



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2019

Pearson Edexcel International A level
In German (WGN02)
Understanding and Written Response

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Publications Code WGN02_01_1901_ER

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General comments

As with January 2018, the cohort for Paper 2, Understanding and Written Response, was small and varied this session.

The multiple choice was generally well done, and the grammar questions were pleasingly well done, even by candidates who found the paper otherwise challenging. The gap fill, however, posed greater problems than usual.

Questions 4, 6 and 7 require short answers in German. Candidates should answer as far as possible in their own words, and it is evident that candidates are beginning to use their own words more. However, once again, far too many candidates copied large chunks of the stimulus text into their answer booklets. This does not allow the examiner to judge whether candidates have understood the text.

As in previous sessions, candidates need to be aware that questions 4, 6 and 7 will contain questions which require higher level cognitive skills, such as judgement or inference. Candidates need to be more careful to answer the question, rather than to merely transfer information.

Question 9 requires an essay in German in response to a stimulus. Candidates generally performed well in this question.

Question 1

This question is a multiple choice question with four parts based on a short listening text. It was accessible to almost all candidates, although part c) provided slightly more challenge.

Question 2

This question is a multiple choice question with four parts based on a short listening text. Parts a) and b) relatively challenging, whilst parts c) and d) were generally accessible.

Question 3

This question is a gap fill exercise based on a short listening text. It proved more challenging than in previous years, and this seemed to be because candidates were answering from their existing beliefs rather than listening carefully to the text. For instance, 3d proved challenging

across the board, and most candidates wrote that one 'must' eat breakfast, although the text specifically says that it is not necessary to do so.

Question 4

This question discriminated effectively, with most candidates able to gain some marks, and a few candidates gaining most or all of the marks. Parts a) and d) were most accessible, and parts b) and e) most demanding.

Candidates are transcribing too much into their answer booklets. They need to select the most appropriate information and they need to manipulate it, in order to demonstrate understanding.

Candidates need to be aware of higher level cognitive questions requiring inference, judgement or summary in this question especially. Even candidates with otherwise high levels of German were simply transcribing information from the listening text, rather than responding to the text.

For example, Question 4c asks, 'To what extent does Eva-Maria agree with Jochen on the subject of camping?' Across the ability range, candidates transcribed (sometimes with paraphrase) what Eva-Maria said, with only very few candidates considering the extent to which Eva-Maria had agreed with Jochen. A small minority recognised that she agreed with him about noisy people, but disagreed about camping itself.

Question 5

These questions were generally accessible, although part d) proved challenging.

Question 6

In this question, candidates have to write short answers in German in response to a short text. Most candidates were able to gain three or four marks in this question.

Parts c) and d) proved more challenging than a) and b). In part c) candidates tended to repeat that it was easier to tell lies online, rather than explaining why. In part d), only stronger candidates were able to say that these relationships would end.

Question 7

Although Question 7 was generally fairly well done, and discriminated across the range, it provided a number of examples of questions where, with a little more focus on answering the question, candidates could improve their performance.

In Question 7c), candidates tended to describe the plastic in the Rhine rather than saying where it came from.

In 7d), candidates tended to consider 'sheets of rain' as a consequence of the storm, when it would more properly be described as part of the storm.

In 7e), a surprising number of candidates wrote that plastic bags contained plastic, although the question asked for 'surprising' products which contain micro plastic parts, and it is not at all surprising to discover that plastic bags contain plastic.

7g) was intended to be challenging. A pleasing number of candidates thought about the text and realised that the aim of listing the products in a pamphlet was to raise awareness and to reduce consumption of them. However, a substantial proportion of candidates thought the aim was simply to list the products, and weaker candidates tended only to copy a more or less relevant sentence.

Question 8

This grammar exercise was well done on the whole. Parts i) and j) were generally well done, which was pleasing. Parts d) and g) were generally challenging – who doesn't love an adjective ending? a) and c) were surprisingly troublesome, and even a few strong candidates did not accurately conjugate sein in e).

Question 9

As usual, there were a number of very strong responses to this question, from candidates with a high level of language skill who organised coherent responses which addressed all four bullet points and communicated ideas logically. However, a significant proportion of candidates did not address all four bullet points, which affected the marks they were able to attain, and many treated the bullet points as general topic areas rather than as specific points to be addressed.

Candidates talked generally in response to bullet 1 about the strong points of the Sophie Scholl Schule, for example, without specifically saying which one thing impressed them the most and why.

In response to bullet 2, candidates did generally talk about cooperation, but many talked about the Sophie Scholl Schule rather than their own school, and many talked about group work and cooperation between pupils, rather than focusing on cooperation between the school leadership and the pupils.

In response to bullet 3, candidates talked generally about independent learning, on the whole, often giving an advantage and a disadvantage, and in some cases weighing up whether independent learning was only or primarily positive, which was pleasing. However, many candidates confused independent learning with working alone – and despite the very good account of independent learning as involving discussion with teachers which was given in the stimulus, these candidates tended to say that independent learning precluded getting help.

In response to bullet 4, candidates talked generally about the advantages and disadvantages of computers, often talking about the environmental impact, which was not fully relevant. The strongest candidates considered whether computers were essential for school education or merely beneficial. Their conclusions – and their experiences of using computers in school – varied considerably.

A number of candidates wrote lengthy preambles and conclusions. Some of these were extraordinarily basic, including the candidate's name, age and place of residence, none of which was relevant to the task or appropriate to AS level.

Some candidates wrote in clear German, but struggled to sequence their ideas logically, or whose work was disorganised, although there were candidates who struggled more with written German, but who clearly communicated a logical sequence of ideas.

A significant proportion of the candidates wrote in clear and accurate German. There were a number who wrote in a rather too spoken register: candidates should be careful to write appropriately and to respect the differences between spoken and written language.

At the lower end of the range, there were a number of candidates whose German had not significantly improved from IGCSE level, and who struggled to communicate ideas. Many of these candidates struggled with basic structures, word order, subject-verb agreements, tenses and genders.

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