

Examiners' Report /  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

International GCSE German (4GN0)  
Paper 02

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Summer 2012

Publications Code UG032315

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# Examiner Report

Examiners were pleased to note that most candidates coped well with the demands of both the Reading and the Writing tasks, although a broad range of ability was evident. Some candidates appeared unfamiliar with the format of certain task types and centres are reminded of the need to prepare candidates specifically for the demands of the questions so that they are confident with the actual format.

## Section A

### Part One

#### Q1 Freizeit

This question provided a gentle entry into the paper for most candidates and the outcome was very positive for the majority.

#### Q2 Krankheiten

Ailments remain a popular topic and again most candidates fared very well with this question. Examiners felt that candidates had heeded previous advice to allocate their time wisely to each question, rather than rushing through the seemingly easy ones to progress to the more challenging questions.

#### Q3 Schule

This question targets grades D and C and most candidates were able to score 3 or 4 marks here. Unfortunately, some candidates entered information into the wrong column. Responses for (i) and (ii) were accepted in any order, as were responses for parts (iii) – (v).

#### Parts (i) and (ii): *Vorteile*

The problem areas centred mainly on:

- *keine Noten* without the necessary *bis Klasse 8*;
- *Nachmittagsunterricht* without *kein(en)*;
- *weniger Schulstress* or *neue Bibliothek*.

#### Parts (iii) - (v): *Nachteile*

The concepts of *Hausaufgaben* and *Samstagsschule* were generally dealt with well. The main reasons for not scoring full marks here were simply giving *neue Bibliothek* without any indication of the need for this, such as *man braucht*, putting *weniger* before *Schulstress* and offering words lifted somewhat indiscriminately from the text such as *keine Noten* and *Zeit für Hobbys*.

## Part 2

### Q4 Mögen Sie Ihre Schule?

Candidates are expected to write approximately 50 words in German on the topic given and examiners were pleased to note that candidates seemed well prepared for both this question and this topic and were consequently able to write succinctly and relevantly. It should be remembered that it is possible for candidates to access the full assessment range in 50 words and examiners commented on the fact that the vast majority of candidates were indeed quite capable of touching on a variety of themes in what might be considered a small number of words.

Whilst some responses did rely on the information given in the email of Q3, most candidates were able to come up with their own original ideas which included the benefits of being in an *Internat*, the quality of the food on offer, the various *Sportmöglichkeiten*, extra-curricular activities such as *Orchester*, *Chor* and, of course, the teachers. Only very few resorted to writing a list of school subjects they enjoyed or strayed off the point to give details of where they lived, family and holidays. It was encouraging to note that the overwhelming majority expressed highly positive opinions on their school.

Candidates clearly made use of some vocabulary available in the Q3 email, but there was no over-reliance on the language of this text. Most used a variety of vocabulary and structures including subordinating conjunctions such as *weil*, *wenn* and even *obwohl*, and many tried to incorporate a range of tenses although there is no requirement to do so in this task.

## Section B

### Part One

#### Q5 Das Dorfleben

This question led to mixed outcomes. It targets higher grades (C and B) and proved to be a reliable discriminator. Candidates struggled with parts (iii) and (iv) in particular. The task type relies on candidates' understanding of synonyms or synonymous phrasing and this would be an ideal area for development in centres.

### Part Two

#### Q6 Hat das Radio noch Zukunft?

Question 6 targets grades B, A and A\* and is therefore more demanding. Answers are assessed first of all for communication of correct information, and then a global mark is awarded for the quality of the German. Whilst targeted lifts from the text are allowed, candidates should be aware that such lifting will have an impact on the mark awarded for the quality of their language. When relying on the language in the text, candidates should be careful to lift judiciously and not include all kinds of extraneous material.

Candidates should also be aware of the 'order of elements' rule. Thus, if one mark is available, only one piece of information will be assessed – the first answer candidates give. Candidates need to give precise answers which contain all relevant detail to answer the question set

Close and careful reading is required here – of both the text and the questions. Unfortunately, some scripts showed evidence of superficial skimming only. However, on the whole candidates were able to communicate their answers effectively, if not grammatically accurately.

a. Most candidates enjoyed success here. Targeted lifts from the text were well deployed.

b. This question led to mixed outcomes and it was not always clear whether candidates had really understood the word *Nachteil*. Answers often compared listening to the news in the car with listening to the news at home or offered truisms, which did not relate to the text such as *you can't take the TV in the car*. Other answers did not really address the question as set such as *man muss nicht zu Hause bleiben, um Radio zu hören*. In many instances, candidates lifted the text verbatim but did not omit the crucial *nicht* e.g. *man muss nicht zu Hause bleiben*.

c. This proved to be a discriminating question. Many candidates did not state the trend expressed in the text that *immer weniger Leute hören Radio* but gave somewhat imprecise responses that included references to the fact that the younger generation prefer listening to Internetradio and/or Podcasts or a more general statement such as *mehr Leute hören Radio im Auto*. References to radio becoming louder indicated some misunderstanding of the word *laut* in the context *laut Statistik*.

d. This question was intended to be more accessible and indeed proved to be so. The majority of candidates identified the correct answer from the text and usually offered all three possible answers - albeit with incorrect verb agreement or not changing *liest, sieht* etc. to agree with *Leute* in the question as opposed to *Generation* in the text. Examiners allowed this for the reading comprehension mark, of course, but this was then reflected in the mark awarded for language.

e. Closer reading and attention to detail were required here and this question proved challenging for many who were happy just to skim and scan. This was not enough to gain the 2 marks available. Whilst many candidates were able to pick out at least one of the two positive aspects, they often did not answer in sufficient detail, e.g. they conveyed the notion of *Musiktitel kaufen und herunterladen* but missed *per Mausklick* or *sofort*. This detail was required for the mark. Candidates should be aware that since this whole questions targets a range of grades, some sub-questions will require in their answers evidence of a closer understanding of the detail of the text.

f. A demanding question which differentiated well. It was necessary to read this question carefully before answering. Many candidates went straight for a lift from the text and came up with answers such as *Leute, die weit weg von zu Hause wohnen* without considering the importance of *Radiosendungen aus dem Ausland* in the question. Candidates seemed to find the second possible answer easier to identify and convey. Weaker candidates just gave the lift from the text *man kann Radiostationen aus aller Welt und in jeder Sprache hören* which did not address the question at all. From the language aspect, only the stronger candidates were able to formulate their answers in a grammatically accurate way.

g. This question also led to mixed outcomes. There was much direct lifting of *wenn man etwas Interessantes im Radio verpasst hat* - which attracted the mark, of course. A significant number gave answers such as *wenn man etwas Interessantes hören will* or *wenn das Radio langweilig ist* or answers along the lines of when you are out jogging/running. All answers which seem perfectly plausible but are based simply on their own prior knowledge and could not be rewarded. Others again lifted the incorrect sentence from the text *das ist eine Art Radiosendung zum Herunterladen*.

h. There was much success here and candidates tended to use a subordinate clause with a partial lift *weil es bis jetzt keinen Internetanschluss im Auto gibt*.

Knowledge and application of language

Scores were variable, as might be expected, but only in rare cases was communication hindered by poor and inaccurate language. Very many candidates

relied on the original text – this is fine in terms of communicating understanding of the text but it will limit the language mark. Those who preferred to use their own independent language tended to do so skilfully and accurately.

## Section C

Option (c) was the most popular option – attracting approximately 40% of the entry – with option (b) in second place but followed closely by option (a). All three titles offered candidates guidance in the structuring of their writing via bullet points. It is essential that candidates make sure they cover all the bullet points as these determine the content. Any omissions will be reflected in the mark for Communication and Content. Best practice indicates that covering the bullet points in the order given is advisable.

To access the top marks, candidates should be able to link the concepts within their essay so that it forms a coherent whole rather a sequence of disparate episodes. To achieve this coherence, candidates should be encouraged to use linking words such as *außerdem*, *jedoch*, *leider* more confidently, as well as a range of adverbial phrases such as *vor zwei Jahren*. For the most part there was an over-reliance on simple sentence structures and attempts at subordination tended to focus on the use of *weil* or sometimes *obwohl* with the verb *ist*. It is important to use a range of tenses and verb forms, show evidence of a confident use of a variety of more complex structures and lexis. High scoring responses were typified by this but in general, the range of language used and the levels of accuracy achieved were variable. Examiners identified word order, gender of nouns and adjectival endings as areas for development in this regard.

Candidates should observe the word count for the essay: those who submit shorter responses will not be able to access the full mark. Essays which exceeded 150 words are not penalised but there were, in fact, some long and at times repetitive essays which were self-penalising as the quality of language tended to deteriorate after the 150 words. Candidates should be aware that it is possible to access the full mark range with a piece of writing of no more than 150 words which is well written, addresses all the bullet points relevantly and includes a range of vocabulary and structure.

a) Here the most successful pieces of writing were well structured and coherent: they covered the bullet points in the order given, with a paragraph for each bullet point and the ideas successfully linked, especially those in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet points. Weaker candidates tended to write more general pre-learnt sentences e.g. *man muss ... recyceln*, *alle Leute müssen Müll trennen* rather than addressing the *Sie* in bullet points 1 - 3. On the other hand, some more able candidates gave detailed exhortations about what everyone should do to help the environment but omitted to detail their own contribution. On the whole, candidates commanded a pleasingly specific knowledge of vocabulary about environmental matters.

Ideas in bullet 1 included recycling bottles, paper, tins and cans, batteries etc. and switching off lights, TVs, computers etc. when leaving the room or the house. Cycling or taking the bus instead of driving by car were also popular. In

many cases, bullet 2 covered the same list of ideas as in bullet 1 but here candidates had not done these things. Some development was achieved by adding that in the past the candidate had not taken *Energiesparen* or *Umweltschutz* seriously or had found them boring. A good many said what they had done in the past but failed to say exactly why it was bad. Some candidates were more imaginative in bullet 3 and mentioned solar panels for the house, energy saving light bulbs, hybrid cars or working with an environmental group. Bullet 4 was well answered by some but most stated merely that the environment was important without offering any reasons.

b) This question was chosen by a wide range of candidates. Some had problems responding to the bullet points as set: *Ihren letzten Geburtstag* was ignored in favour of birthdays from years ago. *Warum es die beste Geburtstagsfeier war* was overlooked in favour of stating simply that it was the best. In addition, there was a high incidence of candidates trying to incorporate into this essay pre-learnt vocabulary and phrases from other topics such as my best holiday, my dream job, my favourite food etc. Whilst many candidates managed to link such elements successfully into the description of the birthday celebration such that irrelevance did not become an issue, others were less skilful. When addressing the final point many wrote about what they would do if they were rich but made no reference to the possibility of winning the prize. In some cases the €1000 seemed to stretch very far indeed with several family members going on extensive trips abroad.

Structures and vocabulary deployed were mostly predictable e.g. *ich bin/wir sind ... gegangen, ... geschwommen, ich habe/wir haben ... gegessen, ..getrunken, gekauft, getroffen* usually with correct forms and syntax but sometimes inconsistent. Where candidates were able to manipulate the language there were some excellent essays.

c) This was the most popular choice, as already stated, and very many candidates acquitted themselves well here. However, some candidates often produced a larger amount of detail about their family than information addressing the other 3 bullet points all put together. Whilst it is not necessary to address all bullet points in equal measure, it is a fact that different bullet points elicit different ideas and structures – leading to detail and range. In addition, examiners read some very pedestrian and basic descriptions of families. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> points tended to be less developed as candidates undertaking this task found it more difficult to express opinions and reasons. In addition, *wie* appeared not to have been understood by many, but those reasons for why they did or did not get on with their family ranged from the basic *immer nett und sympathisch* to quite advanced descriptions of why they were all on the same wavelength. *Neulich* was missed by a substantial number who described holidays from last or previous years and here again, some candidates tried to incorporate pre-learnt vocabulary and phrases from other topics. These focussed on activities with the family that were *umweltfreundlich* or *gut für die Gesundheit* or had something to do with *einkaufen*. Many went on to elaborate future plans with their family, which was not part of the question. The best answers on the final bullet point made pleasing and indeed heart-warming reading, but many reasons given were very basic.



Whilst many used a range of structures and lexis, including e.g. past tenses, subordination, and infinitive clauses with ease, others struggled with gender of family members, verb agreements, word order and adjectival endings. These would represent areas for development

Examiners felt the paper reflected the interests of young people and offered all candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in German.

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Order Code UG032315 Summer 2012

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