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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Subsidiary
In German (WGN02) Unit 2: Understanding and
Written Response

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General comments

Overall, the cohort was able, and the questions were well answered, although there was also a long tail, and a significant minority of candidates did not seem to have moved beyond the standard required by International GCSE.

The multiple choice questions and gap fills were generally well answered.

Questions 4, 6 and 7 require short responses in German, and these questions did provide a challenge for many candidates. Candidates are instructed to use their own language as far as possible, and questions are written so that candidates will need to use their own language, or at the very least, manipulate the language in the text. Lifting answers from the text is, therefore, not a successful strategy.

These questions also target higher level cognitive skills, so candidates should expect to be asked to, for example, summarize, interpret, infer and / or come to judgements. Here again, lifting answers is not a successful strategy. Equally, looking for an answer in one particular sentence will not be useful in cases where candidates need to select and summarise, or to come to a judgement.

Candidates seemed to struggle most with inference questions, often writing information from the text. Candidates should look for trigger words such as *wohl* and *vielleicht* which might indicate that they need to draw an inference.

The essay question requires a personal response to a stimulus and contains a discursive element. Some candidates of all linguistic abilities appeared to have identified a general topic from the stimulus, and set off to write their opinions or to rephrase the stimulus. Candidates should be prepared to respond to the bullet points specifically and precisely.

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to correctly answer all four parts of this question. Parts b) and d) proved slightly more challenging. The most common mistake was to suggest in part d) that Sabine only swam in the sea, confusing *in einem See*, in a lake, with *in der See*, in the sea, and not taking into consideration that she will compete internationally, in Canada, next year.

Question 2

This question was also well answered by the majority of candidates. Parts c) and d) were more challenging than a) and b).

Question 3

The majority of candidates were able to correctly answer all four parts of this question. Part c) proved most challenging, with some candidates suggesting that politicians were complaining about the future of German coal fired power stations rather than discussing it. A small minority of candidates wrote *Energie* in part d) rather than *Unterstützung*.

Question 4

This question discriminated across the range of ability, with parts b), c) and d) providing the greatest challenge.

Candidates should answer this question in German in their own words as far as possible. It is acceptable to use words or short phrases from the text, but these should be contained within candidates' own language. A majority of candidates tended to select words from the text to use in their responses.

It is also important that candidates should read the questions carefully and answer the questions which are asked.

As noted in the general comments, this question targets higher level cognitive skills, so candidates should expect to be asked to, for example, summarize, interpret, infer and / or come to judgements.

Part a) was generally accessible. The most common error in part a) was to ignore the introduction, and to provide specific answers about why Steffen and Magdalene in particular were taking a gap year, rather than answering the question about why young people in general take gap years.

Part b) provided more cognitive demand. Candidates needed to select information which demonstrated that Steffen was socially responsible. The mark scheme recognised a range of different possible responses. Successful candidates identified that Steffen was doing voluntary service in a refugee centre rather than travelling for a year, or that he said that he wanted to be socially active. A significant majority of candidates wrote that he was teaching German and filling in forms. Whilst it is true that he was doing these things, they do not show that he was socially responsible.

Part c) required candidates to come to a judgement about the success of Steffen's gap year. Successful candidates generally said that it was successful, and gave a reason to support this, such as that he had been able to help other people, or that he had widened his own horizons. Here again, a significant minority of candidates wrote that he was successful because he was teaching German and filling forms; this would only have been a measure of success if teaching German and filling forms had been a long held ambition which he had successfully fulfilled. This is not accurate according to the information in the text.

Part d) required candidates to explain specifically why Magdalene wanted to do work experience with animals. Stronger candidates identified that this was because she wanted to deepen her knowledge in her subject area (biology) or because she wanted to do something meaningful. Weaker candidates merely stated that she studied biology, which in itself is not a reason for doing work experience with animals, or said that she wanted to see the world, which was true, but did not explain why she wanted to work with animals.

Part e) asked for Magdalene's attitude / outlook / mindset towards her year abroad. Successful responses indicated that Magdalene was worried or anxious, because China would be strange to her, but that she was looking forward to cuddling panda cubs. A significant proportion of candidates managed to identify one of these factors, and a smaller group identified both. However, a significant minority of candidates did not realise that Magdalene was talking about work experience which had not yet happened, and reported on what she 'had done'.

Question 5

A substantial proportion of candidates managed to accurately answer parts a), b), c) and e) of this question. Part d) proved more challenging. The most common misinterpretation here was that the storm chasers worked in meteorology, as opposed to helping meteorologists with their data. Around half of the cohort was able to identify that *Rechtsanwältin* and *Notar* were legal jobs.

Question 6

This question requires short answers in German, in the candidates' own words. It includes questions with higher cognitive demand, such as summary, inference, interpretation or judgement. As a result, candidates who answered by lifting parts of the text tended not to achieve highly.

Most candidates were able to access one or two marks in part a) and one mark in part b). Parts c) and d) provided a greater challenge for the cohort.

Part c) required candidates to isolate the specific information which made the clip by Borussia Dortmund unusual or special. Successful candidates responded that they were able to keep still whilst holding weights. A significant proportion of the cohort wrote out all the information given about this clip, without selecting the significant information.

Part d) required an inference. Successful candidates suggested reasons why so many people join in with the internet trend, such as that it is fun, or they want to imitate celebrities. A significant proportion of the cohort wrote the information given about why celebrities join in with the trend, which did not directly answer the question.

Question 7

This question requires short responses in German, in the candidates' own words. Lifting is not a successful strategy. Candidates are also expected to respond to questions requiring higher cognitive skills, such as summary, interpretation, inference and judgement.

Most candidates managed to score 1 mark in parts a), b) and f), although the second mark often proved elusive. In part a), successful candidates summarised the information available to contrast the previous situation with the current situation. In part b) successful candidates answered the question about what both men and women should do. Less successful candidates lifted information from the text which referred only to men. In part f) successful candidates summarised the relevant information succinctly.

Most candidates were able to access one mark on part c) for identifying one way in which men demonstrate their engagement with their children. Less successful responses copied out whole sentences from the text.

Part d) was more challenging. Successful responses identified that men wanted a closer relationship with their children in order to promote their development. Less successful responses suggested that men want a closer relationship to their children in order to be closer to their children, which is tautologous and does not answer the question.

Part e) was especially challenging. Very few candidates recognised that the question was asking for an inference, rather than a restatement of the information in the text. As a general guide, if the question contains *wohl*, it is not asking for repetition of information from the text.

Part g) was more accessible, with most candidates identifying that some men were worried about their careers if they took time out with their families, or that they put their careers ahead of their family. A significant minority of candidates copied out large parts of the last paragraph, or repeated the question.

Question 8

The new grammar question discriminated across most of the cohort, although there was a significant minority which gained 10/10, indicating an excellent, possibly near-native, command of grammar, and another significant minority which gained 0 – 2 marks.

Candidates should be aware that they need to write extremely clearly in this part of the question. In particular they need to distinguish the endings on verbs and adjectives, such that examiners can be certain what the candidate has written. If examiners cannot tell, for example, whether an adjective ends in -r, -en or -em, candidates cannot be credited with knowing what the ending should be.

Parts a), c), d) and h) were most accessible, although a significant minority of candidates found even manipulating *sein* → *ist* too great a challenge.

Parts e) and i) were the most challenging. This indicates that dative plural endings have been well practiced, but that dative singular is a little less well understood.

Question 9

This question requires extended writing in response to a stimulus. Candidates need to address the bullet points directly, and to demonstrate an appropriately wide range of lexis and grammatical structures.

It was noticeable that commas were uncommon across the cohort. This made it hard to decipher what was being said, especially where candidates were using multiple subordinate clauses.

There were a significant number of responses which scored highly on both content and language. However, a substantial minority of candidates demonstrated very strong language skills, but did not address all of the bullet points, or addressed them only vaguely, and thus were less able to access marks for content.

There were a number of candidates with a restricted range of lexis and grammatical structures, who nevertheless communicated effectively and addressed all the bullet points.

- A substantial minority of candidates produced language that was so inaccurate that it impeded comprehension, and in some cases seemed not to have progressed beyond the standard of International GCSE.

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