distinct from **Section 2**. There should be a complete change of topic and this conversation should also last about eight minutes.
- Personal details such as the candidate's future plans and his or her interests may feature initially, but it is better to move on to more complex or wider issues in order to enable the candidate to access the higher marks for 'Comprehension and Responsiveness' or 'Providing Information and Opinions'.
- Open questions by the examiner are more effective than closed ones, as they tend to encourage more extensive responses. Brief questions such as *Warum?* are particularly useful.
- It should not be expected that the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the examiner, such as a topic of current affairs. It would be better to switch quickly to a different topic if a candidate is clearly unhappy with or uninformed about the original topic suggested.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8683/22 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (Integration of disabled students into mainstream schools).

They must then answer vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**. In **Question 3** and **Question 4**, candidates answer comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates are asked to summarise the two texts with reference to the advantages and challenges of integrating disabled students into mainstream schools and then to briefly give their own opinion.

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 their 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 could not be credited. **Question 1** and **Question 2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level.

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Almost all candidates answered this question well and identified the word *Deutschland* from the text.
- (b) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly and provided the correct synonym.
- (c) Many candidates answered this question well.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question well.
- (e) Nearly all candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates answered this question well and the majority answered correctly.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) This question was usually answered correctly, and candidates recognised the infinitive requiring *zu*.
- (d) A significant number of candidates managed to answer this question correctly and used the correct word order.

- (e) Many candidates answered this question correctly and used the correct gender for the noun.

Question 3

- (a) Almost all candidates answered this question correctly.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly and were awarded full marks. They understood the dilemma that teacher found themselves in by wanting to support integration but being overstretched at the same time.
- (c) Most candidates scored at least two marks. In order to obtain full marks, it was necessary to mention three out of four possible answers.
- (d) This question was often answered correctly. Some candidates did not mention the fact that the courses should be free for teachers.
- (e) The question presented no difficulty and most candidates referred both to the lack of trained teachers and to the problem that school buildings are not adapted for disabled students.
- (f) The majority of candidates scored at least two marks in this question. However, some candidates failed to mention the fact that Lisa is deaf.

Question 4

- (a) The majority of candidates answered this question well and gained full marks with many even mentioning more detail than necessary.
- (b) This question was usually answered correctly, and candidates identified the two benefits that integration brings to the students.
- (c) Most candidates identified the three details necessary here to gain full marks.
- (d) Some candidates struggled with the second part of this question and did not mention the fact that the important thing is not her disability, but her character.
- (e) A significant number of candidates answered this question well, with many giving additional details.
- (f) This question presented no difficulties for most candidates and the answers were mostly extensive.

Question 5

Most candidates gave good responses to this task and were able to identify various advantages and challenges of teaching disabled children in mainstream schools. 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. Candidates should be discouraged from rephrasing points of the text and 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

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (Alternative living arrangements for elderly people in multi-generational house and flat shares).

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 summarise the two texts with reference to advantages of the two alternative living arrangements for the elderly and things that you have to take into consideration before briefly give their own opinion.

General comments

Many candidates found this paper challenging and did not show sufficient understanding of the two texts as demonstrated by their answers to **Questions 3–5**. The quality of language varied from good to extremely poor. Only a small minority of candidates wrote using their own words, while the majority restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This could not be credited as it does not show understanding. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level.

In **Question 5**, students should be reminded to keep their summary brief and precise without going into too much detail in order not to exceed the word limit. Simply copying sentences from the text does not gain marks as it does not demonstrate summary skills.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates answered this question well.
- (b) Some candidates were unable to find the equivalent word for *modern* in the text and chose a different word instead.
- (c) Many candidates found this question challenging as they did not understand the original word they were given and were so unable to find a synonym in the text.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question well.
- (e) Very few candidates answered this question correctly and many guessed the answer and inserted an incorrect word from the text.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates answered this question successfully by using the correct word order.
- (b) This question was challenging for many candidates and the verb 'räumen' was not used or spelled correctly.
- (c) Many candidates answered this question well and changed the word order correctly.
- (d) Some candidates struggled with the correct construction of 'zu spielen'.
- (e) The correct gender presented a challenge for many candidates in this question.

Question 3

- (a) Many candidates struggled with this question and were unable to manipulate the language correctly to answer the question (what NOT to expect). Some candidates did not give sufficient detail to be awarded full marks.
- (b) Again, many candidates did not answer this question well as they were unable to answer the question in a logical manner.
- (c) The majority of candidates referred to the relevant passage in the text, but many did not mention the required two aspects. They were unable to summarise the aspect of privacy in a succinct manner and copied large portions from the text.
- (d) Some candidates answered this question well and were awarded at least three out of the four available marks. However, many candidates restricted themselves to copying the relevant passage from the text. This could not be awarded any marks as it does not show understanding of the text.
- (e) Only the strongest candidates answered the second part of this question well and the majority of candidates did not understand that the text referred to learning and skills, not material gifts that grandparents can pass on to their grandchildren.
- (f) Some candidates were awarded full marks in this question. However, some candidates restricted themselves to copying the relevant paragraph as an answer without any explanation.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates managed to gain at least some marks for this question, but many did not understand that Hilde was physically no longer able to live by herself and focussed instead on what she was able to do in the past, e.g. run up the stairs.
- (b) Again, many candidates answered this question only partially and focussed too much on copying the details from the text verbatim.
- (c) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly and were able to gain three marks.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question fully with many giving more than enough detail for full marks.
- (e) Many candidates were able to gain at least two marks in this question. However, many candidates did not understand the original passage from the text and were unable to summarise the necessary points in an intelligible manner.

Question 5

Some candidates gave good responses to this task and were able to identify some advantages of the different living arrangement for elderly people and things to take into consideration. However, there was often a very poor quality of language which made it very difficult to understand the candidates' summaries.

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. Candidates should be discouraged from copying sentences verbatim from the text and instead they should summarise 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. However, most candidates restricted themselves to writing short general statements without giving personal opinion. This did not demonstrate that the candidates had understood and engaged with the text.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8683/32 Essay</p>
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Key messages

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

- select the title 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 were clearly structured with an introduction, a conclusion and ideas organised into paragraphs. As always, the strongest essays demonstrated insight and opinions were supported with well-chosen evidence.

Many candidates had an excellent command of German and achieved marks for Language in the Good or Very Good category. They used 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 and although the language read reasonably well, spelling was often phonetic and punctuation was sometimes missing.

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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Freunde aus der Kindheit bleiben lebenslange Freunde. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

This was the most popular title. Candidates came to different conclusions but those who recognised the difficulties of maintaining childhood friendships had much more material to work with: moving schools, changing countries, divergence of interests and a changing outlook on life. Very few mentioned that with current technology it is much easier to remain in contact with friends than in the past.

Question 2

Es gibt viel mehr Männer als Frauen im Gefängnis. Warum ist das Ihrer Meinung nach so?

Few candidates selected this topic despite the fact that the title was straightforward. Those who chose it approached it in different ways but managed to produce a coherent explanation.

Question 3

„Ich bin glücklicher bei der Arbeit als in meiner Freizeit. Ist das so ungewöhnlich?“ Peter, 60 Jahre alt. Was halten Sie von Peters Standpunkt?

This question was chosen by a small number of candidates but those that did choose it found no shortage of points to defend their opinion.

Question 4

Der Mensch is von Natur aus nicht fähig, mit seinen Mitmenschen in Frieden zu leben. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

No candidates chose this title.

Question 5

Um die Umweltverschmutzung wirklich zu reduzieren, müssen wir die Weltbevölkerung auch drastisch reduzieren. Sind Sie auch dieser Meinung?

This title was popular with candidates but some seemed slightly shocked by it. Some made coherent links between overpopulation and pollution but others found it a difficult subject to address. It was, of course, possible to disagree with the statement from the start and discuss other more effective ways of tackling pollution. This approach enabled candidates to use arguments they were familiar with.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8683/33 Essay</p>
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Key messages

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

- select the title 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

Although few candidates selected the topics of *Law and Order* and *War and Peace*, the essays were fairly well distributed across the other three topics. Most candidates were aware of the need to structure their essays and to organise their ideas into paragraphs with an introduction and conclusion. Some candidates did not consider the title fully and based their essay on only part of the essay question and so gave irrelevant information. Candidates should ensure they are not side-tracked into discussing issues that are not required by the title. Some candidates seemed to have prepared themselves for the examination by creating an all-purpose introduction for their chosen topic which sometimes distracted them from the title. Frequently the introductory paragraph was too long, not all content was relevant and this reduced the number of words available to the candidate to address the title appropriately. The strongest candidates presented relevant ideas in a coherent fashion and backed up their opinions with well-chosen evidence.

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 fluency of expression: language that reads well and whose meaning is clear. Candidates of all abilities are advised to 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.

Common errors included:

- confusion between *man*, *Mann* and *das*, *dass*;
- nouns without articles;
- singular subjects with plural verbs and vice versa;
- confusion between *bekommen* and *werden*;
- confusion between *retten* and *sparen*;
- lack of punctuation;
- incorrect word order after subordinating conjunctions;
- confusion in use of *man* – object forms and accompanying verb forms.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

'Ich komme mit den Mädchen in meiner Klasse gut aus, aber ich finde, dass Jungen und Mädchen nicht wirklich befreundet sein können.' Jasper, 15 Jahre alt. Was halten Sie von Jaspers Standpunkt?

This was a popular choice but its nuances were too often overlooked. Candidates were asked to investigate the difference between getting on and genuine friendship between the sexes. Very many described friendship between boys and girls in very general terms or commented on the advantages and disadvantages of having friends of the opposite sex. Others pointed out why boys and girls should be friends and in doing so missed the point of the title. Few made any reference to the fact that Jasper is a 15 year old boy which provided a very particular perspective to the opinion expressed. However, some essays were quite insightful and candidates did not draw the same conclusions about the possibilities of genuine friendship between boys and girls.

Question 2

Online-Verbrechen sind heutzutage häufiger als alle anderen Verbrechen. Teilen Sie diese Meinung? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

This title was rarely chosen. Those who did select it either wrote an insightful essay or misunderstood the title.

Question 3

In ein paar Jahren werden wir fast nur noch Freizeit haben, weil Roboter unsere Arbeit erledigen werden. Finden Sie eine solche Entwicklung positiv?

Many candidates chose this title. Despite the fact that the topic was *Work and Leisure*, most candidates failed to deal with the issue of excessive free time and focused exclusively on robots. A discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of robots did not adequately address the question. Those who did consider the leisure aspect of the title rarely found that a life of leisure would be a positive development.

Question 4

Um in Frieden zu leben, muss man immer auf Krieg vorbereitet sein. Was halten Sie von dieser Aussage?

No candidates chose this title.

Question 5

Um die Umweltverschmutzung wirklich zu reduzieren, sollten wir auf Privatautos verzichten. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

This was the most popular of the essay titles. Candidates were well prepared with environmental information, vocabulary and phrases to tackle this topic but many were so keen to make use of this material that they wrote an essay merely describing pollution and its effects on the earth, making only a minimal reference to cars. It was of course acceptable to disagree that cars are an important aspect of pollution and to proceed to write about more pressing issues, but this approach needed to be explicitly stated at the outset. Another possible approach would have been a discussion about the practicalities of banning the private ownership of cars and the effects on the environment.