

GERMAN

Paper 1343/01
Speaking

Key message

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

- choose a topic 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 natural and spontaneous discussion.

General comments

Most candidates tackled the examination with a good degree of success. They dealt confidently with the questions posed to them and experienced few difficulties with conveying their knowledge of their chosen topic and expressing their opinions. There was evidence that a good amount of work and preparation had gone into acquiring a wide range of vocabulary and strengthening grammatical knowledge.

The key to success in speaking test is effective communication and the willingness on the part of the candidates to share factual knowledge and express their opinions on 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 linguistic resources they have acquired. For the best marks it is also important that candidates show versatility in responding to questions related to their topics, some of which may be unexpected.

Provided it relates to a country where the target language is spoken, there are very few restrictions on topic choice. As in previous years, a variety of topics was presented, each related to a candidate's particular field of interest. The following titles (in no particular order) will give an impression of this:

- *Ausstieg aus der Atomkraft?*
- *Gastarbeiter in Deutschland*
- *Das Verhältnis der Deutschen zu Friedrich II*
- *Die Stasi*
- *Die Luftbrücke in Berlin und ihre Auswirkungen*

At the start of the topic discussion, candidates were usually invited to give reasons for their choice of topic. The discussion then followed the 5-8 headings submitted in advance of the speaking test. Most candidates were indeed able to provide the appropriate factual knowledge this year 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 most 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 as well as detailed comprehension of spoken and written passages in German and the ability to produce an accurate and relevant piece of writing. Most candidates' performances gave evidence of a good knowledge of vocabulary related to the topics mentioned in the syllabus. They were generally able to identify the information targeted in the questions and to communicate this information clearly in most of their answers.

Some candidates' answers tended to be too vague and therefore 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 in the questions ('who', 'what', 'where', 'why'). Candidates should also make sure they answer questions in the language specified in the rubric, in particular if the answer is a geographical name, as, for example in **Question 39**. Here, the correct answer was 'Bavaria', not *Bayern*. Candidates should also remember that in German responses grammar mistakes may obscure meaning and thereby hinder communication. For example, one of the answers given in response to **Question 10** was: '*Sie hat ihnen telefonieren*'. Leaving aside the incorrect past participle, the singular '*hat*' and the plural of the second personal pronoun ('*ihnen*') seems to imply that Jana called the hotel staff, when, in fact, she was called by them.

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 very good response to **Question 18** that was awarded both marks, for example, was: 'The customers bought their bread somewhere else because Frau Sammer's bread was not available in the morning.' The following is an example of a much weaker answer as it was vague and did not explain that customers purchased their bread from other bakeries and why: 'They did not approve. They only bought bread in the morning.'

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 a large number of prepared phrases unsuited to the topic, thereby showing little evidence of the ability to use language creatively and spontaneously.