

GERMAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0525/01

Listening

General comments

The June 2007 paper proved to be of a similar standard to those set at previous examination sessions. A full spread of marks was obtained including many candidates who submitted work of the highest standard. This was particularly pleasing as this was the first examination session where all three sections of the paper had to be attempted by all candidates and reflected careful preparation by centres and by the candidates themselves.

Most candidates were familiar with the paper in terms of rubrics and question types although a small minority omitted ticks in a number of multiple choice and *Richtig/Falsch* boxes. Not all candidates attempted **Section 3** even though this is now a compulsory element.

A range of candidates found answering in the target language difficult. The accuracy of the German was not taken into account when written answers were called for as long as spelling mistakes did not obscure the meaning, except for one question in **Section 1** where a name or address are spelled out with the German alphabet. Answers not in the target language were not rewarded. Full sentences are not required nor do numbers need to be spelled out.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This initial component tested the comprehension of short extracts. The question type was multiple choice with visual options.

With the exception of **Question 3**, this exercise was well executed by the vast majority of candidates. The icon in **Question 3** is the actual representation of the German youth hostel sign but apparently this was not recognised by all candidates. Although the question asks for information on a **cheap room**, a number of candidates opted for the hotel or the caravan.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-15

Candidates heard the answering machine of a youth hostel and had to fill gaps with brief snippets of information. In view of the fact that all material for **Section 1** comes from the Defined Content Syllabus, which is available to all Centres and candidates, it was surprising that many candidates were unable to render *Speisesaal* in a comprehensible manner (**Question 12**). The majority of candidates scored fully in this exercise.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 16-23

Candidates heard a conversation with a young musician and had to decide if the eight statements were true or false.

The vast majority of candidates coped very well here, many scoring full marks. If mistakes occurred, it usually involved the wrong answers for **Questions 16** or **23**, relating to how long the interviewee had been playing the violin for and whether or not they enjoyed performing live.

Exercise 2 Questions 24-29

Candidates heard an interview with a teacher and had to answer in the target language.

In general, candidates coped well with this exercise. In **Question 25**, *Studienreise* was not infrequently rendered as *Studioreise* for which no credit could be given.

Question 26: *Wie haben die Schüler ihre Umwelt schöner gemacht* proved problematic to some; *Blumen* and *Rasen* were usually answered correctly but many candidates were unable to express how the pupils used these for the purpose described.

Most surprisingly perhaps were many wrong answers to **Question 27** where *Realschule* would have been enough to score. The different types of schools in Germany do not seem to be well known, despite being part of the syllabus.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30-35

Here, candidates heard an interview with a person who does not watch any television and the question type was multiple choice.

In view of the fact that this was the first year when **Section 3** was compulsory for all, it was particularly pleasing that most candidates scored fully or nearly fully on all questions in Exercise 1. If mistakes occurred, they usually involved **Questions 33** and/or **35**. Candidates found it difficult to identify how most people reacted to the information that Herr Röm no longer watched television - *mit Verständnis* - and that as a child he had found TV *unterhaltsam*.

Exercise 2 Questions 36-41

Candidates heard a talk with two young Germans about their attitude to foreign countries.

This is the last and most difficult part of the examination. Some candidates scored fully or nearly fully here but answering clearly in the target language proved – not surprisingly – to be problematic for some.

Nonetheless, question words like *wann*, *warum*, *wodurch*, *wie* and *was* were occasionally apparently disregarded.

Question 36 was usually answered correctly.

For **Question 37**, just stating the percentage (52%) without any additional information was not enough to score.

Question 38 elicited some very adventurous answers from some candidates.

Most candidates scored at least one mark for **Question 39**, but the misspelling of *Globalisierung* frequently got in the way of deciphering the meaning of the answer.

Question 40 proved difficult to a number of candidates although a short answer would have sufficed.

Questions 41 and **42** were answered correctly by the majority of candidates.

Question 43 often elicited the (wrong) answer “*kein Land ist perfekt*”. This was incorrect as the question asks about changed attitudes specifically to Germany.

GERMAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0525/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

Overall, the June paper elicited work of a similar standard to papers set at previous examination sessions. As usual, although there was a wide range of performance, the majority of candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the tasks demanded of them, and a good number achieved high marks. They had clearly been well prepared by Centres, and trained to read questions carefully and cover all tasks in their answers. Apart from isolated examples, scripts were legible and the level of presentation was good. All candidates appeared to have had enough time to complete the paper. In view of this being the first year when **all three sections** of the paper were compulsory, the high level of achievement and the fact that virtually all candidates completed the paper were particularly creditable.

On questions requiring answers in German, apart from exercises where accuracy marks were available, the accuracy of the German was not taken into account unless the meaning was obscured. Answers in any language other than German were not rewarded.

Candidates should be reminded that they should use black or blue ink, not pencils.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Where candidates did not score full marks, it was generally because they opted for A in **Question 2**, *Brot* instead of the *Brötchen* required.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Unexpectedly, a number of candidates, even those who scored highly in later sections of the paper, did not cope well with this exercise. A small number of candidates even put in the boxes letters that were not available in the exercise. There was, however, no common pattern to the incorrect responses. This was all the more surprising as the material for this section of the paper derives from the Defined Content Syllabus.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This exercise caused no problems and nearly all candidates scored fully here.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Most candidates managed to communicate the required points to achieve three marks and many achieved two marks for quality of language as well.

There was, however a significant minority who disregarded the instruction in the rubric to take note of the **text as well as the pictures**.

Examiners accepted the widest possible interpretation of swimming costumes.

Some candidates did not manage to issue an invitation of any sort but announced their own arrival, thus losing a mark.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

High scores were common in this exercise. **Question 17** was usually correctly answered, as was **Question 18**. **Questions 19 and 20** caused few problems. Some candidates could not define how a child's mobile phone **differs** from a normal one in response to **Question 21**: *klein* did not score. For **Question 22**, a number of answers gave only the positive aspects of Erik's friend Paul in response to the query *Warum macht sich Eriks Mutter Sorgen, wenn er seinen Freund Paul trifft?* and failed to score.

Most candidates answered **Question 23** correctly. The element of mischief, that Erik turned his mobile phone off or that he tricked his mother, had to be indicated to score with **Question 24**.

Exercise 2 Question 25

The majority of candidates found this writing task accessible and scored highly in both communication and accuracy marks.

There were still a few candidates who omitted to cover one or more of the bullet points and lost communication marks as a result.

Virtually all candidates achieved the full 5 marks for accuracy.

A small minority obviously misunderstood *wer* for *wo* and started to tell **where** they presently were, a surprising mistake in view of the good work produced elsewhere.

Candidates need to be aware of the word count on this question, 80 to 100 words, and to remember that after 100 words, accuracy marks are no longer awarded. Communication marks stop after 120 words.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-32

As this was the first session when all three sections had to be attempted by all candidates, it was pleasing to see many candidates scoring well here. Where a correction was required with NEIN-answers, one mark was given even if the correction was faulty and did not score the second mark.

It was good to see that fewer candidates than in previous sessions added explanations for JA-answers and thus followed the rubric.

Questions 26-30 were generally correctly answered. The most problematic seemed to be **Question 31**. A number of candidates appeared to think that there was only one person working for *Wikipedia* or that Jimmy Wales, its founder, earned most.

Question 32 also elicited some wrong answers.

Exercise 2 Questions 33-41

This last exercise is the most demanding both in terms of text to be interpreted and by virtue of needing answers in the target language. Nonetheless, all candidates scored here and many did very well.

Question 33 was usually answered correctly. **Question 34** was more problematic. The notion that a person or fact can be symbolic or provide an example (see also **Question 38**) was not grasped by some candidates in response to the question *Wofür ist Lotta Schmitz ein Beispiel?* An answer along the lines that girls too, even if they are not allergy-sufferers, can be highly talented as well as boys was what was expected here.

Questions 35 and 36 were answered well.

Questions 37 and 38 were in a similar vein and answers were rewarded interchangeably for those two questions, but obviously no marks were given for the **same** answers for **both** questions.

Question 39 scored well. Candidates' answers to **Question 40** were treated as generously as possible by the Examiners. Candidates needed to take account of the negative implied in the word *vermeiden*. Those who gave a positive answer to the question *Was sollte man bei Kindern vermeiden?* , e.g *Man sollte Kindern so viele Aktivitäten wie möglich bieten*, were on safe ground.

Candidates answered **Question 41** well on the whole, with most being able to express the notion that young people generally develop best among their peers.

GERMAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0525/03

Speaking

General comments

These comments are to read in conjunction with the **Teachers' Notes** for March – April 2007.

As in previous years the ability of candidates to communicate in German is impressive and there were many highly scoring performances. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and once again there was a wide range of performance from candidates this year, with the general standard being comparable to that heard in previous years.

Centres generally conducted the Speaking Test very professionally and most Examiners had prepared themselves thoroughly before the examination and prepared their candidates to deliver their best. In a small number of cases only, Examiners were not well prepared for the Role play situations, which resulted in their candidates not being fully able to demonstrate their ability; sometimes candidates were confused as the situation developed into an unnecessary mini-conversation; in some cases individual Role play tasks were just not asked or completed.

Occasionally, Examiners did not ask appropriate questions in the Topic and/or General Conversation sections of the test. Thorough preparation for these sections can produce excellent performances from candidates, who should be prepared to use the full range of time frames (present, past and future) in these sections of the test. Examiners of course must ensure that they ask the sort of questions that will allow these time frames to be used: otherwise marks on Table B (Linguistic Quality) may well be limited, as is explained on pp 6 and 7 of the **Teachers' Notes**. The instructions in the Teachers' Notes booklet should be consulted carefully; a few Examiners continue to award higher scale (**b**) marks to candidates who do not (or cannot) convey past and future meanings. Such candidates cannot be awarded above the satisfactory band (see Teachers' Notes, p6). Similarly, candidates whose topic or conversation is very short cannot expect to be awarded full marks if they do not have time to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structures. In a very few cases, candidates seemed unaware of what was required of them for the Speaking Test and were rather nonplussed when they were asked what topic they had prepared to speak on; in such instances an unsatisfactory and often rambling 'presentation' about 'Myself/My life' tended to be produced, despite the advice offered on p6 of the booklet.

Most Centres forwarded the appropriate sample size for the Centre with clear recordings, in labelled cassette boxes; only a few recordings were of poor quality. A sample submitted on CD was extremely well presented MS1 copies and Working Mark Sheets should be sent to the Moderator with the recordings; a small number of Centres failed to do this. Occasionally Centres sent the complete set of recordings of all candidates, rather than a sample, as directed on p3 of the Teachers Notes. Administrative work in Centres was generally very good this year, with very few clerical errors of addition on the WMS.

The recommended timings for each section of the test were usually observed, although some Centres did run the Topic and General Conversation sections of the test together, which can make moderation difficult.

The mark scheme was applied consistently in general and the order of merit within Centres was usually accurate. Where adjustments were necessary, these were usually the result of lack of time frames in the conversation sections or failure to complete Role play tasks.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Examiners are reminded to encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task. If only one part of a task is completed, the full three marks cannot be awarded. The majority of candidates were able to converse fluently in their Role plays and make use of natural and idiomatic German to complete their tasks. Examiners are reminded that they should adhere to the rubrics and printed stimuli of the Role plays and not attempt to add to or extend the set tasks, nor develop them into mini-conversations. Full guidance is given on p6 of the booklet, under **Structure of the Examination**.

Role plays A

Page 13

This was a straightforward Role play and most candidates performed well on it. Task 4, where the candidate had to make a suggestion, was somewhat more demanding, but accessible to most candidates.

Page 14

This too was a straightforward situation for candidates. Tasks 2 and 3 did oblige the candidate to ask questions, but again this was not beyond most candidates' capabilities.

Page 15

This situation – giving information about school and future plans – was similarly accessible. Generally candidates had no difficulty with any task.

Role plays B

These tasks are more demanding, in that they require the ability to use a range of time frames and to give explanations, justifications and opinions where necessary. Centres are reminded that the longer tasks demanded in the candidate's rubric may be split by the Examiner; this is quite appropriate.

Page 16

This task was a familiar task from previous years: the problems relating to losing a purse or wallet. Candidates were able to report relevant information about the loss in the appropriate tense to their friend and ask for the required help. Examiners ought to be aware that they should avoid giving away potential structures in their introduction (e.g. *Während Sie in der Stadt waren, haben Sie Ihren Portemonnaie verloren....*).

Page 17

This task was a familiar task from previous years: an interview regarding a possible job and giving information about one's own previous relevant experience. Candidates approached the task well and were able to give answers in an appropriate tense about past experience and respond to queries about their future plans.

Page 18

This task was also a familiar task from previous sessions – the reporting of a theft the candidate had witnessed and giving information to the required agency. There were some unnecessarily longish responses from candidates; again, the importance for candidate and Examiner of not adding to or extending the set task is emphasised. In general, this card too proved accessible to most.

Topic (prepared) Conversation

The Presentations ranged widely from monologues, where even struggling candidates were left to fend for themselves, to immediate general conversations with no initial candidate exposition. Examiners are asked to let candidates speak for approximately a full minute before interrupting, so that the exposition of the candidates' prepared material can be assessed. Many Examiners and candidates do an excellent job by producing a natural and not too over-rehearsed presentation and subsequent discussion with spontaneous exchanges in a variety of time frames, and a full range of vocabulary and structures. The manipulation by candidates of their prepared material is a decisive factor in determining their marks.

The choice of topics was very wide; a number of candidates chose very challenging topics - there were some very commendable expositions on the environment and the role of women in society; many were able to speak at a very high and sophisticated level; in other Centres, candidates were happier with less complex topics such as school, home life, future plans etc.

Candidate performance was generally very good on this part of the test with some fluent, interesting expositions and discussions. The minority of candidates, who clearly do not prepare a topic as prescribed by the syllabus, cannot be awarded high marks for scale a) (Quality of presentation and preparation).

General Conversation

The best performances from candidates in this section of the test were ones where they were encouraged to use a variety of time frames, relevant vocabulary and appropriate structures; many were able to demonstrate a high degree of fluency in their responses to the Examiner's questions. As usual, a good range of topic areas was tested, including school, holidays, family life, education, daily life etc. – all of which are entirely appropriate, all being topic areas where candidates can reasonably be expected to have a suitable command of relevant vocabulary and idiom. A minority of Examiners do ask questions which are perhaps too sophisticated for the average candidate, thus denying such candidates the opportunity to demonstrate what they know or could offer with a more basic level of vocabulary and structure.

As has been said in the General Comments section, for both Topic and General Conversation, Examiners must ensure that candidates are offered the opportunity to respond in a range of tenses, otherwise marks above the satisfactory band on scale b) cannot be awarded. Similarly candidates whose topic or conversation is very short cannot expect to be awarded full marks if they do not have the time to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structure.

General Impression

It was pleasing to see that the impression mark was consistently well used by the majority of Examiners.

GERMAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0525/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

The majority of candidates acquitted themselves well and there were relatively few weak candidates. There were some very good pieces of writing, distinguished by their style and accuracy.

A majority of candidates handled basic German syntax well and wrote flowing, idiomatic German. A few scripts contained a wide variety of sophisticated constructions. Most candidates, however, limited themselves to a few subordinate clauses, almost all of which began with *weil* or *dass*. The latter sometimes occurred as *das*. Vocabulary, though appropriate tended to be repetitive and unadventurous.

A relatively small number of candidates did not always use capital letters appropriately; they were sometimes omitted for nouns, even in some very fluent scripts. On occasion, *sie* and *Sie* were confused. Genders were often incorrect and sometimes nouns changed gender seemingly arbitrarily within the same piece of work.

There continues to be a marked difference on a significant number of scripts between the standard of German in **Question 1** and in **Question 2**. Some candidates, who seemed to be accomplished letter writers and produced idiomatic and accurate German in **Question 1**, produced German of a much lower standard for **Question 2**. This would suggest that while letter writing is rigorously prepared to good effect, essay writing may be receiving less attention.

A very small number of candidates produced work that was almost illegible. Occasionally, there was so much crossing out that parts of the script were indecipherable. Candidates should be aware that poor handwriting could be to their disadvantage.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 (a)

There were many very good letters and it was clear that most candidates were thoroughly versed in this skill and familiar with the range of vocabulary. Candidates are advised to note the requisite number of words, namely no more than 140; just a few candidates significantly exceeded this, which was not to their advantage.

Most wrote an appropriate letter opening, although *Hello, Wie geht's?* did occur.

Occasionally *du* or *ihr* was used instead of the more appropriate *Sie*.

- Most candidates introduced themselves appropriately. A few took the opportunity to write at unnecessary length about themselves, including details of their siblings and school.
- Candidates supplied appropriate information here, although one or two seemed to have extremely young grandmothers, as they confused *achtzehn* with *achtzig*. A few candidates mistakenly used *bekommen* in this context e.g. *Meine Grossmutter wird siebzig bekommen*, which failed to communicate.
- Candidates generally stated when they wanted the hall, although vague information e.g. *nächste Woche* or *am Freitag* without the date was not uncommon.
- Candidates generally wrote at length about party plans, which included discos with hip hop music, speeches, cakes and surprise guests.

- The majority asked appropriate questions, although some addressed the manager as *du*. A few made enquiries about the facilities in the local park. Occasionally candidates did not seem to have understood *Mietkosten* and made lengthy enquiries about how much would be charged for organising the event rather than hiring the hall.
- Some candidates concluded their letter inappropriately. *Alles Gute* and *bis bald* occurred on a number of occasions.

Question 1 (b)

- Candidates were able to state which languages they were learning, although some wrote about those they spoke rather than actually learnt.
- Details regarding frequency and length of lessons were supplied without problem.
- Candidates sometimes wrote confusingly, so that it was not always clear which languages they were going to take up in the future and which they had studied at some time in the past.
- It was clear that a significant number of students did not understand *was halten Sie von* as some responded by writing about equipment needed, general information about options and in particular, which subjects they were going to drop. Those who did understand, wrote appropriately about the benefits of learning foreign languages.
- Suitable questions were asked.

Question 2

Almost all candidates wrote relevant responses. Generally responses involved the mysterious disappearance and equally mysterious and sometimes unexplained reappearance of a friend. Some stories took place in a town, which did not suggest close reading of the rubric. In some cases the disappearance of the friend was due to a visit to obey the call of nature. The best stories involved the friend having sustained an injury and needing medical attention, helicopter searches and, regrettably, the occasional fatality or failure to find the friend.

Some candidates appear not to have understood the instruction in the rubric: *Erzählen Sie, was weiterhin geschah*; a significant number of candidates spent much or all of the essay scene-setting rather than developing the story. This cannot be credited for either accuracy or communication.

Candidates are reminded that a narrative in **an appropriate past tense** is required here as indicated by the rubric. Just a few wrote in the present tense.