Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner's Feedback

January 2022

Pearson Edexcel International AS Level
German (WGN01) Paper 1
Spoken Expression and Response

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International AS Level in German WGN01 June 2019

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 choses 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 sub-topic, upon which the stimulus text is based.

For question 1, it is expected that the candidate 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 candidate will give answers which are full and detailed, drawing on the research that they undertook on the GTA, in preparation for the examination.

The candidate's 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 sub-topic of the Stimulus Card to more general discussion of the topic area and its linked subtopics. The sub-topics 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 candidate'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 in this examination session was once again Youth matters combined with Lifestyle, health and fitness. Lifestyle, health and fitness was tested in approximately a third of tests overall, and Youth matters in a further third of all tests in this examination session. It was pleasing, however, to note a considerable increase in the number of candidates choosing the topics of Environment and travel (a topic tested in approximately a quarter of all tests), and Education and employment. As these two GTAs potentially present more opportunities to integrate specialised topic-specific vocabulary, candidates who commit to these GTAs generally score highly for for Quality of language (Range of lexis). This point was in evidence in this examination session. Choosing these two GTAs also usually allows candidates to demonstrate very good or excellent knowledge of their selected General topic area, and agains this was in evidence in this examination session. Good candidates are able to use sophisticated lexical items when talking about the topic areas of Youth matters and Lifestyle, health and fitness, especially if responding to suitably challenging questions. Weaker candidates who have chosen these two GTAs tend to employ rather pedestrian vocabulary, however, often drawing on their IGCSE knowledge, and offering personal

preferences or anecdotal evidence instead of evidence of genuine research. This can restrict access to the higher mark bands, even for very fluent candidates.

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**. This does not yet appear to be clear to all candidates and is perhaps something centres should draw candidates' attention to. To respond to Question 2, the candidate has to manipulate the language in the stimulus text sufficiently, rather than anwering from their general knowledge or personal experience. This may require the manipulation of pronouns, verbs and tenses, as well as summarising information in the paragraphs, without including irrelevant details, or details which suggest that the question and the text have not been fully understood.

The candidate should then also go on to provide developed, justifed 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, communciation 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 structuress, as well as the occasional major error, but these will be outweighed by a generally accurate response.

Quailty 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

Candidates 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 should build on the specific answers candidates offer. It should not be a list of pre-determined questions devised in advance of the examination, and teacher examiners should not feel under any pressure to ask a great number of questions, as a rapid question-and-answer format that does not allow the candidates to expand their answers sufficiently and to display their knowledge is not helpful.

A well-developed discussion is one where the candidates are able to extend their answers, and to illustrate, clarify and justify the points they make. In such a well-developed discussion, the teacher examiner will carefully consider and respond to points made by the candidate. 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 and will restrict access to the highest mark bands.

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 by conducting some research. In order for candidates to access the highest mark bands, there must be evidence of knowledge and understanding beyond what is deemed general knowledge and awareness. Good or excellent knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated by refering to independent research which has taken place in preparation for the examinination. This could take the form of mentioning a statistic the candidate has found, or refering to a named online or printed resource that the candidate has evaluated.

Knowledge which is based entirely within the student's personal experience is not sufficient to satisfy the terms "many" or a "wealth" of ideas, as stated in the mark grid. In this examination session, many candidates – even linguistically very able ones - relied on anecdotal or general knowledge to illustrate their ideas, and there many teacher examiner questions that asked for personal opinions on topics such as healthy lifestyle or sports. As a result, many candidates could only be credited with marks from the "some relevant ideas" band of this mark grid.

Specific Comments on Stimulus Card tasks

Youth matters Cards 1A/B
Question 1 prompted candidates to reflect on the positive attributes of latchkey kids. The question was unambiguously understood by all candidates, and the majority had no dificulties in responding, althought not all responded with the required 3 items from the first paragraph. Questions 2 and 3 encouraged candidates to reflect on the factors parents have to consider in their ambition to make their children more independent, and

Question 4 prompted candidates to consider what responsibilities should be shared in a family. These questions were understood well by most candidates and there were some imaginative answers.

Youth matters Cards 2A/B
The stimulus text was based on a teenage user of social media in Switzerland and her supportive mother. Whilst the text was understood well, not all candidates understood Question 1, which asked how the fictional mother differed from other Swiss parents, and not all candidates responded with 3 items of information from the first paragraph. Many candidates who attempted this card appeared to believe that one item of information was sufficient. Question 2, however, was unambiguously and competently answered by all candidates. Questions 3 and 4 on cards 2A and 2B, questions that prompted candidates to explore how social media use can help individuals' development and benefit society, generated interesting and highly individual candidate responses. Although some candidates illustrated their answers with personal experiences, many others offered excellent justifications and development based on their research of the wider topic area.

Lifestyle, health and fitness Cards 1A/B
The stimulus text referred to a daily dish in Namibia, the so-called 'Mealiepap'. Some candidates attempting this stimulus card found it very difficult to identify the correct three items from the first paragraph in esponse to Question 1 challenging. By contrast, all candidates answered Question 2 correctly and Questions 3 and 4, encouraging candidates to think more widely about issues related to healthy nutrition, engendered interesting candidate responses. Questions 4 on Cards 1A and 1B, which asked if consumers should buy imported foods, and if unhealthy foods should be made more expensive, were particulary suited to producing insightful, individual candidate responses.

Lifestyle, health and fitness Cards 2A/B
This card, based on a stimulus text of online fitness classes, proved to be extremely accessible to the candidates who attempted it. Candidates responded with a high degree of success to each of the four questions. Questions 3 and 4 on cards A and B were equally successful in prompting candidates to think about the relevance of fitness for citizens of all ages, and of ways how employers can assist their workforce's fitness levels.

Environment and travel Cards 1A/B
Although this topic area still ranks behind the topic areas of Youth matters or Lifestyle, Health and Fitness in terms of popularity, this stimulus card about the German spa town of Baden-Baden proved extremely successful for its candidates. Questions 1 and 2 were answered correctly by the vast majority of candidates.The final two questions on cards A and B encouraged candidates to reflect and comment on the relationship between tourism and environmental protection. Questions 3 and 4 on the A and the B cards produced interesting responses that allowed candidates to showcase their knowledge and research into the topic area, especially Question 3 on Card 2A and Question B on Card 2B.

Environment and travel Cards 2A/B
This stimulus card was based on environmentally conscious young people who love to travel. Perhaps because of its its topic-specific vocabulary that prompted candidates to read the stimulus text very carefully, questions 1 and 2 resulted in successful responses from almost all candidates. Question 3A, which asked candidates to suggest modes of transports that should be sponsored in holiday destinations, proved to be more successful than Question 3B, which asked candidates to consider why some young people do not enjoy travelling by train. Questions 4A and 4B that asked candidates to consider factors that environmentally conscious travellers should consider, both on journeys within their own countries, were particularly successful and produced answers that helped candidates to attain the higher mark bands, perhaps because of the additional requirement, embedded in the question, to justify answers.

Education and employment Cards 1A/B
This stimulus card about digital competencies taught in German classrooms was correctly understood by all candidates who attempted it, with the majority of candidates offering 3 items of information in response to Question 1. Questions 2, 3 and 4 on Stimulus Cards A and B were also understood well. Candidates were able to offer pertinent ideas of how schools could support teachers in their computer use in the classroom, why digital competencies are gaining in importance, and what drawbacks there may be to internet research or regular computer use.

Education and employment Cards 2A/B
This stimulus card was based on the global success enjoyed by a contemporary Berlin-based architect. The text, including some complex topic-specific vocabulary, was absorbed carefully by all candidates, and Questions 1 and 2 did not present any challenges to them. Questions 3A, which asked candidates to debate whether university study is good preparation for the world of work, and questions 4A, which encouraged candidates to consider whether high remuneration is the most important aspect about a job, produced some particularly original and imaginative candidate responses.

Summary

For subsequent series, the following points should be noted.

- During their preparation period, teacher examiners should not allow candidates access to the questions they will ask.
- Rephrasing questions for section A will render a candidate's response void, as it may give an unfair advantage. It is, however, acceptable to change 'Sie' to 'du'.
- No supplementary questions should be asked in addition to the 4 questions printed in the Teacher/examiner instructions.

- 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" ideas 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).
- Very able candidates should be discouraged from giving overly long answers in response to the four questions in Section A, as this will limit the time available for the discussion in Section B and will have an impact on the overall marks that can be awarded for Understanding (General topic area).
- Section B should be a discussion. It is not good practice for the teacher examiner to pose a question, for the candidate to reply – sometimes at length – and for the teacher examiner to ask another question on a different sub-topic. Fewer topics being covered in Section B usually leads to a more natural and in-depth discussion that will allow candidates to access the higher mark bands for Spontaneity and for Understanding (General topic area).
- The questions asked in Section B should relate to the same General Topic Area as the stimulus card that has been covered, as otherwise the mark that can be awarded to Understanding (General topic area) will be adversely affected.
- Questions should be suitable challenging for AS level candidates. Candidates should be able to demonstrate that they have moved on linguistically from IGCSE level. Questions inviting a candidate to discuss personal preferences or interests, for example, do not allow candidates to achieve this, nor nor do long lists of vocabulary items or long, pre-learnt sequences of speech offered by candidates.
- Even in the case of centres with a large number of candidates, it is preferable examiners do not work from a "list" and refrain from asking candidates attempting the same stimulus card identical questions, and identical questions in the same order. Instead, questions should be adapted for candidates of different linguistic abilities, and the teacher examiner should listen to, and comment on, individual candidate responses. By prompting their individual candidates to give examples, expand on their views, and justify

opinions, teacher examiners will give candidates the best possible chance to access the higher mark bands for Spontaneity and for Understanding (General topic area).

The examiners marking on this unit would like to thank centres for the effort they put in to ensure the assessments run smoothly for their candidates and to allow them to reach their full potential. The hard work that goes into preparing candidates for examinations is also appreciated and we seek to reward this whenever possible.