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GCSE in German (4GN1/02R)

Unit 2R: Reading and Writing

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Examiner Report for 4GN1 02R 2022

Outline: Paper 2 is the Reading and Writing component of the International GCSE with the first assessment having taken place in 2019. The paper constitutes 50% of the total marks for the International GCSE whilst the total number of marks for the paper is 80, with 40 marks for reading and 40 marks for writing. The assessment is through a 1-hour and 45-minute examination with the paper set by Pearson and externally marked by examiners.

The paper assesses reading and writing skills in separate sections across five topic areas:

- Home and abroad
- Education and employment
- Personal life and relationships
- The world around us
- Social activities, fitness and health

The **reading section** comprises the first five tasks where candidates are required to convey their understanding of written German through a series of five reading tasks, each based around a collection of short texts or a longer single text.

The first task is assessed through multiple choice answers (6 marks), the second task is a multiple-choice gap-filling exercise (6 marks) and the third task is a multiple-choice question (8 marks).

The fourth task is based on a literary text which consists of a short, adapted extract from an authentic source appropriate to this level. Candidates have to give short answers to prompts in German. (10 marks)

The fifth task is based on an authentic German text with questions in German which require the candidates to answer in German. (10 marks)

The overall level of difficulty increases from the first task to the fifth task.

The **writing section** comprises three tasks, two writing tasks and a third grammar-based task.

The first writing task is short, and the candidate are asked to write 60-75 words, including four prescribed words or short phrases. Candidates are being assessed in two sections: 1) Communication and content; 2) Linguistic knowledge and accuracy. (10 marks)

The second writing task is longer than the first and contains an element of choice. The candidates are able to choose from three questions that are drawn from different topics, and need to write between 130 and 150 words in response to the question, addressing four bullet points. Candidates are being assessed in two sections: 1) Communication and content; 2) Linguistic knowledge and accuracy. (20 marks)

In the third grammar-based task candidates are asked to change the words in brackets so that they correctly fit the sentences. This involves the need to manipulate, for example, verbs and adjectives, into their correct verb form. (10 marks)

Grammatical accuracy, punctuation and spelling is being assessed in this section of the paper.

Report on Individual Questions

Question 1:

This question was well handled by almost all candidates. Many candidates scored full marks but Q1e) seemed to be the most challenging where candidates did not identify 'besser als' correctly and often gave the wrong answer C.

Question 2:

Most candidates have dealt well with this section and more than 50% of them received full marks. If any answers were incorrect, these were likely to be Q2a), Q2d) or Q2f). Candidates could not identify that 'brauche' in the text would require the adjective 'notwendig' in the question. For Q2d), it was important to work out that 'Hausarbeit' incorporated 'Kochen und Putzen'. In Q2f), 'gut gelaunt' needed to be linked to 'gern' to achieve the correct answer.

Question 3:

This question was very well handled and most candidates achieved high marks. Q3a) to Q3d) were almost always correctly answered with Q3f) being the most difficult part of the question. Candidates needed to identify that 'Ich will nichts falsch machen' corresponded to 'Ich will immer perfekt sein.' to gain a mark.

Question 4: Candidates on the whole have dealt well with the literary text. A good number of candidates scored full marks. Q4d) and Q4e) proved more challenging. Quite a number of candidates answered Q4d) with 'Mann und zwei Kinder' when the text does not mention 'Mann' at all. In Q4e) some candidates did not give enough detail and just wrote 'hohe' instead of 'hohe Häuser' which rendered the answer wrong. Q4f) and Q4g) were answered correctly by almost everyone.

Question 5: This question was answered very well by candidates this year. This might have been partly due to the decision to remove all words not in the Minimum Core Vocabulary list from the paper.

The main issue why candidates may not score a mark is the fact that they do not always answer the question which has been asked. It is vital that candidates read very carefully through the questions in order to establish what they need to address in their answer. There is at times too much untargeted copying from the text without manipulation which will not gain a mark. Answers in general should be short and candidates need to make sure that a question containing 'sie' cannot be answered with 'wir'.

More able candidates will have scored marks particularly for sections Q5a), Q5b), Q5c), Q5d), Q5e) and Q5g). In Q5f) candidates were often not precise enough or only mentioned one item so could not score two marks.

Question 6:

Communication and Content:

Good responses will be clearly communicated. For communication and content candidates will be able to respond to set questions with a developed response to the set bullet points. We will expect predominantly effective adaptation of language to describe, narrate and inform with opinions and justifications being expressed effectively.

Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy:

Linguistically, candidates will predominantly use accurate grammatical structures with mostly successful references to past, present and future events in response to the set bullet points. Errors might occur but rarely hinder clarity of communication.

Most candidates covered all four bullet points in their answers and many used different time frames to convey meaning. There were only a few candidates who did not seem to know that 'Kuchen' meant 'cake' rather than 'kitchen'. The bullet points were on the whole very accessible.

Some candidates write lengthy answers when they are asked to write 60-75 words. At times, the accuracy became weaker the longer the writing. Candidates should write distinct responses covering the four bullet points rather than producing a lengthy essay on the main topic.

Question 7:

Communication and content:

Able candidates should communicate detailed information relevant to the questions and topics, usually with extended sequences of writing. They will frequently use language creatively to express and justify a variety of individual thoughts, ideas and opinions. There will be a variety of vocabulary in order to vary expression for different purposes.

Linguistic knowledge and accuracy:

Linguistically, we expect able candidates to manipulate a variety of grammatical structures with some variety of complex structures. Grammatical structures will predominantly be accurate with mostly successful references to past, present and future events. Errors might occur but they rarely hinder clarity of communication.

All three tasks were chosen by a good number of candidates with task 7a being the most popular. None of the individual sections in any of the tasks posed a major difficulty in understanding for the candidates. It is advisable to start a new paragraph for every section of the response.

It was interesting to read about the hobbies of young people, their thoughts about the environment and their holidays and travel which seems to have been curtailed because of the pandemic.

Question 8:

The majority of candidates dealt well with this type of question. Most candidates scored around 8 out of 10 marks; the most difficult sections being Q8f) where few knew the correct past participle of 'tragen' and Q8j) where the correct answer 'kann' was at times wrongly given as 'könnte'.

Advice for teachers

In general, teachers should emphasise to candidates to read the questions carefully and read through the whole section before answering questions. For task 4, the literary text, only very short answers are required (often one word) and non-targeted lifts from texts will not gain a mark.

For task 5, candidates should be discouraged to copy whole untargeted sections of the text as this will not be rewarded with a mark. A number of these responses can also be given as one- or two-word answers, certainly not more than a short sentence. Candidates have to be aware that they might need to manipulate the subject pronoun in order to answer the question. Answering a 'sie' question with a 'wir' answer will not score a mark.

For task 6, candidates are required to use all four bullet points in their answer in order to be able to score the highest marks. They should also make sure that they use more than one time frame in order to score 5 marks out of 5.

For task 7, candidates also have to address all four sections in order to be eligible for the highest marks for communication and content. Examiners are looking for coherent and purposeful responses that show an excellent ability to express ideas in a logical sequence. Candidates are also encouraged to display an excellent range of vocabulary and grammatical structures with a secure use of at least three tenses.

In task 8, candidates are able to show their grammatical knowledge and need to read the sentences with the words in brackets carefully in order to produce the correct answer.

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