

GERMAN

Paper 1343/01
Speaking

Key message:

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where the target language is spoken
- be prepared to take the lead in the conversation
- be ready to engage in a natural and spontaneous discussion.

General comments

Most candidates approached the test with confidence and were able to cope with its demands without any major difficulties, due to their careful preparation and the valuable guidance received from their teachers. Linguistically, some performances were not always very strong, but there was evidence that a good amount of work had gone into strengthening vocabulary and widening structures prior to the examination.

All candidates (including those at Centres new to this specification) were familiar with the format of the examination and had obviously been well primed for the task by their teachers. The Visiting Examiner's initial talk to candidates also served to reinforce what was required in the exam and may have helped to calm nerves.

The key to success in the oral component of this specification is effective communication and the willingness on the part of the candidates to share factual knowledge as well as their own opinions on their chosen topic. Candidates require a wide range of structures and vocabulary at their disposal, and they need to be confident about using the language they have acquired. In order to achieve the best marks it is also important that candidates show creativity and versatility in responding to unexpected questions on their topics.

Candidates used the fact that there are few restrictions on topic choice to their advantage, and chose and diligently researched topics which appeared to be of genuine interest to them. Subjects chosen came from a fairly wide range. The following (presented in no particular order) will give an impression of this:

- *Die Wiedervereinigung in Deutschland*
- *Die Wende*
- *Inwiefern könnte man behaupten, dass Deutschland immer noch ein traditionsreiches Land ist?*
- *Die Fälscher*
- *Deutsche Mode*

At the start of the topic discussion, candidates were often invited to give reasons for their choice of topic. The discussions then followed the five to eight headings submitted in advance. Most candidates showed they possessed an appropriate degree of factual knowledge for a discussion in German and also coped well with unexpected questions asking for clarification, analysis, comparisons and personal opinions relating to their chosen topic.

Communication with Centres prior to the examination was efficient and effective. Agreement about exam dates was reached easily and candidate topic sheets were sent to the Visiting Examiner in good time.

GERMAN

Paper 1343/02
Reading, Listening and Writing

Key message

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
- pay particular attention to conveying the required information in unambiguous language.

General comments

This paper requires candidates to demonstrate overall and detailed comprehension of spoken and written texts in German, as well as the ability to produce a piece of extended writing. Most candidates' performances gave evidence of a good knowledge of vocabulary relevant to the topics covered in the syllabus and in the paper. They were generally able to identify the information targeted in the questions and to communicate this information clearly in their answers.

Some answers did not provide the specific information asked for in the questions. A good strategy to avoid this problem is to read the questions closely and pay particular attention to the question words used: if a question is introduced, for example, by *wer*, the response should refer to a person or a group of people. One response to **Question 8**, for instance, was: "*mit seiner Mutter*". This answer could be not awarded a mark as it was not specific enough. Had this been the required answer, the question would have been phrased: *Mit wem kommt Erich morgens zur Schule?* The word *wie* in the question indicates that the answer should refer to a method or mode of transport. Candidates should also remember that in German responses grammar mistakes may obscure meaning and thereby hinder communication. For example, one response to **Question 14** was: '*Man soll Extra-Geld für seine Kinder geben*'. The incorrect use of the preposition obscured the meaning, as 'to give money for their children' conveys a different meaning from 'to give money to their children'. The correct response was: *Man sollte seinen Kindern [dative object] extra Geld geben*, as this answer conveys that the children are the indirect object of the action indicated by the verb.

Comments on specific questions

In the Listening and Reading sections of the paper good answers provided concise, detailed and strictly relevant responses to questions. A good response to **Question 19**, for example, was: 'She worked with children and taught them swimming and drawing as it listed both activities that Sandra undertook with the children. Another response – 'She helped out with swimming lessons' – was awarded one mark as it provided only one of the activities. The answer 'She got experience working with children and experience teaching' did not explain exactly what Sandra did at the holiday club and was therefore awarded no marks.

In the Writing section of the paper good answers were well structured, presented relevant ideas and gave evidence of a good range of appropriate vocabulary, as well as a solid understanding of grammar. Some weaker answers included prepared phrases that were adapted in a rather forced way to the topic, with little evidence of an ability to use language creatively and spontaneously. Candidates should also avoid repetition and make sure they present their piece of writing in a format relevant to the task (e.g. by using appropriate epistolary phrases, such as *Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren* or *Mit freundlichen Grüßen*).