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## FOREWORD

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This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

# GERMAN

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## GCE Advanced Level

Paper 9717/01

Speaking

### General comments

There was a wide range of entry, from candidates who had a German-speaking parent or relative to candidates for whom German was a completely foreign language acquired at school. There were some very lively, interesting topic discussions and general conversations. The candidates who performed best sounded spontaneous, whereas there were some candidates who seemed to have over-rehearsed their topic and were awarded lower marks.

Teachers at Centres which have entered candidates for Speaking in the past seem now to be aware of the various requirements and regulations for this component, in particular the need for the candidate to ask the Examiner two questions in both the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation. On the whole, tests from these Centres were well examined and assessed.

There are two aspects, which need to be considered by new Centres:

- The candidate must ask at least two questions in the Topic Conversation and in the General Conversation. The Syllabus states: "Candidates are required to seek information and the opinions of the teacher." If the candidate fails to ask a question, no marks can be awarded under the heading "Seeking information and opinions". If only one question is asked, then the maximum mark is 3 out of 5. If no question is asked, then no mark can be awarded.
- All timings of the test should be adhered to. The Sustained Speech should last 3 minutes, the Topic Conversation 7 to 8 minutes and the General Conversation 8 to 9 minutes. At a few Centres, parts of the test lasted too long, and so the examination as a whole was allowed to run on much longer than the stipulated 20 minutes. At a few other Centres at least one part of the test was too short.

Individual Centre Reports will highlight any specific issues.

Paper 9717/02

Reading and Writing

### General comments

There was a wide range of performance, from candidates who wrote fluently and accurately in stylish German to those who had difficulty in answering the questions.

### Comments on specific questions

#### *Section A*

#### **Question 1**

Some candidates chose words, which were outside the lines 1-11 indicated in the rubric or which were not in the text. They should be urged to read the question carefully.

Answers to (a), (b) and (c) were those that were most frequently correct. Candidates had less success with (d) and (e).

**Question 2**

- (a) Some answers began: “[Eine ökologischere Agrarpolitik hat] **der** Streit (viel ernster ge... showing a lack of knowledge of case endings.
- (b) Some candidates omitted “den Bauern” from the correct answer: “[Mehr Licht und mehr Platz für Schweine werden] den Bauern von der Landesregierung vorgeschrieben”.
- (c) In some answers “die Kosten” was considered to be a singular noun, and therefore the verb was incorrectly put in the third person singular: “steigt”.
- (d) Most candidates gave the correct answer: “[Die Bauern werden] durch Klagen nicht weiterkommen.”
- (e) The idea that Germans were eating the same amount of meat was often not expressed. Candidates wrote: “[Man isst] viel Rindfleisch, wie vor BSE und MKS” or: “[Man isst] mehr Rindfleisch, als vor BSE und MKS”. Another error was to write “bevor” instead of “vor”. The correct answer was: “[Man isst] **ebenso** viel Rindfleisch, wie vor BSE und MKS”.

**Question 3**

There were two reasons why candidates lost marks in this question: the failure to mention enough relevant points and the inability to express the answers with original wording instead of lifting them from the text. The rubric for **Questions 3** and **4** states: *ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*. Where the candidate merely copies the relevant part of the text, no mark is awarded. Candidates of average to less than average ability in the language need more practice in the art of finding synonyms to express concepts. Good candidates were able to make most points and to gain 4 or 5 marks for language in this Exercise.

- (a) On many scripts the only point given was: “Die Regierung will, dass das Vertrauen noch stärker wird.” Few added to this sentence: “durch konventionelle Methoden”. Very few candidates made the third point: “Man kann der Qualität der Produkte wieder vertrauen.”
- (b) The majority of candidates gave the correct answer: “Welche Art von Produkten von den Verbrauchern favorisiert werden wird.”
- (c) Candidates realised that German consumers would have to spend twice as much on “Ökoprodukte”, but the following point was usually overlooked: “oder (wahrscheinlich) mehr, wenn sie biodynamische Lebensmittel oder freilaufende Hühner kaufen (wollen).”
- (d) The following points were often omitted: “weil es jetzt weniger Geld gibt”, and: “der Steuerzahler fragt, ob man so viel für die Landwirtschaft ausgeben sollte.”
- (e) The idea which few candidates understood was that, in the author’s opinion, the German government was hoping that there would be fewer farms in the future.

**Section B****Question 4**

The general comments on **Question 3** also apply here. However, candidates performed better on this question, perhaps because it placed more emphasis on environmental issues, with which they were more familiar.

- (a) Most candidates were able to gain one mark or both marks on this question. However, weak candidates gave irrelevant answers.
- (b) Only the most able candidates were able to make more than three correct points out of five. The actual points mentioned varied from one script to another.
- (c) Weak candidates wrote answers about protecting nature, which were taken from the first sentence of the correct paragraph: “Nicht die Produktion ist entscheidend, sondern ...”. They did not read far enough. Some of those who did read up to the right point in the text incorrectly assumed that it was a matter of raising money, whereas it was about agreeing upon rules to be followed for giving money to farmers: “um neue Regeln für die Gelder zu befolgen.”

- (d) As in **Question 4 (b)**, only the most able candidates were able to make enough correct points. In fact, once more the actual points mentioned varied from one script to another. For questions worth more than two marks, candidates should be urged to check that they have answered the question completely, in other words to ensure that the total of the points they have made is equal to the number of marks available for the question.
- (e) Candidates recognised that East European farmers were ecologically-minded and effective, but few were able to explain that these farmers were waiting to occupy a lucrative corner of the German market.

### Question 5

The essential task is to summarise the two texts with original wording, according to the question set. Ten marks out of 20 are awarded for this aspect, as is stated on the Question Paper. Then the candidate is asked to give his or her own opinions on the issue for 5 marks. Indeed, some very able candidates express their own views whilst summarising the texts, in order to avoid repeating details.

It is important to organise the response like a mini-essay in order to fit everything in to the stipulated 140 words. The answer is cut off at around 150 words or at the end of the sentence after 140 words is reached, and no further marks can be awarded for the remainder. A fair number of candidates wrote at great length and failed to mention enough points in their first 140 words.

Some gave their own opinions with little regard for the set passages, thus losing most of the 10 content marks available. A few summarised the passages very well but gave little personal response to the texts, thereby gaining only one or two marks out of 5.

Finally, 5 marks are awarded for language. For candidates who had properly planned their response to this question, language marks awarded here were broadly comparable to those awarded in **Questions 3 and 4**. However, some appeared not to have devoted adequate time to this exercise or forgot to check their answer. Others wrote too much without regard to accuracy. On these scripts more errors appeared than in previous exercises.

Paper 9717/03

Essay

### General comments

All questions were attempted. For 9717 candidates, the spread across all titles was very even, with some preference for **Question 1**, *Ausländer in Deutschland*. Many 8683 candidates also chose **Question 1**, but showed a strong preference also for **Question 6** on *Familie*. There was only a small number of linguistically very weak essays. Problems were encountered particularly with items of key vocabulary, for example, 'education', 'adaptation', 'attitude', 'direction'. The soft option for candidates in such cases is to create a Fremdwort, e.g. Attitude. Since the topics which will feature in the Exam Paper are announced in the Syllabus, one would expect candidates to prepare themselves by making sure they are acquainted with such key items of lexis. There were frequent errors with plural forms, especially *Unfälle*, *Probleme*, even (writing about the family) *Kinder*. This latter problem was no doubt provoked by the use of the dative plural in the essay title.

Other errors occurred with the use of the comparative (*mehr frei* rather than *freier*), and in confusions between the usage of *bevor* and *vorher*.

Previous Reports have pointed out that titles set are intended to provoke discussion, and that this is not helped when candidates state their conclusions at the outset. There are still essays which start with the statement, *Ja, meiner Meinung nach...*, thus excluding any need for making a case. The main criticism of many essays is that they fail to construct an argument that sets out the issues and arrives at a conclusion. There is a tendency to rely on generalised statements which are not supported by evidence.

**Comments on specific questions****Question 1**

*Welche Probleme gibt es für Ausländer in Deutschland?*

Candidates need to focus quite specifically on the question asked. A number of answers provided historical background and other information that was not brought into line with the specific request to talk about problems faced by *Ausländer*. Many candidates wrote good answers drawing attention, particularly, to language problems, issues of integration into society, resentment and hostility from right-wing groups etc. Some essays were content to describe the problems, but others did attempt to evaluate the issues and go beyond simple description.

**Question 2**

*«Es gibt immer mehr Aggressionen in großen Städten, aber niemand ist bereit, in solchen Situationen dem Überfallenen zu Hilfe zu kommen.» Was denken Sie persönlich über dieses Problem?*

This was the least popular of all the essays set. The answers were thoughtful, and sometimes illustrated by personal experience.

**Question 3**

*Wir erfahren fast jeden Tag durch die Medien von Kriegen, Naturkatastrophen, Hungersnöten und Unfällen. Meinen Sie, dass die Welt immer gefährlicher wird? Oder kann man von Überinformation und Panikmache sprechen?*

The general view was that the media have to fill the pages of newspapers or find pictures for the screens, and that bad news is more interesting than good. Therefore, it was felt to be true, in some senses, that the media are responsible for generating vast amounts of information about crises. Nevertheless, famines and catastrophes have always occurred, even before they were so extensively reported. The media cannot therefore be blamed for the actual events.

**Question 4**

*Der reiche Tourist findet sich in den Entwicklungsländern mit Armut konfrontiert. Was sollte seine Einstellung zu dieser Armut sein?*

This title produced mixed opinions. There was uncertainty as to whether tourism, in these circumstances, was a good thing, because it brings money to poor countries, or whether such money never reached the poorest anyway. Some candidates felt that it was a good thing for rich tourists to be confronted with poverty they could not imagine when at home.

**Question 5**

*«Die Gesundheit schätzt man erst, wenn man sie verloren hat.» Sind Sie auch dieser Meinung?*

The title produced some rather rambling essays, sometimes anecdotal and straying from the central issue.

**Question 6**

*Wie haben sich Beziehungen zwischen Eltern und Kindern während der letzten 50 Jahre verändert?*

This was a popular title, which produced some interesting personal reflections about relationships within families. However, it was also a title which led to a good deal of generalisation and statements with no supporting evidence. Perhaps this is inevitable when candidates can only be expected to guess at what family relationships were like 50 years ago. The general opinion put across was that families used to be rather rigidly controlled and lacking in successful interpersonal contact. Nowadays, it was claimed, parents have closer contact with their children and talk to them more. It might be possible to make exactly contrary statements, and candidates should at least try to see both sides of the question, even if their own experience is limited.

<p><b>Paper 9717/04</b></p>
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<p><b>Texts</b></p>
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**General comments**

The weaknesses in candidates' essays were the ones that Examiners report on every year:

**Focus on the terms of the question**

Candidates fail to engage with the terms of the question set and to focus on the issues raised by the question. Thus, in many cases a summary of the story was given, but not an answer to the questions set in the Paper. Candidates should be reminded that essay titles are worded with the greatest care, and the first task when tackling an essay is to decide what is the significance of the words used.

**Structuring the essay**

An essay should be seen, first and foremost, as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates start their essay by agreeing with the title, that is to say they begin with their conclusion. Other candidates just do not conclude in any noticeable way, their essay just stops.

**Storytelling**

It must be clear from the published criteria for marking the essay that simple retelling of the story gains low marks. Obviously, candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the story, but this must be tied in to the title of the essay, and evidence from the book must be *relevant* to the title. A candidate gains few marks if their knowledge of the text is not examined critically in the light of the question asked.

**Length**

Some candidates' answers were too short. In many cases what was written indicated that higher marks could have been achieved, if the candidate had carried on with their argument. A small number of candidates wrote two essays rather than three.

**Language**

Many candidates lacked the ability to produce language suited to express an appropriate argument. Often the essays were difficult to follow because of weaknesses in lexis and grammar.

**Comments on specific questions****Section 1****Question 1**

Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*

A small number of candidate chose this text and answered **(a)**. They showed good knowledge of Iphigenie's story and conflict, expressed their arguments well and made good use of the passage.

**Question 2**

Frisch, *Biedermann*

- (a)** Candidates know the play well and sustained good arguments about Gottlieb Biedermann's behaviour in the extract as well as in the rest of the story.
- (b)** This question involved a discussion of the stupidity of some people which may lead to their ruin. Most candidates argued well how Frisch criticised some people's attitudes through the character of Gottlieb Biedermann.

**Question 3**

Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*

- (a) Most of the candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the points raised in the questions well. However few went beyond simply quoting from the text and story telling. Most candidates had understood the significance of the stranger in the extract, but not all of them continued to explain clearly enough where in the story this figure appears again and in which people.
- (b) Fewer candidates chose this question which involved discussing Aschenbach's moral decline throughout the story. This question was tackled well.

**Question 4**

Storm, *Der Schimmelreiter*

- (a) The candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the situation and Storm's narrative technique well.
- (b) Some good points were made, and on the whole it appeared that most candidates were able to argue and express their opinion well, with good reference to the book. A few candidates simply retold the story, without answering the question.

**Section 2****Question 5**

Andersch, *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund*

- (a)(b) A small number of candidates chose this text. The questions were answered well and good knowledge of the text was apparent. Even the more complex question (a) triggered interesting responses which were well presented.

**Question 6**

Brecht, *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*

- (a) Good answers gave examples of Azdak's decisions. Other candidates retold the whole story or only quoted one example of Azdak's way of applying the law, in the dispute about the child.
- (b) This question gave opportunities to deal with a complex quote in the title.

**Question 7**

Böll, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*

- (a) There was some difficulty in interpreting the requirements of this question.
- (b) A very popular question. Answers showed a good understanding of the text, although, in some essays the story of Katharina Blum was simply retold. Better answers discussed why Katharina's story could happen to any of us at any time. A few candidates did not refer to the story in detail, but wrote down their opinion about the press and journalists. In a couple of instances, the essay was more about Princess Diana than about Katharina Blum.

**Question 8**

Horváth, *Jugend ohne Gott*

- (a) Few candidates chose this question, but the answers showed a good understanding of the text and some good points were made. Interesting passages were quoted and used in well sustained arguments.
- (b) This question presented the opportunity to discuss the whole society under the Nazi regime in detail. This task, on the whole, was carried out quite well, with some good use of quotes and references to history. Good knowledge of life under the Nazi regime was displayed.