

GERMAN

<p>Paper 9717/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- The presentation should clearly relate to the culture or society of a German-speaking country but should also reflect the candidate's personal interests. It should last between three and four minutes.
- Candidates should ask the examiner at least two spontaneous questions in both the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation, and if necessary they should be prompted to do so.
- The test should be completed within twenty minutes and the two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each.
- The candidate and examiner should be equally audible to anyone listening to the recording, and the recording equipment should be tested beforehand and placed accordingly.
- Natural interchange between candidate and examiner in the conversations is preferable to prepared responses.

General comments

Nearly all candidates were appropriately entered at this level and the majority were well aware of the requirements of the speaking test. At some centres, candidates did not ask the examiner a minimum of two questions per conversation and were not always prompted to do so. They were thus unable to access all the marks available for Seeking Information. In general, candidates were responsive and nearly all were spontaneous, with very few relying on prepared responses. Most centres had a small number of candidates. Most used the mark-scheme correctly and fairly accurately. Some centres allowed the tests to last too long, thus risking tiring the candidates. Recording quality was usually very good, but at some centres either the candidate or the examiner was less audible, owing to incorrect placement of the recording equipment.

Specific comments on the sections of the examination

Section 1 (Presentation)

- If the delivery of the presentation is lively and confident, and ideas and opinions are evident, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- Presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks however, as they cannot be considered to have been well organised, as in the published mark-scheme.
- For a mark of five for pronunciation a candidate does not have to be a native speaker.
- A well-prepared candidate should be able to access at least 4 marks for Language. What is required is a "reasonable range" of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary, delivered "fairly fluently", and without ambiguity of meaning.
- There was a very good range of interesting, up-to-date or relevant presentation topics this year, including the following:

Die negativen Einflüsse der Medien, Globalisierung und die deutsche Wirtschaft, Selbstmord, Veganismus, Hitler, Handball, Kant, älter werden in Deutschland, Sport in der Schweiz, Kartoffeln, die Flüchtlingskrise and kulturelle Unterschiede.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- In this conversation the issues raised in the presentation should be followed up and discussed.
- Candidates should be able to defend any ideas and opinions already expressed and also ought to have prepared plenty of additional points. However, examiners should not expect them to know any specific factual information over and above what has been presented.

- Any issues more suitable for the General Conversation should be raised later in **Section 3**, provided that the main issues of the Topic Conversation are not returned to.
- The questions candidates ask the examiner to seek information should be as varied as possible. „Was denken Sie?“ or „Sind Sie der gleichen Meinung?“ are useful questions, as they can move the conversation along, but a wider range is expected for a maximum mark of five.
- If a candidate asks only one question during a conversation, the maximum mark for Seeking Information is three.
- A maximum of three marks should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but not more complicated ones.

Section 3 (General Conversation)

- This section should be distinct from **Section 2**. It should not be shorter, but of a similar length to the Topic Conversation at around eight minutes.
- The examiner should clearly inform the candidate that the Topic Conversation is over, and should introduce a completely different topic for the General Conversation. At least two different topics should be covered in this section.
- Personal details, such as the candidate's future and interests, could feature briefly, but it is essential to move on fairly swiftly to more complex and wider issues. This will allow the candidate access to the higher marks available for Comprehension and Responsiveness or Providing Information and Opinions.
- Open questions by the examiner are more effective than closed ones and will encourage the required level of response from candidates. Brief questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* are particularly useful.
- It should not be expected that the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the examiner, perhaps a topic of current affairs. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with, or uninformed about, the original topic suggested, it would be better to switch quickly to a different topic.

GERMAN

<p>Paper 9717/22 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key message

- In **Question 5**, students should be reminded to keep their summary brief and precise without going into too much details in order not to exceed the word limit.

General comments

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (Working from home compared to working in an office). They then answered vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**. In **Questions 3** and **4**, candidates answered comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates were asked to summarise the two texts with reference to the advantages and disadvantages of working from home/in an office and then to briefly give their own opinion.

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of this paper and showed a good understanding of the two texts as demonstrated by the answers to **Questions 3 – 5**. Some candidates wrote confidently using their own words but others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This could not be credited. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates coped well with this question.
- (b) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) Many candidates coped well with this question. Some candidates gave the verb *zunehmen* instead of a noun which could not be credited.
- (d) Most candidates coped well with this question.
- (e) Nearly all candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates coped well with this question and the majority answered correctly, using an infinitive with *zu*.
- (b) Many candidates had problems with this question and did not manage to use the correct noun 'Organisation'.
- (c) This question was usually answered correctly and candidates recognized *abholen* as a separable verb.
- (d) A significant number of candidates struggled to use the correct adjective ending.
- (e) Many candidates did not know the correct past participle for *anbieten* and answered incorrectly.

Question 3

- (a) Almost all candidates answered this question correctly.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly but could not be awarded full credit as they did not give enough detail. There is not only a lack of skilled workers in Germany, but it is also important that working from home means you do not have to move.
- (c) Most candidates did not gain full credit as they did not mention all of the relevant details.
- (d) Most candidates gained at least partial credit. In order to obtain full credit, it was necessary to mention the fact that employees were more motivated and more productive, and also that they work longer hours when working from home.
- (e) This question was mostly answered correctly. Some candidates did not give enough details to gain full credit however.

Question 4

- (a) The majority of candidates coped well with this question and gained full credit.
- (b) This question was mostly answered correctly, and candidates identified at least three things that make working in an office 'uncool' with many candidates giving four details instead of three.
- (c) Most candidates identified the three details necessary here to gain full credit.
- (d) Some candidates struggled with this question as the answer was not directly in the text – candidates had to use their own words to explain the quote.
- (e) A significant number of candidates coped well with this question, with many giving additional details.
- (f) This question presented some difficulties for some candidates as they found it hard to identify the relevant passage from the text.

Question 5

Most candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify various advantages and disadvantages of working from home or in an office. Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit as any points after the 150-word cut-off will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary and candidates should be discouraged from rephrasing points of the text. Instead they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5(b)**, the majority of candidates were able to give a well-founded opinion on the topic. Many candidates supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience.

GERMAN

<p>Paper 9717/32 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most confident about;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, supported with examples, coherently structured and well informed;
- use German which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrating a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

Most essays were coherently argued with a suitable introduction and conclusion and were of an appropriate length. The strongest essays demonstrated insight, and opinions were backed up with well-chosen evidence.

Many candidates had an excellent command of German. Most also showed an impressive vocabulary, both general and topic-specific. Their language was usually fluent but sometimes lacking in precision. There were a number of candidates who formed their letters so indistinctly that many words were difficult to decipher.

Common errors included:

- a lack of punctuation;
- a lack of capitalisation of nouns;
- incorrect but phonetic spelling;

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Was sind die Konsequenzen, wenn Familien nur ein Kind haben? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

Most candidates restricted themselves to the personal and financial consequences within the family. A few saw the potential in the title for a more ambitious treatment and widened out the discussion to the consequences for the wider society and even for nations.

Question 2

Stadtbewohner und Landbewohner haben kein Verständnis für einander, weil ihre Leben nichts gemeinsam haben. Finden Sie das auch?

Candidates who chose this title generally acknowledged that country dwellers and city dwellers had different lifestyles but thought that any lack of understanding was probably superficial.

Question 3

Wenn man wirklich an etwas glaubt, ist es unmöglich tolerant zu sein. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

The few candidates who chose this title to write about approached it in different ways but generally produced thoughtful essays.

Question 4

*„Meiner Meinung nach ist man als Tourist zu beschützt. Als ich jung war, hat man beim Reisen mehr erlebt“
Harald, 65 Jahre alt. Stimmen Sie mit Harald überein?*

Candidates tended to agree with Harald. They discussed the phenomenon of all-inclusive holidays and the speed and comfort of modern travel to prove their case but pointed out that individual travel was still possible and had become more accessible.

Question 5

Das letzte Jahrhundert hat fast kein kulturelles Erbe hinterlassen. Teilen Sie diese Meinung

This title had the potential to be very wide ranging and some candidates found it difficult to get the balance right between sweeping generalisation and detailed illustration.

GERMAN LITERATURE

Paper 9717/42
Texts

General comments

In this section of the examination candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Candidates who did well on this paper were able to show good knowledge of the text, choosing good examples to illustrate points made and structuring their arguments well. They also linked the points made back to the focus of the essay title. The majority of candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to organise their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

Occasionally candidates gave irrelevant answers to the questions and organised their essays incoherently in German.

A few candidates with near native fluency wrote superficial essays and relied on their linguistic ability but did not appear to have prepared appropriately for the exam.

A few candidates' command of German was poor to the point where it was difficult to derive meaning from their answers and in some cases hand-writing was almost illegible.

Labelling and layout: Candidates labelled their work correctly. Clear paragraphing throughout the essays was linked to a more organised and structured approach in the writing and therefore to a better analysis.

Following instructions: A very small number of candidates did not answer the required three questions. This appears to have been because they ran out of time. Similarly, some candidates answered one part of a two-part question well but not the other, resulting in an overall lower mark. Candidates should be reminded that it is important to give due consideration to both parts of a question.

A few candidates misunderstood questions about text excerpts and wrote about the drama general when the question required them to discuss the excerpt on the question paper. Candidates should be encouraged to read questions very closely in order to understand what is asked.

It is not permitted to answer two questions on the same text. Three different books have to be covered, one from each of the two **big sections** and a third book from either of these sections. It is advisable that candidates decide on the questions they wish to answer before they start writing and ensure they have chosen books from both sections. Apart from those few who only answered two questions, candidates addressed these requirements.

All three essays should have a length of about 500 to 600 words each to allow candidates to make a variety of points relating to the questions of their choice. Quite a few answers were significantly shorter and therefore candidates penalised themselves by not including enough detail to access the higher marks.

Focus on the terms of the question: The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide what is expected of them. A generic, pre-learnt essay or an accumulation of knowledge listed in the answer does not constitute a good essay, however accurate the knowledge may be. Candidates are advised to copy down the question and clearly label their own work. They should then refer back to the question in order to ask themselves whether each point they are making is relevant and contributes to a good answer.

Structuring the essay: An essay should be seen 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 omitted the introduction or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion. Other candidates did not

come to any conclusion, either because they seemed to have run out of time, or because the essay was poorly structured or argued throughout.

Clear paragraphing is crucial for a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. Some candidates wrote whole essays without any paragraphing at all, which sometimes made it difficult to identify points made. Often this also led to unnecessary repetitions and as no new ideas were introduced, which limited the credit that could be earned. Stronger candidates made relevant points in separate paragraphs, supported these with detailed examples and evaluated or analysed what they had read and said.

Language: Many candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write essays that could be followed easily. Others struggled considerably with grammar and word usage, and a small number of essays were grammatically and linguistically so poor that it was difficult to make out what the candidate was saying. It was noticeable that even candidates with a very secure grasp of vocabulary and grammar made spelling mistakes not expected at this level.

Good practice for candidates:

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question.
- Make sure you read each question carefully and identify what is actually being asked.
- Divide your time into three equal chunks and start working on the first essay.
- Label each essay with the section and question number, do not forget sub-questions.
- Think about paragraphs: present one main idea and supporting evidence per paragraph.
- Evidence does not have to be a precise quote but should show that you have read the text in detail, not just a summary of the plot (or watched the film, if available).
- Make sure you have an introduction, a main part and a conclusion in your essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: *herunter*, not *runter*, *etwas können* instead of *was drauf haben*, or *verärgert* instead of *genervt* or *sauer* are examples of this.
- Capitalise all nouns. Do not separate compound nouns.
- Do not use any English words.
- When you have finished writing, read through each essay and check for spelling mistakes. Spell names of characters correctly and make sure they belong to the text you are referring to.

Examples of particular weaknesses:

- ß and ss mixed up, the former still required after long vowels and diphthongs, the latter after short vowels.
- Ä and e mixed up as in *Probläme* instead of *Probleme*.
- Apostrophe *s* applied when this is not done in German, such as in, Faber's Charakter' instead of 'Fabers Charakter.'
- Nouns not always capitalised; compound nouns sometimes separated, such as in *Welt krieg* instead of *Weltkrieg*.
- Incorrect pronouns or pronoun endings: *sorgen für sein Sohn* (correct: *seinen Sohn*); *hat jemandem, der er liebt, verloren* (*hat jemanden, den er liebt, verloren*); *er redet über ihn* (in the context where it occurred it should have been *über sich*).
- Register/style: the language was sometimes too informal. There is a definite issue to be addressed here, relating to candidates not being able to differentiate between spoken/colloquial and written/formal language, such as *rum* instead of *herum* or *runter* instead of *herunter*. More serious still is colloquial language that makes candidates' essays instantly unacademic such as *genervt sein* instead of for example *verärgert sein*, *die Aussage ist Schwachsinn* instead of *unglaublich*, or *Maik bekommt es nicht auf die Reihe* instead of *Maik schafft es nicht* or *es ist Maik nicht möglich*.
- Anglicisms – phrases: often candidates who had weaknesses in their vocabulary used English phrases and translated them into German **word by word**: *in meiner Meinung* instead of *meiner Meinung nach*; *in 1931* instead of just *1931*; *sie lassen* instead of *sie verlassen*; *es handelt über* instead of *es handelt von*; *hören über* instead of *hören von*; *einen Freund machen* instead of *einen Freund gewinnen*; *sein Leben wechselt sich* instead of *sein Leben verändert sich*.
- Words made up from the English meaning: *relaxiert* should be *entspannt*; *influenzen* should be *beeinflussen*; *befreundlichen* should be *sich anfreunden mit*. Most notably *Engineur* should be *Ingenieur*.
- Wrong formation of adjectives, verbs or nouns: *stressvoll* instead of *gestresst*, *künstlich* instead of *künstlerisch*, *abstößlich* instead of *abstoßend*, *erstaunend* instead of *erstaunlich*, *nutzvoll* instead of *nützlich*, *überkämpfen* instead of *bekämpfen*, *Wohlheit* instead of *Wohlsein*, *Vernünftigkeit* instead of *Vernunft*, *Wahnsinnigkeit* instead of *Wahnsinn*.

- Mixing up of related words: *beurteilen* instead of *verurteilen*, *verlieben* instead of *lieben*, *bewusstlos* instead of *bewusst*, *überraschend* instead of *überrascht*.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Dürrenmatt – Die Physiker

- (a) (i) Stronger candidates went beyond merely retelling the text passage. They located its place within the play and contrasted the common-place behaviour of Newton with the severity of what had just occurred – a murder. Weaker answers simply offered a summary of the excerpt.
- (ii) Stronger answers went beyond repeating what had already been said in response to (i). These candidates also presented specific points to illustrate Newton's insanity and proved each point with a range of examples rather than just listing a number of individual examples. Thus, the fact that Newton does not remember having murdered a nurse, and his subsequent statement that his murdering a nurse is different from someone else murdering a nurse, could be examples for delusion and derangement. Newton tidying up the room and his polite detached tone with the inspector in the face of murder could be examples of abnormal behaviour. Some weaker essays just listed what Newton said and did without explaining what was insane about it.
- (b) This question was only answered by a few candidates.

Question 2

Herrndorf – Tschick

- (a) (i) Most candidates summarised well and used their own words to say what the reader learns about the narrator Maik Klingenberg in the excerpt. Stronger candidates, in addition, analysed Maik's problems and linked his otherness, his lack of friends, and feeling boring and excluded with the experiences of many teenagers today.
- (ii) This question gave opportunity for comprehensive answers with lots of examples as Maik's situation changes significantly in the course of the book. At the same time, the large number of examples required candidates to structure their responses clearly. This could be done by following a chronological order or by clearly linking characteristics like courage or independence to situations in the book. Many candidates did this well. However, some candidates randomly listed changes that occurred without offering much analysis.
- (b) As with (a) (ii) candidates needed to be disciplined in their responses and ensure their answers had clear focus. Furthermore, while Maik's relationships with his classmates on the one hand and with Tschick on the other are fundamentally different, both relationships are not static, and this needed to be considered in the discussion. Weaker candidates ignored the changing nature of the relationships or did not argue their points tightly.

Question 3

Frisch – Homo Faber

- (a) (i) Almost all candidates were able to outline the characteristics in this excerpt that clearly set Faber apart from others such as his cold, analytical approach and his fascination with technology. Most candidates also pointed out that Faber puts the robot above people because it rules out human error and emotion.
- (ii) The majority of candidates successfully described Sabeth's incredulity at Faber's insistence on the superiority of robots. Stronger candidates analysed the dynamics between Faber and Sabeth in the excerpt, where Faber single-mindedly remains focused on his technological topic without paying

much attention to what might interest Sabeth. The relevance of this scene later on could be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand it could be said that Faber changes significantly in the course of his relationship with Sabeth in that he starts following her interests. For example, he pays attention to art and sees images in natural phenomena such as moonlit paths, black mountains and cypresses, the dawn, the breeze, or the surf of the sea. Similarly it could be suggested that he never stops to use logic and rationality to explain his actions or his life at large, meaning deep down he does not change. There were no wrong answers as long as the answers were well argued with lots of examples given.

- (b) While most candidates successfully outlined the topic of the excerpt, only stronger candidates used a nuanced approach in discussing the further development of the story and characters. Much ambiguity remains regarding Faber's character as until the end he clings to logic to explain life while at the same time he has opened himself up to creative experiences. Stronger responses showed a clearly structured argument with good examples that took account of these ambiguities.

Section 2

Question 4

Kehlmann – *Die Vermessung der Welt*

- (a) Only a few candidates chose this question.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question reasonably well. It offered scope for a richly illustrated argument that could confirm or dispute Humboldt's cruelty, or claim he was somewhere in between. Stronger essays distinguished between the cruelty Humboldt showed towards himself and the cruelty that he inflicted on others – the book contains many examples for both – concluding that the former should not be used to call Humboldt cruel. They also contrasted Humboldt's acts of cruelty with his acts of kindness, gave reasons for Humboldt's cruelty, and put it into the historical context, i.e. what is considered cruel today may not have been considered cruel at the time Humboldt lived. The strongest essays considered the different angles to Humboldt's personality and the context of the times.

Question 5

Klüger – *Weiter leben*

- (a) Candidates who answered this question generally gave simplistic responses, claiming that a place as inhumane as Auschwitz made it impossible for people to behave in a humane way. The act of kindness by a young Jewish warden, which saves Klüger's and her mother's life, or the adoption of an orphaned young prisoner by Klüger's mother, were examples of humanity in Auschwitz.
- (b) Most candidates were able to describe the mother well and talked about those qualities that enabled her and her daughter to survive the concentration camps. Few candidates pointed out the mother's paranoia, which is repeatedly highlighted by Klüger and which, significantly, saved their lives when they volunteered for a special work force at a selection in Auschwitz.

Question 6

Schlink – *Liebesfluchten*

- (a) Very few candidates answered this question.
- (b) Candidates successfully linked the titles to the contents of individual stories as the people or objects mentioned in the titles were central to the plots. 'Das Mädchen mit der Eidechse' was the most popular story. All candidates argued the titles were well chosen, and most did this convincingly. However, no candidates went beyond the obvious by making the counterintuitive and more imaginative argument that the titles did not do the stories justice. Such an answer might have highlighted the particular interpersonal dynamics that are present in the stories and transcend the titles.