

# **Report on the Units**

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**January 2010**

**HX76/MS/R/10J**

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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 German Speaking

### General Comments

#### Role-play

The majority of candidates were able to cope with the demands of the three role-plays set for this series. Very few candidates wrote out translations and read them out. Many candidates used their 20-minute preparation time well, and were able to convey at least half of the points of the stimulus material successfully.

Some examiners listened carefully and tried to elicit further information from the stimulus material, where candidates omitted details. Others simply asked the questions suggested on the Examiner's Sheet. Candidates who do not attempt to convey what is in the stimulus material, or who simplify it, cannot be rewarded with high marks on Grid 1A. Since 15 marks are allocated to Grid A, it is vital that examiners invite candidates to provide this information.

Most candidates were aware of the need to change the initial two statements into questions. Timing of the role-play was good in the majority of cases, although some were too short. Role-plays lasting three minutes are unlikely to get high marks, especially on Grid A. At the other extreme, some role-plays overran. Centres should be aware that assessment of the role-play stops after six minutes.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Role-play A: Youth Theatre

The first in the randomisation sequence (printed on page 2 of the Teacher/Examiner Booklet). The two most difficult items of vocabulary had been glossed, and most candidates coped well with the rest. Elements which were often ignored were 'amateur', 'we're interested in you' and 'rewritten'. '7.30 to 9.30' was mostly done correctly, but 'Thursday' was sometimes *Dienstag*. The name Driffield was sometimes mispronounced, and the y of the e-mail address [yt@yahoo.com](mailto:yt@yahoo.com) was often rendered with *Jot* not *Ypsilon*. 'Acting' was not always known, nor 'make-up', but one of the tasks of the role-play is to manipulate language to cope with the unknown, and many candidates could do this. Most coped adequately with the final two extension bullet points. Quality of language ranged from excellent to poor.

#### Role-play B: Sandringham

The text contained information familiar to candidates - describing a visitor attraction. Items which tended to be ignored were: 'main ground floor rooms', 'regularly', 'friendly and informal place', 'knowledgeable guides' and 'self-service'. The superlative 'most comfortable' caused difficulties. However, numbers were mostly correctly done in this role-play. For the most part sensible responses were offered to the final two extension bullet points.

### Role-play C: Land's End

Most candidates made a good attempt to express what was in the text, but some omitted details on lengthier sections. The first paragraph in particular was largely ignored, and candidates moved quickly to the second paragraph. 'South west corner' and 'experience the wild Atlantic Ocean' caused some difficulty. Several items in the first bullet point ('unforgettable', 'multimedia' and 'local history') were not generally known. The second bullet point (modes of transport) of paragraph two was only successfully done by a few. Some candidates thought that this was somehow linked to the first bullet point, some suggested unrealistic modes of transport (eg *Straßenbahn*) to get from Land's End to John O' Groats, and a few described the latter as a person rather than a place. Not all understood 'man's relationship with the sea' and referred instead to a particular man. Exhibition was not well known. Most did manage to convey the easier sections relating to shopping, eating and the visitor centre.

The AS role-play has proved to be a good test of what candidates are able to do after one year of study beyond GCSE. Candidates are given the opportunity to express a range of language, as well as their imagination and initiative. The quality of language heard this series was comparable to that of previous series. Some candidates tended to limit themselves to simple sentence structures and vocabulary. Others not only had a good command of the basics, but also impressed with their use of ambitious language and complex structures.

### Topic

The majority of candidates were well prepared for this part of the examination. A few were over-prepared. A presentation is no longer required and examiners moved successfully on to the discussion at the end of the role-play. Timing was often good and most discussions correctly lasted 9-10 minutes.

Discussions mostly followed the headings on the Oral Topic Form. Most centres ensured that topics chosen related to the AS topics/subtopics in the specification. Where a topic was unsuitable, eg a historical topic such as *die Weimarer Republik* (suitable for A2 but not AS), marks on Grid D were restricted. Most topics chosen by candidates were relevant and interesting. Another area of some concern is topics of a general nature. The FAQ section on the OCR website states that topics must relate to the country whose language is being studied. It is not enough for candidates to be able to talk about *Fernsehen* or *Fettleibigkeit* with no mention of a German-speaking country. Such discussions tend to be too generalised. The topics should be *Fernsehen in Deutschland* or *Fettleibigkeit in Deutschland* and contain well researched factual information.

Discussions should contain a great deal of spontaneous language. Examiners should react to statements made by candidates and challenge what is being said, particularly if it contains generalisations (eg *die Deutschen spielen Fußball* or *die Deutschen essen Sauerkraut*). A good number of examiners challenged well and made conversations interesting. The best discussions are those where much genuine interchange takes place. This occurs naturally when discussions have not been over-rehearsed in preparation for the speaking test. Over-rehearsed 'mini-monologue'-style deliveries do not demonstrate spontaneity, and candidates penalise themselves on criterion E1 ("fluency [is often] confined to pre-learnt material"). Teacher / examiners should note that simply stating *OK* or *Gut* at the end of each recitation, followed by the next question, restricts the marks candidates can be awarded on Grid E1.

It is very good practice when candidates from the same centre offer different topics. Quality of language was as in previous years and series. Some candidates struggled with accuracy: subject/verb agreement, verb second idea and word order in subordinate clauses. Others were able to use ambitious structures and manipulate language effectively.

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Most recordings were sent on CDs and were good. A few CD recordings were only just audible at full volume. Omni-directional microphones give the best sound quality when recordings are played back for assessment. It is essential that centres check that recordings are audible before sending them to examiners. A few centres used the F711/02 OCR Repository. Most centres entered their candidates correctly.

## F712 German: Listening, Reading and Writing 1

### General Comments

This is the second series that this unit has been available and the cohort was different to that of the June 2009 series when all the candidates were in their first year of A Level studies. The paper appears to have differentiated well: each task had elements that were accessible to all candidates, while still giving the opportunity to attain higher marks. It produced responses over the full mark range. The quality of written German, particularly in the extended writing tasks, was encouraging and suggested a great deal of work had gone into preparing candidates appropriately. Candidates appear to have been able to complete the tasks comfortably in the time allowed.

### Section A - Listening & Writing

The two non-verbal response tasks at the beginning of this section were good indicators of performance.

#### Aufgabe 1

Candidates were required to complete statements from 3 options, according to evidence provided by the listening text. This text on the subject of the smoking ban was generally well-understood. The number of wrong answers to (c), (d) and (e) suggest that some candidates were predicting the answer rather than listening to the text. In (j) a surprising number chose C as the answer.

#### Aufgabe 2

A gap-fill task is a discriminating test-type and candidates who had gained high marks on Q1 sometimes failed to do so here. Most were not fooled in (a) by the distractor *sonnig*. (e) and (f) were generally correctly completed. (d) *begleitet* caused problems for a number of candidates, mainly because it appeared to be an unknown item of vocabulary. The three negatives *keine*, *nicht* and *niemand* were sometimes confused.

#### Task 3

Most candidates respond well to questions and answers in English. Only one or two candidates attempted to answer in German (for which they received no credit). Many answers were straightforward but demanded precision: in (g) (ii) for example the *noch eine* had to be clearly understood as another tour not just a concert. Candidates did not always get the three marks in the final question even though they had four items of vocabulary to choose from. *Hausmeister* caused the most problems and appeared as chef, house husband, businessman, house and wife-keeper.

#### Aufgabe 4

In this task there are 10 marks for communicating the meaning. Marks are lost when elements of the message are not included: 'here' 'mostly' and 'festival' caused most difficulties. The last element had to be expressed as a question to gain the mark. Most candidates used appropriate vocabulary to communicate either directly or with a paraphrase. 'Member' caused some vocabulary difficulties, as did 'surprised' but, for the latter, examiners allowed a wide range of alternative expressions. 'Live' had to be attempted to gain the mark and many got round it very nicely by saying *in Konzert*.

10 marks were available for Quality of Language and only a small minority gained fewer than half marks. The most appropriate form of address for this message was the informal 'ihr' which

many candidates realised but few could achieve. As long as candidates were consistent, they were not penalised for being formal. Combinations of *Sie* and *dein* were not accepted. Very few candidates seem to be familiar with *euch* and *euer - ihr* tended to be the catch-all pronoun and possessive. 'In the shops' rarely had the article in the correct case but word order and verbs were generally accurate.

### **Aufgabe 5**

This type of task is challenging, regardless of the level of the stimulus text, and discriminates effectively. Most candidates made a reasonable attempt at it. (d), (e) and (f) were most frequently wrong.

### **Aufgabe 6**

Many candidates seemed to understand the text but not all were always capable of responding accurately to the questions. There was, however, a pleasing number of candidates who manipulated the language of the text successfully or used their own words. The main problem occurred with (e) as many candidates overlooked the clue given by the bold printing and answered *ähnliche Interessen* instead of *ähnliche Lebensgewohnheiten*. In (g) many candidates did not make it clear that new flatmates were required and in (j) that problems had to be discussed as well as 'going to the pub'.

There were 10 marks awarded for Quality of Language in this task and questions were intended to encourage candidates to manipulate language rather than lift entire phrases and sentences. Liftings were accepted for the comprehension marks as long as they directly answered the question but, for example, in (d) *die Wohnung sondern* did not get a mark as it makes no sense. For the Quality of Language mark an attempt to use different words and manipulate the language of the text were credited.

### **Aufgabe 7 (a)**

Candidates seemed to be confident about the content of this text and in some instances when asked to describe the world of online adventure games they did so with little reference to the text so consequently did not score highly on comprehension. Some of the expected comprehension points required candidates to have demonstrated understanding of the whole sentence, not just an element of it. In point 10 in the Mark Scheme, for example, the candidate had to mention the reason for creating 'guilds' not just that 'guilds' are created.

Candidates are expected to manipulate the vocabulary and structures from the text and do not have to search constantly for synonyms. The response should be a summary of the main points; there is no need to go into minor detail. For example, it is not necessary to give all the biographic details of Julian, when the point was that some people spend a very long time on these games.

### **Aufgabe 7 (b)**

Although only a minority of candidates admitted to a fondness for online adventure games, they all seemed to have some experience of them. There were some very interesting responses on the advantages and disadvantages of computer games, expressing both obvious and quite insightful points of view. No candidate seemed stuck for ideas and even some who had struggled on the rest of the paper managed to achieve a good mark here.

Some candidates organised their ideas better than others. A good technique is to spend some time thinking before starting to write as this avoids the use of asterisks later to include afterthoughts elsewhere on the page. It also avoids repetition for which no credit is given.



### **Quality of Language**

Grids C.2 (Accuracy) and F.2 (Range) are used to award marks for Quality of Language over both 7(a) and 7(b). Most candidates had sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas. 7(b) provided candidates with the opportunity to use complex structures and varied vocabulary. However, some are experiencing problems with accuracy in grammatical areas that should have been mastered at GCSE or earlier: singular / plural, genders of common words, basic use of case, elementary word order, punctuation and capital letters. The level of language was occasionally inconsistent between the two parts of the task: some candidates were good at manipulating the language of the text in (a) but were less confident in their use of German when they had to improvise, others struggled with the text but then expressed their own ideas fluently.

## F714 Listening, Reading and Writing 2

### General Comments

The majority of candidates attempted all questions and were able to make good or adequate responses to the tasks set. There was no evidence that candidates were short of time.

### Comments on individual questions

#### Section A: Listening and Writing

##### Task 1

This passage was generally well understood. Some candidates from a German-speaking background did least well on this task because they had insufficient English vocabulary to express themselves clearly.

- (a) Almost all candidates gained this first mark; examiners accepted teenagers or youths for *Jugendlichen*.
- (b) There were few candidates who did not gain at least one of the two marks. "She is 19" was not accepted as this was not a specific answer to the question and there were three other items of relevant information to choose from.
- (c) *ihr Leben opfern* was not understood by all.
- (d) Most gained at least one mark. *Vorurteile* caused some problems.
- (e) There were three possible points and most candidates gained at least one mark.
- (f) *entwickeln sich* was not always understood.
- (g) Almost all candidates got this mark.

##### Aufgabe 2

This task discriminated well between candidates with a much wider spread of marks.

- (a) The mark was not awarded in cases of misspellings of *Müllabfuhr* or when *so läuft* was wrongly transcribed.
- (b) Almost all candidates got this mark. *5 Uhr* instead of *Stunden* was not accepted.
- (c) and (d) were understood by better candidates.
- (e) The mark was lost if candidates failed to mention approximately.
- (f) and (g) were understood by better candidates
- (h) The mark was not awarded if candidates failed to transcribe *Einkommensverhältnisse* convincingly. *Aus* was sometimes put on the end of the phrase, which meant that it did not make sense.

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- (i) Candidates who did not understand *wohlhabend* usually missed this mark.
- (j) Some candidates incorrectly wrote that young academics eat *Gemüsereste*.
- (k) Examiners accepted misspellings of *Braunkohle*. However, those who wrote something about drinking coke did not gain the mark.
- (l) The word *Pappbecher* was not always clearly expressed. Some candidates were distracted by the *Dosen*, but most candidates understood correctly.
- (m) Despite inaccurate spelling, this caused few problems.
- (n) *einfach stehen* was sometimes transcribed as *ein verstehen*, thus affecting both the comprehension point and language marks. This question was phrased in such a way as to encourage candidates to demonstrate their ability to use the passive and gain language marks.
- (o) Most candidates were able to express these answers accurately to gain comprehension marks. *Hundehaufen* and *Hundehalter* caused some difficulty. The word *Abfälle* was not known by some.
- (p) A few candidates wrote *Jeder Bürger*, but not many. A few candidates changed *eine Stadtreinigung* to *die Stadtreinigung*.

## Section B: Reading and Writing

### Aufgabe 3

Many candidates got all seven marks.

### Aufgabe 4

Comprehension marks were awarded even if the grammar was not totally accurate. In the case of (b), however, candidates were not awarded the comprehension point if they put a plural ending on the verb, since it distorted the meaning. On the whole, despite making errors, which then affected the global language mark, candidates did this task well.

### Aufgabe 5

- (a) Few candidates were able to answer concisely with *im Internet*.
- (b), (c) and (d) presented no particular problems.
- (e) Few candidates looked sufficiently carefully at the wording of the question, or possibly did not understand *mitgemacht*, and did not give a direct answer.
- (f) This question discriminated well, with few candidates getting both points.

### Aufgabe 6

Examiners accepted many different explanations of these phrases as long as they felt that the meaning had been understood. The word "Neugier" was unfamiliar to a number of candidates.

### **Aufgabe 7**

This task proved to be challenging. Some candidates were not able to express themselves in clear English: 'poverty' was often given as 'poorness' and *sich auseinandersetzen mit* was hardly known. *Sozialwissenschaftler* despite the plural verb was thought to be singular and *Rückgang* was not known. *Inzwischen* was rarely known, with many candidates thinking that it must mean 'between 1987 and 2000'; *Niveau* was unfamiliar. Although candidates understood the concept of high unemployment, they did not understand the *spiegelt sich wider*.

### **Aufgabe 8**

Difficulties in this task were in the following questions:

- (c) Few candidates gained the second point, ie low-earners.
- (e) Some candidates were unable to express 'they feel ashamed' clearly.
- (f) and (i) Many candidates lost the mark because they wrote *Belastung* in their answers, which was not required and so made the answer invalid.

### **Aufgabe 9**

This sentence completion task caused some difficulties in (b) where candidates saw other possibilities for answers than those given in the mark scheme. The mark for (a) was lost if the element of 'extreme' was omitted. (c) was often answered correctly and almost all candidates gained the two marks for (d).

### **Aufgabe 10**

This was completed successfully by most candidates. Some used the past tense for (b) and (c), which was incorrect in this context.

## **Section C: Writing**

It was encouraging to see that all candidates had sufficient time to complete the paper and write their essay. Some wrote well over the maximum of 400 words recommended. They may have done better to use their time to plan carefully or to check their writing for errors. Not all candidates set their essay out in paragraphs and lost marks accordingly. Almost all the essays were at least 250 words long; those that were slightly short often did not meet the requirements of the assessment criteria. By far the most popular titles were 11 and 13.

### **Question 11**

In general, this question was not answered well. Candidates needed to plan their answers better and consider two sides to the question rather than agreeing with the provocative statement in the question. There was a tendency for candidates to write down a few facts about immigration in Germany without using the information to prove points.

### **Question 12**

A handful of candidates wrote this non-discursive essay and there was a good range of marks awarded. Not all knew how to address a letter properly and one candidate wrote to Angela Merkel, rather than the mayor. Insufficient account was taken of the need to structure a non-discursive response (paragraphing is just as important here as in a discursive essay). There was sometimes insufficient factual detail. Candidates who avoided these pitfalls got good marks.

### **Question 13**

There were some impressive essays written in answer to this question, displaying knowledge of the political issues surrounding Germany opting out of atomic energy as well as knowledge of some of the alternatives. Full, or almost full, marks were given to several candidates. Other candidates, seeing the word *Atomkraft* in the title, wrote more on the advantages and disadvantages of atomic power and often did not point their material sufficiently towards the title.

### **Question 14**

The response to this question was about environmental problems in general rather than one specific one.

### **Question 15**

There was one answer to this question, and it was knowledgeable and convincing.

### **Question 16**

There was one answer. Again it was excellent.

### **Question 17**

Several candidates chose the Nazi period and wrote perceptive essays on how Germany's image in the world is still affected by it.

### **Question 18**

One response to this question was about a German actress in an American film and could therefore not gain any marks for 'relevance'. Some responses showed only a superficial knowledge of a book, but some essays showed a thorough knowledge of books, and used this knowledge relevantly in response to the question.

## Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE German (H476)  
Advanced Subsidiary GCE German (H076)  
January 2010 Examination Series

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
F711	Raw	60	47	42	37	32	27	0
	UMS	60	48	42	36	30	24	0
F712	Raw	140	110	99	89	79	69	0
	UMS	140	112	98	84	70	56	0
F714	Raw	140	108	96	84	72	60	0
	UMS	140	112	98	84	70	56	0

### Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H076	200	160	140	120	100	80	0
H476	400	320	280	240	200	160	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H076	43.4	63.6	78.3	93	99.2	100	134
H476	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:  
<http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums/index.html>

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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