



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International AS Level
In German (WGN0) Paper 2
Understanding and Written Response

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Introduction

The cohort for Paper 2, Understanding and Written Response, was around the same size as last year, and remained varied this season.

The multiple choice was generally well done, and the grammar questions were also successfully attempted by most candidates. The gap fill was also generally accessible, although part d) offered more challenge.

Questions 4, 6 and 7 require short answers in German. Candidates should answer as far as possible in their own words. There is continuing evidence that most candidates are using their own words more, but there remains a problem with candidates copying large sections of the text into their answer booklets. Untargetted lifts cannot gain credit, whereas grammatically problematic but comprehensible responses can gain credit.

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 still 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, although a significant proportion of the candidates did not directly respond to the bullet points, which limited their performance.

Analysis

Question 1

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

Question 2

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

Question 3

This question is a gap fill exercise based on a short listening text. Candidates performed generally well, although part d) proved most demanding.

Question 4

This question proved demanding this year, but there was some evidence that candidates had understood the text, but were not directly responding to the questions. For instance in part c) candidates were asked to come to a judgment

about whether Finn's mother had had a happy life. Many simply transcribed information from the text instead of manipulating it to support a judgement.

Part a) This question proved to be somewhat tricky for many candidates. The question required candidates to decide what role popstars and super models played in young people's lives, and the ideal answer was that they are an important part of life, but they are mostly not role models. In the responses, there was some confusion over whether stars were role models or not and if so how important they were. Several understood they were part of young people's lives and used the idea of "aus dem Leben nicht mehr wegzudenken" with several writing "weckzudenken". A few candidates concentrated on "Vorbilder" and compared the role of pop stars, etc. and family thereby answering Q2 in the wrong place.

Part b) Most candidates expressed the idea that family members are the most important role models or heroes but fewer expressed the idea that they have influence not only in childhood but also on their adult children.

Part c) The question required candidates to make a judgement about whether Finn's mother had had a happy life, based on the information in the text. Many did not express a judgement but simply wrote what had happened. Of those who did make a judgement, most thought she did have a happy life and quoted relevant examples to back that up. Very few said that it was both happy and unhappy, with valid reasons.

Part d) This question was accessible to most.

Part e) The question required candidates to identify what Lisa found unsatisfactory about role models. Although most candidates understood that it is not a good idea to have perfect heroes not everyone said why that was not sensible or satisfactory.

Question 5

This question discriminated across a range, with part b) accessible to most, and part d) proving most demanding.

Question 6

Candidates have to produce short written responses to a written stimulus. Most candidates were able to access two or three marks here.

Part a) required a degree of manipulation of information from the text in order to answer the question, 'to what extent does Klamroth have a negative opinion about his childhood role in the film?' Very few candidates gave direct answers to the question, considering that he had mixed feelings about it perhaps, or that he now might view it as predominantly negative. Nearly everyone answered with "Die Aufregung war ihm zu viel" or words to that effect followed by information from the text about having to do TV interviews in the evening and go to school the next day.

Part b) was accessible to most. A few candidates said that his first job was 'Schauspieler', which was, of course, true! Most candidates identified that he had worked as SOS Kinderdorf (in a charitable capacity), which was the anticipated response. A minority of candidates copied the sentence which said that Klamroth worked for SOS Kinderdorf and then did an FSJ in Guatemala. This was regarded as an untargeted lift, and also as not answering the question – only one of these could possibly be his first job.

Part c) was more demanding. Many candidates were able to say that the reality of life had been made clear to him, but there were some answers saying he had made the reality of life clear.

Part d) was relatively accessible with most candidates accessing a mark from the variety of acceptable answers. Some copied too much, and a minority clearly misunderstood, suggesting that it was surprising that someone with a Masters in Political Economy should be working on a political talk show, for example.

Question 7

This question discriminated across the range.

Part a) Although the vast majority successfully gave a correct response, several answers were incomplete, omitting the key idea of turbulent parts of the world. A few candidates thought severe weather was most likely in Braunsbach, Baden-Württemberg or German generally.

Part b) Most candidates managed to give an acceptable response to this part of the question, although some candidates omitted the idea of relaxing.

Part c) Most candidates managed to manipulate the text to answer the question, but a few simply copied the relevant part of the text. Most candidates were able to give an accurate response, with one concrete detail, such as lorry sized stones or 30 m trees being moved by the water. A minority of candidates did not qualify the size of the stones, and at least one thought that lorries were swept down the main road of the village – not improbable, but a misunderstanding of the text.

Part d) The question, 'How could one describe the reaction of Jürgen Mors?' could be answered with a single word, and a substantial proportion of candidates were able to say that he was speechless or shocked. Some said that he was shocking, which was a valiant attempt but conveyed the wrong meaning. Others said that he was surprised, which seemed too much of an understatement. A substantial minority copied the text, which did not answer the question.

Part e) This question was intended to be demanding, and so it proved. The question, 'What did the local people of Braunsbach think of the emergency accommodation and why?' was intended to elicit responses such as, 'Not much. A room used for selling cows wasn't suitable.' However, most candidates focused on the problems

with people's own homes, such as the toilets being out of action. Those who did write about the emergency accommodation and the cattle market did not all express an opinion as to how they might feel or if they did, they did not suggest a reason why.

Part f) Most got this answer correct although a number copied from the text in a way that did not answer the question.

Part g) was mostly answered correctly.

Part h) was accessible to those who read the question carefully. However, many candidates did not concentrate on what the question asked and instead of just mentioning Blockierungen and Überschwemmungen, they quoted huge chunks from the text in a way that did not answer the question or adapted the text but left out the vital information.

Question 8

Both ends of the mark scale were evident here and of those at the lower end, the two most successful answers were (a) and (f). Part (c) there were several examples of the present tense rather than the imperfect, and a few incorrect spellings – bekam, bekam. Generally (a), (f) and (g) caused fewer difficulties and (i) and (j) were more frequently incorrect

Question 9

Again, the quality of answers varied considerably. Although there were some very pleasing responses, there was again a surprising number of candidates who seemed to have very little grasp of basic grammar (especially when it comes to verb endings). The vast majority of candidates did heed the word limit, even if it meant going back and crossing out whole lines of writing, something that does not make marking any easier.

Most candidates managed to include all the content points in some way or another, although some points were developed better than others. A few candidates wrote rather long and sometimes irrelevant introductory paragraphs about the benefits of doing sport or added a long section within the essay which was not relevant to the task.

Another group of candidates attempted to make every bullet point relevant to motivation in an attempt to synthesise the different bullet points into a coherent essay on one theme. Although all the bullet points are relevant to sport, the intention is to move beyond the starting point of motivation to address some more demanding areas within the topic, and each bullet point should be addressed on its own. It would really help candidates to optimise their chances on this question if they were to address the 4 points separately and follow the format of the question.

Bullet point 1

Most candidates mentioned at least one way people can motivate themselves to do sport and several gave examples of how they motivate themselves. The main suggestions were considering the health benefits, setting yourself goals and rewarding yourself when you have achieved them and doing sport with other people because it is less easy to opt out if others are relying on you. A few identified that finding a sport you enjoy is the most motivating factor of all. Unfortunately, some candidates took the opportunity just to write about the benefits of sport without addressing the task of self-motivation.

Bullet point 2

Most candidates were able to describe one or two disadvantages such as becoming so obsessed with winning that you no longer get pleasure from going sport, the possibility of injury, psychological damage, the danger of taking drugs to enhance performance and also ruined friendships. In some cases, though, it was not clear that the task had been understood correctly (possibly because Wettbewerb was confused with Werbung) as there were no clear references to the idea of competition and the implication was it was the role of advertising that was being discussed.

Bullet point 3

This bullet point is intended to introduce a discursive element, and to be fully successful candidates needed to consider reasons for and against the idea that professional sportspeople should enthrall others for sport. Most candidates were able to express an opinion although the degree of development varied greatly and in some cases there was a description of what professional sports people do but no mention of whether they should encourage others to do sport. Some took the line that ordinary people should not be encouraged to become professionals which was not really on task. The idea was also expressed that professionals have a great deal of influence just by being role models.

Bullet point 4

This bullet point is also intended to develop some of the skills needed for a discursive essay. To fully succeed, candidates needed to consider the extent to which new technologies in sport could be beneficial – which means also considering ways in which they might not be beneficial. Few candidates noticed the broadening of the scope from social media to new technologies, and many concentrated on the role of the social media as mentioned in the stimulus material giving examples such as watching videos to learn techniques, getting tips on healthy eating, making plans with others interested in the same sport, finding out what is going on in the area, etc. Others mentioned gadgets like fit-bits, smart watches or equipment that one

can use at home so you do not have to go to the gym. The other focus was on VAR and similar systems and their effect on professional sport. Mostly the points made were positive but a few candidates pointed out possible down sides like people spending too much time concentrating on social media, etc. so that they become less and not more active.

As last session, some candidates wrote in clear German, but struggled to sequence their ideas logically, or their work was disorganised, and other candidates struggled more with written German, but clearly communicated a logical sequence of ideas.

A significant proportion of the candidates wrote in clear and accurate German. There were a number once again 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.

A few candidates had obviously pre-learnt a few fairly complex structures which they used at every opportunity, even when it was not appropriate, and that, in fact, did not enhance communication.

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. A very small handful of candidates were unable to meet the demands of this question, and the quality of German made their responses incomprehensible even with significant generosity on the part of the examiners.

Although punctuation is, on the whole, not at the forefront of examiners' concerns, a gentle plea for the reintroduction of the comma might not be misplaced. Effective use of the comma is of great help in assisting examiners in recognising the difference between long, well-constructed sentences with accurate word order, and long, poorly constructed sentences with word order governed by another language's rules.

Nevertheless, there were some very competent answers, not only from native speakers, and many candidates seemed aware that the best way to tackle this question is to eliminate irrelevance and thus boost their chances of gaining a good Content mark even if the Quality of Language leaves something to be desired at times.

Overall, a pleasing session.

To improve for the future, candidates could consider:

- Using their own words to answer Questions 4, 6 and 7

- Fully answering the questions in Question 4, 6 and 7
- Directly addressing the bullet points in Question 9
- Using language which is appropriate to the task
- Avoiding colloquialism or artificially complex structures
- Concentrating on using simple sentences accurately

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