

GCE

German

Advanced GCE **A2 H476**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H076**

OCR Report to Centres June 2014

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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F711 Speaking

General Comments

Most teacher/examiners conducted the speaking test well and established a friendly atmosphere conducive to good performances from their candidates. Most role-plays and topic discussions were timed correctly. Many centres now upload recordings and in some cases also paper documentation to the Repository.

Role-Play

The four role-plays were deemed by markers to be broadly similar in demand and contained material of varying degrees of difficulty. Candidates seemed familiar with the format and approached the task of conveying the detail of the stimulus material with enthusiasm.

As in previous sessions, role-plays were most effective when

- teacher/examiners had a thorough knowledge of the Examiner's Sheet and the Candidate's Sheet.
- teacher/examiners encouraged candidates to supply information from the stimulus material by using open questions.
- teacher/examiners did not supply the information which candidates were intended to supply.
- teacher/examiners listened carefully and elicited further information, if they became aware that candidates had omitted parts of the stimulus material.
- teacher/examiners reacted to candidate responses and suggested further stimuli designed to extract more information.
- teacher/examiners used the correct form of address.
- teacher/examiners followed up the final two bullet point questions with extra questions, giving candidates the opportunity to be inventive and imaginative.
- candidates changed the word order and/or verb ending in the initial two questions.
- candidates conveyed the stimulus material systematically and chronologically.
- candidates took the initiative and used their imagination to invent.
- candidates did not at any time read out notes written in the preparation stage.
- candidates reacted spontaneously to questions.

Although there were some really fine performances, some potentially strong candidates did not convey all the details, sometimes because they were not given the opportunity. The best examiners managed to coax details from even weak candidates. Centres should also be aware that the final two bullet points are an opportunity for candidates to expand and engage with the teacher/examiner imaginatively.

Comments on Individual Questions

Role-play A: Blackpool

The two initial questions caused few problems. Successful candidates understood that they were supposed to be going on a family holiday to Blackpool, rather than recommending it as a destination for the examiner. Those who supplied the details scored highly on Grid A, which is marked according to the 15 Key Points. Many centres are now aware that a brief summary of the text will not suffice to gain high marks on this grid. Successful candidates were able to convey information from the text such as: relaxing in fabulous parks / chips / big wheel / free live entertainment / lift to the top / as far as North Wales / something for all ages / one all-inclusive

price / circus. The final two bullet points were accessible to all and allowed candidates to respond to questions asking about their own attitude to holidays and ideal destinations.

Role-play B: This Week

In general candidates responded well to this fictitious news magazine with its paper and online formats. With this role-play some candidates tended to summarise rather than supply the detail. The initial two questions were asked successfully in most cases. Candidates who performed well provided details such as: news and comments / to keep you well-informed / important world events / your own comments / attractive gift card / personal greeting / delivered to home and to inbox. The final two extension bullet points, asking whether the candidate reads a newspaper and the best way of keeping oneself well-informed, were dealt with well and provoked a range of responses.

Role-play C: Luigi's Ices

This role-play, a possible summer job selling ice cream from a van, proved very accessible. Most candidates understood that the job was for them, but some misinterpreted the situation and recommended it to the examiner. The initial two questions proved to be very straightforward. As with all the role-plays, some teacher/examiners recognised the details some candidates had omitted and by skilful questioning were able to encourage them to provide these details, thereby enabling access to higher marks on Grid A. Successful candidates were able to express: super ice-cream van / 50 years ago / all over South West England / ready to work / sell more and earn more / at least 4 weeks / have favourite locations / always looking for new opportunities. The final bullet points asked candidates if they had part-time jobs and whether summer jobs for pupils are a good idea. These elicited a good response and candidates spoke easily on these topics.

Role-play D: The Greenhill Centre

Most candidates tackled this role-play with enthusiasm. The two initial questions posed few difficulties. Well-performing candidates supplied details such as: spend more time on hobby / with well-qualified tutors / bring own equipment / get fit / weekly talks / specialists are invited / chance to ask questions / book early / planets / improve Spanish / from local produce. The final bullet points, asking candidates whether they have a particular hobby and whether leisure activities are important, proved to be no hurdle and offered candidates the opportunity to speak about their own interests.

Topic Discussion

Almost all centres are now aware that it is a requirement of the specification that topics must relate to the AS topic list. The vast majority of topics offered by candidates were judged to be appropriate. Discussions ranged from the highly impressive to weak. Most candidates had prepared themselves well for this part of the examination, and many successful conversations took place, with spontaneous interchanges of ideas between teacher/examiner and candidate. A minority of candidates were over-prepared and delivered a series of mini-monologues. Good teacher/examiners prevented this. The best candidates were able to expand on their topics very well and had a wide range of opinions. Some topics, such as those with a high factual content but with limited scope for development of ideas/opinions, can limit marks on grid D. Centres should encourage candidates to select a topic which is relevant to a German-speaking country, which interests them, and which they can research in depth. The headings on the Oral Topic Form, which should be brief, should be different aspects relating to the same topic and interconnected. Topics should not be too wide-ranging, as they then lack depth.

Grid D (Ideas, Opinions, Relevance) awards a maximum of ten marks for the ability to convey ideas and opinions, supported by factual information referring to a German-speaking country. Candidates with the ability to converse at a high level and with personal views on the issues can score high marks on this grid.

Grid E1 (Fluency, Spontaneity, Responsiveness) has a maximum of ten marks for the ability to use German naturally, fluently and genuinely spontaneously. Those candidates who are in charge of the conversation, i.e. those who can keep the momentum going, are likely to achieve a mark of at least 7-8. The headings outlined on the Oral Topic Form should be followed in chronological order. Candidates are not penalised if a heading is omitted, as long as the conversation has been successful. The recommended length of the discussion is nine to ten minutes. Centres should be aware that overlong discussions do not bring candidates any advantages, as assessment ceases after ten minutes.

Spontaneity is crucial. One of the many roles of teacher/examiners is to react to statements made by candidates and to challenge statements or ask for further clarification. Those candidates who can respond spontaneously and fluently to such interventions score highly on this grid. Good teacher/examiners encourage many genuine and spontaneous interchanges. These happen in a natural way when discussions have not been over-rehearsed. Contrived situations, where expected questions lead to expected answers, do not bring high rewards in this grid and at this level. Teacher/examiners are not expected to script their questions.

Grid C1 (Quality of language) awards up to 5 marks for a combination of accuracy and range. Candidates who mostly offer accurate basics but little ambitious language are restricted to a mark of 2/5. Those offering more ambitious structures in accurate German are rewarded with higher marks.

Grid G (Pronunciation and intonation) (5 marks) rewards candidates with good German pronunciation and intonation.

Recordings can be submitted in various formats, the preferred one being mp3, which is often excellent in terms of quality of audibility.

F712 Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments

The paper produced a full range of responses and a wide distribution of marks: the texts and tasks proved to be accessible to all but the weakest candidates, whilst giving the most able the opportunity to show off their knowledge. Most candidates have been well-prepared and know what to expect, so there were few instances of candidates misinterpreting the rubric or failing to attempt questions. There was little evidence that candidates had had insufficient time to complete the paper.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A – Listening and Writing

Q1 The listening text explored the effect of foreign holidays on everyday life in Berlin and from three options candidates were required to choose the correct endings to the sentences. Most candidates achieved above half marks but few managed to get all ten correct. The question most frequently answered incorrectly was (c) but otherwise there was no distinct pattern.

Q2 The second listening text was about a Facebook party fiasco and candidates had to choose the correct word to complete the sentence. All the words were verbs, used as such or adjectivally, to minimize the possibility of completing the task grammatically. This task discriminated effectively between candidates and was a reliable predictor of performance in the rest of the paper. Most candidates correctly identified the last three gaps but some weaker candidates misunderstood *möbliert* as 'mobilised' and opted for the distracters *erlaubt* and *unerwartet* instead of *durfte* and *überraschte*.

Q3 Answering questions in English is generally well done and most candidates understood the gist of this text about the changing face of youth hostels. Marks were often lost through giving insufficiently detailed answers. *Sprecher* is easy to understand but many candidates could not come up with 'spokesman' or 'representative' which is the English translation. Very few candidates could render *Ostseeküste* as the Baltic coast. Many candidates also had difficulties with 'bunk beds' although *Doppelstockbetten* should be easy for a candidate at this level to work out. Similarly, *Preis-Leistungsverhältnis* contains three words that should be in an AS level candidate's vocabulary but few came up with 'value for money' and merely answered 'cheap'. In (h) *entspannend* was sometimes interpreted as exciting (*spannend*) even though it was used correctly in the context of television later.

Q4 Most candidates were capable of communicating the general content of this email, although some lost marks unnecessarily through omitting elements of a sentence. It is unfair to those candidates who take care to include all the details and need greater grammatical complexity to achieve this, if candidates who take a broad brush approach are credited equally. *Empfehlen* was known by a pleasing number of candidates but not the correct past participle or the correct spelling but the rendering was generally sufficient to gain the communication mark. There was a significant number of candidates who could not render 'kitchen' accurately enough to gain the communication mark and who made up the non-existent *kontakten* for the final point, which was considered inadequate.

Most candidates had at least an adequate command of German and could communicate the message. However the candidates' grasp of the difference between the formal *Sie* and the informal *du* seems to be slipping. There were frequent mixtures of *du* and *Sie* within the same email (either was acceptable in this context as long as there was consistency) which limited the Quality of Language mark to 6. Possessive adjectives were often responsible for this as *deine*

Webseite was followed by *Könnten Sie*. Those that did not do this often failed to distinguish between *Ihre Webseite* and *ihre Webseite* which affects the meaning. Word order is generally quite sound but many seem to have a broad brush approach to grammatical accuracy as well as to content.

Section B – Reading and Writing

Q5 This task tested the comprehension of a text about modern trends in car ownership. Most candidates correctly matched the beginnings and endings of the sentences and scored well above half marks.

Q6 Most candidates understood the gist of the text and few left questions unanswered. Most candidates are now aware that the questions are designed to prevent them from lifting answers directly from the text and that they are required to manipulate the language of the text rather than to come up with synonyms: (c) asked for the reaction of the teacher which required the candidate to manipulate the noun *Erstaunen* to the adjective *erstaunt*. Candidates are required, however, to read the questions and the text carefully in order to give precise and direct answers. The most challenging question was (f) because it required the candidate to select information carefully from a complex sentence, to understand *beibringen* and to manipulate it. Only the more able candidates gained the two marks. In other questions the answers were usually correctly sourced from the text and mostly communicated effectively but were penalized for the Quality of Language.

The Quality of Language was generally sufficient to convey the meaning but manipulating from 1st to 3rd person often caused difficulties with verb endings, pronouns and possessives. Almost every Task 6 requires candidates to manipulate a time phrase from *seit* to *vor* or vice versa, this task was no exception. A pleasing number of candidates can now distinguish between these two prepositions but there are still many who cannot.

Q7

(a) Most candidates understood the gist of this text about growing up without a television but had difficulties distinguishing between the experiences of Thorsten as a child and his attitude now. As usual there were 12 points in the Mark Scheme and the candidates needed to convey just ten of those to gain full marks. Candidates sometimes failed to gain marks because they used a present tense to refer to events that had occurred in the past but most achieved at least half marks.

(b) This essay title was well within the experience of all the candidates and must have been practised in every classroom so there was no shortage of opinions or relevant points. There were many candidates who had not performed particularly strongly on the rest of the paper who gained almost maximum marks for Content in 7b simply because they had plenty to write about. There were some really well constructed essays covering communication, entertainment and effects on the economy, the environment and the mental and physical health of individuals and society. Most candidates addressed both sides of the question. The general consensus seemed to be in favour of television in moderate and controlled amounts.

This essay is all about giving and justifying opinions, so it is important to respond to the question in the title and not to get side-tracked into health issues (for example) which go beyond the remit of this essay. There are no marks for structure, so a long preamble and a conclusion going over all the points again, are unlikely to gain extra marks. However, a few moments taken to gather ideas before starting in order to present them in a logical way and to avoid repetition are well worthwhile.

Many candidates express themselves quite fluently and have an extensive vocabulary. For this reason they usually get a good mark for Range but then get marked down for Accuracy because there are so many basic errors in verb / subject agreements, irregular but commonly used verbs, gender, case and plural forms. Inaccuracies in spelling and capitalisation, words and phrases crossed out and poor handwriting often leave the examiner having to second guess the candidate's intended meaning.

The Accuracy and Range grids in the Mark Scheme are identical for AS and A2 but the expectations of "complex language" are not the same. An ability to express opinions is clearly important but *Meiner Meinung nach, ich finde, dass* are perfectly adequate ways of doing this. Occasionally substituting *da* or *denn* for *weil* provides variety in justifications and the confident use of subordinating conjunctions like *obwohl, damit, wenn* etc can be considered as complex language at this level. Over-use of pre-learnt introductory phrases, however, makes the writing sound stilted and actually contributes nothing to the content.

F713 Speaking

General Comments

There was good evidence that many of the points made in previous years' reports had been put into practice this year, as there were very few problems as far as administration, recording quality and conduct of the examination were concerned. There was a generally high standard of examining and the vast majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level. There was a greater variety of chosen topics this year and some very interesting conversations around them. It is far more interesting for candidate, teacher-examiner and assessor if the candidates all choose a topic of their own and research something unusual or controversial. All three texts also worked very well and seemed to stretch the stronger candidates, with the help of skilful examining, and yet were at the same time accessible to less skilful linguists. Text A produced perhaps the most interesting view-points, with a high proportion of candidates agreeing with the mild sentence passed down by the judge mentioned in the text, though with a significant minority inclined to be much stricter. Virtually all candidates were willing to enter into lively discussions on all three texts after only 20 minutes' preparation, which is extremely encouraging. Despite this good preparation, candidates should be encouraged to speak spontaneously rather than looking at or even reading out their notes about the text. It is difficult to achieve high marks on the marking grid for "understanding and responding to the examiner" when using this technique.

Comments on individual Texts: Text A

Jeder braucht ein Familienleben

The subject matter appeared accessible to all and there were some very enjoyable discussions. In the first paragraph only the better candidates were able to point out that the statistics referred to the numbers *entering* the different types of home and *not* those already there. The verb *ziehen* had not been fully understood. Similarly, not all candidates were even asked for a definition of "*eingeschränkte Erziehungskraft*", but to show full understanding of the paragraph this would have been necessary. It is perfectly acceptable to give approximate numbers when referring to statistics in all texts, especially, as is often the case, but really shouldn't be at this level, if a candidate has a problem saying more complex numbers. *Rund dreißigtausend* would have been a totally acceptable response here, for example. The key point of the paragraph was the *increase* in the numbers. It is worth centres practising even simple numbers with their candidates, as many errors were evident, in the discussion of all three texts, and marks for understanding could be lost.

In the second paragraph there were few difficulties. Excellent ways of conveying the sense of the inverted commas around "*schwieriges*" *Kind* were to use *angeblich*, or *ihre Eltern hielten sie für schwierig*. *Im Heim* was sometimes taken to mean *zu Hause*. *Fertig werden* was also not always fully understood. Nina's dream of leading a normal family life should have been referred to at some point in the discussion, if not necessarily here, as well as discussing what "normal" might possibly mean.

Finding synonyms for words in the text is an excellent principle, in order to avoid being too text-reliant and missing out on the higher marks for responsiveness, but this need not be overdone. Occasional use of synonyms is fine, such as *Qualifikationen* for *Abschluss* in the third paragraph of this text, or *leicht* for *mild* and *Recht* for *Anspruch* in the fourth. Again, natural replies are preferred, even if text vocabulary is re-used in a spontaneous response to a question. Examiners should probe for the correct information if they become aware that something has been omitted or misunderstood, as there are marks for responsiveness if a candidate corrects himself, but no penalty for getting it wrong at first. The third paragraph caused few problems, though not everyone knew *Gericht*, a key word here, or realised that "*der Mädchen*" was plural.

The last paragraph produced lively discussion as a follow-up, as mentioned in the General Comments, with most candidates apparently preferring the idea of helping criminals with difficult backgrounds rather than punishing them too severely. Using the passive to say, for instance, “she was given a mild sentence” proved beyond all but the very best candidates.

Under no circumstances may the questions the examiner intends to use in the follow-up conversation be revealed to the candidate in the preparation period. Many examiners find the suggested questions perfectly adequate, though excellent alternative ideas are frequently heard, such as in this case: “Who was responsible for Nina’s situation: she herself, her parents or society?” Examiners need to ensure, however, that any alternative questions they use are related to the text. They should also be sufficiently sophisticated to stretch the candidate but at the same time not too complex.

Text B

Eine deutsche Erfolgsgeschichte

The subject matter again proved accessible, though involving slightly more complex ideas and, particularly, statistics. Candidates were able to identify with another young girl, this time called Alena, and nearly all re-told her story accurately and enthusiastically.

The main point of the first two paragraphs, which were frequently and sensibly discussed together, was that the situation regarding unemployment is better in Germany than elsewhere in Europe. There were so many points available to mention in these paragraphs that not all were required for maximum marks. However, the point at the end of paragraph two about the shortage of apprentices was considered essential, and it was possibly not mentioned by some candidates as they had failed to understand *uns fehlt es nicht mehr an Lehrstellen, sondern an Lehrlingen*. It would be expected at this level that candidates pronounce basic names such as *Griechenland* correctly. The expression *höher als bei den Erwachsenen* sometimes led to misunderstanding.

In the third paragraph it was important to understand the meaning of *nicht anerkannt* and *reichte nicht aus* and to show this understanding by providing explanations or synonyms, such as *war nicht gut genug*, and in the final paragraph only *wusste Rat* and, surprisingly, *schult* caused some problems. Instead of the suggested general questions some examiners with well informed candidates preferred to discuss the whole issue of youth unemployment and its causes, and possible remedies for it. It was clear that the German system of *Lehrstellen* was familiar to many and approved of by most.

Text C

Studieren per Webcam

Candidates seemed to find the subject matter and the possibilities of the system appealing, even though only very few admitted to having done any on-line learning themselves. Some centres ask their candidates to provide a general introduction before launching into the first specific question. It is not essential, however, and a one sentence response is usually sufficient. A good introductory sentence for this text was noted, namely: “*Viele Deutsche halten Ausbildung für wichtiger als Freizeit.*”

There are strategies for coping with numbers and statistics in an imaginative way, as for example by quoting a fraction, such as *vier Fünftel*, when the text, as in the first paragraph, has a percentage, or referring to the percentage of men involved when the text mentions the equivalent for women. Surprisingly at this level some candidates still confuse *Freizeit* and *Freiheit* and, similarly, not all were able to pronounce *berufstätig* as the two items *berufs-* and *tätig*, or explain that it meant *sie hatten einen Job*.

There was some confusion in trying to explain from the second paragraph how the exams and tests were differently organised compared to the lessons. *Ersetzt* was not always a familiar item. The name *Bossemeyer* should not have been hard to pronounce. However, candidates should be trained to practise saying relatively difficult words out loud during the preparation period.

It was interesting to notice how few people commented spontaneously on the information in the third paragraph that 20 hours' work a week were required for these courses of study, *over and above their normal working hours*, but several examiners asked for candidates' views on this prospect. *Schwerpunkt* was often misunderstood as denoting difficulty, though *Priorität* and *Fokus* were good alternatives. Good examiners sometimes anticipated this problem and asked: "*Welche Kurse sind am beliebtesten?*" *Wissenschaften* was sometimes used indiscriminately to cover *Wirtschaftswissenschaften* and *erfordern* was not always known. The phrase *eine permanente Präsenz erfordern* was one that really required elucidation, but this seldom happened. An examiner need only ask: "*Was bedeutet das?*" The word *eingeschrieben* was another source of misunderstanding.

The final sentence of the last paragraph, concerning the drop-out rate, was vital for content points, but a proportion of examiners did not require candidates to discuss it, possibly as they felt they were running out of time. Many candidates, of those who did mention it, still erroneously used *ein halb*, which doesn't exist, instead of repeating *die Hälfte* or changing it to 50%.

There were some interesting general discussions, during which it emerged, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the majority of candidates envisaged going straight to University rather than getting a job and studying on line in the evenings, though most thought a *Fernstudium* a good alternative. There were also lively debates as to whether teachers would eventually be phased out and replaced by computers, but most candidates preferred being taught in a class-room by a good teacher to studying alone.

Topic Conversation

It is worth reminding centres again that this section should be a natural conversation around the chosen topic area and not a presentation by the candidate of learned material. The latter approach attracts few marks for spontaneity or responsiveness and often ensures that pronunciation deteriorates just at the time that it is being judged. The use of rising tones also appears to be creeping into some candidates' German, especially when not conversing naturally, and this might result in a lower mark for intonation. The majority of candidates adopt the conversational approach fortunately.

There was a greater variety of topics this year, with candidates obviously opting to discuss something of their own choice, or a controversial issue, and fewer centres where everyone discussed the same general theme, such as the environment. The following is a list of some of the more unusual topics successfully discussed this year:

- *Mozarts Opern*
- *Die Filme "Almanya", "Gegen die Wand" and "der Vorleser"*
- *Musikfestivals*
- *Türken in Berlin*
- *Ehrenmord*
- *Silicon Saxony*
- *Hat Kafka / Schiller immer noch Relevanz?*
- *Internetpiraterie*
- *Tierversuche*
- *Die Bundesbank*
- *Inwiefern verändern Smartphones den Alltag?*
- *Die EU ohne Deutschland?*

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- *Bauhaus*
- *Der Kunstfund in München*
- *Bevölkerungsprobleme in Deutschland*
- *“Brot für die Welt”*
- *Neonazis im Internet*
- *Wie tolerant sind die Deutschen?*
- *Die Stasi*
- *Rentner und ihre Probleme*
- *Schubert*

The most popular topic this year, however, concerned the various issues surrounding Germany's *Atompolitik*. In conclusion, it is worth pointing out that some good individual research and a certain depth of knowledge is expected for a high mark on Grid M (“Development of Ideas”). It is not sufficient merely to have read a single article or to have discussed the topic in class. Fortunately most centres and candidates go far beyond this and many of the discussions heard are both interesting and informative.

F714 Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General Comments

There was a wide spread of marks. The majority of candidates coped well with the length of the paper. There were very few instances of candidates not completing the essay, probably following the advice of their teachers to write this first as there are so many marks allocated to it. In a few cases there were a number of gaps in other sections of the paper, possibly because of time pressure. If candidates find timing a problem then they should certainly be advised not to count the words in their essay, which some do meticulously and quite unnecessarily, since they should have had sufficient practice to judge the approximate length.

Some candidates may well have lost marks because of handwriting which was, at times, so bad as to be indecipherable. There were also candidates who crossed out their answer to a question and then wrote it somewhere else on the paper, perhaps at the bottom of the page or on an additional page without telling the Examiner that they had done so. Candidates should be strongly advised to state clearly where they have written the answer to a question if it is not in the expected space. Examiners would also appreciate it if candidates did not write their essays on alternate lines, as it makes it harder to get an overview of paragraphs when marking on line.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A: LISTENING

Task 1

Examiners found the level of the task appropriate with questions varying in difficulty.

(a) Where candidates made errors it was through putting bicycle in the singular, which was surprisingly not uncommon, through understanding *'hinten an'* to mean behind, and occasionally through not recognising *'Fahrräder'*, thinking that the camper van had had its wheels stolen. This misunderstanding often lost the same candidate several marks over the next few questions. Marking was quite strict here because the word bicycle was given to candidates in questions (e) and (f).

(b) Precise statistics were asked for and candidates lost marks through omitting part of the answer, such as the words 'over' or 'in Germany' or only giving the first part of the information.

(c) The word *'Fahrzeuge'* was unfamiliar to many candidates.

(d) *'auseinanderggebaut'* was rarely understood, as was *'Ersatzteile'*. Many candidates did not seem to know that *'gebracht'* can mean both "brought" and "taken" and thus assumed that the false papers were brought into Germany from abroad.

(f) Most candidates gave the station in their answer, but were often not sufficiently precise.

(g) The rendering of *'lassen'* caused problems.

Task 2

(a) Water from the Rhine featured frequently, but unsurprisingly *'Böden'* caused the most problems, resulting in a lot of strange words such as *'Burden'*, *'Berden'* and quite often *'Bürgern'*. There was also some inappropriate adding of *'vorfinden'*.

(b) *'heizen'* was rendered as *'heißen'* by weaker candidates.

- (c) This was also usually correct although the use of *'kein'* was a rarity (affecting the Quality of Language mark).
- (d) This mark was usually awarded, although candidates who wrote a garbled version of *'Vielfalt'* did not get the mark. Wiser candidates left it out if they did not recognise it.
- (e) The most common error was the wrong preposition *'um'*.
- (f) Many gained these marks, and this was a good test of linguistic skills, enabling able candidates to demonstrate their competence.
- (g) Some candidates did not express the idea of starvation satisfactorily and weaker candidates had problems with *'Naturkreislauf'*.
- (h) The main problems were omitting the *'mehr'* and the spelling of *'Unwetter'* as *'Umwetter'*.
- (i) Here and for (k) the comparatives *'sauberer'* and *'weniger'* were often expressed as *'saubere'* and *'wenige'*
- (j) Candidates sometimes simply transcribed what they heard without seeing how the answer fitted the question. A surprising number of candidates used a *'zu'* with a modal verb, both in this question and the next one, which affected their QL mark.
- (l) This enabled candidates to demonstrate a real understanding of the text (a stretch and challenge question).
- (m) The main problem for weaker candidates was the spelling. Recognising an *'ö'* needs practice, as seen also in (a).

SECTION B: READING

The Bismarck text clearly appealed to some candidates whereas others were thrown by seemingly never having heard of him. His name being *'von Bismarck'* was perhaps an additional problem as some clearly thought that it was about someone called Otto who came from Bismarck. Some, influenced by the audiofiles, seemed to think he was a singer.

Task 3

- (a), (b), (c) and (d) were quite challenging questions. The question *'Wozu?'* in particular caused problems. Often the idea of early recordings was omitted.
- (e) and (f) were much more straightforward, although candidates lost marks through not expressing the idea of *'um 1900'* satisfactorily.
- (g) Apart from a few straight, inappropriate lifts this was expressed well.
- (h) Some understood Bismarck to be singing, but other than that it was straightforward.
- (i) Not all candidates were able to identify 3 languages. For some the *'Marseillaise'* was also a language.
- (j) *'in Maßen'* was tested here and the answer required successful manipulation of the language.

Task 4

This was often high-scoring, although even native speakers often failed to get 7. (b) was often mistaken for a correct answer as 'da' seems to have been interpreted as 'deshalb'. The most common mistake was to give (e) or (f). A handful of candidates did not give the correct number of ticks.

Task 5

(a) (b) and (c) scored well although Examiners had to show sympathy towards the language.

For (d) some candidates did not understand the verb 'stammen'.

For (e) forming past participle from the infinitives was required – no easy task for some.

(f) required candidates to express themselves clearly rather than copying something out from the text. Many were able to do this.

Task 6

The Roma text began with quite a challenging transfer of meaning task, partially because the word 'Roma' was not necessarily familiar to candidates and there was confusion in their minds between Rumanian/Romanian/Roma/Romany and even Roman. What was surprising, however, was that candidates did not go back to correct some of their misapprehensions when subsequent tasks and later paragraphs clarified this issue.

Examiners were, however, quite accepting of this difficulty, although Roman was clearly wrong. Surprisingly, problems were caused by 'seit', 'Asylbewerberheim', 'öffentlich', 'Himmel' and 'Gemeinde'; less surprisingly by 'besetzen', 'überzeugen', 'Behörden' and 'umzusiedeln'.

This task elicited a very wide range of marks. Native speakers often tended to fare badly here, as apart from vocabulary problems there was the tendency to use German word order.

Task 7

(b) was a stretch and challenge question as the marks depended on reasoning and not just linguistic understanding. Many candidates got both marks.

(c) and (d) Some candidates were distracted by the ideas of being tourists and the 'Aufenthaltsrecht'.

(e) and (f) required direct answers to the questions. The question 'Was machen..?' is quite specific and an answer beginning 'es gibt ...' is never correct. 'Anschläge' was often not known and therefore either copied out or incorrectly transformed into verbs like 'anschlagen' or 'schlagen ... an'.

(h) 'vor' and 'seit' caught some candidates out, as usual.

Task 8

Whereas the Transfer of Meaning task was slightly harder than last year, this was a little easier. Many got 4 marks, the most difficult being (e) 'Vorfahren'. This was misunderstood by many weaker candidates who did not make use of the context to elicit the meaning first but focused on 'fahren' instead and gave explanation such as 'eine Reise machen', 'eine lange Fahrt machen' etc.

Task 9

A degree of grammatical accuracy was demanded for the point to be awarded in this task, i.e. the inclusion of 'worden' for (a), infinitives, preferably with 'zu' for (c) and a past participle for (d) ('geschützt'). There was often good handling of transfer from nouns to verbs. The main difficulty was for (a) where the correct rendering of a perfect tense in the passive voice was not within every candidate's reach, but there was always the option to get away with 'gestorben' or 'ums Leben gekommen'. Overall candidates are used to this type of task and performed well. It was interesting that for (b) a number of candidates omitted the 'deutscher' (rarely with an *r*), possibly because the use of 'citizenship' on its own would be acceptable in English.

The Quality of Language mark overall for the Reading section took account of candidates' ability to manipulate language in the way that the questions demanded. It was not necessary to find synonyms.

SECTION C: WRITING

Language:

There were fewer occasions this year when Examiners felt that they could not understand what was being said, so fewer very low language marks. Examiners also reported that they often found the level of language impressive. There were clearly some native or semi-native speakers who, however, did not always find the right register and did not always score full language marks. There were also some impressively competent non-native speakers whose linguistic performance right through the paper was good. Some other candidates included a good deal of pre-learnt material in their essays, often at the expense of writing a relevant essay, and gained better language than content marks. Candidates do need to take care, however, that they do not ignore the title completely as this then results in a mark of 0 for the whole essay, a rare but occasional happening.

Content:

The vast majority of candidates seemed to have a good grasp of how to structure their essays in a fairly logical way. Examiners main advice is that candidates should read the question carefully and focus continually on the wording of the question throughout the essay, given the large number of marks for content. Some candidate clearly believe that if they fill their essay full of facts and go on to two additional answer booklets they cannot fail to get a good mark. Nothing could be further from the truth. Careful planning and selection is what is required.

Q10

This was a very popular title. Most chose foreigners and concentrated on the difficulties they encounter. Often the focus was more on discrimination than intolerance and it was a pleasure to read the essays that really did focus on the latter. The idea of 'Alltagsleben' was rarely picked up on. Women were another group chosen, but this often did not quite fit as candidates mostly focussed on difficulties balancing work and a family and unequal pay which are not intolerance. The second part was sometimes more about what the government should do in the future rather than what is being done. Nevertheless there were some extremely thoughtful essays as well.

Q11 There was a range of responses to this question. Some saw the word unemployment in the title and decided to write all they knew about it without reading the title carefully, or perhaps did not understand the word 'lobt', which they could have guessed if they knew the word 'niedrig'. Other candidates included irrelevant information about the consequences for the individual of unemployment. Some knew nothing at all about it and threw in some inaccurate statistics, not realising that the Examiners had done their homework. At the other end of the scale there were several excellent essays which really adhered to the task of mentioning government initiatives and giving them credit.

Q12 The most popular choice. Although most started off as if they were going to answer the specific question (*‘Was verursacht die meiste Umweltverschmutzung?’*) weaker candidates often lapsed into very generalised discussions of global warming and CO2 emissions, as well as *‘Mülltrennung’* and recycling. There was some misconception about atomic energy which many thought was the major cause of emissions. The second aspect of the question (whether it is getting better or worse) was often tackled better.

Q13 There were some excellent responses to this question which demanded not only taking up a position firmly in favour of atomic power but also focussing on it being the only way to meet Germany’s energy needs. The best candidates knew about Germany’s increasing energy needs, current government policies, the Energiewende and renewables, fossil fuels and Germany’s dependence on other countries and were able to make their knowledge relevant. At the other extreme, a few took completely the opposite stance to the one required. Some did not seem to understand *‘bedarf’*. Others tended to concentrate on other pros and cons such as safety which were not really to the point here.

Q14 Not many chose this title but there were some well focussed and well argued essays here, some very generalised but some with excellent factual illustration. It is not always easy to find specifically German examples for science and technology where advances are often global, but good examples chosen included the German car industry and renewable energy technology.

Q15 There were only a few answers to this question which were mixed in quality.

Q16 Candidates wrote on works by Böll, Rilke, Brecht, Käthe Kollwitz, Horvath, Goethe, Otto Dix, Schubert, Mozart. Films chosen included Goodbye Lenin, Das Leben der Anderen and Das weiße Band. In general the essays demonstrated good individual research, although it was only the best candidates who were able to extract *‘Ideen’* from their chosen book/film/piece of music or art and many wrote about *‘Themen’* instead or all they knew about the work. Examiners were reasonably accepting in the interpretation of ‘ideas’, but it is difficult to see how the Stasi, for example, can be considered to be an idea.

Q17 There were a number of responses to this question, most of them praising Mrs Merkel, but also other parties. They were often quite accurate about the government’s achievements (and it usually was the government) and about what it stands for. Better candidates were really able to address the target audience of young people. There were a few more creative responses that needed rather more factual content to back up the ideas.

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