



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner's Feedback

January 2022

Pearson Edexcel International A level
In German (WGN04) paper 1
Research, Understanding and Written
Response

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Candidates had been well prepared for this paper and were clearly familiar with the topic areas covered. Most could attempt all parts of the paper. Whilst many fared well with the comprehension questions in Sections A and B and were able to rely on their own experience of the language to select relevant detail and draw conclusions, Section C provided more of a challenge.

Section A – Listening

Generally, candidates fared well in Section A. The multiple-choice questions proved very accessible, whereas there were some more challenging issues with Questions 3 and 4.

Hörtext 1 (Trendsport) Parts (a) and (d) were usually answered correctly. In part (b), some candidates were unable to see the relevance of *mangelnde Erfahrung*, and in (c), only those who listened very carefully to the implications in the recording about wearing a helmet were able to choose C as the correct answer.

Hörtext 2 (Die Insel Sylt) Many candidates scored full marks here. There were occasional errors with part (a) which may have been caused by lack of knowledge of vocabulary.

Hörtext 3 (Jungpolitiker) This question required candidates to choose the correct word from a box to complete four sentences. With only verbs on offer here, this proved more challenging than in previous series. Parts (a) and (b) were normally correct, but answers to (c) and (d) often appeared as *beschweren* and *beenden* respectively. A small number of candidates inserted words which made no sense in the context of the sentence.

Hörtext 4 (Mode) Targeted lifts are sometimes possible in this section, but more usually it is sensible for candidates to attempt an answer in their own words which reflects their understanding of the spoken passage. Short answers only are required as long as the full detail is given.

The interview with a designer of work clothing was generally understood, but candidates did not always manage to choose the correct section of the passage from which to select their answer. Often, answers to parts (c) and (d) were confused.

Parts (a) and (b) were usually correctly answered. However, in (a) some candidates gave a nonsensical answer such as *am Anfang der 19 Jahre*.

The best answers were from candidates who had considered carefully what Irena had said and then wrote a concise answer in their own words. This was particularly relevant in part (d) where the essence of the answer was that no two days were alike in her job.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Question 5 (*Recht und Ordnung*) A recurrent wrong answer was in part (b) where some candidates were unable to understand the relevance of *aus einem*

Querschnitt der Bevölkerung. Otherwise, this question proved accessible for the majority.

Question 6 (*Tierversuche*) Less successful candidates were often unable to pinpoint the answers to the questions within the passage. Perhaps some were thrown by the length of this passage which has only four targeted questions. However, many managed parts (a) well. In part (b), some candidates explained why human beings and animals were different, forgetting that this is a reading comprehension where the information sought has to come from the passage. To gain marks in part (c) it was necessary to put the information in a suitable context such as *Die Vertreterin meint, ...* in order to give a relevant answer. Targeted lifts were not successful. Most candidates managed to explain that people from Augsburg could sign the petition, using the verb *unterschreiben*.

Question 7 (*Neue Technologien*) There were many correct answers to parts (a), (c), (g) and (h). Other questions demanded careful reading and some manipulation of the words in the passage to gain credit. As always, candidates who merely repeat information given in the question will not give a correct answer: in part (b) an answer such as *Der Bürgermeister machte sich für Künstliche Intelligenz stark* was not enough for one mark without the vital information *in einer Rede*. Similarly, in part (f) targeted lifts did not score well: those who simply lifted the questions directly from the penultimate paragraph had not done enough to show genuine understanding of the passage.

Question 8

The new format of this paper highlights in bold the phrases to be manipulated from each of the texts at Questions 5, 6 and 7. It is important to refer to these phrases in context to ensure, for example, that the correct tense is used when a verb is involved.

8(a): This was well-answered, although some candidates omitted the reflexive pronoun or did not give the comparative *sicherer* in their response.

8(b): This was relatively straightforward for candidates who had thought about how the new phrase would fit into the context. However, often no verb was given in the *obwohl* clause.

8(c): The 3rd person present tense of *vertreten* was often unknown.

8(d): This posed few problems for candidates, most of whom gave a satisfactory answer.

8(e): The majority took the opportunity to convert the verb to a noun and to use the genitive feminine singular correctly.

8(f): Very few candidates omitted *zu* in the infinitive clause which was necessary to complete the sentence.

8(g): A past tense verb was required here, but the addition of *rund* was not necessary because this was already implied in *über die Messe*.

8(h): This was a challenge for many. Those who recognised that *der Bundesrepublik* was in the dative case were able to complete the clause with *gelingt*, but many simply used a verb such as *macht* which was of course grammatically wrong.

8(i): The subtlety or the suffix *-bar* meant that some candidates omitted the necessary infinitive *können* at the end of the new phrase.

8(j): Many candidates were able to make the link between *kaum eine* and *fast keine*, but those who wrote *fast eine* failed to score a mark.

Section C

It is crucial that candidates understand the nature of what is expected in the final essay. Since marks awarded for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical analysis, Organisation and development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of language (out of 5), it is important that some examination time is spent planning the response to the specific question asked. While some candidates clearly have been trained to do this, others write fluent essays in German of a very high quality which score low marks for the other two categories because their response lacks relevance or is simply a regurgitated version of everything they know about the topic or work.

Most importantly, candidates should realise that the thrust of the questions set is mostly in the second part. The descriptive first part is simply a *Sprungbrett* to allow them to show relevant knowledge resulting from their reading or research. To access the higher mark bands they must engage in an analysis of the issues. Essays which relied too much on description and less on evaluation fared poorly.

The best essays were in clear paragraph form with a main sentence to introduce the paragraph, followed by several examples. A final evaluative sentence then often referred back to the essay title in some way.

Geografisches Gebiet

Since this is a topic which has been researched by the candidate, it is assumed that there will be relevant supporting evidence for the points made in the essay. There were some very interesting answers to Question 9(a), the more popular option. Chosen regions included Wolfsburg, München and Chemnitz. Answer often shown a wealth of factual and statistical knowledge and genuine engagement with the topic.

Geschichtliche Studien

Many of the essays on historical subjects were full of relevant information and managed to present facts to support general ideas and to draw conclusions required by the questions set. However, it is important to remember that the essay must focus on a German speaking country: a response solely about China, for example, will score no marks, no matter how good the quality of German is.

In this series, the most popular historical periods were the Hitler dictatorship and the SED rule of East Germany in the latter half of the twentieth century. However, there were also interesting accounts of the Weimar Republic and of the German states in the post-Napoleonic period.

Literatur

It is not necessary to introduce the essay with general information about the genesis of the work. In fact, this produced a poor start when it appeared. Some candidates who chose *Der Besuch der alten Dame* could not resist giving irrelevant details about the first performance or relating the whole plot. Such answers scored low marks because much of what was written did not focus on the question.

Better candidates provided an opening paragraph which identified the issues to be addressed in the essay, took the reader through a series of analytical points with relevant supporting details and ended with a strong conclusion which gave a balanced answer. The more popular option on the play by Dürrenmatt was Question 12(a). The most successful answers made links between Claire's sophisticated appearance as a tool of power and contrasted it with the image of her as a young girl. The best answers referred to the outer shell of her being in contrast to the inner decay caused by her experiences in life.

Film

Answers were given to all five films in the specification, and it was evident that candidates had enjoyed studying these. The most popular choices were *Almanya - Willkommen in Deutschland* and *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*. Whereas knowledge of the details of these films was sound, only the most successful scored marks in the higher bands for the first and third categories. Their essays did not simply relate the plot but chose to make general points in reference to the question and illustrated each one with some examples from the text.

For example, a successful answer to Question 20(b), analysing a key scene in the film, considered the implication of Jan's and Jule's unsuccessful break-in to Hardenberg's villa and evaluated why this scene had wider relevance. The essay highlighted that this episode cemented their relationship, that it proved their inexperience and that it showed the ridiculous side of their efforts to rebel. Less successful answers to this question simply stated that it was the springboard for further events in the film and fell into the trap of relating the plot.

Conclusion

To prepare for success in this paper, candidates should:

- familiarise themselves with all topic areas listed in the specification,
- develop as wide a range of vocabulary as possible and an ability to infer the meaning of unknown words,
- practise reading and listening to passages of German with a view to extracting the most important information and become used to rewording the details in the written or spoken text succinctly,

- become familiar with German grammatical usage, concentrating on complex verb forms and the fine details of declension of adjectives and nouns,
- study their chosen topic, literary text or film in detail,
- practise the skill of planning and writing an essay which focuses on analysis rather than on narrative.

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