

# GERMAN SHORT COURSE

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**Paper 1343/01**  
**Speaking**

## **Key messages**

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**

This year's cohort was strong on the whole, with some particularly excellent performances.

The key to success in the Speaking test is effective communication. This can be achieved best if candidates are able to show that they can state factual knowledge, express their own opinions and those of others, make comparisons and analyse their chosen topic. Candidates need to have a wide range of structures and vocabulary at their disposal, and they need to be confident about using the language structures they have acquired. For the best marks it is also important that they have the creativity and the versatility to respond to unexpected questions.

Candidates generally enjoyed the opportunities the test gives for communication at a complex level on their chosen topic. Most approached the task with confidence and were able to cope with its demands without any major difficulties as a result of careful preparation and the guidance they had received from their teachers. Linguistically, some candidates were as strong as many who were entered for the Principal Course, and there was evidence that a good amount of effort had gone into strengthening vocabulary and widening the range of structures.

All candidates (including those in new centres) were familiar with the format of the examination and had obviously been well prepared by their teachers. The initial talk to candidates at each centre reinforced exactly what was required in the exam and appeared to contribute to the important purpose of calming nerves.

As there are few restrictions on topic choice, as long as the topics relate to the German-speaking world, candidates usually discuss their topics with impressive enthusiasm. The topics chosen this year reflected the wide-ranging personal interests and passions of the candidates. The following titles (in no particular order) give an impression:

*Kant und seine Erkenntnistheorie*  
*Deutsche klassische Musik*  
*Bismarck*  
*Integration der Türken in Deutschland*  
*Die Bedeutung der Mauer im Film Der Tunnel*

At the start of the topic discussion, candidates were often invited to give reasons for their choice of topic. The discussions then followed the 5-8 headings chosen previously. Most candidates demonstrated they had the relevant factual knowledge at their fingertips and also coped well with unexpected questions asking for clarification, analysis, comparisons and opinions relating to their chosen topic.

Communication with centres prior to the examination was efficient and effective. Generally, agreement about exam dates was reached easily and candidate topic sheets were sent to the visiting examiner in good time.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 1343/02</b> <b>Reading, Listening and Writing</b></p>
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## Key messages

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 passages in German, as well as the ability to produce an argumentative/discursive text. Most performances gave evidence of a good knowledge of vocabulary relevant to the topics covered in the syllabus. Most candidates were able to identify the information targeted in the questions and to communicate this information clearly in their answers.

Candidates should remember that in German responses grammar and spelling mistakes will be taken into account if these obscure meaning and hinder communication. Some answers could not be given marks because the use of possessive articles and personal pronouns made communication unclear. For example, in answer to **Question 12** (*Welche Konsequenz hatte ihr Alltag im Internat?*), one response read: *'Sie hat nur einmal die Woche mit seine Eltern / Schwester gesprochen'*. While the wrong case ending could be tolerated in this context, the possessive article seems to imply that Lina did not manage to speak to somebody else's parents, which created confusion. A good response would have been: *Sie hat nur einmal in der Woche Zeit gehabt, mit ihrer Familie zu telefonieren.*

In some of the English responses, too, there were instances of ambiguity and unclear expression, which made these answers difficult to understand. This typically occurred where candidates offered word-for-word translations of German expressions or phrases. One such case occurred in answer to **Question 38** (What is the destination of the cars?) where a candidate wrote 'Most are going to Asia and America, some are waiting there to go to a car house in Europe'. This response was awarded only one of the two marks available as the second part of the sentence was not comprehensible in English. The German word *Autohäuser* should either have been translated as 'car dealerships' or paraphrased appropriately.

## Comments on specific questions

In the Listening and Reading sections of the paper good answers provided concise, detailed but strictly relevant responses to the questions. A good response, for example, to **Question 16** (When does Andreas play for the national team?) was 'When one of the national players in the national team is injured Andreas is called up as a replacement'. The following is an example of a weaker answer as it does not explain the specific circumstances in which Andreas plays for the national team: 'When they are missing players'. This response could not be awarded a mark.

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 grasp of grammar. Some weaker answers included prepared phrases that were adapted to the topic and showed insufficient evidence of the ability to use language creatively and spontaneously. Candidates should also avoid repetitions and generalisations which have no direct bearing on the topic.