

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/01

Reading

General comments

This is the third session of the revised IGCSE First Language syllabus. Paper 1, the Reading paper, consists of two extended passages. One passage invites candidates to answer comprehension questions and then both passages are summarised in **Question 2** of the paper.

On the whole, candidates did reasonably well in this paper. Most responded to both parts of the examination with extensive, well-written answers and, particularly in the first part, there were only a few examples of an incomplete response – almost all candidates answered most of the questions fully. Presentation was generally satisfactory, although some candidates' handwriting was difficult to decipher.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) A straightforward, warm up question which most candidates answered correctly. Very few candidates did not understand that Britain was included in the 21 countries involved in the study.
- (b) All candidates picked up that they had to mention **two** countries at least that had performed better than Britain in the UNICEF study: The Netherlands and Scandinavia (Sweden), Poland and the Czech Republic or, alternatively, the fact that all countries which participated in the study had done better than Britain.
- (c) The problems affecting young British people mentioned in the study were: alcohol abuse, early sexual encounters, teenage pregnancies, bullying, obesity and drug abuse, of which three had to be mentioned to score full marks. A few candidates referred to the fact that teenagers felt unhappy in their families, which did not answer the question asked, and a small number of candidates simply wrote that British youngsters were unhealthy, which was not specific enough.
- (d) Looking at the marks allocated for this question, candidates could deduce that two details had to be mentioned: Adults felt guilty and ashamed/helpless in the face of the problems their offspring were facing. The majority of candidates had no problems with this question.
- (e) Candidates were asked to compare poverty among British teenagers with the poverty of children in the Third World, to which the response was that, relatively speaking, British children were not poor. Some candidates wrote at some length in response to this question whereas a short answer only was required for the one mark allocated.
- (f) This question, about teenagers and mobile phones, likewise required a short answer from candidates: most teenagers have a mobile phone/they can all afford to have a mobile phone would have been sufficient. Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (g) This question – *Welche Aspekte werden bei der UNICEF Studie nicht erwähnt?* – proved more challenging than questions earlier in this exercise, as is to be expected. Most candidates managed to pinpoint in their response that the report on the study did not contain any details about younger children. Few candidates added the point that British young people today wanted to appear **interesting** when answering the questions put by the researchers carrying out the survey.

- (h) Most candidates mentioned the fact that British teenagers were not honest when answering questions (in contrast to their Dutch and Swedish peers), or refused to speak out openly about things such as drugs. Fewer candidates were able to read between the lines and point out that British young people's ironic and nonconformist approach falsified the picture given in the passage. Just a few candidates mentioned the fact that the honest answers given by young people in the Netherlands and in Sweden suggested that grown-ups there were respected.
- (i) The final question in this exercise asked candidates to identify things about young people in Britain today that the author judged to be positive, and most candidates were able to list several points though not in many cases the five points needed to gain full marks.

Most candidates mentioned the flourishing pop, art and fashion scenes in Britain and the fact that 81% of teenagers liked going to school. Fewer candidates mentioned that the rebellious streak in British teenagers was not always a bad thing. Some candidates made the point that in many instances the picture simply was not as bad as many people painted it. Other points made were that these young people would survive their current problems – and that they were, in fact, little different from how teenagers had always been, or than they were elsewhere.

It was interesting to see that most candidates managed to score at least three marks for this question, and that there was not one point in particular that proved hard to get. The material for the response to this question is intended to be drawn from the whole passage and candidates had realised this.

It was pleasing to note that candidates overall had labelled the questions properly and presented their work in a legible fashion. The level of language used when answering the questions was good or very good in the majority of cases, the only mistake to recur in most candidates' work was the omission of capital letters from nouns. Some candidates did quote at some length from the text which is not necessary in response to these questions nor can it be credited for language marks. Time spent on this could have been used more effectively for the summary question.

Question 2

The structure of responses to the summary question was generally sound. It was pleasing to note that fewer candidates than at previous sessions spent time analysing and interpreting the texts. However, a number of candidates did still include their own personal opinions rather than focusing on the texts. This is not part of a summary and in some cases detracted from otherwise good responses.

A number of summaries this year did not include the level of detail that would have scored more marks: the general statement, for example, that: *Es gibt Unterschiede bei der Bildung zwischen Jungen und Mädchen* is correct but needs to include an indication of what those differences are.

Some candidates quoted at length from the two passages and were able so to support the content points made. However, this can use up words needed to cover other points and can lower the language mark available if not enough of the candidate's own language has been produced.

It was encouraging to see that almost all candidates finished the summary in the allocated time and did not appear to have rushed their work. In a few cases, candidates had taken too long producing a detailed draft of their summary and then ran out of the time needed to include all of the points made in their draft in the final version. Some summaries fell significantly below the prescribed word count, meaning that marks for content and for language produced were inevitably lower than they might have been. Candidates who wrote a great deal more than the word limit of 250 words often repeated themselves unnecessarily and scored less well for structure than candidates who were more succinct.

A disappointing point to note at this session was the extent to which candidates moved away from the passages for summary to develop their own ideas on the topic of young people today. Reflections on candidates' own experience or of a speculative or philosophical kind may be interesting and correct, but may only be credited if they relate to the passages and to the summary question set.

Language marks were higher than at previous sessions, with no candidates struggling to express themselves in German, as indeed is to be expected on a First Language paper. Most candidates wrote in fluent, generally idiomatic and correct German, and handled the comprehension questions and the summary question appropriately. There were, however, two areas noted by the Examiner that would benefit from candidates' attention: past participles were often spelt the English way: *erwarted*, *bestreited*, *bedeuted* instead of *erwartet*, *bestreitet* and *bedeutet*, and capital letters on nouns appeared almost to have disappeared in some cases. Examples where the adjective was given a capital letter while the following noun had a small letter were quite frequent: *Die Britischen jugendlichen*; *Frühe schwangerschaften*, for example. As mentioned in previous reports, candidates used to texting and emailing without the use of capitals, do need to remember to use these in examination circumstances.

Some general language points noted in responses to **Questions 1 and 2**:

- confusion between *dass* and *das*;
- absence of adjective endings where required and problems with the comparative form: e.g. *mehr hilfsbereit* and *mehr rücksichtsvoll* instead of *hilfsbereiter* and *rücksichtsvoller*;
- use of incorrect preposition with verbs: e.g. *konzentrieren an* instead of *auf*; *handeln sich von* instead of *es handelt sich um* or *der Text handelt von*;
- plural nouns used with singular verbs and vice versa: e.g. *die Probleme besteht*; *die Altersklasse haben*;
- confusion between *keine* and *nicht*: e.g. *keine 81% mögen die Schule* instead of *81% mögen die Schule nicht*. *81% mögen die Schule* would of course have been factually correct.

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

General comments

The majority of candidates acquitted themselves well. There were some outstanding pieces of writing in which candidates handled German syntax well and used language that was flowing and idiomatic. However, there was, as usual, a wide spread of marks throughout the range. Candidates chose fairly evenly across the range of essay titles available. Time spent choosing titles that were of interest and matched the candidate's ability to express themselves effectively was as ever well spent.

A number of candidates were inconsistent in their use of capital letters on nouns. Punctuation, including commas and speech marks, was often not applied correctly. Some candidates had difficulty selecting the correct tense to use. As at previous sessions, there were signs of confusion between *man* and *mann*, and *das* and *dass*. A few candidates' grasp of word order was shaky.

Overall control of structure and presentation were of a fairly high standard. A small number of candidates submitted scripts with a significant number of errors, some minor, some more serious, e.g. *Ältern* for *Eltern*, *Schühler* for *Schüler*, *Gefülle* for *Gefühle*, *tregt* for *tragt*, *Notten* for *Noten*, *verschwämten* for *verschwommenen*, *Schmärtze* for *Schmerzen*, *vierlich* for *vielleicht*, etc.).

Candidates are advised to carry out detailed checking of the spelling of words in their essays before they hand them in.

Comments on specific questions

Erster Teil – Diskussion und Argumentation

Question 1 (a)

Muss ich alle Trends mitmachen, um „in“ zu sein? Was meinen Sie dazu?

Candidates' essays in response to this topic reflected their own strong views as well as being linguistically accurate. Arguments were generally clear and concise:

- *Wenn alle Menschen gleich wären, dann wäre zwar jeder „in“ und jeder hätte die gleichen tollen outfits, aber niemand wäre er selbst und niemand wäre etwas Besonderes.*
- *Wenn Leute über neue Trends reden, beziehen sie sich auf viele Bereiche im Leben; Trends liegen in der Musik, in der Mode – Trends gibt es überall!*

A few candidates' range of language and ability to develop this title were inadequate to the task with recurring errors on simple language, e.g. superlatives – *viel toller* instead of *am tollsten*. Scripts included a number of misspellings: e.g. *tuhn* for *tun*, *Weld* for *Welt* and incorrect use of idioms: *man sollte das machen*, *wozu man lustig ist* instead of *man sollte das machen*, *wozu man Lust hat*.

Question 1 (b)

Wäre ein fernsehfreier Tag pro Woche sinnvoll?

There were some good essays amongst those submitted with candidates demonstrating an effective range of vocabulary and insight into the topic:

- Auch Kreativität und sportliche Aktivitäten rücken mehr und mehr in den Hintergrund, wenn der excessive Fernsehkonsum anhält.
- Zu guterletzt wirft man vor allem Kindern und Jugendlichen vor, zu viel vor der Glotze zu sitzen. Im Grunde genaugunehmende fundierte These, auf die viele Statistiken der Vergangenheit und die Zukunft Gegenwart hinweisen.

There were frequent misspellings, e.g: *Intelligents* for *Intelligenz*, *abwechslungsreif*, meaning *abwechslungsreich*, *fehrn zu sehen*, meaning *fernzusehen*. There were also signs of confusion in choice of vocabulary, e.g.:

- ...ein hochauflösendes Fernsehen
- ...die das Fern durchgehend sehen
- ...das gucken von Fernsehen

Question 1 (c)

Sind Examen wirklich nötig oder verursachen sie nur Stress? Wie denken Sie darüber?

This was the most popular essay title and produced a wide range of performance from candidates. Most candidates demonstrated good command of German generally and were able to give negative and positive accounts of examination situations in everyday life. Some candidates appeared to forget that their essays should not exceed the requisite number of words, and this could have been to their disadvantage.

There were a number of quite basic errors from weaker candidates, e.g. *bestehtigt*, for *bestätigt*, *gibt* for *gibt*, *kann nerfig sein*, *lerned* and *wirked* for *lernt* and *wirkt*.

Grammatical errors included incorrect formation of the superlative: *dass es mehr schweren wird...* instead of *dass es am schwersten wird*.

Sentences that were over long caused problems for weaker candidates, e.g. *...Millionen von Leuten wollen in die Schule gehen und die, die es tun wollen es meistens nicht*. At the same time, the strongest candidates produced work that was well argued and linguistically sophisticated:

- *Dazu kommt die Tatsache, dass viele Experten heftig dementieren, dass man Wissen oder Verstandnis überhaupt messen kann, denn die Wahrheit ist doch, dass Schulexamen nur anzeigen, wie gut ein Schüler im Examenschreiben ist, und nicht seine eigentlichen Fähigkeiten.*

Endings in particular were well known:

- *Würden wir nicht in einer profit-orientierten Gesellschaft leben, gäbe es gar keine Notwendigkeit für solche Examen.*

Question 1 (d)

Heutzutage gibt es in den Zeitungen zu viele Fremdwörter! Sind Sie derselben Ansicht?

This title was the least popular in this section although most of the candidates who chose it were able to write relevant and sensible answers. Responses included examples of good idiomatic usage, variety of expression, a range of tenses and a high standard of accuracy:

Fremdsprachen in Zeitungen vernichten unser Sprachgefühl und hindern uns an tieferem Verständnis.

Some candidates' language became quite confused and they might perhaps have done better on a less technical subject:

- *sie lassen einen Gebildeten klingen welches einen in Job und Karriere helfen kann.*
- *Die Fremdwörter sind Wörter die von den anderen Sprachen kommen, die aber in keiner anderen Sprache eine Umsetzung weder einen Wort mit gleicher Bedeutung haben.*

Zweiter Teil – Beschreibung und Schilderung

Question 2 (a)

Mein schlimmster Alptraum! Erzählen Sie davon.

Candidates who chose this title produced a wide range of work, from the slightly Irrelevant to the insightful. Some candidates' work was characterised by real creativity.

e.g. *...ein eisiger Wind säuselt an mir vorbei. Meine Nase läuft, die Finger sind starr und jede kleinste Bewegung wurde zur Herausforderung.*

Misspelling – *unauffählig* for *unauffällig*; incorrect genders and verb tense forms – *schlieste* for *schloss*, *scheinte* for *schien* were features of the work of weaker candidates. Language in longer sentences became confused in some cases:

*...jedem der Leute, die dagewesen waren, es aber nicht waren...
...war der kleines Zimmer mit helles, erblindetem Licht gefühlt*

The word count was not always kept to, with some candidates occasionally writing essays of twice the prescribed length, while others produced responses that were far too short.

Question 2 (b)

Meine Traumschule: Beschreiben Sie Ihre ideale Schule: Sie sind Direktor/in.

The strongest candidates had a good command of the relevant vocabulary, and structured their work effectively, with convincing introductions and conclusions. While some candidates took a rather limited approach to the topic, and did not take the opportunities to broaden it out contained in the title, others were able to develop ideas with confidence:

...eine leichte Brise streicht mir über das Gesicht und neugierige Erstklassler, denen die Unschuld noch ins Gesicht geschrieben steht, kommen schüchtern auf mich zu.

On the language side, a small number of candidates wrote sentences that were over long and, inevitably, confused: *...es sollte möglichst seien die Turnhalle mit gigantischen Vorhängen in bis zu 4 Teile anzuteilen damit auch mehrere Schulklassen gleichzeitig Sportunterricht haben können ohne dabei mit der anderen Klasse zusammenzustossen.*

Capital letters were not always used appropriately, even in some very fluent scripts, and some scripts contained more than a smattering of words in English which did not really have a place here, e.g.: *education, cases, parties, security, image*. There were a few examples of essays on this topic that fell below the minimum word count.

Question 2 (c)

Wenn ich groß bin, werde ich... Dieser Satz wird auch Ihnen oft durch den Kopf gegangen sein. Was bedeutet das für Sie?

This was a popular title and gave rise to some imaginative responses.

The work of weaker candidates was characterised by some frequently occurring errors, including missing umlauts, misspellings – *vereinflussen* for *beeinflussen* – and an at times incomplete grasp of the rules governing verbs :

*...soll ich studieren in der Universität;
...welche Abschlüsse ich werden machen.*

Common misspellings included: *reißen* instead of *reisen*, *währe* instead of *wäre*, *Changsen* instead of *Chancen*. Some over-long sentences would have benefited from being split:

...dieser Satz ist sehr häufig und einfach zu vollenden wenn man klein und jung ist, da im heranwachsenden Alter wird es schwer den Satz zu vollenden und ihn überhaupt zu beginnen.

Providing a conclusion to this essay proved difficult for a small number of candidates.

Question 2 (d)

Der Tag an dem ich ganz stolz war... Erzählen Sie davon.

Candidates who chose this title wrote answers that were relevant, what they were most proud of referring in most instances to a particular success they had had. Some candidates did spend too much time scene-setting rather than developing the story: this can result in candidates far exceeding the word count which is not to their advantage.

The past tense was required in this narrative task, though a few candidates wrote part of their essay in the present tense, which was incorrect. A few candidates missed out *umlauts* and commas throughout their essays. There were a number of frequently occurring errors, including misspellings and incorrect use of capital letters. A few candidates' grasp of word order was shaky: *...und dann wir vereinbarten ein...; mein bester Freund ist mich suchen gekommen um 2 Uhr morgens*. A number of weaker candidates limited themselves to language that was somewhat simple: *es war ein normaler Tag und ich bin gegen 9 Uhr aufgestanden und habe gefrühstückt* This included their conclusion in some instances: *Es war ein Montag abend deshalb war nicht viel los und wir trafen uns auf der Strasse. Dann liefen wir alle zusammen zu dem Haus meines Freundes, wo mich eine spannende Nacht erwarten sollte.*