

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0525/01

Listening

General comments

The June 2008 examination reflected the standards achieved in previous examination sessions.

The majority of candidates coped well with all three sections of the paper, a number scoring nearly full marks. Candidates had clearly been well prepared by Centres and were familiar with the layout of the question paper and with the demands of this examination.

Candidates fared particularly well on exercises which required ticking or matching of answers. Candidates are reminded that answers where they are required to answer in the target language are assessed for communication and not for accuracy. Candidates fail to score only if the language is so unclear as to obscure the meaning. A small handful of candidates omitted all exercises which demanded answers in German and restricted themselves to those which required ticks. This will have prevented them from achieving their potential on the paper.

The use of possessive pronouns is something that is worth practising carefully to avoid confusion. As in previous years, this proved particularly troublesome to a number of candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This initial exercise tested candidates' comprehension of short extracts. The question type was multiple choice with visual options.

Candidates coped well with the exercise, most scoring full marks. If problems occurred, they tended to involve either **Question 2** or **Question 4**, difficulties with the latter suggesting that types of houses were not well known. All exercises in this section are based on the Defined Content Syllabus, which is readily accessible to all Centres.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-13

Candidates heard information about a summer fair to be held in a local park.

Somewhat surprisingly in view of their excellent work elsewhere, a number of candidates struggled with **Question 9** where a day and a date were required to fill the gaps.

Question 10 was generally answered correctly; to score, *Mitternacht* could also have been written in numbers.

In **Question 11** the verbs in both parts of this question, which were not necessary to score, proved difficult to a number of candidates.

Question 12 elicited a range of spellings for *Getränke*, some of which were barely comprehensible.

Candidates coped well with **Question 13**, where they were asked to note down the telephone number given in the recording.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 14-21

On the whole, candidates scored well in this exercise.

Candidates heard a conversation with a young person about her gap year. It is important for candidates to remember that their answers must be based on what they hear in the recording and not on their general knowledge or expectations. **Question 16** and **Question 20** were incorrectly answered even in a number of otherwise excellent papers possibly because candidates had ignored this principle. Apart from this no individual question in this exercise proved particularly challenging.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-28

Candidates generally showed themselves able to tackle the more complex language of this second exercise in Section 2 of the question paper. Candidates heard an interview about a new sport that is enjoying some popularity, involving walking with ski sticks.

Somewhat surprisingly, a number of candidates were unable to identify the answer to **Question 26 (i)**: *Wie viel bezahlte der Freizeitverband für seine Arbeit?* i.e. 170 Euro. There was no particular pattern in wrong answers to individual questions. Examiners accepted a number of different spellings for the word *Stöcke*.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 29-34

Here, candidates heard an interview with a young film director about his latest film. The question type was multiple choice.

Questions 29, 30, 32 and **34** were generally tackled correctly. Wrong answers appeared most frequently for **Questions 32** or **33**, where candidates found it difficult to identify the correct description of the film and its characters. On the whole candidates scored well on this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 35-41

Overall it was pleasing to see so many candidates scoring as highly as they did in this, the most difficult exercise on the paper. Candidates hear an interview with the head of a state secondary school in Berlin in which none of the pupils are German.

In response to **Question 35** a number of candidates were unable to convey the point that other German schools have a mixture of nationalities; *nur deutsche Schüler* failed to score in the first part of the question.

In view of the number of possible single word answers to describe pupils in the school that candidates could have given in response to **Question 36 i** and **ii** - *türkisch/ arabisch/ nett/ respektvoll/ neugierig* - it seemed surprising that a small number of candidates nevertheless got this wrong.

Virtually all candidates achieved a mark for **Question 37**.

Questions 38 and **39** needed some degree of language manipulation, to be anticipated at this stage in the question paper, and this proved to be beyond a minority of candidates.

Question 40 i and **ii** were answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Various spellings of the vocabulary required in response to the question were accepted, provided they would not prove incomprehensible to a sympathetic native speaker of the target language. Similarly, in the case of **Question 41**, candidates were credited with recognising that *Schulabschluss* was the correct answer even if they were unable to spell it correctly.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0525/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General Comments

Candidates achieved across a wide range on this paper as usual. Almost all candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the tasks demanded of them. They had clearly been well prepared by Centres, and coped effectively with the tasks set, better in several instances than they had done at previous sessions. Scripts were legible and the level of presentation was – apart from isolated examples – good.

The first section of the paper was, as usual, based on vocabulary from the Defined Content booklet, which is readily accessible to Centres. On questions requiring answers in the target language, apart from **Section 2, Exercise 2**, accuracy in German was not taken into account unless the meaning was obscured. Answers in any language other than German were not rewarded.

A small handful of candidates tried to get by with attempting only those questions where no answers in German needed to be given and could not be credited at all for a range of questions as a result.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Most candidates scored full marks on this multiple choice exercise. Where mistakes were made, they usually involved **Questions 1 and 2**. Familiarity with the vocabulary of the Defined Content booklet is crucial on this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Most candidates scored well on this exercise where they were required to match up activities in a holiday camp with statements by individuals about the different activities. There was a distinct improvement overall on this exercise compared with the June 2007 session.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This exercise, involving true/false questions relating to a letter, caused few problems; most candidates scored full marks. A small number of candidates had problems with **Question 13**: they needed to recognise that the response to the phrase: *Im Moment ist das Wetter schlecht* was *Nein*, in the light of the text: *Ab morgen soll das Wetter leider schlechter werden*.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Most candidates achieved three marks for communication; many also obtained 2 marks for accuracy. Please consult the detailed mark scheme for the allocation of marks.

A minority of candidates could not express the notions of date and time involved or failed to take note of the direction in the rubric advising them to refer in their answer to the pictures as well as to the text. Examiners accepted the widest possible interpretation of the duration of the birthday party.

Section 2 Questions 17-23

Candidates generally performed well on this exercise where they were required to answer questions on a text relating to changes in the German school system and some high marks were scored. Where candidates did not score full marks this was usually down to incorrect choice of vocabulary and to mistakes on

Questions 19 and 20 in particular. Answers to **Question 20** needed to make reference to the relevant time frame in order to score.

Section 2 Question 24

The majority of candidates found this writing task, on working for a voluntary organisation during a gap year, accessible and scored high marks for both accuracy and communication.

It was perhaps surprising, in view of the good work produced elsewhere, that a small number of candidates failed to introduce themselves and thereby lost two marks for communication.

Virtually all candidates obtained the full 5 marks available for accuracy.

Candidates also kept to the word count and seemed to be aware that after 100 words no more accuracy marks are given and that communication marks are not awarded after 120 words.

Section 3 Questions 25-31

Marks are allocated for ticking the correct box and for providing a correct answer/ explanation in the case of *Nein* answers.

Candidates seemed better prepared for this exercise than at previous sessions and gave explanations only where necessary. Although adding explanations in the case of *Ja* answers is not penalised, it may take up time that the candidate could spend better elsewhere. The subject matter, the views of young people and of parents about how to bring up children, seemed to be accessible to candidates.

A small number of candidates were clearly trying to work out mathematically whether they were dealing with *Ja* or *Nein* answers. This was not always successful.

Questions 25-28 and Question 31 were usually answered correctly. **Questions 29 and 30** proved to be the most problematic. Candidates may have had difficulty understanding the verbs: *behandeln* and *bitten um*.

Section 3 Questions 32-38

This exercise is the most demanding, both in terms of difficulty of text and in view of the need to answer in the target language. All candidates who attempted the exercise managed to score; some candidates did very well. The text concerned visions of the future held by young people in Germany and in the United States.

Question 32 was usually answered correctly.

Question 33, *Was erwartet man von den Schülern, die jetzt die Schule verlassen?* proved problematic for a minority of candidates only.

Most candidates answered **Question 34 i and ii**, as expected. Alternative answers were treated as sympathetically as possible by the Examiners.

Question 35 was generally answered correctly.

Both **Questions 36 and 37** were in two parts. Some candidates had difficulty identifying the correct section of the text in response. In some cases the same or similar answer was given to both parts of the question though this could only be credited once.

Question 38 asking candidates where in this context they could find out about work experience abroad was usually answered correctly.

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Paper 0525/03

Speaking

General comments

These comments are to read in conjunction with the **Teachers' Notes** for March – April 2008.

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. However in a number of centres Examiners were not as well prepared for the Role play situations, which resulted in their candidates not being fully able to demonstrate their ability; often candidates were confused as the situation developed into an unnecessary mini-conversation; sometimes certain Role play tasks were just not asked or completed.

Occasionally, some Examiners did not ask appropriate questions in the Topic and/or General Conversation sections of the test. It is essential that thorough preparation for these sections takes place so that candidates can produce their best under examination conditions and Examiners must ensure that they are prepared to use the full range of time frames (present, past and future time) in these sections of the test by asking the sort of questions which will allow these time frames to be used: otherwise marks for language on Table B (Linguistic Quality) may well be limited, as is explained on pp6 and 7 of the **Teachers' Notes**. Examiners must consult these instructions very carefully as there are still a few Examiners who are awarding 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 significantly curtailed 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, some 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 these cases an unsatisfactory and often rambling 'presentation' about 'Myself / My life' was produced, despite the advice offered on p6 of the booklet. In a small number of centres this year it did seem that candidates were not well-versed in the art of Role play: a small number of candidates indeed seemed not to have prepared the Role play cards and were at a loss what to do with the requirements of the test.

Most Centres forwarded the appropriate sample size for the Centre with clear recordings, in labelled cassette boxes or on CD; some recordings however remain of a poor quality. Centres are reminded that MS1 copies and Working Mark Sheets should be sent to the Moderator with the recordings. Occasionally Centres sent the complete set of recordings of all candidates, rather than a sample, as instructed on p3. One Centre sent its sample on a tape, which was recorded at twice the normal speed; this had to be re-processed at the Board in Cambridge.

Administrative work in Centres was generally very good this year, but clerical errors of addition on the WMS still occurs, particularly in Centres with a large number of candidates.

The recommended timings of each section of the test were usually observed, but some Centres did run together the Topic and General Conversation sections of the test, which can make moderation difficult. There were also a small number of Centres where the Role play tasks developed into quite lengthy conversations, usually Examiner led, and others where the Topic and General Conversations were very brief and perfunctory. In the few instances where there was no Topic or General Conversation candidates could not be credited.

The mark scheme was generally applied fairly consistently and the order of merit within the Centre was on the whole 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 satisfactorily.

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 however 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. Equally importantly, Examiners should be wary of feeding information to the candidates by giving them a choice of vocabulary, which cannot then be credited. Full guidance is given on p6 of the Teachers' Notes booklet, under **Structure of the Examination**.

Role plays A

Page 13

This was a straightforward Role play and most candidates performed well. Giving the candidates a simple choice where to sit – e.g. by the window or on the terrace – would of course not enable the candidate to be credited with marks if the answer simply repeated what the Examiner had suggested. Some candidates did find difficulty with the final task (explaining how they wanted to pay).

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This was not a difficult situation for candidates either. For some weaker candidates the pronunciation of *Jugendherberge* proved difficult. Task five proved more difficult, as some candidates did not seem to understand the concept of *zumacht*.

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This situation was also straightforward. Generally candidates had no difficulty with any of the tasks, although they had to remember to ensure that both parts of the final task were completed to gain full marks.

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 can be split by the Examiner; this is quite appropriate.

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This Role play was well attempted generally with most candidates able to offer information about their respective ailments (usually *Kopfschmerzen*). Most candidates did convey the idea of what they wanted to do later, but only the better ones conveyed the idea of how things had changed because of their illness; this particular utterance relied a good deal on the Examiner's skill at directing the candidate and teasing out a suitable answer.

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This Role play was accessible to most candidates, although often the first two tasks were blended into one, and again the Examiner had to extricate the separate ideas and also deal with the required information in task three. Tasks four and five were well attempted generally.

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Task one was a routine task, but candidates had to remember to include the information about tiredness. Task two was sometimes misunderstood, with candidates taking the concept *geht* quite literally and explaining where various members of the family were going. Examiners did not always query here. The remaining three tasks were quite straightforward.

Topic (Prepared) Conversation

As usual 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. However, one must not lose sight of the many Examiners and candidates who 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 structure. The manipulation by candidates of their prepared material will determine their marks.

The choice of topics was very wide; in many Centres candidates chose very challenging topics - there were some very commendable expositions on the environment, problems of drug abuse, religious intolerance 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. There is still a minority of candidates, who clearly do not prepare a topic as prescribed by the syllabus; they cannot be awarded high marks for scale **(a)** of the mark scheme (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 all 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 significantly curtailed 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.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

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. In terms of range of structures, most candidates limited themselves to a few subordinate clauses and almost all of these began with *weil* or *dass*. The latter sometimes occurred as *das*. Vocabulary, though generally appropriate, tended to be repetitive and unadventurous.

A relatively small number did not always use capital letters as they should; they were sometimes omitted for nouns, even in some very fluent scripts. Conversely *ich* was written with a capital *I* throughout some scripts. Genders were often incorrect and sometimes nouns changed gender seemingly arbitrarily within the same piece of work.

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

Several candidates produced work that was almost illegible. Occasionally there was so much crossing out or the handwriting was so small that parts of the script were indecipherable. Candidates should be aware that poor handwriting can be to their disadvantage. Writing on alternate lines can help in some instances.

Some candidates, including very good candidates wrote in excess of the required number of words. In some cases this meant that candidates could not be credited with communication marks they would otherwise have gained. Candidates are reminded that for each question the requisite length is between 130 and 140 words.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 (a) and **Question 1 (b)** were tackled in almost equal numbers.

Question 1 (a)

Nächstes Jahr möchten Sie Ihr Arbeitspraktikum in Deutschland machen. Sie schreiben einen Brief an die Eltern von Ihrem deutschen Brieffreund/ Ihrer deutschen Brieffreundin.

There were many good letters and it was clear that most candidates were thoroughly versed in this skill and familiar with the range of vocabulary. The concept of *Arbeitspraktikum* and working in Germany posed no real problem. A small number of candidates could have benefited from closer reading of the rubric as they addressed their letter to the friend rather than to the friend's parents.

Most candidates wrote an appropriate letter opening, although some wrote the formal *Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren* and then used *du* or *ihr* in the body of the letter. Conversely some wrote *Hallo! Wie geht's dir?* and used *Sie* in the letter itself. Possessive adjectives proved challenging for some: they used *Sie* throughout and then used *sein/Sein* instead of *Ihr*.

- Most candidates stated when the work placement was to take place, but some omitted to state its duration. Candidates must refer to both items where two are referred to in the task.

- Candidates supplied plenty of information about the work placement they wanted. Most candidates explained why they wished to have such a placement. Typically they wanted to work in a nursery, because of their love of children or in a car factory or garage, because of their fascination with cars. The desire to work with a vet or in a zoo also featured fairly often. Some placements were somewhat ambitious, e.g. some wanted a placement as a doctor or teacher. This was not penalised.
- Description of part time jobs caused little problem, although one or two candidates simply wrote that they had no part time job. A few wrote about a job which was clearly a full time career post, but candidates were not penalised for this.
- Appropriate and predictable reasons for working in Germany were supplied. These included the desire to improve their German, the fact that they already spoke very good German, the friendly and welcoming nature of the German people and superior working conditions.
- Most candidates asked appropriate questions. It was clear, however, that some candidates had not set this final task in context. They took *Stellen* to mean places in general rather than jobs and wrote about leisure facilities or accommodation. Forming questions using appropriate forms of *du*, *ihr* or *Sie* still eludes many candidates.

Question 1 (b)

Sie haben neulich eine Woche mit Ihrer Familie in einer Ferienwohnung verbracht. Sie schreiben einen Brief an Ihren deutschen Brieffreund/ Ihre deutsche Brieffreundin.

This letter was well done by almost all candidates who attempted it.

- Candidates were able to give the location of their holiday home and most described their means of transport and/or route to the destination. Sometimes this description was overly long, which affected candidates' ability to complete the letter within the requisite word limit.
- Most explained that they liked the *Ferienwohnung*, but some did not say why. Some candidates clearly took *Ferienwohnung* to mean the holiday destination and described at length the village/town/area they had stayed in rather than their accommodation.
- Some candidates did not complete this task. It appeared that, as at the previous session, some candidates did not understand *halten* in this context. They wrote confusingly about things the family had taken with them. As mentioned above, some misunderstood *Ferienwohnung* and so wrote about their family's opinion of the location where they had stayed or alternatively about the activities the parents had undertaken during the break.
- A full and appropriate range of possible pastimes was supplied without problem.
- The Principal Examiner was pleased to note that most candidates asked a question and indeed in some cases more than one question in attempting to complete the final task. Unfortunately, some candidates had not read the rubric closely and so asked about current/recent/last /future holidays and not about a favourite holiday as specified.

Question 2

Als Sie in der Pause mit Freunden plauderten, kam ein Lehrer auf Sie zu und sagte, dass der Schuldirektor Sie sprechen wollte. Erzählen Sie, was weiterhin geschah.

It was clear that the topic was accessible to the candidates as all appropriately entered candidates wrote relevant if somewhat predictable responses. Vocabulary was appropriate. Some candidates wrote in excess of 140 words.

Most candidates were overcome with anxiety at the thought of encountering the head teacher. Sometimes he was perceived as being a kind and friendly person, in which role he bestowed prizes for good work or behaviour or encouraged and/or rewarded charity work, or even announced that the candidate's mother had just given birth. Other candidates portrayed him as distinctly unfriendly, intent on punishing them for failure to complete homework, smoking on the school premises or breaking windows. There were also a number of cases of mistaken identity and a suitably apologetic head teacher. Some sadder tales involved the head

teacher having the sad duty of announcing to the candidate the death of a parent or sibling, or telling them that a family member had been admitted to hospital.

A few candidates gave some unlikely reasons for seeing the head teacher; including his announcing to the candidate that they had won the lottery.

Candidates are reminded that a narrative in **an appropriate past tense** is required here, as indicated by the rubric: '*Erzählen Sie, was weiterhin geschah.*' Just a few wrote in the present tense.