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Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International AS Level
German (WGN0) Paper 1
Spoken Expression and Response

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This is an 8–10 minute assessment in two sections that total 40 marks with 15 minutes preparation time.

In advance of the examination, the student chooses two of the four specified general topic areas (GTA) to prepare.

The GTAs are:

- Youth matters
- Lifestyle, health and fitness
- Environment and travel
- Education and employment.

A randomisation grid informs the teacher, which of the two chosen areas will be tested. The student is told this immediately before the preparation time begins.

Section A requires students to respond to four set questions on a stimulus related to one of the student's chosen general topic areas (GTA).

Section B requires the teacher/examiner to engage the student in a discussion that, although still relating to the same GTA and its linked subtopics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus.

Stimulus cards are provided for each area. These form the assessment for section A. Before starting the examination, the candidates have 15 minutes to prepare with the stimulus card provided. They may make notes of up to one side of A4 sheet of paper in this time, which they may refer to during the examination.

In Section A, the candidate is asked four questions relating to the stimulus card. These questions are mandatory and may be repeated, but for the purpose of fair assessment across all centres, they **must not be re-phrased**. The first two questions relate specifically to information in the stimulus material, the second two relate to aspects of the subtopic, upon which the stimulus text is based.

For question 1, it is expected that the student will manipulate the wording of the text in order to arrive at a complete answer to the question. A lift of information from the stimulus text will not provide

sufficient information to answer the question completely. This question targets information in the first paragraph of the stimulus text. There are three possible elements to the answer to question 1 in the first paragraph and candidates should try to include as many of these elements as they are able.

For question 2, it is expected that the candidate will find the answer in the second paragraph. It will be necessary to manipulate the language found in the stimulus text to arrive at a complete answer.

For questions 3 and 4 it is expected that the student will give answers which are full and detailed, drawing on the research that they undertook on the GTA, in preparation for the examination.

The students' understanding of this stimulus specific topic area is marked out of four. The four marks are not directly allocated as one mark per question. The statement in the mark grid, which best matches the entire performance of section A, will dictate the mark awarded.

In Section B, the teacher examiner must initiate a discussion about the general topic area chosen by the randomisation grid. The teacher examiner must move away from the subtopic of the stimulus card to more general discussion of the topic area and its linked subtopics. The subtopics of each area are stated in the specification. The students must attempt to show a clear understanding of the chosen topic, and use the research they completed in advance of the examination in order to do this, ideally citing sources they have used in their research.

The student's knowledge and understanding of the general topic area is marked out of a total of ten. The marks of five for Quality of Language (Accuracy), five for Quality of Language (Range of Lexis) and sixteen for Response apply to the test as a whole.

It is important that the full test lasts at least eight minutes. If the test is too short, examiners follow the guidance stated in the "Unit 1 Further Marking Guidance" which is available to centres via the Edexcel website. The examiners will stop assessing tests beyond ten minutes, and will base their judgements on the performance offered up to that time limit.

Choice of General Topic Area (GTA)

The most popular combination of topic areas chosen by candidates was once again Youth Matters and Lifestyle, Health and Fitness. Therefore, these two topics were tested almost equally as often. It was pleasing, however, to note an increase in the number of candidates choosing Environment and Travel and Education and Employment. These latter two GTAs perhaps have more specialised topic specific vocabulary relating to them, and so candidates who do choose these topics tend to score well for Quality of language (Range of Lexis). Good candidates are able to use sophisticated lexical items when talking about Youth Matters and Lifestyle, Health and Fitness, but weaker students tend to employ rather pedestrian vocabulary, often drawing on their IGCSE knowledge.

Application on the Marking Criteria

Understanding Stimulus Specific AO2

To arrive at a mark, examiners consider primarily the mark band descriptions, rather than the number of “correct” answers. A response attains full marks when the student correctly identifies **all three elements to question 1**, together with the correct response to question 2, sufficiently manipulating the language in the stimulus text to directly answer the question. Manipulation of pronouns, verbs and tenses may be required, as well as summarising information in the paragraphs, in order to directly answer the question, without including irrelevant details, or details which suggest the question and the text have not been fully understood.

The student should then also go on to provide developed, justified answers to questions 3 and 4, which consider more than one implication and use examples to illustrate answers.

Quality of Language – Accuracy

To access three or more marks, students need to show accuracy in basic principles, such as subject/verb agreements, tense formation and word order. At three marks, communication may be impeded at times, either due to pronunciation issues, or grammatical errors. To access full marks, communication must be clear at all times, and the student will demonstrate the ability to pronounce German well enough to be understood without undue difficulty. There may be minor errors in case

agreements and complex structures, as well as the occasional major error, but these will be outweighed by a generally accurate response.

Quality of Language – Range of Lexis

To assess the performance in this area, the grammar list in the specification is considered, and examiners listen for a wide range of specified structures in order to award the higher marks. In addition to this, the GTA is important, as examiners are standardised to listen for and reward a range of **topic specific** lexis.

Spontaneity and Development

Students are assessed on the ability to communicate spontaneously in speech. Spontaneous use of language occurs when students use their knowledge of structures, lexis and the GTA and apply it appropriately in response to questions. The discussion should develop naturally, and build on the answers to previous questions. It should not be a list of pre-determined questions devised in advance of the examination.

A well developed discussion is one where the candidate expands on an idea, justifying, illustrating and clarifying and where the teacher examiner responds to what the candidate says. The teacher examiner might, for example, ask, “Wie meinen Sie das?”, “Warum?” or “Können Sie ein Beispiel geben?”. When giving examples, students should draw on their research, not on anecdotal evidence, or personal experience, as doing so will not enable them to demonstrate understanding of the GTA.

Knowledge and Understanding – General Topic Area

It is expected that candidates will undertake preparatory work in their two chosen topic areas in advance of the examination. There must be evidence of knowledge and understanding, beyond what is considered general knowledge and awareness, in order to satisfy the criteria for the highest marks in this section. Good or excellent knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated by referring to independent research which has taken place in preparation for the examination.

This could take the form of mentioning a statistic or referring to a named source, such as an article online, which the student has used.

Knowledge which is based entirely within the student's personal experience is not sufficient to satisfy the terms "many" or a "wealth" of ideas, stated in the mark grid. Many candidates – even linguistically very able ones – rely on anecdotal or general knowledge to illustrate their ideas, and they can only be credited in the "some relevant ideas" band of this mark grid.

Specific Comments on Stimulus Card tasks

Youth matters Cards 1A/B

The questions were well understood by candidates and many could demonstrate at least a satisfactory understanding of the text. In question 1, many candidates only gave one piece of information. For question 4 on 1A candidates needed to mention advantages and disadvantages of spending time alone.

Youth Matters Cards 2A/B

Very few candidates gave all three pieces of information required in response to question 1, namely that role models have already achieved things which appear impossible to the individual, that we can learn from them and that they inspire us. Again, question 4 on both cards asked 'inwiefern' and so candidates needed to mention positive and negative influences of role models on 2A and refer to modern as well as historical role models for question 4.

Lifestyle, Health and Fitness cards 1A/B

For question 2 it was necessary to say that Victoria Meier considered the increase in city populations to be problematical. Simply repeating the quote given in the stimulus could not be credited, as it does not demonstrate that the text has been fully understood. Candidates were able to give good reasons for having a job in the countryside versus one in a city on 1A.

Lifestyle, Health and Fitness cards 2A/B

Not all candidates grasped that the text referred to Germans being overweight in the first paragraph and then went on to discuss obesity in the second paragraph, with a distinction being made between the two. Some candidates could not answer question 3 on 2A which asked why it is problematic for a country if many citizens are overweight. Instead they talked about problems that being overweight causes the individual. It is

perfectly acceptable for candidates to take a few moments to reflect before answering the questions.

Environment and Travel Cards 1A/B

For this card many more candidates gave all parts of the answer to question 1. Question 2 caused weaker candidates difficulties; possibly 'Klagen' was not known. Candidates were able to give extended replies about the need to invest, or not, in protection against natural catastrophies and they could talk about the consequences of such catastrophies.

Environment and Travel Cards 2A/B

The final two questions allowed some candidates to raise interesting points about tourist attractions. Most candidates focused on the revenue which a tourist attraction could generate. A few talked about how convenient it would be for residents, as they would not have to travel to get there. Question 4 on 2A generally triggered a response that the government could invest in the tourist industry.

Education and Employment cards 1A/B

This stimulus card was generally well understood and many candidates were able to speak confidently about voluntary work, listing advantages and disadvantages of it.

Education and Employment cards 2A/B

All candidates who attempted this stimulus card were able to explain that unemployment was declining in Germany, although not all gave the details required in response to question 1. Candidates were able to put forward proposals for how a government could help the unemployed and to make suggestions for how to reduce one's chance of becoming unemployed.

Summary

For subsequent series, the following points should be noted.

- Rephrasing questions for section A will render a student's response as void, as it may give an unfair advantage. It is, however, acceptable to change 'Sie' to 'du'.
- Question 1 on the stimulus card refers to the first paragraph only and will **have three possible elements for the answer**, which must be communicated by the student in his or her own words, in order to be considered a full answer. Question 2 will relate to the second paragraph, and the student must manipulate the language from the text in order to answer the question. Questions 3 and 4 must be developed in order to be considered as complete answers.
- Pronunciation is an important aspect of the accuracy mark, and centres should encourage their students to develop their pronunciation skills, in order not to impede communication.
- Knowledge and Understanding (GTA) must show evidence of research into the topics chosen, ideally citing at least one source. General knowledge, or personal experiences alone, will not demonstrate "many" or a "wealth" of ideas, which are required for marks of 7 or higher.
- The question words on the stimulus card are important – for example "inwiefern" must have an answer which addresses this particular question word, i.e. both sides of the argument. A comparison question must show an ability to compare in the answer.
- Topic specific lexis and the specified grammar contents are important considerations when awarding marks for Quality of Language (Range of Lexis).
- Section B should be a discussion. It is not good practice for the teacher examiner to pose a question, the candidate replies – sometimes at length – and then the teacher examiner asks another question on a different subtopic. Fewer topics in Section B usually leads to a more natural and in depth discussion.
- Questions should be challenging enough for candidates to demonstrate that they have moved on from IGCSE. Asking about the candidate's personal preferences or interests, for example, does not do this.

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