

GERMAN

Paper 0505/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

There was a broad range of attainment in this year's paper. Although occasionally candidates omitted to perform a certain task, the vast majority of candidates had something to write in response to every question. Success depended in part on the ability to understand and produce written German, but also on the ability to read the question carefully and to work out what type of answer was required. The best candidates had clearly understood the texts and the questions and had been able to structure their responses effectively. They also produced varied and interesting answers in their own words.

The overall standard ranged from excellent to very weak; many candidates tackled **Question 3** most successfully and showed imagination and insight into the problem. They also wrote in the correct register and used a broad range of vocabulary.

Question 1 requires candidates to write a summary. The mark scheme credits points summarising one or both texts; linguistic analysis and own opinions are not called for in this exercise.

In **Question 2** candidates often provided the detail lacking in **Question 1** and then made valid points for the essay they had to write. In this task candidates produced some very interesting angles on the topic and were able to express a broad range of opinions.

Attention is drawn to the following, relatively frequently occurring errors:

- adjectives, comparatives and superlatives, e. g. *mehr unerfreulich* should be *unerfreulicher*
- when referring back to a noun previously used, e. g. *Der Urlaub..... Es ist* should be *Er ist*
- prepositions e. g. *in dem Artikel handelt es sich über* should either be *In dem Artikel handelt es sich um* or *Der Artikel berichtet über*; *Der Artikel dreht sich um*, not *von*, *in Strand* should be *am Strand*
- frequent misspellings, e. g. *unvergässlich*, *unerfräulich*, *ersätzen*, *stultzt* instead of *stolz*, *das* instead of *dass*
- lack of apostrophes when using more colloquial language, e. g. *reinziehn* should be *'reinziehen*, *was* should be *etwas* or *'was*
- adjectives used as nouns should have capital letters, e. g. *etwas Neues*, *nichts Schlimmes*
- generally speaking sentences should have a verb in them
- relative clauses should be separated by comma from their main clause

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

All candidates answered **Question 1** and found the texts by and large accessible. The quality of the summaries was patchy; some candidates produced excellent, well-structured summaries containing succinct comparisons between the texts, whereas others compared both texts by producing a linguistic analysis and giving their own opinions about both texts. The latter was not required and could not be credited.

In some cases candidates quoted directly from the text instead of using their own words – this is a practice to be avoided.

Some candidates were unsure who had said what in the second text and mixed up the names and the statements. A number of candidates omitted to mention the stereotypical traits of the Germans in detail and just mentioned clichés in general. Some summaries failed to mention that Germany was the country concerned.

Many candidates failed to observe that one comparison point was that in the first text German candidates had difficulties being positive about themselves and their nationality, whereas in the second text national candidates had difficulties finding something to be proud of.

Candidates tended to link right wing extremism straight to the NS-regime – an understandable connection to be made, but almost a piece of interpretation, rather than a summary.

The best candidates systematically summarised texts A and B and then compared both and highlighted differences.

Question 2

The answers to this question varied hugely in quality and indeed in quantity: some candidates barely managed 200 words and others wrote nearly 400 words.

For a few candidates it seemed difficult to express their ideas in intelligible German – often good ideas got lost in inadequate phrasing and poor grammar.

The top candidates clearly linked their answers to the stimulus texts and used the given information to structure their own work. Some candidates had original ideas and did not stick to Germany as a country – the USA and the Iraq war made for some interesting comments on how media and politicians do more to change our opinion about the character of a people than time, habits and customs.

In some cases the target audience of the talk was unclear – candidates got addressed as *Sie* and *Du* (mixed) or just *Sie* and *Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren* when normally *Liebe MitschülerInnen* would have been the correct form of address.

Clear paragraphing was not in evidence in all cases, although some candidates had added marks to indicate paragraphs as an afterthought.

The best candidates addressed their target audience correctly, used information from both texts to support their own arguments and added ideas of their own in the correct register. Their grammar and spelling were also very good.

Section B

Question 3

On the whole this task was successful and many varied answers were produced. Some candidates provided shorter answers than required which this led to very abrupt endings. The lower marks were scored by candidates who tended towards writing a generic essay about their holidays with no reference to the letter or to any ideal holidays. In some cases the language used was more than colloquial and bordered on rude slang (*'rumhängen'*, *keinen Bock haben*). Incomplete sentences and poor spellings frequently hindered communication.

The best candidates referred to the letter as a starting point and then contradicted or supported points made in the letter by using their own (often invented) experiences or describing their ideal holidays. It was good to see those candidates referring back to the newspaper letter right at the end of their own letter, as this gave their work a frame and added a nice finishing touch.

GERMAN - FIRST LANGUAGE

Paper 0505/03

Continuous Writing

General Comments

Candidates on this paper are being tested on their skill in continuous writing. They choose one topic from a list of nine to write about, in one of the following categories: imaginative, narrative or argumentative. This year again candidates generally displayed a good command of German, producing work that was enjoyable to read and demonstrating a pleasing capacity to incorporate a personal response in their work and give their opinion where required.

Candidates are directed to write between 350 and 500 words, though some nevertheless still produced essays that were far too long. This is not in candidates' best interests as they risk leaving themselves short of time for essential checking of language and content. It is helpful to candidates to write out in full the essay title they have chosen – some scripts were again submitted without any indication of this. Candidates need to be on the lookout for careless mistakes: omission of capital letters where needed, confusion between *das* and *dass* and *man* and *mann* are being overlooked quite frequently, as well as incorrect punctuation (use of commas) and selecting the correct tense. Overall control and presentation were of a fairly good standard, although poor presentation including legibility again affected some candidates' level of achievement.

The work of a relatively small number of candidates showed evidence that they were in fact second language candidates. The number of errors of a more or less serious kind was high here, for example: *fieleicht* meaning *vielleicht*, *lest* meaning *lässt*, *Fohrteile* meaning *Vorteile*, *taht* meaning *tat*. It is essential that rudimentary mistakes are identified and tackled as soon as possible. Some candidates could relatively easily have improved their performance had the incidence of simple errors in their work been lower.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die Vor- und Nachteile des Landlebens?

This question was the most popular essay title. Most candidates were able to write relevant and sensible answers, with some achieving sophisticated development of ideas resulting in confident, well structured essays. Weaker candidates made some careless mistakes, in grammar, spelling and punctuation, including *im Land* instead of *auf dem Land*.

Only a few candidates here submitted weak essays containing spelling and grammar mistakes and little relevant material.

Question 2

„Was für eine Welt wäre diese ohne Musik!“ Nehmen Sie Stellung zu dieser Aussage.

Candidates who wrote on this title generally produced work that demonstrated a very good command of German, although some work was let down by grammatically inaccurate endings, numerous spelling mistakes and elementary errors e.g. *das/dass*, *schprechen*, *forshbar* – meaning *furchtbar*, *langgeweit* meaning *gelangweilt*, *ehr* meaning *er*, *stehlen Sie vor* meaning *stellen Sie sich vor*.

Question 3

„Die Uhr schlug Mitternacht, und da passierte es...” Schreiben Sie weiter.

This was another reasonably popular title which allowed candidates to explore their imagination and make a genuine attempt at writing a story. There were some superb linguistically highly developed and coherent stories from stronger candidates. Some weaker candidates seemed to struggle to express themselves in simple written language. A small number of essays were too long while poor presentation making scripts difficult to read told against a few candidates.

Question 4

„Einfach riesig!” Bauen Sie diese Worte in eine Erzählung ein.

Some content lacked the imagination and inspiration that could be anticipated here. Where this was missing candidates might have been better advised to choose an alternative title. On the other hand, some candidates' enthusiasm for the story saw their language becoming a little confused: *...wir lachten bis die Wände klapperten; ...wir nahmen ein langes Frühstück; ...als es uns langsam langweilig oder eher gesagt unternehmungslustig wurde; ...auf ihrem Kopf sass ein Hut.*

Again there were some elementary spelling mistakes and basic grammatical errors, as well as examples of poor presentation due to handwriting.

There were relatively few examples on this question where creativity was matched by a clear sense of structure and accurate manipulation of language.

Question 5

Blicken Sie einmal in die Zukunft. Wie stellen Sie sich Ihr Leben im Jahre 2020 vor? Äussern Sie sich dazu.

There was evidence here of some strong linguistic capabilities. A number of candidates were able to select and use appropriate vocabulary and showed a thorough understanding of some more complex grammatical issues and syntax. Much work was clearly presented and organised.

Grammatical inaccuracy in some candidates' essays did however lead to slightly weaker marks, e.g. on gender, sentence structure and spelling: *wahre* meaning *wäre*, *wehsentlich* meaning *wesentlich*, *Eerde* meaning *Erde*, *stehts* meaning *stets*.

There were some rather confusing openings: e.g. *...ich würde die Nachteile eher als Vorteile sehen, und der Fakt, dass die anderen das nicht täte, als noch eins;...die abgeloffen sechzehn Jahr bin ich von kleines frisches Baby aufgewachsen zu einen grossen Knaben.*

Question 6

Bringen Sie in einer Form, die Sie selbst wählen, zum Ausdruck, welche Gefühle, Eindrücke oder Ideen das folgende Sprichwort bei Ihnen erweckt: „Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein.”

The small number of candidates who chose to answer on this essay demonstrated adequate control of vocabulary, syntax and grammar. There was evidence of confident and accurate writing, incorporating elements of the candidates' own style.

Question 7

Bereitet die Schule die Jugend genügend aufs Leben vor? Was meinen Sie dazu?

The essays inspired by this title either demonstrated significant aptitude or simply lacked lustre and inspiration, with thin content, and many grammatical errors.

Question 8

Die Olympischen Spiele: Was kann der Sport zur Völkerverständigung beitragen?

A small number of candidates chose this topic. Answers attempted a complex style of writing. However, presentation and a significant level of grammatical error again affected candidates' work.

Question 9

Ein Wochenende allein.

This was a relatively popular topic and provided an excellent opportunity for candidates to display their linguistic strengths and creative capabilities. There were some careless errors e.g. *Jugentliche, rufte, Kleinischkeiten, bekam*.

Some candidates struggled to reach a conclusion, searching awkwardly for words and phrases, whilst others wrote far too much. and the level of error tended to be correspondingly high, including spelling mistakes and omission of capital letters: *fon* for *von*, *foran* meaning *voran*, *sangte* meaning *sang*, *gibte* meaning *gab*, *tute die Wesche* meaning *tat die Wäsche*, *endschiden* meaning *entscheiden*.