

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/01

Reading

Key message

To do well in this paper, candidates should:

- take care to read the question carefully in **Part 1**, taking into account the number of marks available
- use their own words as far as possible in order to gain higher marks for Language
- produce a structured response in **Part 2**, making each point briefly, rather than expanding on each point.

General comments

This paper consisted of two extended passages. The first exercise invited candidates to answer a number of short comprehension sub-questions on the first of these passages. Candidates proceeded thereafter to the second passage and the second exercise. Here, they were asked to summarise both passages with specific reference to the advantages and disadvantages of resitting one's year at school and what measures or alternatives were proposed to avoid students having to repeat their year.

Overall, candidates did well. Most responded to both parts of the examination with extensive, well-written answers. Responses were generally neatly presented, but candidates should make sure they label all questions clearly and ensure that any later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers corresponding to numbers or asterisks in the main body of the response.

Candidates generally scored good marks for the linguistic quality of their answers. Most candidates wrote in fluent, correct German and handled their responses to **Question 1** and **Question 2** appropriately. Two trends in particular are worthy of note:

- A large number of candidates neglected to start nouns with a capital letter
- Some candidates used too colloquial a register for the summary; candidates need to be made aware of the more formal language required in an examination. The use of informal and abbreviated words should be avoided. A clear distinction should also be made between written and spoken German.

Some general linguistic mistakes picked up in both parts of the paper included:

- confusion between the use of *dass* and *das*
- incorrect or missing adjectival endings
- incorrect spelling, including of basic words.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) A straightforward warm-up question, which the vast majority of candidates answered correctly.
- (b) Most candidates gained the mark on offer here.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) The majority of candidates scored the two marks available here; some candidates, however, did not give sufficient information to achieve full marks.
- (e) This question posed few problems for the candidates.

- (f) The majority of candidates gained full marks here.
- (g) Again, most candidates managed to earn the marks available here. However, there were a few contradictory answers. This question tested the ability to contrast and compare the situation in different countries and weaker candidates struggled to do so properly.
- (h) Most candidates had the ability to score all three marks, but many candidates over-generalised and were unable to achieve some or all the marks on offer.
- (i) Most candidates answered this question correctly. Weaker candidates nevertheless misunderstood the term *Koedukation*, despite the explanation given at the end of the text.
- (j) Most candidates answered this question very well.
- (k) Many candidates provided only one bit of information, although there were three marks available. Some answers were rather spurious (e.g. both towns are in Nordrhein-Westphalen) with reference to the task set.

Overall, it was pleasing to see that most candidates had labelled the questions properly and presented their work in a legible fashion. The level of language used when answering the questions was either good or very good in the majority of cases. Some candidates quoted at length from the text instead of using their own words – this is not necessary and tends to waste time which could be spent on proofreading and eliminating mistakes. In addition, the questions in this paper are phrased in such a way as to elicit a response in the candidate's own words and copying from the text very often leads to answers being incorrect.

Question 2

Most candidates structured their summaries effectively. There were very few instances of stylistic analysis and candidates offering their own views, both of which were not part of the task. Some candidates nonetheless included their opinion about repeating a school year in their answer, which could not be credited.

A number of summaries were rather short on the level of detail required to score the highest marks but it was encouraging to see that nearly all candidates finished the summary and their work generally did not appear to have been rushed. In a small number of cases candidates had taken a long time to produce a detailed first draft of their summary and did not have time to mention all the points they had made in their final answer.

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

Key Messages

Candidates who performed best ensured that each aspect of the title was addressed appropriately and relevantly. Candidates are credited for the range and relevance of their ideas and the ability to use and select appropriate vocabulary, e.g. the use of effective verbs and the use of varied and ambitious adjectives and adverbs to paint a picture in the reader's mind. Structure too, is an important aspect of a well written essay and candidates are advised to plan their work in order to achieve an effective and focused development of their ideas.

General Comments

Candidates write two essays on this paper: one involving Argument/Discussion, the other a Description or a Narrative. Candidates choose one essay out of four under each of these two headings, and it is important that they take time to choose the essay titles best suited to their knowledge and powers of expression, and that they allocate their time equally between the two pieces of work. The word count (350–500 words) needs to be respected. In the case of essays that are too short, marks for content in particular can be negatively affected as the Argument/Discussion or Description/Story remains unfinished.

The majority of this year's candidates acquitted themselves very well and there were very few weak candidates. There were some excellent performances in which candidates demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of the topic, using a wide range of examples and evidence. On the whole, the language used in essays was encouragingly idiomatic. Candidates used language that included sophisticated and complex structures as well as a wide range of ambitious vocabulary with a high level of accuracy. Those candidates who achieved highly, had thoroughly prepared their chosen topic and wrote a lively and interesting presentation.

Only a few candidates were patchy and inconsistent in structuring their work, showing little linkage between sentences and/or paragraphs and missing many opportunities to give examples, state a contrast or give opinions. The syntax in these essays was often simple and the language was weak with frequent spelling mistakes. Some candidates struggled to express and justify points of view, appearing too emotional or too one-sided with repetition, particularly those who did not set up a plan beforehand. Providing an effective conclusion to the essay proved to be difficult for those candidates.

There were still candidates this year confusing *man* and *mann*, *das* and *dass*, and *den* and *denn*. Sentences should not begin with *Und*, *Aber*, *Oder*, and *Deswegen*.

All essay titles were equally popular this time and, overall, candidates allocated their time for both essays effectively. Only very few candidates wrote an essay that was too short.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) **Informatik oder Musik? Welches Fach ist am nützlichsten? Was meinen Sie dazu?**

This essay title was popular and most candidates wrote with commitment and enthusiasm. Many candidates had very good ideas on the subject matter, although some of them seemed confused at times about the choice between studying *Musik* or *Informatik*. In general, candidates agreed that studying *Informatik* could not only provide them with a good career, but was also an incredible tool for business development. Many candidates argued that *Musik* had the power to change the way people feel, think and behave, and that it was fun without necessarily having to be very skilful.

(b) **Linienflüge in den Weltraum – eine gute Idee oder nicht?**

Some truly excellent essays were written under this title. These essays had many positive qualities, showing that there was genuine interest in the subject matter. Some candidates impressed by attempting to provide scientific details and explanations. Others had more general knowledge and delivered more of an overview. The main counter-arguments presented by candidates were that *Linienflüge in den Weltraum* would be hard work for pilots and that they would be too expensive to run. Consideration was given to the damage that such shuttle-traffic could cause in space and the question was addressed as to whether regular space travel would create a high-speed stream of gas. Weaker candidates struggled to use their own words and frequently only related very loosely back to the title given in the course of their essay.

(c) **Jugendliche geben sehr viel Geld für Kleidung aus. Finden Sie das auch? Erörtern Sie, welche Funktion Kleidung und Mode für Jugendliche hat.**

This essay title seemed to provide a very easy concept for candidates to relate to but some arguments were disappointing,

e.g. *Dies lässt sich am Fühlen der Haut bekannt machen....
Obwohl Jugendliche die Geld für Kleidung ausgeben, hilft es ihnen aufzuwachsen.*

The better essays were clearly answered, with considerations being given to the possibility of getting bullied at school for not having the latest 'must-have' item. They emphasised image, fun and popularity amongst peer groups. Buying designer outfits in order to become more popular was mentioned in almost every essay.

(d) **Eltern sind immer im Recht und sie haben für alles eine Lösung. Wie viel Wahrheit steckt in diesen Worten? Wie denken Sie darüber?**

Most candidates, on the whole, tackled this apparently authentic title very well. They agreed that parents should give their children the chance to gain an insight into their parents' experience and knowledge, but that parents should also realise that their children are not going to live the same way, nor will they want to be told everything: children need to learn for themselves.

The essays were a mixture of very good and weaker content, some with complex German language and excellent use of grammar and punctuation, others lacking innovation and inspiration.

Section B

Question 2

(a) **Ein Nachmittag im Park. Schildern Sie in lebendiger Form Ihre Beobachtungen und Eindrücke.**

Candidates wrote with much detail and provided illustrative evidence of an enjoyable time in the park. They created atmosphere, conveyed mixed feeling and reaction, and developed ideas and images which are key attributes in helping to build a convincing descriptive essay. The level of

language was often very creative with varied and complex vocabulary. The need for personal response enabled candidates to use the subjunctive, which, when used carefully, was impressive. Adjectives and adverbs were beautifully used to describe the perfect afternoon in a park.

Common problems for some weaker candidates were verb endings, and in attempting to write creatively, weaker essays sometimes became disjointed.

e.g. *ich konnte es nicht glauben, direkt vor mir saß ein Vogel auf dem Ast und zwitscherte vor sich hin....*
...ich zittere, denn es ist immer früh im Frühling...
...und mit was simplen zu befreudigen.

Sometimes gender appeared rather erratic. Quite often candidates used the wrong personal pronoun.

(b) „Mein Zimmer ist meine eigene kleine Welt.“ Schildern Sie Ihre Gedanken und Gefühle dazu.

Observation is the key to writing a good description of your room. Many candidates conveyed thoughtful and creative descriptions of their place. They successfully described the sights, sounds, and smells and created atmosphere. A few candidates wrote creatively, inspirationally and also successfully about their ideal rooms. Good grammar and a wide range of vocabulary were used, showing a thorough understanding and control of the language.

Some weaker essays did not hold many ideas and they also showed simple and sometimes inaccurate grammar and language, lacking lustre, style and imagination.

(c) „Gerade noch rechtzeitig!“ Erzählen Sie eine interessante Geschichte und lassen Sie sie gut enden.

This title proved fairly popular too. Many good candidates articulated personal experience well, entertaining the reader by sparking their curiosity.

On the whole, performance on this essay title ranged from very good to very weak. The weaker essays were written in a rather monotonous and simplistic style and opportunities to develop ideas were often missed.

(d) Führen Sie die Erzählung spannend fort: Am letzten Samstagabend waren meine Eltern bei unseren Nachbarn eingeladen. Sie verließen gegen 20.00 Uhr das Haus. Weil ich noch in meinem neuen Buch lesen wollte, legte ich mich kurz darauf ins Bett und schlief nach ein paar Seiten ein. Lange hatte ich bestimmt nicht geschlafen, als ich plötzlich...

All responses to this question were appropriate with most of the candidates following the title closely, generally producing an engaging story with a happy ending. The majority of the candidates managed to tell the story with very vibrant and luminous details. The better essays limited the number of characters they introduced within their story.

The use of the past tense was required in this narrative task. A few candidates ignored this and decided to write part of their essay in the present tense, which was not an appropriate response to the title.

Since most narrative essays will involve some dialogue, candidates should ensure the correct use of speech marks.