

**GCE**

**German**

Advanced GCE **A2 H476**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H076**

**OCR Report to Centres June 2015**

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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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**Advanced GCE German (H476)**

**Advanced Subsidiary GCE German (H076)**

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## F711 Speaking

### General Comments

A friendly atmosphere conducive to good candidate performance is important and the majority of the speaking tests were conducted well by teacher/examiners. Timing has improved over the course of the specification and most role-plays and topic discussions this series were timed correctly. The use of the OCR Repository has increased and many centres now upload recordings and also, in some cases, the paper documentation. All centres are reminded that markers should receive a topped and tailed Working Mark Sheet and Oral Topic Form for every candidate, for both the 01 (Repository) and 02 (CD) routes, together with the Attendance Register.

### Role-Play

The four role-plays set this series were judged by markers to be of equal difficulty and no single one caused particular problems. Each one is designed to have easier and harder elements for candidates to convey. Candidates continued to be familiar with the format and many approached the task of conveying the stimulus material with enthusiasm. Teachers should be aware that Grid A is marked according to the Key Points issued with the Mark Scheme: candidates should convey all the details in the stimulus material and not just summarise the text in broad terms. Markers this series observed that more candidates read out what they had written in the preparation stage. This should be strongly discouraged, since it sounds contrived and can lower the mark at Grid B (Response to Examiner). A number of candidates lacked some quite basic vocabulary to deal with the stimulus material, but, on the other hand, markers noted some increased ability to develop imaginative responses to the final two bullet points.

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 be inventive;
- candidates did not at any time read out notes written in the preparation stage;
- candidates reacted spontaneously to questions.

There were some excellent performances, but some potentially strong candidates did not convey all the details, at times because they were not given the opportunity to do so. The best teacher/examiners were able to elicit 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, although this may, of course, occur during the role-play itself and not just at the end.

## Comments on Individual Questions

### Role-play A: The Mayfair Hotel

The two initial questions proved to be straightforward. Successful candidates understood that they were supposed to be thinking about training to be a hotel manager themselves, although some candidates seemed to be under the illusion that their role was to recommend the position to 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 be sufficient to gain high marks on this grid. Successful candidates were able to convey information from the text such as: luxury / service / from around the world / looking for trainees / variety of people / ready to spend / at least one foreign language / training given / in all aspects of the job / management of hotel employees / good telephone skills. The final two bullet points were accessible to all and allowed candidates to respond to questions asking about the advantages of this particular trainee opportunity and their willingness to work with others.

### Role-play B: Schloss Dankern

Candidates responded well to this holiday stimulus. The initial two questions were asked successfully in many cases. Most candidates understood the situation, but a minority tried to recommend Schloss Dankern as a place the teacher/examiner ought to visit. Candidates who performed well provided details such as: near the border / hire a bike / be train driver on children's railway / discover new paths in forest / of all ages up to ninety / traditional wooden hut / bedding supplied at small charge / or if prefer / well-stocked / €700-€1150. The final two extension bullet points, asking about the suitability of this resort for all the family and the candidate's best holiday choice, caused no problems and provoked a range of responses.

### Role-play C: Beeches

This role-play, involving the sale of a house, proved to be very accessible. Candidates understood their role and in most cases were able to play the part of an estate agent well. The initial two questions proved to be very straightforward, and most candidates stayed within role by using the polite *Sie* form throughout. 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. Somewhat surprising was the number of candidates who struggled with *Schlafzimmer* / *Wohnzimmer* / *Esszimmer*. Successful candidates were able to express: built two years ago / owners furnished it / quiet / views / next to / fully equipped / rear / patio / plants and trees / some mature / privacy from neighbours / excellent condition. Expressing the price of the house accurately and the idea of a quick sale caused some difficulty. The final bullet points asked candidates whether they would buy this house and the best place to live. These elicited good responses and candidates managed to speak with ease on these topics.

### Role-play D: The English Cookbook

Most candidates tackled this role-play concerning a fictitious cookbook with enthusiasm. The two initial questions posed few difficulties, although a question of style emerged. A minority of centres had evidently advised their candidates to introduce these questions (and others with other role-plays) with a mechanism which avoided language manipulation. This may be well-

meaning, but the end result is contrived. *Kann sie gut Englisch?* is a much more likely question than *Ich möchte wissen, ob sie gut Englisch kann*. These initial questions are not difficult, and intended as an easy entry into the role-play. Well-performing candidates supplied details such as: aims to correct / the false impression / don't just (eat) / book is a must / no single book / healthy alternatives / best drink with it / historians discovered / in the past many varieties / at one end / at the other / TV chef. As with other role-plays, expressing numbers correctly caused some difficulties at times. Good teacher/examiners questioned erroneous prices (e.g. *Fünfundneunzig Pfund?*) The final bullet points, asking candidates what they personally could cook and whether cooking was important nowadays, proved to be no hurdle and offered candidates the opportunity to speak about their own abilities and views.

## 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. Almost all topics offered by candidates in this series were deemed to be appropriate. Discussions ranged, as expected, from highly impressive to weak. Many candidates had prepared themselves very well for this part of the examination, and many successful conversations took place, the very best with spontaneous interchanges of ideas between teacher/examiner and candidate. As in the past, some candidates were over-prepared and delivered a series of mini-monologues. Good teacher/examiners prevented this by intervening and challenging candidates' statements, thereby allowing access to the higher marks on Grid E1. 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 restrict 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, since they lack depth as a result.

**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. However, long lists of factual or statistical information are not interesting in themselves and are considerably less important than developing analysis of them. 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 vital. One of the many roles of teacher/examiners is to react to statements made by candidates and to challenge these 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. If candidates feel the need to write notes or have run out of space to write their answer, it would be most helpful to the Assessors if they used the Additional Page at the back of the question booklet before resorting to extra paper.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A – Listening and Writing

**Q1** The listening text concerned a reality TV show and from three options candidates were required to choose the correct ending to the sentence. Most candidates achieved above half marks but few managed to get all ten correct. The questions most frequently answered incorrectly were (g) and (j).

**Q2** The second listening text was about a new dress code for soldiers. Candidates had to choose the correct word to complete the sentence. All the words were verbs 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. The candidates had most difficulty with (e) *entfernen* followed by (f) *verdecken* and (j) *schützen*.

**Q3** Answering questions in English revealed that most candidates understood the gist of this text about a summer job on an organic farm. However, marks were sometimes lost through giving insufficiently precise answers. In (a) *ausruhen* as an item of vocabulary caused problems for a number of candidates; some also interpreted *sie* as 'she' despite the plural verb ending. Some candidates had difficulties expressing their answers correctly. A good example of this was (f): where *auf dem Lande zu leben* was sometimes construed as 'living off the land', *Lebensmittel* was 'groceries' which made no sense in the context and *handwerkliche Kenntnisse* also frequently got lost in translation. Some failed to grasp the context of *fremd* in (g) and rendered it as 'foreigners'.

**Q4** Most candidates communicated the content of this email effectively, although a few lost marks unnecessarily through omitting elements such as 'specific' and 'possibly'. 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. *Bauernhof*, *freiwillig*, *Unterkunft* and *umsonst* could be gleaned from the previous listening task. *Erzählen* was not widely known but there were many acceptable substitutes. *Empfehlen* was known by most candidates, as was a way of asking for further information. As these elements appear frequently in this task; it is pleasing that candidates have taken note. Most candidates had at least an adequate command of German and could communicate the message. Word order and verbs were generally quite sound but gender and adjectival endings were rather hit and miss.



## Section B – Reading and Writing

**Q5** This task tested the comprehension of a text about the use of a phone app to counter binge drinking. Most candidates correctly matched the beginnings and endings of the sentences and scored well above half marks.

**Q6** This text about a precocious student was accessible to most candidates and there were very few instances of "no response" to the questions. 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: (f) for example, required the candidate to manipulate a negative sentence from the text to a positive one and to add a verb. 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 (g) because it required the candidate to select information carefully from a complex sentence. Only the more able candidates gained the two marks. It was pleasing to note that in (i) where a very similar question has been asked before, almost all candidates answered the question directly which required the use of a verb. This was not the case when it occurred previously. In other questions the answers were usually correctly sourced from the text and mostly communicated effectively but did not always gain full marks for Quality of Language.

The Quality of Language was generally sufficient to convey the meaning but manipulating from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> person still causes difficulties with verb endings, pronouns and possessives.

**Q7(a)** Most candidates understood the gist of this text about a new way of promoting healthy eating. 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 have by now become skilled at picking out the salient ideas from the text and only a small minority achieved fewer than half marks on this task.

**Q7 (b)** Many candidates failed to read the essay title properly and launched into an essay on healthy eating which bore no or very little reference to the future. Unless their points were tied in to the future, candidates did not gain credit for their ideas. It was perfectly acceptable to describe the current situation as long as the candidate expressed an opinion as to whether or not things would be similar in the future. Candidates generally concentrated on the *was* and made only slight reference to the *wie* but this was in no way penalised. There were many interesting and thoughtful essays, bringing in not only health but also environmental issues. Some predicted that we would just eat pills or drink our food, that insects would be a valuable food source or that we would become increasingly vegetarian. Many predicted total domination by the fast food industry.

Candidates should be reminded that there are no marks for structure in this essay, 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 make an effort to vary their vocabulary and the structures they use. For this reason they usually get a good mark for Range which is often not matched by the mark for Accuracy because of a high level of basic error such as verb / subject agreements, incorrect 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 Assessor 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 marks for content.

## F713 Speaking

### General Comments

There were few problems as far as recording quality, paperwork and conduct of the examination were concerned, although it is important to ensure that the details of the topic on the candidate's form correspond with the points covered in the discussion. A generally high standard of examining was again noted and the vast majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level. There was again a particularly good variety of chosen topics and some very interesting conversations around them. It is more interesting if the candidates all choose a topic of their own and research something unusual or controversial. Historical and literary topics should be clearly linked to the present-day situation, or interpretation.

All three texts seemed capable of stretching the stronger candidates, with the help of skilful examining, and yet were accessible to less skilful linguists. 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, although this comment applies only to a few Centres. It is also worth noting that the text discussion is indeed a discussion and not a reporting exercise. The over-use of the present subjunctive in responses to the examiner, although intended as a laudable attempt to extend the range of structures, is not really to be recommended in such a situation, although a number of centres appear to encourage this approach.

### Comments on individual Texts:

#### Text A

##### ***Wenn der Mann zu Hause bleibt***

This text was frequently chosen as it covered a familiar topic, albeit from a slightly unusual angle. Most candidates appeared to approve of the *Elternzeit-Regelung*, although not all could pronounce it correctly. A significant minority still thought a woman more suited to the role of child-carer in the early months but not all were able to explain clearly enough exactly what the new arrangements entail. The point about *entweder....oder...* was not always emphasised sufficiently. *Eine berufliche Auszeit* in the first paragraph should really have been explained in the student's own words, perhaps borrowed from the second paragraph, but this did not always happen.

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 *in der Vergangenheit* for *früher*. Natural replies are preferred, even if the 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 candidates correct themselves, but no penalty for getting it wrong at first.

For the discussion of the second paragraph the importance of having practised simple numbers was evident and there were fewer gross errors this year, though still some. Some of the best candidates "reverse" the statistics, by saying, for example, that under a third of stay-at-home fathers *don't* find it a positive experience. It is also a good idea to change percentages into fractions or vice versa, which would count towards the marks for quality of language and

responsiveness. Not everyone understood the 10% figure quoted, which referred to the relatively low number of men taking time off work, but which was in fact an *increase*.

In paragraph three *Bedenken* was not always understood and only the better candidates were able fully to explain the points covered by the first sentence. It was disappointing how few could pronounce the German name *Michael*. Candidates should be trained to practise personal and place names occurring in the texts by saying them out loud during the preparation period. In the fourth paragraph there was occasional misunderstanding of the verb *sich leisten*, which here meant “afford the time”. Few examiners asked why Sigmar Gabriel couldn’t afford this time and relatively few candidates mentioned his role in the government or were able to pronounce it correctly. He was taken to be a woman by some, despite the *sagte er* in the text. Good examiners would query this immediately. Candidates coped well with *Unter einen Hut bringen*, but surprisingly not always with *Abholen*.

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: „Ist es wichtig, dass ganz kleine Babys von der Mutter betreut werden, oder kann der Vater es genauso gut machen?“ Examiners need to ensure 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

### **Gewalttätige Videospiele – ein Problem in ganz Europa?**

The subject matter again proved accessible, although involving slightly more complex ideas and, particularly, statistics. Many candidates found it quite difficult to make a clear distinction between the three incidents related in the first paragraph, and there were many examples of the ages of the young people not being expressed correctly.

*Drei Jungen zwischen 14 und 19* was a neat way of summarising the key numerical information. As with people’s names, numbers in the text should be practised out loud during the preparation period, and the examiner should query incorrect information during the test. *Schläger* was sometimes pronounced as *Schlager* and *erschlagen* sometimes became *geschlagen*, both of which errors might cause confusion. The passive construction *wurde...ermordet* was not always understood, so that it sometimes became unclear as to who had murdered whom. Some good candidates found ingenious ways of expressing the inverted commas around *Freund*, such as *angeblicher Freund* or *sogenannter Freund*.

The first part of the second paragraph was not understood by some, perhaps as a result of *sein sollen*, and Mia’s opinion was, therefore, interpreted incorrectly. A simple alternative for those who were unsure how to pronounce TV was *Fernsehsendungen*.

The vocabulary item in the third paragraph, *suchterregend*, was a useful one and relatively easily understood, but many candidates, in seeking to use their own words, tried *süchtig*, which is not a viable alternative, unless, as was sometimes heard, expressed as *man kann dadurch süchtig werden*. Good alternatives were offered for *Clan* and *in der wirklichen Welt*, for example: *seine virtuelle Familie* and *in der Realität*.

In the last paragraph *abbauen* was usually understood and replaced by *reduzieren* or similar, and some other simple but effective alternatives to the text vocabulary were *Mannschaft* for *Team*, *Teamarbeit* for *im Team zu spielen*, *Frust* for *Aggressionen* and *taktisch zu denken* for the simple noun *Taktik*. *Amok* was not always pronounced correctly and *Spielern* was sometimes misunderstood as *Spielen*.

In the general discussion it was interesting to hear that the majority of candidates seemed to agree with Mia that these violent video games are not really a problem. There was a significant number, however, whose brothers were apparently addicted to them! Teacher-examiners usually followed the suggested general questions, but there were many good alternatives, such as *Gibt es einen Zusammenhang zwischen Videospiele und Aggressivität?*

## Text C

### **Welche Gruppen werden heute noch diskriminiert?**

This text was chosen slightly less often than the other two, but produced perhaps the most interesting discussions. Some Centres ask their candidates to provide a general introduction before launching into the first specific question. It is not essential, however, and it is also not necessary for the examiner to query the meaning of every difficult vocabulary item in the texts and ask for synonyms, though it is good practice to ask: „*Was bedeutet das?*“ occasionally. The first paragraph of this text posed few such problems, although the name of the school, the *Holstenschule*, was sometimes pronounced as if it had been *Holstein*, and occasionally *die elften Klassen* was thought to refer to eleven-year olds.

Some details were occasionally omitted from the second paragraph, such as mention of the presentation each of the spokespersons had to make to the whole class after the ten-minute small-group discussion. In this context *präsentieren* was a useful alternative to the text vocabulary item *vorstellen*. Some good strategies were evident to avoid having to read out sections of this paragraph verbatim, for example the list of discussion topics. *Sexualität*, *Rasse* and even *wie sie aussehen* (instead of just *Aussehen*) were all good alternatives heard from enterprising candidates, as was *in Betracht nehmen* for *berücksichtigen* and *ob sie wissen, was sie machen* instead of *bewusst oder unbewusst*.

The third paragraph was understood well and many people expressed their disgust at the way the unfortunate man was treated: *sie haben es lustig gefunden, dass er nicht deutlich sprechen konnte* was a good own-words summary of the incident. *Bereich* was occasionally misunderstood to mean *Region*, and the discussion group's main point that everyone should be treated equally in society regardless of their abilities was surprisingly frequently glossed over or omitted. This was certainly regarded as a “main point” of the text, when considering marking grid K: *Understanding of and response to the Text*.

The final paragraph caused few problems, apart, quite understandably, from the footballer Hitzlsperger's name. „*Er ist der einzige, der sich geoutet hat*“ used some very up-to-date vocabulary to refer to him. *Promis* was used for *Prominenten* and *legal* or *erlaubt* for *zulässig*, which was clearly understood by nearly everyone. There was almost universal support for gay marriage, when it came to more general discussion, and surprise that Germany is lagging behind in its legalisation. Race and religion were the other “categories” most mentioned as interesting to candidates.

## Topic Conversation

This should be a natural conversation around the chosen topic area and not a presentation by the candidate of learned material. It is good to note that the latter technique is employed by very few Centres and that the majority of examiners and candidates adopt the conversational approach.

There was an excellent variety of topics again, with most candidates obviously opting to discuss something of their own choice, or a controversial issue. The three topics covered by the texts: *Rolle der Frau*, *Aggressivität unter Jugendlichen* and *Diskriminierung / Integration*, were also

popular choices as candidate topics, though centres always chose an alternative text by way of contrast, as prescribed.

The following is a list of some of the imaginative topics successfully discussed this year:

- *Fatih Akin's Filme*
- *Legalisierung von Prostitution*
- *Einfluss des 2. Weltkriegs auf die Kunst*
- *Roboter: Effekt auf den Arbeitsmarkt*
- *Vergleich zwischen der Vereinigung 1871 und der Wiedervereinigung 1990*
- *Wien – Armut und Reichtum*
- *Filmindustrie vor und nach dem Mauerfall*
- *Gewalt und Rassismus in Fußball*
- *Einfluss der Nazis auf die Politik heute*
- *Graffiti-Kunst in Berlin*
- *grüne Gentechnik*
- *Stefan Zweig*
- *„Türkisch für Anfänger“*
- *Nanotechnologie*
- *Wladimir Kaminer*
- *Hans Zimmer*
- *Königsberg und deutsche Kultur*
- *Zwangsehen*

In conclusion, it is again 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 short story 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 very informative.

## F714 Listening, Reading and Writing 2

### General Comments:

There was a wide spread of marks. Candidates appeared to find the texts accessible and in general showed appreciation of the overall meaning of the passages. Mostly candidates read the questions well, although there were a few cases where candidates answered in the wrong language (usually isolated questions) and also cases where candidates misread general instructions (Task 7 for instance). There were very few instances of candidates not completing the paper, and some found time to write very lengthy essays as well. 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 know whether their essay is long enough or not. Writing a draft of the essay first and then copying out a neat version also uses up valuable time and additional errors may creep in. Some candidates may well have lost marks because of handwriting which was, at times, so difficult to read 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.

### Comments on Individual Questions:

#### SECTION A: LISTENING

##### Task 1

Examiners found the level of the task appropriate with questions varying in difficulty. Candidates should be sure to read the questions carefully. The word 'exactly' indicates that full details are required. If a comparison is required then the answer must acknowledge this.

Problems mainly occurred in:

- (a) One of the elements was often missing or wrong (e.g. understanding of *Jahrhunderte*).
- (d) Sometimes 'in Germany' was omitted, which rendered the answer meaningless.
- (g) Many said 'millions' rather than 'billions' and omitted 'every year'.
- (h) Some gave the right answer which was then negated because they gave a wrong figure for the age.

##### Task 2

This proved to be a good barometer of candidates' ability and all but the weakest candidates appeared to understand the gist of the conversation.

The main problems for candidates were:

- (c) *Gemeindewohnung*.
- (f) Although most candidates got this mark, a few lost it by adding something about the *14 Tierärzte*, which was not required by the question.
- (i) Unsurprisingly it was the *Ratte* that caught some candidates out. A number of invented animals were mentioned.

- (j) *abrutschen* was unfamiliar to most candidates and the transcription was often unsuccessful.
- (l) Not all candidates were able to identify *besorgter* as a comparative and some omitted *um ihre Tiere*.
- (o) The answer to this required thought rather than mechanical transcription of *Arztpraxis* and for this reason it proved to be a discriminating question.

## SECTION B: READING

### Task 3

This question caused very few problems, providing a good lead into the text as a whole. Even the weakest candidates scored at least 5/8. (e) and (p) were the most common wrong statements ticked.

### Task 4

Many candidates showed excellent comprehension here as well. The main difficulties were:

- expressing (c) clearly as *hineingehen* rather than *hereinlassen*;
- understanding that for (d) their clothes were meant, rather than simply their appearance, but an encouraging number of candidates understood and expressed this well.

### Task 5

There was a wide spread of marks, with the most able demonstrating an excellent ability to manipulate the language accurately to convey the required meaning. They saw that *beteiligt* would not fit and chose *teilgenommen* instead. They were able to come up with the word *Unterschied*. They realised that “*Geht mal bitte zur Seite*” had to be changed to “*zur Seite gehen*” to make sense. Teachers have clearly trained candidates well for this type of exercise, and it was only the weakest who did not cope at all.

### Task 6

The CCTV camera text also eased candidates in gently with the Transfer of Meaning task. On the surface this was quite an easy paragraph, and careful candidates were able to score high marks. There were, however, many candidates who lost marks unnecessarily for omission of words, for wrong spelling, for using capital letters for common nouns and for use of wrong prepositions. The vocabulary items that caused the most difficulty, quite surprisingly in some cases, were *öffentlich*, *Brücken*, *Eingänge*, *Gebäude* and *Allheilmittel*.

### Task 7

Most candidates performed well, gaining the comprehension mark although there were grammatical errors which affected the Quality of Language mark, whether or not to use *zu* with the infinitive, being just one example.

All but the weakest candidates were able to manipulate the language for *Gesamtzahl* in (a) and *Verbrechensrate* in (f), again showing that Centres have prepared them well for this type of task.

### Task 8

This was found to be a very challenging exercise. *Vororte* was unknown by most. Few knew or attempted to render the meaning of *Hang*, even if *Konformismus* was known. If not already known, the meanings of *Fazit* and *allgegenwärtig* were correctly deduced by many from the text. Again, this task engendered production of language, assessed in the QOL mark.

### Task 9

Candidates who were able to answer questions precisely did best in this task. Not all candidates read the questions carefully enough and consequently lifted what they thought was the answer straight from the text without considering how it fitted. Questions (b) and (c), for example, have *wir* in the question and this needed to be taken account of in the way the question was answered. There were many answers for (c) that were not accepted for this reason. For (f) the answer should start with *Man kann...* and should not include the word *können* in a phrase lifted from the text. If candidates find that they are simply copying out long phrases from the text, they have probably missed something and would be advised to read the question again.

The Quality of Language mark overall for the Reading 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:

In almost all cases the level of language was of A2 standard, with marks for range (structures, vocabulary and general fluency) often better than those for accuracy, reflecting a patchy understanding of cases, verb and adjective agreement, word order and tenses. This may, of course, be due to the fact that they were writing under time pressure. There were clearly some semi-native speakers, some of whom wrote excellent German but who 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.

### Content:

The vast majority of candidates seemed to have a good grasp of how to structure their essays in a fairly logical way. Good advance planning is very important as there are 15 marks for structure, and potentially good essays are spoilt by becoming long and rambling as yet another point comes into the candidate's mind. Candidates should also remember the importance of constantly focussing on the question set and should only include material that is relevant to that question. Sometimes candidates have too much material to include and have to be selective, but conversely they should beware of choosing a title if they do not have any factual knowledge at all. This year many candidates choosing Question 14 fell into that trap. The most popular title chosen this year was Question 12, followed by Question 10.

### Q10

There were some good attempts at this question, although there was clearly much guesswork involved when identifying where in Germany there is the most crime and a lot of invented statistics (checked by Examiners). Nevertheless there were relevant ideas about big cities, racial



hatred, unemployment, poverty etc being the causes of crime. There were also candidates who wrote irrelevantly about crime prevention measures.

#### **Q11**

There were several difficulties for those who chose this question. The first was that for some candidates the word *Dialog* was not understood and there were one or two essays that were written as letters. The second was that they should know a little about Bulgaria (i.e. Bulgarians are members of the EU, not asylum seekers and didn't come as *Gastarbeiter*). The third was to make it more than simply a piece of creative writing and to ensure that there was a proper dialogue between the two protagonists, including facts about problems facing immigrants and some of the initiatives being taken to help them. A few candidates rose well to the task.

#### **Q12**

This was the most popular choice and on the whole the best answered question, as many candidates were well prepared and had information at their fingertips. They tended to concentrate on renewables, recycling and the Atomausstieg. Good candidates focussed on the question and were able to analyse why the various government policies were successful, weighing up the success of different aspects at the end. Candidates gaining lower marks tended to lapse into very generalised discussions of global warming and CO2 emissions, as well as '*Mülltrennung*' and recycling, barely making reference to any specific policies.

#### **Q13**

There were a few good attempts to make this a rousing pamphlet but some tended to forget this aspect of the question. Also there were very few responses that revealed much knowledge about Germany's plans for expanding its coal production which currently makes up over 40% of Germany's electricity production. Germany has the largest coal reserves in the EU. Some knowledge of this would be expected. The emphasis was less on coal itself and more on the advantages of other forms of energy.

#### **Q14**

This was quite a popular title but, with one or two notable exceptions, the argument was completely generalised with no, or only a passing, mention of German industry. For most it was a purely speculative weighing up of the advantages and disadvantages of robots over humans, how they can affect unemployment, how they can do the housework, etc. Marks for Grid N in particular were affected by this, and indeed, if the argument was baseless and superficial, marks for Grid O as well.

#### **Q15**

There were only a few answers to this question. Candidates generally knew about the biography and achievements of their chosen scientist and were able to write from a personal perspective. They found addressing the importance of the achievements for humanity more challenging.

#### **Q16**

There was an interesting range of responses, as the title allowed for a wide interpretation. Candidates wrote about historical buildings, the long-lasting psychological effects of the past on the present (many focussing on the division of Germany). Stronger candidates gave concrete examples and wrote thought provoking essays. There were several candidates who gained deservedly high marks. Weaker candidates did not give enough examples but almost all tried to address the title and come to conclusions.

#### **Q17**

Some candidates who answered this question chose to write about films rather than works of literature and this was accepted. The best candidates did not merely write a summary of the plot but explained why aspects of the film/book would be interesting to study. Most candidates focussed on content and themes rather than style.

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